

Industrial states take lead in easing Labour Laws

By Yogima Seth Sharma, ET Bureau Last Updated: Apr 25, 2023, 01:10 AM IST

Synopsis

While Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have extended the work hours to 12 per day from eight for four days a week, states including Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are eyeing similar changes to make their labour laws flexible. Labour, being a concurrent subject, states have the flexibility to amend the labour laws but states require the President's assent for implementation.



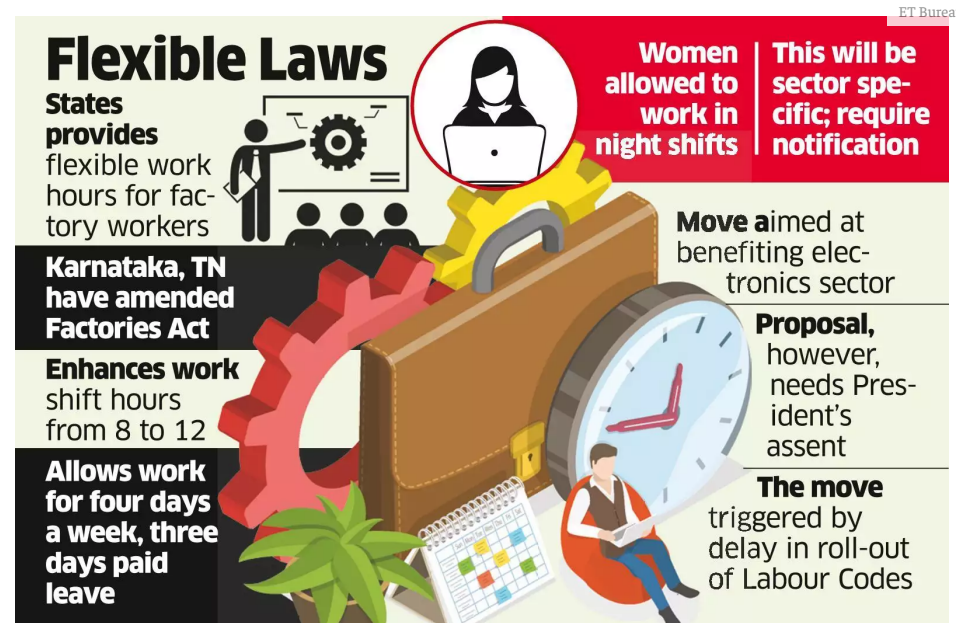
Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav

Key industrial states have taken the lead in easing labour laws for select sectors through amendments to the [Factories Act](#), whereas the Centre has yet to implement the labour codes endorsed by [Parliament](#).

While [Karnataka](#) and [Tamil Nadu](#) have extended the work hours to 12 per day from eight for four days a week, states including [Uttar Pradesh and](#) Madhya Pradesh are eyeing similar changes to make their labour laws flexible. Labour, being a concurrent subject, states have the flexibility to amend the labour laws but states require the President's assent for implementation.

The move is expected to facilitate electronic and other hardware manufacturing sectors where robust demand has forced states to provide for flexible work hours, subject to notification.

However, the weekly work hours continue to be capped at 48 and the flexibility will not be available for hazardous sectors.



Karnataka had last month liberalised its labour laws, allowing 12-hour shifts and opening up night shifts for women.

"These changes are part of the labour codes. However, since the Centre is yet to implement the codes, the state has gone ahead to bring in flexible work hours to suit the industry requirement," a senior labour department official in the Karnataka government told ET. "We have sent the proposal to the Centre and are awaiting the President's nod before we implement it."

Last week, the Tamil Nadu government passed a legislation extending daily

working shifts of factory workers to 12 hours, in case they opt for four-day working weeks.

However, this has to be in consent with the employee and each sector will have to represent its case if it requires long work hours.

While [Gujarat](#) is yet to give any such flexibility, a senior state official told ET that the state is willing to consider any request made by industry though similar provisions exist in the code.

The move has drawn the ire of the trade unions. The [All India Trade Union Congress](#) (AITUC), a central trade union, has called for immediate withdrawal of such a legislation, saying it will be misused against the interest of the workers. "The amendment to increase the working hours will have a negative impact on the wages and also the working conditions of the employees," it said on Monday.

There is an apprehension that the Centre may have put the labour codes on the backburner till the 2024 general election to avoid backlash.