International Workers’ Day

Part of: GS-III- Labour (PT-MAINS-PERSONALITY TEST)

Every year, 1st May is celebrated as the International Workers’ Day and as Labour Day in different parts of the world to commemorate the contributions of workers and the historic labour movements.

- It is a day when the International Labour Organisation (ILO), nations, employers and workers from all over the world commit themselves towards the collective efforts of promoting decent work for all.
- In 1889, the Second International, an organisation created by socialist and labour parties, declared that 1st May would be commemorated as International Workers’ Day from then on.
- On 1st May 1904, the International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam, the Netherlands called for the legal establishment of the 8-hour day for the class demands of the proletariat and made it mandatory upon the proletarian organisations of all countries to stop work on this day.

Different countries

USA

The USA celebrates Labor day on the first Monday of September, every year. The USA recognised the day as a federal holiday in 1894.

Canada also celebrates the Labour day on the same day as the US.

Labor day was designated as a day in support of workers by trade unions and socialist groups in the memory of the Haymarket affair of 1886 in Chicago, USA. It gave the workers’ movement a great impetus. Haymarket Affair was a peaceful rally in support of workers which led to a violent clash with the police, leading to severe casualties. Those who died were hailed as “Haymarket Martyrs”.

Workers’ rights violations, straining work hours, poor working conditions, low wages and child labour were the issues highlighted in the protest.

USSR

The Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc nations started celebrating the Labor day after the Russian Revolution 1917. Impact of Russian Revolution: New ideologies such as Marxism and Socialism inspired many socialist and communist groups and they attracted peasants and workers and made them an integral part of national movement. It became a national holiday during the Cold War.

India

In India, Labor day was first celebrated in 1923, after the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan initiated the celebrations and Comrade Singaravelar (Singaravelu Chettiar) continued the celebrations. Comrade Singaravelar was one of the leaders of the Self Respect
movement in the Madras Presidency and passed a resolution stating the government should allow everybody a national holiday on Labour Day.