

Business Standard

Trade unions to boycott BRICS Labour Ministers meet tomorrow

Unions claimed that the government has not formally invited them to the summit, but has appointed BMS to coordinate with them for the event

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The 2-day BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Labour and Employment Ministerial meeting will commence in New Delhi on Tuesday but the Central Trade Unions (CTUs) have decided to boycott the event.

The meeting will deliberate on issues including job creation and social security for

Source: AIR Twitter handle

workers.

The unions claimed that the government (Labour Ministry) has not formally invited them to the summit, but has appointed Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh affiliate Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) to coordinate with them for the international event.

"This is probably the first time in India that government has asked a union to invite other CTUs for a summit as big as BRICS. It is the Labour Ministry, which is the nodal agency to coordinate with the unions," Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) Vice President Ashok Singh told PTI.

He added that this is the other side of the government's "anti-worker" and anti-people" face.

All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) Secretary Amarjeet Kaur said the Labour Ministry has not briefed the CTUs about the BRICS meet, which is the usual practice. There has been no official invitation from the government.

"All the CTUs except BMS have decided to boycott the summit as the Labour Ministry did not have the courtesy to invite us for a formal event. This is intentional. Looks like government is avoiding unions in the wake of the successful general strike on September 2," she added.

AITUC Secretary D L Sachdev questioned the ministry's move to allow the BMS to coordinate with the other unions.

"This is unfortunate. We will boycott the inaugural session," he added.

India assumed presidency of the BRICS group in February this year and it will host the 8th BRICS Summit scheduled to be held on October 15-16, 2016 in Goa.

The theme of India's BRICS Chairmanship is 'Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions'.

In the prelude to the final meeting of the BRICS, a series of meetings from participating ministries is being held at various places in India following the recommendation of the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting in Ufa (Russia) under Russia's Presidency.

The first meeting of the BRICS Employment Working Group was held on July 27-28 in Hyderabad.

During this meeting broad consensus was achieved in areas such as 'Employment Generation for Inclusive Growth', 'Possible Social Security Agreement among BRICS nations' and 'Networking of Labour Institutes of BRICS nations' to include in the BRICS Ministerial declaration for their subsequent discussion.

Tuesday's meeting will see ministers deliberating on adopting the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministerial Declaration. It will have dedicated sessions on employment generation, social security and inclusive development including formalisation.

Global bodies such as International Labour Organisation, International Social Security Association and Academia's are also participating in the event.