



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout**

**29th December 2024**



**CONTEXT:** Six workers were injured in a gas cylinder blast at a snacks manufacturing factory in west Delhi's Najafgarh

## What is Workplace Health & Safety?

- Occupational Safety
- Measures and Regulations - designed to protect workers from hazards
- Creating safe working conditions - prevent injuries, occupational illnesses, and fatalities - Inc. Mental wellbeing
- Includes training, safety protocols, compliance with standards

## Current Status

- Workplace accidents - notably high - construction, mining, and manufacturing - ILO, 2022 ~48k
- Sectoral Gaps - Lack of structured safety measures
- Economic Costs - Impact productivity - significant economic costs - ILO - unsafe working conditions - 4% of GDP

**Importance :** Worker Welfare and Rights; Global Compliance and Competitiveness

## Issues & Challenges in Occupational Safety

- **High Informal Sector Presence** - 90% - without consistent regulatory oversight, limited safety measures
- **Lack of Awareness and Training** - poor risk assessment and accident prevention
- **Inadequate Infrastructure and Equipment** - lack safety equipment or modern safety technologies
- **Understaffed and Underfunded Regulatory Bodies** - fail to effectively monitor and enforce safety standards

- **Fragmented Legislation and Weak Enforcement** - ineffective due to poor implementation and enforcement
- **Sector-Specific Hazards**
  - **Construction:** falls, electrical mishaps, machinery-related injuries.
  - **Mining:** exposure to toxic gases, the risk of mine collapses, inadequate emergency measures.
  - **Manufacturing:** chemical exposure, burns, machine-related injuries.

## Government Laws, Schemes & Initiatives

### Key Legislations:

- Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code 2020
- Factories Act, 1948
- Mines Act, 1952
- Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996
- Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948

### Schemes and Initiatives:

- National Policy on Safety, Health, and Environment at Workplace, 2009)
- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
- Skill Development Programs
- Employee State Insurance Scheme



# Workplace Health & Safety

29th December, 2024

**CONTEXT:** Six workers were injured in a gas cylinder blast at a snacks manufacturing factory in west Delhi's Najafgarh

## Way Forward

- **Strengthen Regulatory Framework-** Simplify and strengthen occupational safety - fully implementing OSHWC 2020 - cover both formal and informal sectors.
- **Enhanced Training and Awareness Programs-** safety protocols, hazard identification and emergency preparedness

## Mains Practise Question:

*"Discuss the current status of workplace health & safety in India, highlighting the key issues and challenges faced by workers across various sectors. Analyze the effectiveness of existing government laws, policies, and initiatives aimed at ensuring worker safety and well-being. Suggest a comprehensive way forward to strengthen occupational safety standards in India."  
(15 Marks, 250 words)*

- **Increase Safety Inspections and Monitoring-** hiring and training more safety inspectors- Esp. in high-risk sectors
- **Technology Adoption-** AI-powered safety monitoring, real-time safety alerts and automation for high-risk tasks.
- **Promote Incentives for Safety Compliance-** tax breaks or certifications
- **Extend Social Security and Insurance Coverage -** like PMSBY to include informal sector workers and provide social security
- **International Collaboration-** like the ILO for technical assistance, training programs and developing guidelines



# 'Freedom of Religion Act'

29th December, 2024

**CONTEXT:** Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh announced that the Govt. is framing rules for the implementation of 'Freedom of Religion Act' which prohibits religious conversions 'by use of force or inducement or fraudulent means'

## What are Anti-Conversion Laws?

- Legislative measures - preventing or prohibiting religious conversions
- Aim to prevent forced or induced conversions

**Union Law Ministry** - 2015 - Parliament  
- 'Freedom of Religion' statutes

## How Anti-Conversion laws violate Rights?

- Article 25
- Article 19(1)(a)
- Right to Privacy
- Article 14
- Right to Dignity
- Alleged suppression of Minority

## Freedom of Religion Act:

- Supreme Court in **S.Pushpa Bai Case**

## History of Anti-Conversion Laws:

## Supreme Court's Views:

- Rev. Stanislaus v. State of MP, 1977
- Hadiya v. Ashokan K.M
- K.S. Puttaswamy Case
- Lata Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh - 'Stringent Punishment'
- Sarla Mudgal vs. Union of India - Polygamy

## Way forward:

- Balance - Individual's right & Malafide Conversions

## Mains Practise Question:

*"The subject matter of Anti-Conversion laws by different states in India is fraught with various debates.' Elaborate."*

(15 Marks, 250 words)



Pre-  
independence

- Introduced by Hindu Princely states during the 1930s and 1940s to preserve their religious identity from the influence of the Christian missionaries
- Example includes: Raigarh State Conversion Act 1936, the Patna Freedom of Religion Act of 1942, the Udaipur State Anti Conversion Act 1946 etc.



Failed  
attempts at  
national level

- 1954: Indian Conversion (Regulation and Registration) Bill was introduced
- 1960: Backward Communities (Religious Protection) Bill was introduced
- 1979: freedom of religion bill
- However, they failed due to lack of parliamentary support.



Current  
stand

- In 2015, the Law Ministry said that matter is "purely a state subject" and legislating such a law by Parliament would not be in accordance with the tenets of the Constitution.
- This means anti-conversion laws are completely in the domain of the states.



# The Four Labour Codes

29th December, 2024

**Syllabus:** GS 3: Indian Economy

**Newspaper:** Indian Express **Page No:** 15

- As of now, **the four labor codes have not been fully implemented in India**, although they have been passed by Parliament and received Presidential assent.
- These codes **aim to consolidate and simplify the existing numerous labor laws** into four comprehensive codes.
- The government has framed the rules for these codes, but their implementation is pending because **several states are yet to finalize and notify their respective rules**, as labor is a **Concurrent List** subject.

## The Four Labor Codes:

1. **Code on Wages, 2019:** Deals with minimum wages, timely payment of wages, and removes complexities in wage definitions.
2. **Industrial Relations Code, 2020:** Covers industrial disputes, trade unions, and conditions for layoffs, retrenchment, and strikes.
3. **Code on Social Security, 2020:** Extends social security benefits to all workers, including gig and platform workers.
4. **Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code, 2020:** Focuses on workplace safety, health, and welfare measures for workers.

ALL 36 states and Union territories (UTs) are expected to complete "harmonisation and pre-publication" of draft rules under the four labour codes by March 31, 2025, a release by the Labour Ministry said on Saturday.

So far, barring five states and UTs, all others have pre-published the rules, setting the stage for the much-awaited rollout of the four codes — Code on Wages, Code on Social Security, Code on Industrial Relations, and Code on Occupational Health & Safety — by next year. The Labour Ministry has been consistently working for harmonisation of rules under the four codes across the states, said

## Reasons for Delay:

1. **Pending Rules from States:** Labor being a concurrent subject requires states to draft and notify rules, which many have yet to do.
2. **Stakeholder Concerns:** Trade unions, employers, and workers have raised concerns over various provisions, calling for further consultations.
3. **Economic and Political Factors:** Implementation has been delayed due to apprehensions about its impact on the economy and employment, especially post-COVID-19 recovery.



## The Four Labour Codes

29th December, 2024

**Syllabus:** GS 3: Indian Economy

**Newspaper:** Indian Express **Page No:** 15

Labour laws fall under the concurrent list of the Constitution. Hence, both the Centre and states are empowered to make rules. But in the event of a conflict between state and central laws, central legislation generally takes precedence, unless the state's law has obtained presidential assent.

The four labour codes are a judicious combination of reforms aimed at easing labour market rigidities, and reinforcing workers' rights and welfare. As many as 44 labour related Acts were consolidated into the four codes in 2019-2020 with the objective of reinforcing trade and investment, facilitating ease of doing business and easing compliance. Several minor offences were decriminalised via the codes, while skill development and dispute resolution have been accorded due priority. Meanwhile, the ministry also is working towards development of a framework for social security coverage to gig and platform workers, said the release.

Extensive stakeholder consultations were conducted with aggregators, knowledge partners,

platform worker organisations, and state/UTs this year to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the Social Security Code, 2020, and to develop collaborative approaches for a social security framework tailored to gig and platform workers, it said.

Also, a collaborative study is being undertaken with the International Labour Organization to comprehensively assess various factors related to platform workers.

"These include the number of platform workers, prevalent business models, potential schemes, financial implications (such as aggregator turnover and contributions), and a roadmap for implementing a social security scheme for platform workers," the release said. **FE**



29th December, 2024

**Syllabus: GS 3: Environment**

**Newspaper: Indian Express Page No: 11**

**NIKHIL GHANEKAR**

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 28

THE NATIONAL Green Tribunal's (NGT's) principal bench has ordered the Uttar Pradesh government and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to ensure no untreated sewage is discharged into the Ganga and the Yamuna during the Mahakumbh Mela 2025 so that no pilgrim suffer. This comes as the generation of sewage is esti-

mated to increase by 10% during the event in Prayagraj.

The tribunal also said that since the Magh Mela will continue for 45 days until the end of February, the authorities have to make sure that the river water is of "drinking water/bathing water quality" at all times.

The NGT bench chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel passed the order earlier this week while disposing of a petition, which had raised griev-

ances about the discharge of untreated sewage from drains into the Ganga, in Prayagraj.

The Mahakumbh Mela will begin in Prayagraj on January 13 and end on February 26.

"During the Mahakumbh, in order to have a better monitoring mechanism and to ensure that on account of the unwanted flow of untreated sewage in river Ganga and Yamuna, the pilgrims who come for holy bath may not suffer, the CPCB and UPPCB (Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control

Board) will increase their monitoring points and frequency of monitoring on river Ganga and Yamuna," the order stated.

The order said that the CPCB and the UPPCB have to collect water samples from Ganga and Yamuna rivers at least twice a week from the monitoring points and display analysis reports on their website. The authorities have also been directed to take steps for effective disposal of the sludge generated in the sewage treatment plants and deposited

## **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):**

- **Established:** 1974, under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- **Governing Legislation:**
  - Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
  - Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- **Functions:**
  - Acts as a statutory organization under the **MoEFCC**.
  - Advises the Central Government on pollution-related matters.
  - Coordinates activities of SPCBs.
  - Monitors pollution levels (air, water, and soil) across India.

- Develops and enforces environmental standards, such as effluent and emission norms.
- Conducts environmental research and provides technical assistance.
- Manages the **National AQI**.

## **Key Initiatives:**

- **NAAQM Programme.**
- **NCAP.**
- Effluent monitoring for industries discharging into rivers and water bodies.

## **Challenges:**

- Inadequate infrastructure for real-time monitoring.
- Limited enforcement capacity against violations.
- Coordination issues with SPCBs.



29th December, 2024

**Syllabus: GS 3: Environment**

**Newspaper: Indian Express Page No: 11**

### National Green Tribunal (NGT):

- **Governing Legislation: National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.**
- **Objective:** To provide a specialized judicial body for the expeditious disposal of cases related to environmental protection and conservation.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi; regional benches in Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, and Chennai.

### Functions:

- **Handles cases related to:**
  - Environmental protection.
  - Conservation of forests.
  - Enforcement of any legal right related to the environment.
  - Issues concerning pollution and biodiversity.
- **Ensures compliance with environmental laws such as:**
  - The Water Act, 1974.
  - The Air Act, 1981.
  - The Environment Protection Act, 1986.
  - Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- Adjudicates cases on a **principle of sustainable development** and **polluter pays**.
- Provides relief, compensation, and restitution of damaged property or the environment.

### Powers:

- NGT is not bound by the **Civil Procedure Code** but follows principles of **natural justice**.
- Has powers equivalent to a civil court.
- Decisions are binding and can only be challenged in the **Supreme Court**.

### Achievements:

- Played a critical role in banning illegal sand mining.
- Directed actions to improve air quality in Delhi-NCR.
- Imposed penalties on industries for non-compliance with pollution norms.

### Challenges:

- Lack of sufficient financial and infrastructural resources.
- Backlog of cases due to an increasing caseload.
- Limited jurisdiction in some environmental matters.





29th December, 2024

**Syllabus:** GS 1: Ancient History, Culture

**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page No:** 9

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, along with Minister of Labour and Employment and Youth Affairs Mansukh Mandaviya and Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, held a joint review meeting to assess the progress of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) here on Saturday.

Under the Sagarmala Programme, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways is developing the NMHC at Lothal in Gujarat. This world-class facility will showcase India's maritime heritage from ancient to modern times, adopting an "edutainment" approach.

Lothal, a prominent city of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation dating back to 2400 BCE, holds historical significance for its advanced dockyard, thriving trade, and renowned bead-making industry. Artifacts such as seals, tools, and pottery unearthed by archaeologists reveal a rich cultural and economic his-

tory, making it a pivotal site of the Harappan civilisation.

said: "NMHC project will boost tourism, provide a platform for maritime education, and foster collaboration between India's maritime community and the global industry."

He further said, "This project will create employment, foster skill development, and empower the youth of Gujarat."

The NMHC is poised to become a cornerstone of India's maritime legacy, harmonising cultural and historical significance with economic and educational development.



29th December, 2024

**Syllabus:** GS 2 : Statutory Bodies

**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page No:** 4

After taking *suo motu* cognisance of the sexual assault on a student on the Anna University campus and issuing a notice to the Tamil Nadu police seeking an explanation on the steps taken in the arrest of the accused in the case, the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Saturday constituted a fact-finding committee to probe the incident.

### National Commission for Women (NCW):

- **Established:** January 31, 1992.
- **Governing Legislation:** National Commission for Women Act, 1990.
- **Objective:** To safeguard and promote the rights and interests of women in India.

### Composition:

- **Chairperson:** Appointed by the Central Government, a person of eminence committed to women's causes.
- **Members:** Five members, including a member secretary. At least one member must belong to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe.

### Functions:

- **Policy Advice:**
  - Advises the government on women-related policies and legislative measures.
- **Legal Aid:**
  - Reviews constitutional and legal safeguards for women.
  - Recommends amendments to laws that discriminate against women.
- **Inquiry and Investigation:**
  - Investigates complaints of violation of women's rights.
  - Takes suo moto
- **Awareness and Research:**
  - Promotes research, publications, and awareness campaigns for gender equality.
- **Coordination:**
  - Works with State Commissions for Women to ensure a uniform response to gender issues.
- **Special Studies:**
  - Conducts studies on gender-related issues like trafficking, workplace harassment, and health.



29th December, 2024

**Syllabus: GS 2: Statutory Bodies**

**Newspaper: The Hindu Page No: 4**

**Achievements:**

- Drafted recommendations for laws such as:
  - The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
  - Amendments to the Criminal Law related to sexual harassment and rape.
- Advocated for women's reservation in Parliament and State Assemblies.
- Played a pivotal role in spreading awareness about women's rights.

**Challenges:**

- **Limited Powers:**
  - Acts as a recommendatory body with no enforcement authority.
- **Resource Constraints:**
  - Faces challenges due to inadequate funding and staffing.

● **Overlapping Jurisdiction:**

- Lack of clarity in coordination with state-level women commissions.

**Way Forward:**

- Empower NCW with judicial and punitive authority.
- Increase budgetary allocation and infrastructure support.
- Promote stronger collaboration with state and local bodies to address grassroots issues.



29th December, 2024

**Syllabus:** GS 2: Important International Institutions

**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page No:** 9

### Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

Union Ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw, C.R. Patil, Chirag Paswan, K. Rammohan Naidu and Jayant Chaudhary, along with Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis, N. Chandrababu Naidu and A Revanth Reddy, will join hundreds of government and business leaders from across the globe in the Swiss ski resort town of Davos for the World Economic Forum annual meeting in February.

Mr. Naidu will be joined by his son and Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh, while Karnataka's Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Tamil Nadu Minis-



The summit's main theme this time will be 'Collaboration for the intelligent age'.

ter T.R.B. Rajaa and Uttar Pradesh Minister Suresh Khanna will be there for the five-day annual congregation of the world's rich and powerful, starting January 20.

Over 50 Presidents and Prime Ministers from across the world, and top

officials of international organisations such as the United Nations, IMF, World Bank, Interpol, NATO, European Central Bank and WTO are also expected to be in Davos for the WEF Annual Meeting 2025.

Senior Ministers from Pakistan and Bangladesh, including Bangladesh Government's Chief Adviser and head of the interim government Muhammad Yunus, would be present.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had attended the meeting in the past, but there is no official word so far about his participation in the summit, for which the main theme this time will be 'Collaboration for the intelligent age'.

## World Economic Forum (WEF) Davos Summit:

The **WEF Annual Meeting**, commonly referred to as the **Davos Summit**, is a high-profile event where global leaders from politics, business, academia, and civil society gather to discuss pressing global issues and collaborate on solutions.

### Key Details:

**Organizer:** The World Economic Forum, a Switzerland-based non-profit organization founded in **1971 by Klaus Schwab**.

- **Location:**  
The summit is held annually in **Davos**, a mountain resort in the Swiss Alps

- **Timing:**  
Typically takes place in **January** every year, although it has occasionally been rescheduled (e.g., due to the COVID-19 pandemic).
- **Participants:**
  - Heads of State and Government
  - CEOs of major corporations
  - Leaders of international organizations (e.g., UN, IMF, WTO)
  - Academics and thought leaders
  - Representatives of civil society, media, and cultural sectors



**Syllabus: GS 2: Important International Institutions**

**Newspaper: The Hindu Page No: 9**

- **Theme:**  
Each year, the summit has a specific theme addressing contemporary global challenges (e.g., sustainability, economic inequality, technology).

### **Importance:**

- **Global Dialogue:**  
Provides a platform for discussing and shaping global, regional, and industry agendas.
- **Economic Cooperation:**  
Facilitates partnerships between governments, private sector entities, and international organizations.
- **Innovation and Sustainability:**  
Highlights emerging technologies and solutions for issues like climate change, inequality, and economic recovery.

- **Global Goals:**  
Promotes collaboration toward achieving SDGs.

### **Criticism:**

- **Elitism:**  
The forum is often criticized for being exclusive and catering primarily to the global elite.
- **Lack of Actionable Outcomes:**  
While it generates ideas and discussions, critics argue it lacks tangible, enforceable commitments.



29th December, 2024

**Q1. Consider the following initiatives by the Government of India:**

1. Occupational Safety Code 2020
2. Factories Act 1948
3. Mines Act 1952
4. Employees State Insurance Act 1948

**How many of the above-given initiative/s deal with Workplace Health & Safety?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

**Answer: d**

**Q2. The "Anti-Conversion" Laws passed by several State Governments violate which of the following fundamental rights?**

1. Freedom of Religion under Article 25
2. Freedom of Speech & Expression under Article 19
3. Right to Equality under Article 14

**Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?**

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 and 3 Only
- c) 1 and 3 Only
- d) All of the above

**Answer: d**

**Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):**

1. It was established under the Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act 1981.
2. It functions as a statutory organisation under the Ministry of Environment.
3. It manages the National Air Quality Index.

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

**Answer: b**

**Q4. Consider the following statements regarding Lothal recently seen in the news:**

1. The Government of India is building the National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal.
2. It is an Indus Valley Civilisation site famous for the presence of a Dockyard & bead-making industry.

**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

**Answer: c**

**Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the National Commission for Women:**

1. It is a constitutional body.
2. The chairperson of the commission is appointed by the President of India.
3. It consists of 5 members of which at least one member shall belong to a Scheduled caste or Scheduled tribe.

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

**Answer: a**





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