

Trade unions object to new draft of Factories Amendment Bill

TNN | Aug 16, 2017, 10.49 PM IST

NEW DELHI: The trade unions, including RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), have raised objections to a fresh draft of The Factories Amendment Bill that has included all the points for which recommendations were "unanimously rejected" by parliamentary standing committee on labour.

After a meeting of all 11 trade unions with the labour ministry on Wednesday, the BMS issued a long and detailed statement by terming it "highly objectionable."

"The new amendments contain highly objectionable provisions which are proposed to help the defaulting employers, dilute safety provisions of workers, take away rights and welfare of workers etc. All these were objected by BMS and other trade Unions, but it is a pity that they are coming up again and again," the statement issued by BMS.

In a strong statement, BMS has said: "When there are thorough changes proposed after 69 years of Independence in the Factories Act, they should be progressive. It should take care of the interest of all three stakeholders -- industries, workers and the society living around it."

Directions of parliamentary standing committee on labour have been completely violated, the trade union leaders said after the meeting. The committee had asked for "guarantee of security, safety, health and welfare of the workers" in the Bill.

State governments being given power to increase threshold limit to 40 will take 80% of factories outside purview of safety and other aspects of factories Act, the unions said. "The bill is anti-worker. This new proposal of creating a board to look into workers safety after throwing out 80% workers is nothing but a fraud, which is so typical of the Modi government," said CPM Rajya Sabha MP and CITU leader Tapan Sen.

However, since the bill was first introduced in 2014 in Parliament, standing committee members, including from BJP, unanimously rejected it and trade unions jointly went on a strike in 2014 as well as in 2016, on the same issue. But BMS pulled out of the 2014 strike in the last moment and in 2016 even called it a "politically motivated" move. Hence, the other unions like CITU, AITUC, INTUC etc are wary of BMS' seriousness to the cause when it comes to Sangh Parivar backed Narendra Modi government.

The trade unions have objected to "amendments proposed to help the erring big companies" and the BMS statement hit out saying, "government is repeatedly bringing many proposals that were rejected by trade unions making tripartite consultation a mockery."

The unions have warned that "safety provisions are highly diluted and India will be under risk of increased factory calamities like Bhopal tragedy in every Indian town. On the one side, the government says it is restricting powers of inspectors, but on the other hand it is trying to shift all powers of Parliament to the hands of higher bureaucracy. Bypassing Parliament and the mandate of PSC on labour is against spirit of democracy."