

Labour ministry to fast-track National Employment Policy

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The government has fast-tracked the proposed National Employment Policy (NEP), which aims at formalization of the country's 500 million workforce including migrants to ensure job and social security.

The policy will lay out a sectoral roadmap with incentives for employment generation, based on the recommendations of the Thawar Chand Gehlot-led group of ministers in the wake of the Covid-19-induced economic crisis.

Key Highlights

- Labour minister Santosh Gangwar has asked officials to look at the employment policy afresh keeping in mind the challenges thrown up by the pandemic, said officials.
- The NEP will have twin objectives of creating an enabling environment for attracting new enterprises and industries to generate employment opportunities while improving the skill sets of the existing workforce to make it employable as India gears up to attract companies seeking to shift manufacturing bases from China.
- The proposal to bring in NEP was first mooted in 2008. An inter-ministerial group during the United Progressive Alliance regime examined the proposal but nothing concrete emerged. The idea took some shape at first meeting of BRICS employment working group in 2016, following which the NDA government started work on it. However, even that could not progress much.
- India's economy had already slowed down before Covid-19, but the pandemic is believed to have pushed it further into a recession. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data shows the unemployment rate touched as high as 23.5% in the two months of lockdown in

April and May.

- Besides, the CMIE estimated that 27 million youths in the age group of 20-30 years lost their jobs in April due to the lockdown.

SOURCE: *The Hindu, Economic Times*