CRACKTARGET

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Yearbook 2026

Ideas. Institutions. Developments.

An integrated reference for UPSC examinations

32 CHAPTERS · 800 EXPLAINED QUESTIONS

NOVEMBER 2026 EDITION



A NOTE TO THE READER

Knowledge that connects.

Understand the news.
Recognise the concept.
Apply it in the examination.

Current affairs becomes useful when an event is connected to its wider meaning. A policy announcement matters because of the institution behind it, the problem it addresses and the people it affects. A scientific milestone becomes easier to remember when its underlying idea is clear.

This Yearbook brings those connections together. Labour and social security receive sustained attention, alongside the economy, governance, international affairs, science, defence and the environment. Major developments are supported by background explanations, comparison tables and questions designed to turn reading into understanding.

Read a topic in full before reducing it to a fact. Identify what changed, why it matters and what remains distinct: an announcement and an outcome, a target and an achievement, a statistic and its denominator. These habits make revision more reliable and reasoning more precise.

32	800	8
SUBJECT CHAPTERS	EXPLAINED MCQs	THEMATIC PARTS

NOVEMBER 2026 EDITION

Coverage begins in December 2025. The editorial closing date is 26 November 2026; individual statistics and legal developments retain their stated reference dates. Official sources accompany the chapters. For continuing reading, visit the CrackTarget Current Affairs Hub.

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FROM FIRST READING TO FINAL REVISION

A clear route through the book.

Build understanding by subject. Return through questions and recall.

01–06

Labour & social security

Codes, employment, EPFO, ESIC and the ILO.

07–11

Economy & finance

Survey, Budget, banking and productive sectors.

12–15

Polity & governance

Constitution, legislation, judgments and institutions.

16–19

Schemes & society

Public services, human development and inclusion.

20–23

India & the world

Diplomacy, organisations, agreements and geography.

24–27

Science & defence

Space, emerging technology, medicine and security.

28–30

Environment & resilience

Climate, biodiversity, clean energy and disasters.

31–32

General current affairs

Reports, awards, sport, culture and heritage.

1

Read

Begin with the concept, then study the dated development.

2

Reason

Attempt all 25 questions. Read the explanation, not only the key.

3

Recall

Rebuild the tables from memory and revisit your errors.

THE COMPLETE REFERENCE

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PART I • CHAPTER 01

Four Labour Codes

Implementation, Rules and Regulatory Developments

1.1 Why this chapter matters

India's four Labour Codes came into effect on **21 November 2025**. For this Yearbook, the most important developments are the draft rules, the 2026 Industrial Relations amendment, the final Central Rules and their implementation. [1–7]

Learning objectives

Understand the reform timeline, the 29-to-four consolidation, wage computation, industrial relations thresholds, social security coverage, occupational safety obligations and implementation challenges.

Background and purpose

In 2002, the Second National Commission on Labour recommended grouping labour laws by subject. The reform aims to remove repeated definitions, simplify legal procedures and protect workers in new forms of employment. Parliament enacted the wage Code in 2019 and the remaining three Codes in 2020.

The aim is not just to reduce the number of laws. Workers need to know and use their rights, employers need clear rules, and disputes must be resolved effectively, especially for informal and migrant workers.

PYQ perspective

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 (GS III) asked candidates to assess the merits and limitations of the four Codes and their implementation progress. [12] Recruitment-test preparation should additionally emphasise statutory definitions, authorities, thresholds, time limits and older-law comparisons. The MCQs here are original practice questions, not claimed PYQs.

Reading strategy

Study the timeline first. Learn which Code regulates each issue. Then memorise important thresholds and practise the 25 questions at the end.

1.2 Reform timeline

Date	Development
2002	Second National Commission on Labour report
8 Aug 2019	Code on Wages enacted
28 Sep 2020	Remaining three Codes received assent
21 Nov 2025	Four Codes brought into effect
30 Dec 2025	Draft Central Rules published for consultation
16 Feb 2026	Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Act received assent
8 May 2026	Final Central Rules notified
28 Sep 2026	Shram Samvad nationwide outreach launched
25 Oct 2026	Ministry consolidated FAQ dated as of this day
21–22 Nov 2026	Chintan Shivir at Gandhinagar marked one year of implementation

Constitutional basis

The Seventh Schedule places trade unions and labour disputes (Concurrent List Entry 22), social security and employment (Entry 23), and labour welfare (Entry 24) in the Concurrent List, so both Parliament and State Legislatures can make laws on these matters. Regulation of labour and safety in mines and oilfields is separately addressed by Union List Entry 55.

Article 19(1)(c) protects association; Articles 23 and 24 address forced labour and specified child employment. Articles 39(d), 41, 42, 43 and 43A guide equal pay, public assistance, humane conditions and maternity relief, living wages, and worker participation in management.

Coverage through 24 November 2026. Read each figure with its stated reference date.

The 29-to-four consolidation

1.3 Code on Wages, 2019

Act 29 of 2019 • Four enactments • Repeal: section 69

Earlier enactment	Year
Payment of Wages Act	1936
Minimum Wages Act	1948
Payment of Bonus Act	1965
Equal Remuneration Act	1976

Industrial Relations Code, 2020

Act 35 of 2020 • Three enactments • Section 104

Earlier enactment	Year
Trade Unions Act	1926
Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act	1946
Industrial Disputes Act	1947

Code on Social Security, 2020

Act 36 of 2020 • Nine enactments • Section 164

Earlier enactment	Year
Employees' Compensation Act	1923
Employees' State Insurance Act	1948
Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act	1952
Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act	1959
Maternity Benefit Act	1961
Payment of Gratuity Act	1972
Cine-Workers Welfare Fund Act	1981
Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act	1996
Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act	2008

Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

Act 37 of 2020 • Thirteen enactments • Section 143

Earlier enactment	Year
Factories Act	1948
Plantations Labour Act	1951
Mines Act	1952
Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act	1955
Working Journalists (Fixation of Rates of Wages) Act	1958
Motor Transport Workers Act	1961
Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act	1966
Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act	1970
Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Act	1976
Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act	1979
Cine-Workers and Cinema Theatre Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act	1981
Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act	1986
Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act	1996

Remember: 4 + 3 + 9 + 13 = 29.
The construction workers' welfare cess law belongs to Social Security; their employment and service conditions law belongs to Occupational Safety.

Repeal does not automatically erase accrued rights, past actions or saved subordinate instruments. Always read the relevant repeal and savings provisions together with commencement notifications. [2–5]

Code on Wages, 2019

1.4 Minimum wages and floor wage

The Code removes the earlier scheduled-employment limitation on minimum wage protection. Section 9 authorises the Central Government to fix floor wages based on living standards, including different floors by geographical area. The appropriate government fixes enforceable minimum wages at or above the applicable floor; an existing higher minimum may not be reduced just because the floor is lower.

Term	Meaning
Floor wage	Central statutory lower benchmark
Minimum wage	Enforceable minimum set by appropriate government
Living wage	Pay supporting decent living conditions
Fair wage	Concept between minimum and living wage
Real wage	Purchasing power of monetary pay

Uniform definition of wages

Section 2(y) includes basic pay, dearness allowance and retaining allowance, where applicable. Specified exclusions are subject to the 50% benchmark (or another notified percentage). Excess excluded payments are added back for statutory wage computation. This is not a command to label half of every salary as basic pay.

Worked illustration
Total relevant remuneration: Rs. 40,000. Basic pay and dearness allowance: Rs. 18,000. Specified excluded payments: Rs. 22,000. Excess over 50%: Rs. 2,000. Statutory wages: Rs. 20,000. Assumes all excluded payments are within the relevant statutory calculation.

Distinguish the statutory wage base from gross salary, cost to company and take-home pay. The practical effect varies with the nature of remuneration and the applicable social security provisions.

Payment and authorised deductions

Wage period	Ordinary deadline (s.17)
Daily	End of shift
Weekly	Last working day before weekly holiday
Fortnightly	Second day after fortnight ends
Monthly	Seventh day of succeeding month
Specified separation cases	Within two working days

Section 16 limits the wage period to one month. Section 18 generally caps authorised deductions at 50% of wages for the period. Section 3 prohibits gender-based wage discrimination for same or similar work, subject to its terms.

Bonus and other numerical provisions

Provision	General rule
Minimum bonus	8.33% or Rs. 100, whichever is higher, subject to eligibility
Maximum bonus	20%
Overtime (s.14)	At least twice normal wage rate
Minimum wage review	Ordinarily not exceeding five years

2026 Central Rules

G.S.R. 343(E), dated **8 May 2026**, sets the final Central-sphere procedures. Daily minimum rates are converted to hourly rates by division by eight and to monthly rates by multiplication by 26, subject to the prescribed rounding. The cost-of-living component is computed twice a year for relevant variable dearness allowance revision. [6]

The final Rules leave certain wage-fixation criteria to separate orders. Do not assume that detailed consumption norms in draft texts have automatically become binding.

Exam distinction
A floor-wage enabling provision, a notified numerical floor, and a notified minimum wage are three distinct matters. Check the relevant notification before quoting an amount.

Industrial Relations Code, 2020

1.5 Industrial relations mechanisms

The Code deals with trade unions, standing orders and industrial disputes. Disputes may be dealt with at the workplace, through conciliation (helping the parties reach an agreement), or by tribunals. [3]

Mechanism	Threshold / function
Grievance Redressal Committee (s.4)	20 or more workers
Works Committee (s.3)	100 or more workers, if government requires
Standing orders (s.28)	Generally 300 or more workers
Sole negotiating union (s.14)	51% or more support when multiple unions exist
Negotiating council (s.14)	At least 20% support for representation where applicable
Special prior-permission regime (s.77)	Generally 300 or more workers in specified establishments; higher number may be notified

The prior-permission regime concerns specified lay-off, retrenchment and closure provisions. A lower number of workers does not remove every other legal obligation concerning retrenchment or notice.

Fixed-term employment

A fixed-term worker is engaged under a written contract for a specified period. The Code provides comparable fixed-term and permanent workers with equal treatment in specified employment conditions and proportionate statutory benefits. The fixed-term framework provides for gratuity after one year of service; the Social Security Code also addresses pro-rata gratuity on expiry of fixed-term employment.

Worker re-skilling fund

Section 83 provides for an employer contribution ordinarily equivalent to **15 days** of last-drawn wages per retrenched worker, or another notified number of days. The fund supports workers affected by retrenchment.

Strikes and lockouts

Section 62 requires notice within **60 days** before a proposed strike or lockout and prohibits commencement within **14 days** after notice. Restrictions also apply during specified conciliation and adjudication periods and while certain settlements or awards operate. The Code is not a blanket ban on strikes.

Application example
Workers give valid notice today and propose to strike seven days later. Even if no other bar applies, the proposed date fails the statutory 14-day waiting requirement.

1.6 Industrial Relations amendment

Act 1 of 2026 • Assent: 16 February 2026

The amendment replaces section 104(1) and inserts section 104(1A). It makes repeal of the three earlier enactments explicit from the appointed commencement date and allows existing tribunals and statutory authorities to continue until the new bodies under the Code begin functioning. The amendment is deemed effective from **21 November 2025**. [7]

This ensures continuity: a transition to new institutions should not leave workers or employers without a functioning forum for dispute resolution.

Central Rules of May 2026

G.S.R. 342(E) prescribes procedures for committees, negotiations, industrial disputes and re-skilling fund administration. Remember the difference between the Code's rights and obligations from the procedural forms and timelines laid down by the Rules. [6]

Analytical perspective

Negotiation through a recognised union can reduce the number of separate bargaining groups. However, minority representation and the practical ability to organise remain important concerns. Higher regulatory thresholds may improve flexibility for enterprises, while raising concerns about job security and bargaining power.

Code on Social Security, 2020

1.7 What social security protects

Social security helps workers deal with the financial effects of sickness, maternity, disability, employment injury, old age and loss of earning capacity. The Code brings insurance and provident fund schemes, which are financed through contributions, together with provisions for other types of workers. [4]

Institution	Function
Central Board of Trustees, EPF	Administration of EPF-related schemes
ESIC	Employment-linked health and social insurance
National Social Security Board	Functions for unorganised, gig and platform workers
State Unorganised Workers' Social Security Boards	State-level unorganised-worker functions
Building Workers' Welfare Boards	Construction worker welfare

Applicability at a glance

Chapter / scheme	General threshold
EPF	20 or more employees
ESI	10 or more persons; exceptions apply
Gratuity	Specified establishments; shops and establishments generally 10 or more employees
Maternity benefit	Specified establishments; shops and establishments generally 10 or more employees

ESI can also cover a notified hazardous or life-threatening occupation with even one employee. Applicability of a chapter, membership of a scheme and eligibility for a particular benefit are separate legal questions.

Example
An establishment may fall within the scope of the EPF chapter while an individual worker's membership depends on the relevant scheme conditions.

Gig and platform workers

A gig worker works outside the traditional employer–employee relationship. Platform work is an arrangement outside such a relationship in which an online platform connects parties to obtain or provide services or solve specific problems for payment.

The Code enables social security schemes covering such matters as life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old-age protection and crèche support. A legal provision allowing a scheme does not mean that every worker is already entitled to all these benefits.

Aggregator contributions (section 114)

The Code authorises a notified contribution between 1% and 2% of an aggregator's annual turnover, capped at

5% of the amount paid or payable to gig and platform workers. Turnover excludes specified taxes and levies. A notified rate must be distinguished from the statutory range.

Worked illustration
Assume turnover of Rs. 10 crore, worker payments of Rs. 2 crore and a hypothetical notified rate of 2%. The turnover calculation gives Rs. 20 lakh; the worker-payment cap gives Rs. 10 lakh. The contribution cannot exceed Rs. 10 lakh. The rate is illustrative, not a claim about a current notification.

Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026

G.S.R. 344(E) provides the operational framework for registration, social security organisations, records and related procedures. The Code and applicable schemes must be read together when determining eligibility, contribution or benefit amounts. [6]

Policy relevance

Recognition of non-traditional workers is important in a changing labour market. Effective protection nevertheless depends on registration, funding, portability and access to claims. Chapters 2, 3 and 5 will examine EPFO, ESIC and informal-worker developments in detail.

Occupational Safety Code, 2020

1.8 Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions

The Code consolidates workplace safety, working conditions and protection for categories such as contract labour and inter-State migrant workers. Its definitions and specific chapters determine applicability; no single number of workers governs every requirement. [5]

Category	Earlier general threshold → Code
Factory using power	10 → 20 workers
Factory without power	20 → 40 workers
Contract labour	20 → 50 contract workers
Inter-State migrant workers	5 → 10 such workers

The general establishment definition ordinarily uses 10 workers, with special provisions for mines, docks and notified activities. Higher or lower thresholds in particular chapters and notification powers must be checked separately.

Working hours and overtime

Section 25 establishes the daily working-hours framework. The 2026 Central Rules and Ministry FAQ distinguish eight hours per day for daily wagers and 48 hours per week for other workers in the Central sphere. Section 27 requires overtime at twice the ordinary rate; calculation on the daily or weekly basis more favourable to the worker and worker consent are important safeguards.

2026 final-rule update
Rule 69 sets a 144-hour quarterly overtime limit for Central-sphere establishments. State-sphere limits depend on the respective rules. Do not confuse draft-rule figures with the final Central limit. [8]

Annual leave

Section 32 provides for annual leave with wages for eligible workers, ordinarily after 180 days of work in the calendar year, at one day for every 20 days worked (special rules apply to certain categories). Carry-forward and encashment have statutory conditions.

Contract labour and core activities

Section 57 restricts contract labour in core activities, with exceptions including activities normally undertaken through contractors, work not requiring full-time workers for the relevant period, and temporary surges in workload.

Core activity depends on the purpose of the establishment. Security or catering may be support functions for a manufacturing enterprise but can be core functions of a business set up to provide those services.

Responsibility for wages and welfare

A contractor is primarily responsible for wage payment. If the contractor defaults, the principal employer must pay the unpaid wages and may recover the amount. Section 53 places responsibility for specified welfare facilities for contract labour on the principal employer. The 2026 FAQ explains the applicable Central-sphere procedures. [8]

Women and workplace safety

Section 43 allows women to work in all types of establishments and work, subject to consent and prescribed safeguards when working before 6 a.m. or after 7 p.m. Safety obligations, transport where prescribed, and effective grievance mechanisms are essential for meaningful access.

2026 Central Rules

G.S.R. 345(E) provides procedures for registration, appointment letters, occupational health, welfare facilities, inspections and other matters. Free annual health examinations under section 6(1)(c) depend on the class of employees, establishments and age specified by the appropriate government.

July 2026 procedure

For a Central-sphere core-activity dispute, the Ministry FAQ describes a designated authority's recommendation within **60 days** of reference and a Central Government decision within 30 days thereafter. This is distinct from the substantive prohibition and exceptions in section 57. [8]

Implementation in 2026

1.9 Final Central Rules

Rules	Gazette number
Industrial Relations (Central) Rules, 2026	G.S.R. 342(E)
Code on Wages (Central) Rules, 2026	G.S.R. 343(E)
Social Security (Central) Rules, 2026	G.S.R. 344(E)
Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (Central) Rules, 2026	G.S.R. 345(E)

All four notifications are dated 8 May 2026. [6]

How legal instruments differ

Instrument	Role
Act / Code	Primary legislation
Rule	Delegated procedural or substantive detail within statutory authority
Notification	Formal publication of a prescribed legal decision
Scheme	Framework for administration of specified benefits
FAQ	Administrative explanation; not an amendment to law

Inspector-cum-Facilitator

The Codes combine inspection and enforcement with compliance guidance. The official may examine records, inspect establishments and exercise powers assigned under the relevant Code. Compounding is available for specified offences, but not for every offence. It does not remove all criminal liability.

Shram Suvidha supports electronic registration and compliance. SAMADHAN provides an online route for labour grievances and disputes. Technology can improve recordkeeping, but access and timely resolution remain important.

1.10 Recent implementation milestones

28 September 2026 | Shram Samvad The Ministry launched a 90-day district-level awareness and capacity-building campaign spanning 316 districts across all 36 States and Union Territories, focusing particularly on industrial clusters. It aims to help employers, workers and other stakeholders understand the new framework. [9]

3 November 2026 | Railway coordination The Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) held consultations with Railway Board officials on implementation and alignment of digital compliance systems with Ministry platforms. [10]

21–22 November 2026 | Chintan Shivir The Ministry's meeting at Gandhinagar, Gujarat, marked one year since the Codes took effect. It brought Central and State/UT stakeholders together to discuss implementation, employment, EPFO and ESIC reforms and informal-worker protection. [11]

New initiatives launched at the meeting **NCS ONE**: National Career Service Open Network for Employment connects employment platforms; the Occupational Shortage Index helps assess mismatches between labour demand and supply.

e-Shram Livelihood Profile: records livelihood information alongside five protection categories: food, health, life insurance, accident/disability and pension.

Career Lounges: eight were launched virtually as part of the Model Career Centre framework. Two publications on occupations, including green occupations, were also released.

Why it matters for UPSC

The developments link labour legislation with cooperative federalism, labour market information, digital governance and social protection. A campaign or portal launch is not itself a statutory amendment.

Revision & analytical perspective

1.11 Reform outcomes: balanced assessment

Potential benefit	Implementation issue
Broader wage protection	Enforcement and awareness among informal workers

Potential benefit	Implementation issue
Common wage definition	Payroll transition and correct computation
Collective bargaining framework	Minority representation and effective worker voice
Employment flexibility	Job stability and retrenchment safeguards
Gig-worker recognition	Financing, registration and actual benefit access
Women's employment access	Safe workplaces and transport
Digital compliance	Digital divide and data accuracy
Simplified adjudication	Institutional transition and capacity

Mains answer framework

For a question on the merits, limitations and progress of labour reforms, begin with the 29-to-four consolidation and the 2025 commencement. Explain both the expansion of statutory protection and the simplification objectives. Discuss enforcement, coordination between the Centre and States, informal work, collective bargaining and the ability of institutions to carry out their duties. Conclude with the 2026 Rules and the need for effective implementation.

Key principle
A law can create an entitlement or authorise a scheme. Actual protection depends on notified procedures, eligibility, funding, access to services and enforcement.

The four Codes are the foundation of Part I. Subsequent chapters focus on the year's institution-specific developments rather than repeating this legal overview.

1.12 High-value numbers

Number	Recall point
4 / 3 / 9 / 13	Earlier Acts under the respective Codes
50%	General wage exclusion benchmark; authorised deduction ceiling
51% / 20%	Negotiating union / council support
20 / 100	Grievance committee / conditional works committee
300	General standing orders and special prior-permission threshold
14 / 60 days	Strike notice waiting period / notice window
15 days' wages	Ordinary re-skilling fund contribution
20 / 10	General EPF / ESI coverage thresholds
1–2%; cap 5%	Aggregator turnover rate range / worker-payment cap
20 / 40	Factory thresholds with / without power
50 / 10	Contract labour / inter-State migrant worker thresholds
2 times	Overtime remuneration
144 hours	Quarterly overtime limit in Central sphere

Dates to remember

21 Nov 2025: commencement. 30 Dec 2025: draft rules. 16 Feb 2026: IR amendment. **8 May 2026**: final rules. 21–22 Nov 2026: Chintan Shivir.

All thresholds are subject to the scope, conditions and exceptions of the respective legislation. Central Rules do not necessarily apply to State-sphere establishments.

Practice questions | 01–25

01. Which sequence correctly identifies the number of earlier Acts consolidated by the Wages, Industrial Relations, Social Security and Occupational Safety Codes?
(A) 4, 3, 9, 13
(B) 3, 4, 9, 13
(C) 4, 3, 13, 9
(D) 4, 9, 3, 13

02. Consider the following statements about the floor wage:
1. The Central Government fixes it.
2. It may vary by geographical area.
3. A higher existing minimum wage may be reduced solely because the floor is lower.
(A) 1 only
(B) 1 and 2 only
(C) 2 and 3 only
(D) 1, 2 and 3

03. Which is the correct chronological sequence?
(A) Final Rules → commencement → amendment
(B) Commencement → draft Rules → amendment → final Rules
(C) Amendment → draft Rules → commencement
(D) Draft Rules → final Rules → commencement

04. The Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Act, 2026 primarily addresses which provision?
(A) Section 104: repeal and savings
(B) Section 62: strikes
(C) Section 14: negotiating union
(D) Section 83: re-skilling fund

05. With effect from which date is the 2026 Industrial Relations amendment deemed to commence?
(A) 8 May 2026
(B) 1 January 2026
(C) 16 February 2026
(D) 21 November 2025

06. Which earlier enactment belongs to the Social Security Code rather than the Occupational Safety Code?
(A) Factories Act, 1948
(B) Contract Labour Act, 1970
(C) Plantations Labour Act, 1951
(D) Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996

07. Relevant remuneration is Rs. 60,000, of which Rs. 24,000 is basic pay and dearness allowance and Rs. 36,000 is specified excluded payments. Assuming the general 50% rule applies, what are statutory wages?
(A) Rs. 30,000
(B) Rs. 24,000
(C) Rs. 36,000
(D) Rs. 60,000

08. A Central-sphere daily minimum wage is Rs. 624. Under the conversion method in the 2026 Wages Rules, what is the corresponding hourly rate, ignoring rounding?
(A) Rs. 104
(B) Rs. 78
(C) Rs. 96
(D) Rs. 52

09. The general ceiling on authorised wage deductions in a wage period is:
(A) 50%
(B) 33%
(C) 25%
(D) 75%

10. An employee receives wages monthly. Under section 17, when are these ordinarily payable?
(A) Before expiry of the seventh day
(B) By the fifth day
(C) By the third day of the succeeding month
(D) Before expiry of the tenth day

11. Which of the following pairs is correctly matched?
(A) Grievance committee — 10 workers
(B) Prior-permission regime — all establishments
(C) Standing orders — generally 50 workers
(D) Works Committee — 100 workers, where required

12. Three registered unions enjoy 48%, 32% and 20% worker support. Assuming the statutory conditions are satisfied, what follows?
(A) The largest union is sole negotiating union.
(B) No collective bargaining body can be formed.
(C) Only the two largest unions qualify.
(D) A negotiating council is formed with eligible representation.

13. Which statement regarding fixed-term employment is correct?
(A) It necessarily creates permanent employment.
(B) Specified benefits and conditions protect parity with comparable permanent workers.
(C) It excludes all statutory benefits.
(D) It requires all contracts to last five years.

14. The ordinary employer contribution to the worker re-skilling fund is equivalent to:
(A) The worker's own annual contribution
(B) Six months of wages
(C) 15 days of last-drawn wages
(D) The value of outstanding bonus

15. Consider the following statements regarding strikes:
1. The Code prohibits striking within 14 days after giving notice.
2. All strikes are completely prohibited.
3. Specified conciliation proceedings restrict strikes.
(A) 1 and 2 only
(B) 2 and 3 only
(C) 1 and 3 only
(D) 1, 2 and 3

16. An aggregator has Rs. 100 crore in relevant annual turnover and pays Rs. 10 crore to workers. If a hypothetical notified contribution is 1%, what is the statutory maximum after applying the cap?
(A) Rs. 25 lakh
(B) Rs. 1 crore
(C) Rs. 50 lakh
(D) Rs. 2 crore

17. Which is the general EPF coverage threshold under the Social Security Code?
(A) 5 employees
(B) 10 employees
(C) 20 employees
(D) 50 employees

18. In a notified hazardous or life-threatening occupation, ESI coverage may extend to an establishment with:
(A) At least ten employees only
(B) At least five employees
(C) One employee
(D) At least twenty employees only

19. Which pair gives the general factory thresholds under the Occupational Safety Code?
(A) 10 with power; 20 without power
(B) 20 with power; 40 without power
(C) 40 with power; 50 without power
(D) 50 with power; 100 without power

20. Which statement about contract labour is correct?
(A) A contractor's default ends the worker's wage claim.
(B) All core activities must be outsourced.
(C) Contract labour is prohibited in all activities.
(D) A principal employer has statutory wage liability on contractor default.

21. Under the final Occupational Safety Central Rules, what is the maximum quarterly overtime limit for Central-sphere establishments?
(A) 75 hours
(B) 125 hours
(C) 180 hours
(D) 144 hours

22. G.S.R. 344(E), dated 8 May 2026, notified which Rules?
(A) Industrial Relations
(B) Code on Wages
(C) Occupational Safety
(D) Social Security

23. Which constitutional provision specifically addresses workers' participation in industrial management?
(A) Article 39(d)
(B) Article 42
(C) Article 43A
(D) Article 43

24. Which statement about the NCS ONE portal launched in November 2026 is correct?
(A) It replaces the four Labour Codes.
(B) It links employment platforms and includes labour-market shortage information.
(C) It is a new statutory tribunal.
(D) It exclusively administers provident fund claims.

25. Assertion (A): The Central Rules do not necessarily make every labour compliance procedure identical across India.
Reason (R): Labour-related legislative and rule-making responsibilities are distributed across governments.
(A) Both are true and R explains A.
(B) Both are true but R does not explain A.
(C) A is true but R is false.
(D) A is false but R is true.

Answer key & explanations

Questions 01–13

01. A — The respective totals are 4, 3, 9 and 13; their sum is 29. [2–5]

02. B — Section 9 allows geographical variation but protects a higher existing minimum wage against reduction merely because of a lower floor. [2]

03. B — The dates are **21 November 2025**, **30 December 2025**, **16 February 2026** and **8 May 2026** respectively. [1,6,7]

04. A — The amendment substituted section 104(1) and inserted section 104(1A), preserving institutional continuity. [7]

05. D — The Act received assent on **16 February 2026** but expressly provides retrospective deemed commencement from **21 November 2025**. [7]

06. D — The welfare cess law finances construction-worker welfare and belongs to Social Security. The other listed Acts belong to Occupational Safety. [4,5]

07. A — The excluded payments exceed half the remuneration by Rs. 6,000. Add that to Rs. 24,000 to obtain Rs. 30,000. [2]

08. B — The daily rate is divided by eight. Rs. 624 divided by eight is Rs. 78. [6]

09. A — Section 18 generally restricts deductions to half of wages during the relevant wage period. [2]

10. A — The ordinary monthly payment deadline is the seventh day of the succeeding month. [2]

11. D — The Works Committee threshold is 100, subject to a government requirement. The grievance committee threshold is 20 and the general standing orders threshold is 300. [3]

12. D — No union meets 51% support. All three meet the 20% eligibility threshold for negotiating council representation. [3]

13. B — Fixed-term employment is based on a written contract for a defined duration, with statutory protections and proportionate benefits. [3,4]

Questions 14–25

14. C — Section 83 provides for **15 days** of last-drawn wages or another notified number of days. [3]

15. C — The Code regulates strikes through notice and proceeding-related restrictions, rather than prohibiting all strikes. [3]

16. C — 1% of turnover is Rs. 1 crore, but 5% of worker payments is Rs. 50 lakh. The lower amount is the applicable maximum in this example. [4]

17. C — The First Schedule specifies the general EPF threshold of 20 or more employees. Scheme membership conditions are distinct. [4]

18. C — The Social Security Code permits special coverage even where only one employee is engaged in a notified hazardous or life-threatening occupation. [4]

19. B — The respective general thresholds are 20 and 40, subject to the statutory definition and special provisions. [5]

20. D — The principal employer must pay unpaid wages on contractor default, with the right to recover the amount; core-activity restrictions have statutory exceptions. [5,8]

21. D — Rule 69 provides **144 hours** per quarter. The Ministry FAQ distinguishes Central and State jurisdictions. [8]

22. D — G.S.R. 342(E) to 345(E) relate to Industrial Relations, Wages, Social Security and Occupational Safety respectively. [6]

23. C — Article 43A concerns worker participation in industrial management. Article 43 addresses living wages and decent conditions.

24. B — **NCS ONE** connects employment platforms and includes the Occupational Shortage Index. It is a digital employment initiative, not a Code amendment. [11]

25. A — Concurrent legislative competence and the appropriate-government framework explain differences in applicable rules and procedures. [2–5,8]

Scoring suggestion
Award 2.5 marks per correct answer and deduct 5/6 mark per incorrect answer for EPFO-style practice. Leave unattempted questions at zero. This chapter drill is not an official examination paper.

References & further reading

Official sources

[1] PIB, Ministry of Labour & Employment, implementation of the Codes, 5 February 2026. Open source

[2] India Code, Code on Wages, 2019 (Act 29 of 2019). Open source

[3] India Code, Industrial Relations Code, 2020 (Act 35 of 2020). Open source

[4] India Code, Code on Social Security, 2020 (Act 36 of 2020). Open source

[5] India Code, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (Act 37 of 2020). Open source

[6] Government of Meghalaya Labour Commissioner, official repository of all four Central Rules, 8 May 2026 (G.S.R. 342–345(E)). Open source

[7] Gazette of India, Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Act, 2026, 16 February 2026. Open source

Editorial note

This chapter covers information available through 24 November 2026. Read statutory provisions with the applicable official legal instruments.

Further official sources

[8] Ministry of Labour & Employment, Compilation of FAQs on Four Labour Codes & Central Rules (as on 25 October 2026). Open source

[9] PIB, nationwide Shram Samvad initiative, October 2026. Open source

[10] PIB, Railway Board consultation on implementation, November 2026. Open source

[11] PIB, Chintan Shivir concluding release, 22 November 2026. Open source

[12] UPSC, previous examination question paper archive (Civil Services Mains 2024, GS III). Open source

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