

Topics of discussion:

1. **Wider social security net to minimum wage: Long stalled, labour reforms roll in**
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 3. **PM in SA for G20, says will present 'One Future' vision**
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Wider social security net to minimum wage: Long stalled, labour reforms roll in

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment.

What's the ongoing story: Over five years after they were cleared by Parliament, the Centre on Friday implemented the four long-pending labour codes covering wages, industrial relations, social security and working conditions.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What are the four labour codes?
- What is the purpose of introducing it?
- What is the National Floor wage?
- Labour laws fall under which list of the Seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution?
- How does the reform in labour laws promote the ease of doing business?

- Who are gig workers?
- How do the Labour Codes address issues related to gig and platform workers in India?
- What benefits do the new codes bring for women employees?
- What are the concerns related to these codes?
- What are the challenges associated with its implementation?

Key Takeaways:

- The Parliament had cleared the Code on Wages in 2019 and the rest of the three codes in 2020
- Industrial Relations Code; Code on Social Security; and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code.
- They will replace 29 Central labour laws and are aimed at widening the social security net for all workers, including gig workers as they define gig and platform work and aggregators for the first time.
- The Ministry of Labour and Employment said there will be a provision for compensation for accidents occurring while travelling between home and workplace that will now be treated as employment-related accidents.
- However, the codes have certain contentious provisions such as the norms for fixed-term employment, retrenchment and curtailment of the right to strike by trade unions for which they had earlier come under criticism from trade unions.
- The Prime Minister said these labour reforms will build a future-ready ecosystem that protects the rights of workers and strengthens India's economic growth.
- The Government will engage with the public and stakeholders in the finalisation of the corresponding rules, regulations, schemes, etc., under the codes, in line with wide-ranging consultations carried out during the drafting process.
- Experts said the recent move towards bringing in laws for social security for gig workers by a few states such as Karnataka, Telangana, Bihar and Rajasthan would have also played a role in the Centre moving ahead with its Social Security Code.

— Under the four labour codes, the Ministry said women will be permitted to work in night shifts and in all types of work (including underground mining and heavy machinery), subject to their consent and mandatory safety measures.

• LABOUR CODES COME INTO EFFECT: WHAT WILL CHANGE

After a five-year-wait, the Centre has notified the four labour codes on wages, industrial relations, social security & occupational safety health and working conditions, effective November 21. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has detailed the key features below:



| | PRE-LABOUR REFORMS | POST-LABOUR REFORMS |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Formalisation of employment | No mandatory appointment letters. | Mandatory appointment letters to all workers to ensure transparency, job security, and formalisation. |
| Social Security Coverage | Limited social security coverage | Under the Code on Social Security, gig & platform workers will also get social security coverage. |
| Minimum wages | Minimum wages only for scheduled industries; large sections of workers not covered | Code on Wages introduced concept of floor wage, provides workers statutory right of minimum wage payment. |
| Preventive healthcare | No legal requirement for employers to provide free annual health check-ups to workers | Employers must provide all workers with a free annual health check-up |
| Timely wages | No compliance for timely payment of wages | Mandatory for employers to provide timely wages. Provides financial stability, cuts work stress and boosts overall morale of the workers |
| Women's workforce participation | Female employment in night shifts and certain occupations was restricted | Women to be permitted to work at night and in all types of work across all establishments, subject to their consent and required safety measures |
| Compliance burden | Multiple registrations, licences and returns across various labour laws | Single registration, pan-India single licence and single return |

— The labour codes also introduce the concept of Fixed Term Employment (FTE), under which the employers will be able to hire workers directly under a fixed-term contract, with the flexibility to tweak the length of the contract based on the seasonality of industry.

— Under FTE, the Ministry said the workers will become eligible for gratuity after one year of continuous service. At present, gratuity is given after five years of continuous service.

— The Code on Wages seeks to redefine the break-up of wages to increase the share of the basic pay component — a provision to enable higher provision for social security for establishments, especially in the service sector.

— The codes also aim to expand the social security provisions for workers out of the coverage of the government's welfare schemes as of now. According to the Code on Social Security, aggregators employing gig workers have to contribute 1-2 per cent of annual turnover for social security, with the total contribution not exceeding 5 per cent of the amount payable by the aggregator. The Government is working towards finalising the contours of this scheme, officials said.

THE IDEAS PAGE: Labour laws poisonous regulatory cholesterol, new codes clean up, usher in regime of trust

— Manish Sabharwal writes: The four labour codes are not perfect; there should be only one. But they represent a huge leap in making India a better habitat for good job creation. They also offer us a small peek into a legislative future when India's regulatory cholesterol is replaced by a regime of trust...

— Notifying labour codes helps backward states because their migration — taking people to jobs instead of jobs to people — is hardly god's will.

— Most Biharis toil in employed poverty (jobs that don't pay enough) or unviable self-employment (self-exploitation). Bihar's challenge is the shortage of high productivity employers and lack of high productivity sectors.

— The new labour codes reduce 1,228 sections to 480, 1,436 rules to 351, 84 registers to 8, 31 returns to 1, 8 registers to 1, and 4 licences to 1. It decriminalises 65 sections that weaponise thousands of compliances.

— It expands social security to gig and unorganised workers, removes unfair restrictions on women, and enables portability of benefits for inter-state migrant workers

— The labour codes embrace a trust-based regulatory regime that will, hopefully, restrict the administrative state to two instruments: Acts passed by Parliament and Rules notified in the Gazette.

— In the past, multiple instruments used to create compliance, such as guidelines, circulars, government orders, regulations, directions, notes, policies, and many others, often diminished accountability, bred discretion, and undermined the rule of law.

— India's labour laws have been our most poisonous regulatory cholesterol; they hurt small employers more than big employers with networks, money and power. They blunted the migration of Chinese factory refugees to India.

— They ensured 50 per cent of our labour force was self-exploiting in marginal self-employment or farm employment. They bred a sense of humour about the rule of law because of corruption arising from differences in how the law was written, interpreted, practised, and enforced.

Do You Know:

— India's old labour laws were too many, too complex, and outdated. They increased the compliance burden and discouraged businesses from hiring. Many workers, especially gig, platform, MSME, and migrant workers, had no uniform social security. States had already begun reforming their labour laws, leading to fragmented rules. The new Labour Codes try to [fix all this](#).

— Labour is a Concurrent List subject, and while most states have finalised rules aligned with the four Codes, central-level implementation remains pending. This delay results in: Uneven social security coverage for workers, and Compliance complexity for employers operating across multiple states

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(1) Consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2017)

1. The Factories Act, 1881 was passed with a view to fix the wages of industrial workers and to allow the workers to form trade unions.
2. N.M. Lokhande was a pioneer in organizing the labour movement in British India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

“Success of ‘Make in India’ programme depends on the success of ‘Skill India’ programme and radical labour reforms.” Discuss with logical arguments. (UPSC CSE 2015)

PM in SA for G20, says will present ‘One Future’ vision

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Important International institutions, agencies and fora—their structure, mandate

What’s the ongoing story: PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi reached Johannesburg on Friday evening to attend the 20th G20 Leaders’ Summit, where he said he will present India’s perspective in line with its vision of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ and ‘One Earth, One Family and One Future’.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What is G20?
- What is the significance of the G20 for India?
- What are the key outcomes of G20 over the years?
- What is the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty?
- What are the challenges associated with the G20?
- Suggest reforms for better functioning of the group?

Key Takeaways:

- This is the first time a G20 Summit is being held in the African continent.
- On the margins of the summit, the Prime Minister is expected to hold bilateral meetings with leaders including new Japanese PM Sanae Takaichi.
- He will also attend the sixth IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Summit during his visit from November 21 to 23. In his departure statement Friday, the Prime Minister said, “I will present India’s perspective at the Summit in line with our vision of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ and ‘One Earth, One Family and One Future’.”
- South Africa’s presidency is the fourth developing country presidency on a trot and has helped keep the development agenda centre stage. This is the last presidency of the current cycle. With the US taking over the role next year, kicking off the second cycle, it is important to achieve outcomes for the Global South and Africa.
- The theme of this year’s G20 is ‘**Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability**’, with which South Africa has carried forward the outcomes from the previous summits held in New [Delhi](#) and Rio de Janeiro, Modi said.
- South Africa, which took over the G20 presidency in December 2024, continued the focus on development issues, especially those pertinent to Africa. The summit priorities are — strengthening disaster resilience and response; ensuring debt sustainability for low-income countries; mobilising finance for a just energy transition; and harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth and development.

EXPLAINED: GDP: As the US boycotts G20, what lies ahead for the international forum?

- For one, since decisions are taken only by consensus, a US boycott essentially means there may not be a joint declaration from the summit in South Africa. Moreover, with the US taking over the presidency, it also begs the question: What lies ahead for the G20’s mandate?
- As the events since the start of Trump’s second term as US president have shown, regardless of how big and well-represented a body may be, without the US involvement, little can be achieved, at least in the short term.

— The grouping was created in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, which showed that the G7 (or the seven most advanced economies) were unable to control matters because the world was far more unified thanks to rapid globalisation under the WTO framework.

— So the initial idea was to have an informal forum for the finance ministers and central bank governors of the most important industrialised as well as the biggest developing economies to discuss international economic and financial stability.

— In the wake of another global financial crisis — this time of 2007-08 — the G20 was “upgraded” to the level of Heads of State/Government to ensure necessary crisis coordination. Since 2009, the G20 Leaders have met regularly, and the G20 has become the premier forum for international economic cooperation.

— Far from the impression of a group of 20 most crucial countries, the G20 today includes the G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US), the European Union, the Russian Federation, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey as well as the 55 member countries of the African Union. It is noteworthy that the EU itself has 27 member countries. In other words, the G20 is anything but a group of 20 countries.

Do You Know:

— The G20, or the Group of Twenty, is an informal grouping of 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States), European Union, and African Union.

— **Notably**, the African Union, a grouping that represents 55 countries, was admitted as a new member of the G20 in June 2023.

— The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty was officially launched at the G20 Leaders' Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). It aims to accelerate efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty while promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(2) With reference to the “G20 Common Framework”, consider the following statements (UPSC CSE 2022)

1. It is an initiative endorsed by the G20 together with the Paris Club.
2. It is an initiative to support Low Income Countries with unsustainable debt.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

India's first private PSLV launch likely early 2026

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-III: Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology

What's the ongoing story: The first flight of privately-built PSLV rocket is likely to happen early next year, with at least two more launches planned for next year, according to one of the industry partners developing the rocket.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What are the various types of launch vehicle used by [ISRO](#)?
- What are the major missions of the ISRO?
- What are the various stages of PSLV?
- What is the role of the private sector in expanding India's space industry?
- What do you understand about the commercialisation of launch vehicles?

— Know about Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)

Key Takeaways:

— For the first launch, the PSLV-N1 will carry on-board earth observation satellite EOS-10.

— Initially, the mission was scheduled for the first quarter of 2025. According to sources, at least one mission with the privately manufactured PSLV would have been possible this year itself, however, it got delayed as the satellite it is to carry was not ready.

— The Indian Space Research Organisation had called for commercialisation of its workhorse launch vehicle PSLV in 2022, making it the first vehicle to undergo the process after the space sector was opened up to private players.

— While the contract awarded to the HAL and L&T consortium calls for manufacturing five launch vehicles for the space agency, there may be a possibility of more in the future.

— “This is different from the SSLV model about which ISRO was very clear upfront about the companies having to produce the launch vehicle, sell the launches from day 1. It was on the company to see the potential demand and cater to it,” he said.

— The SSLV technology was transferred to HAL, which is also a part of the PSLV consortium.

Do You Know:

— Satellites don't go into space on their own. They have to be carried there by launch vehicles, or rockets, like the PSLV. The rockets have powerful propulsion systems that generate the huge amount of energy required to lift heavy objects like satellites into space, overcoming the gravitational pull of the earth.

— The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is the third generation of Indian satellite launch vehicles. first used in 1994. More than 50 successful PSLV launches have taken place to date. It has also been called “the workhorse of ISRO” for consistently delivering various satellites into low earth orbits (less than 2,000 km in altitude) with a high success rate.

— [Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicles \(GSLVs\)](#) have been instrumental in launching communication satellites in the geosynchronous transfer orbit. According to the European Space

Agency (ESA), telecommunications satellites are usually placed in geostationary Earth orbit (GEO). It is a circular orbit 35,786 kilometres above Earth's equator.

— The LVM3, formerly GSLV Mk-3, is ISRO's most powerful rocket. It is capable of carrying up to 8,000 kg to low Earth orbit and 4,000 kg to geosynchronous orbit.

— LVM3 uses a combination of solid, liquid, and cryogenic engines and has already launched key missions like [Chandrayaan-2](#), Chandrayaan-3, and OneWeb satellites. For this mission, the targeted orbit was lower (around 29,970 km at its highest point) to accommodate the heavier satellite.

— ISRO modified the rocket to increase its payload capability by 10 per cent compared to the previous LVM3 launch (LVM3-M4) carrying the Chandrayaan 3. The vehicle has been dubbed 'Bahubali' for its weight capacity. The vehicle's cryogenic upper stage was upgraded from the C25 (carrying 28,000 kg fuel and generating 20 tonnes thrust) to a more powerful C32 stage (carrying 32,000 kg of fuel and producing 22-tonne thrust).

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(3) With reference to India's satellite launch vehicles, consider the following statements : (UPSC CSE 2018)

1. PSLVs launch the satellites useful for Earth resources monitoring whereas GSLVs are designed mainly to launch communication satellites.
2. Satellites launched by PSLV appear to remain permanently fixed in the same position in the sky, as viewed from a particular location on Earth.
3. GSLV Mk III is a four-staged launch vehicle with the first and third stages using solid rocket motors; and the second and fourth stages using liquid rocket engines.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 2 only

(d) 3 only

Today's world needs new UN and global order, says Rajnath Singh

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Important International institutions, agencies and for-
their structure, mandate

What's the ongoing story: UNITED NATIONS could have played a “much stronger” role in global conflicts such as Israel-Hamas and Ukraine-Russia, and in humanitarian crises unfolding in Sudan, Defence Minister [Rajnath Singh](#) said Friday, while stressing that today's world needs a new UN and international order.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What are the challenges facing the United Nations?
- What are the concerns raised by India about the UN?
- Know the history of formation and significance of the UN?
- What are the challenges posed by the developing geopolitical order?
- What role can India play in driving UN reforms?

Key Takeaways:

- He was addressing the 26th International Conference of Chief Justices of the World (ICCJW) in his parliamentary constituency [Lucknow](#).
- Singh said that today, conflicts are ongoing in several parts of the world — the Israel-Hamas conflict, the Ukraine-Russia war and humanitarian crises unfolding in Sudan and many regions of Africa. “Amid all this, we could have expected to see a much stronger role of the United Nations. We are not seeing that, but we could have,” he said.

— Singh asserted that this does not mean any lack of intent on the part of the UN; rather, it stems from the complexities of global politics, the influence exerted by major powers, and the slow pace of institutional processes.

— “This situation can change only when we bring the United Nations back to its core objectives — peace, justice, and equal representation — as originally envisioned,” he said. “I firmly believe that today’s new world requires a new United Nations.” He, however, clarified also that by “new United Nations” he does not mean creating a fresh institution, but revitalising the existing body.

Do You Know:

— The United Nations (UN) came into existence on 24 October 1945, after being ratified by 51 nations, which included five permanent members or P5 (France, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the UK and the US) and 46 other signatories. The first meeting of the General Assembly took place on January 10, 1946. At present, 193 countries are members of the United Nations.

— The UNSC is composed of 15 members: five permanent members — China, France, Russian Federation, the United States, and the United Kingdom — and 10 non-permanent members who are elected by the General Assembly. The non-permanent members are elected for **two-year terms** — so every year, the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members out of the total 10.

— From G20 countries pledging to reform the United Nations Security Council through a transformative reform that aligns it with the realities and demands of the 21st century to BRICS nations calling for making global governance more inclusive by reforming the major multilateral institutions such as the UN Security Council.

— The United Nations’ inability to mitigate conflicts in which the interests of the P5 are involved presents one of the biggest limitations of the UNSC as it is no longer representing the current global realities, with limited representation of countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the Security Council.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(4) With reference to the “United Nations Credentials Committee”, consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2022)

1. It is a committee set up by the UN Security Council and works under its supervision.
2. It traditionally meets in March, June and September every year
3. It assesses the credentials of all UN members before submitting a report to the General Assembly for approval.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (2022)

- (a) 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1 and 2

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UPSC CSE 2015)

How India's agri exports posted impressive growth

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation, of resources, growth, development and employment.

What's the ongoing story: India's agricultural exports are growing at a faster pace than overall merchandise exports. Government data shows the value of farm produce exports in April-September 2025, at \$25.9 billion, to have registered an 8.8% jump over the \$23.8 billion for the corresponding six months of 2024.

Key Points to Ponder:

— What are the major agricultural exports from India?

- What are the major agricultural items imported by India?
- What is the food price index?
- What is its purpose?
- What is the impact of the US tariff on the Indian agricultural sector?
- What are the challenges facing the agricultural sector?
- Know about the important schemes related to the agricultural sector

Key Takeaways:

- That's more than the 2.9% growth of the country's total goods exports, from \$213.7 billion in April-September 2024 to \$219.9 billion in April-September 2025.
- During the 2024-25 financial year (April-March), too, India's farm exports grew by 6.4% (from \$48.8 billion to \$52 billion), as against the measly 0.1% rise for all merchandise exports (from \$437.1 billion to \$437.7 billion).
- The export growth this fiscal has been powered by non-basmati rice, buffalo meat, marine products, coffee, and fruits & vegetables.
- The US accounted for \$2.7 billion or 36.2% of India's marine products exports of \$7.4 billion in 2024-25. Given that, one would have expected the over-58% effective tariff levied by the US President [Donald Trump](#)'s administration to have hugely impacted Indian seafood exports.
- However, the data for April-September 2025 over April-September 2024 points to an increase in exports (from \$3.4 billion to \$4 billion), despite a 0.4% dip to the US (to \$1.3 billion). Indian seafood exporters have seemingly absorbed the Trump tariff shock by ramping up shipments to markets such as China, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, European Union and Canada.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index plunged from an average of 119.1 points in 2013-14 to 90 points in 2015-16. The index – a weighted average of world prices of a basket of food commodities over a base period value (in this case, taken at 100 for 2014-16) – stayed at below 100 points till 2019-20, and then soared to 102.4, 133.1 and 140.6 points in the following three fiscals.

— As the FAO index has come down from those highs, it has been reflected in India's agriculture exports falling to \$48.8 billion in 2023-24 and \$52 billion in 2024-25. Some of that has also been a result of export clampdowns – on a host of produce, from wheat, rice and sugar to onions and de-oiled rice bran – by the Narendra Modi government as part of its inflation-containment policy measures.

— As for the Trump tariffs, the 26.9%, 45.1% and 17.8% drop in exports of marine products, spices and basmati rice respectively to the US in September is proof of their starting to bite. On the positive side, there are indications of a trade deal between India and the US materialising before the year end, even as Washington has apparently softened its earlier confrontational stance.

— Like with exports, India's farm produce imports have posted higher year-on-year growth during April-September 2025 (5.9%, from \$18.4 billion to \$19.5 billion), compared to overall imports (4.5%, from \$358.9 billion to \$375 billion).

— But unlike exports, which are well diversified, India's import basket is quite narrow and limited to a few commodities (table 2). At No. 1 position is vegetable oils, the imports of which have risen by 13.5% in April-September this fiscal and are poised to close in on the \$20.8 billion high of 2022-23.

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Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

Explain the factors influencing the decision of the farmers on the selection of high value crops in India. (UPSC CSE 2025)

Elaborate the scope and significance of supply chain management of agricultural commodities in India. (UPSC CSE 2025)

ALSO IN NEWS

As US officials arrive in Ukraine to discuss ending war, peace plan may ask Kyiv to cede territory and trim forces

A US peace plan under discussion with Russia may require Ukraine to give up territory, surrender some weapons and reduce the size of its armed forces, reported *Reuters* citing sources familiar with the matter. The sources said Washington wants Kyiv to accept the main points of the draft framework, which Ukraine did not help prepare.

US President Donald Trump has approved a 28-point plan for peace to end the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, which started in February 2024.

The Telegraph reported that, as per the proposal, Russia would take control of the Donbas region despite Ukraine maintaining legal ownership, with Moscow essentially paying rent for the land.

Donbas would be considered a demilitarised zone and neither Ukraine nor Russia will be allowed to position troops there.

Tejas fighter crashes during air show in Dubai, IAF pilot killed

An Indian Air Force Tejas Mk1 fighter jet crashed during an aerial display Friday at the Dubai Airshow 2025, killing its pilot. The IAF identified the pilot as Wing Commander Namansh Syal.

The IAF has two operational squadrons of the Tejas Mk1, one each at Sulur near Coimbatore and Naliya in Gujarat. This is the second crash of a Tejas aircraft. In March 2024, a Tejas Mk1 aircraft went down near Jaisalmer during a training sortie. Its pilot ejected safely.

PRELIMS ANSWER KEY

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (a)

