

# New labour law to help ratify ILO norms

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**N**EW DELHI: The government on Friday said India will now be able to ratify two ILO conventions related to abolition of child labour as the country had completely banned it up to the age of 14 years.

Under attack from NGOs over changes in the child labour law, labour minister Bandaru Dattatreya said, "Since Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2016 passed by Parliament prohibits employment of children up to 14 years of age, the ILO conventions 138 and 182 will be ratified." The minister also said the new law was much better compared to the original Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

The clarification came amid accusations that the amendment bill allowed first-time employment of children below 14 years in family enterprises while no such provision was there in the original Act, adversely impacting their schooling. Dattatreya reiterated that there could not be any employee and employer relationship in case the worker's age was below 14 years.

The new law provides for "help" by children up to the age of 14 years in family enterprises after school hours without affecting their education, he said. UNICEF had voiced concern over the amendments, saying it could legitimise family work and further disadvantage children from poor families.

It advocated establishing a robust monitoring mechanism with a thorough list of hazardous occupations for a stronger child protection framework. Dattatreya said he had given a satisfactory explanation to the ILO and UNICEF representative who met him on Friday adding that the government will ensure that none of the provisions of the Act are misused.