

Government set to implement four new labour codes by April

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Giving a definite roadmap, the government on Wednesday said it will implement all four labour codes by April 2021, and urged states to fast-track the process to ensure the reforms are rolled out in a timely manner across India.

Union labour secretary Apurva Chandra said the rule-making process is in full swing and the labour ministry will finalize the labour codes by 15 November. Rules are a key part of an Act and are prepared after a bill is passed in Parliament and work as the implementation vehicle.

"We intend to implement all the four codes by April. We are finalizing the rules for all four codes by 15 November. It's a stiff deadline, but we are for faster implementation of the reforms passed by Parliament," said Chandra, who will play a key role in the implementation of the reforms.

"We will upload the rules of the codes and ask stake holders' engagement for 45 days. Based on the feedback, final rules will be fine-tuned and all the four acts will be implemented."

Chandra said rule-making is a lengthy process, but efforts are on to complete it as soon as possible. For the industrial relation (IR) code, almost half of the work is done, while work is progressing well for the wage code.

The other two are social security code and occupational safety and health (OSH) code. While the wage code was passed last year, the remaining three were approved by Parliament last month and has got the presidential assent.

The three codes on social security, industrial relations and occupational safety, once implemented will offer industries flexibility in doing business, hiring and firing, make industrial strikes difficult while promoting fixed-term employment, reducing influence of trade unions and expanding the social security net for informal workers.

The National Democratic Alliance government merged 29 central laws into four codes reducing compliance hassles, and streamlining laws, a decades-long industry demand.

Once implemented, industries will have to file just one compliance return for all four codes, compared to the existing practice of over 20 filings.