

# Business Standard

## Govt aims to pass two labour Bills in Budget session

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Arindam Majumder | New Delhi February 06, 2017 Last Updated at 01:58 IST



The government is planning to resume labour reforms by introducing two labour Bills in the second half of the Budget session of Parliament, a move likely to be resisted by Opposition parties and unions.

The Bills are the Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2016, and the Wage Code

Bill, 2016. The second half of the session begins on March 9. Labour ministry officials say that all formalities, including tripartite consultations with the trade unions and approval from the law ministry, have been done.

Both the Bills are with a Group of Ministers. It will make changes if required and then they will be placed before the cabinet.

The government wants to integrate around 40 labour laws into four pieces of legislation. For example, all wage-related laws will be amalgamated to form the Wage Code and the industrial relations laws will be part of the related Code.

In his Budget speech, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley reiterated forming the four labour Codes, the process of which started since the BJP came to power but has been facing hurdles.

Once passed, the Industrial Relations Code would facilitate hiring and retrenchment in factories, an official said. A previous draft of the proposed law had suggested that companies did not require approval for retrenching up

to 300 employees in the case of an emergency.

The Wage Code Bill was sent to the Cabinet by the labour ministry, but has been returned to the Group of Ministers, headed by Jaitley, for review.

“If it is not possible to pass these in this session, it expects to do so in the next session,” said a senior labour ministry official.

Union Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya, who had earlier announced that the Bills would be passed in the winter session, wants them to get Parliament’s nod in the Budget session.

However, trade unions say they have voiced their strong opposition to the Bills.

“We have rejected the Wage Code Bill outright. Instead of pushing the Bill, the government must focus on how workers can get cash in hand. The Centre must also see how to check the massive job loss arising out of demonetisation,” said Tapan Sen, general secretary of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU).