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Bill to merge labour laws into single code gets Cabinet nod

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New Delhi: In a bid to push labour reforms, the Union cabinet on Wednesday approved a bill to merge 13 central labour laws into a single "code" which will apply to all establishments employing 10 or more workers. This consolidation can potentially benefit large sections of the 40 crore workforce.

The proposed Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Bill, would enhance coverage of workers manifold. The rules will state that workers will have to be given an offer letter besides an annual medical check-up, labour minister **Santosh Gangwar** said.

The minister added the code will be applicable to all business entities dealing in the port and mining sector even if they have a single employee. The proposed changes are intended to improve ease of business while also giving enhanced protection to employees by mandating certain norms. Many of India's labour laws, though intended to protect workers, have been seen to discourage formal employment while providing incentives for graft.

The bill provides for a sin-



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Bill to toughen Pocso Act gets approval

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared a bill that seeks to toughen the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act by proposing enhanced punishment for offenders, including death penalty for the guilty in cases of aggravated sexual assault against a minor girl or boy. The bill, to be re-introduced in the current session, seeks to align POSCO Act with the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2018 which provides for stiffer punishment of even death for rape crimes involving a girl below 12 years of age.

The Cabinet also cleared another important legislation, Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, to be re-introduced in Lok Sabha. Focused around the issue of identity, the bill seeks to allow a person the right to choose to be identified as a man, woman or transgender, irrespective of sex reassignment surgery or hormonal therapy. The bill passed in Lok Sabha in December required a transgender person to go through a district magistrate and "district screening committee" to get certified as a transperson. **TNN**

gle licence regime for staffing firms, thus significantly improving their ease of doing business. Gangwar added that a comprehensive change in labour law which the government will bring through legislation would make appointment letters mandatory. The decision comes a week after the Cabinet gave its go-ahead to a labour code on wages, which

has provision of mandatory compliance of minimum wage and timely payment.

Highlighting the impact of the proposed change, Gangwar said there are some states where the daily wage of labourers is Rs 50 or Rs 60. The Wage Code Bill proposes Rs 178 as minimum wage and states will have the liberty to increase it as well.