

Amendments to Act will totally prohibit child labour: Dattatreya

- Special Correspondent

Union Labour Minister says bill is close to him personally

Union Minister for Labour Bandaru Dattatreya said the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill passed unanimously in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday is very close to him personally as he helped his mother in selling onions as a child after school hours.

Mr. Dattatreya made the observation here on Saturday as the Bill moves to Lok Sabha and is likely to be taken up for debate in the next week. "I am hopeful that the Bill will be cleared by Lok Sabha with similar support as in Rajya Sabha making amendments as part of the Act", he said addressing a press conference.

Further, he expressed hope that the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill and the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill which were already vetted by the Law Ministry will be taken up for debate in the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament. The minister said he was hopeful that the two bills too would be cleared by the two Houses this session itself.

On the child labour amendment bill, the Union Minister said the amendments would totally prohibit children below 14 years from working in any occupation/process against the existing law banning child labour only in 18 occupations and 65 processes. Similarly, the amendments totally prohibit adolescents working in hazardous industries against the existing provision of allowing those in the age group of 16-18 years to work, he stated.

However, the amendments would give exemption to family – mother, father, elder brother and elder sister – to involve the children below 18 years to help in their enterprises after school hours since there would be no employee-employer equation here, Mr. Dattatreya explained. The exemption was given keeping in mind the socio-economic backwardness in the society, he noted.

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