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The Hindu Analysis

Current Affairs for UPSC & State PSC

24 August 2026

SUNDAY

Lok Sabha Prorogation | MMDR Amendment | AI Tutor & DPI | Social Media & Minors | Female Labour Force | Triple Test / Industry | Core Industries Index

COMPILED BY

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SUNDAY · 24 AUGUST 2026

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- Each topic follows a fixed flow: **Why in News → Analysis → Value Addition → Newspaper Clipping → Syllabus Link**.
- The **Value Addition** boxes carry Prelims-ready facts; the **Practice Zone** at the end has 2 Mains questions and 10 MCQs with a full answer key.
- Topic spread today — **GS 1:** 1 • **GS 2:** 2 • **GS 3:** 5.

EDITOR'S FOCUS FOR TODAY

- **Polity core:** prorogation vs adjournment vs summoning — a perennial Prelims + GS-2 favourite.
- **Federalism flashpoint:** the MMDR Amendment vs the 2024 Supreme Court mineral-tax ruling.
- **Economy & society:** FLFPR gains, the Triple Test on 'industry', and the revised Index of Core Industries.

01 'Abnormal' Delay in Lok Sabha Prorogation

GS 2 The Hindu · Page 1

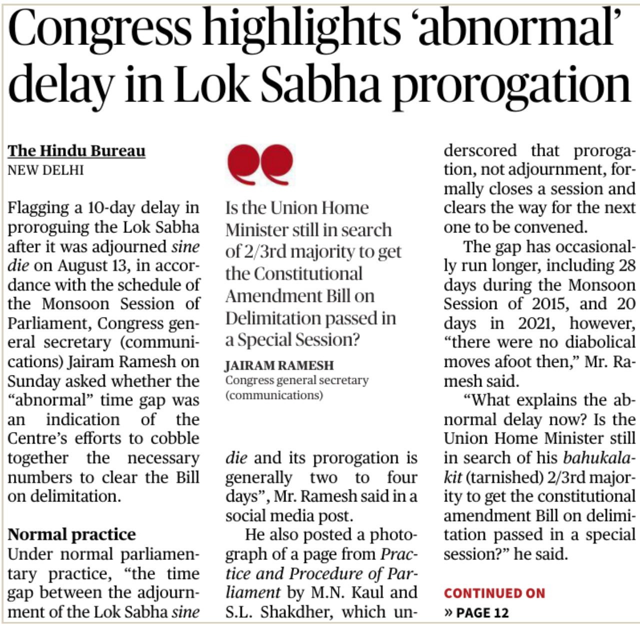
WHY IN NEWS

Congress flagged a 10-day delay in proroguing the Lok Sabha after it was adjourned sine die on August 13, asking whether the 'abnormal' gap signalled efforts to cobble together numbers for the delimitation Bill.

- Under normal practice, the gap between adjournment *sine die* and prorogation is generally **two to four days** (per *Practice and Procedure of Parliament*, Kaul & Shakdher).
- Prorogation — not adjournment — **formally closes a session** and clears the way for the next to be convened.
- The gap has occasionally run longer — 28 days (Monsoon Session 2015) and 20 days (2021).

Key concepts

- **Summoning:** the President summons each House; the gap between two sessions cannot exceed **six months** (Art. 85).
- **Adjournment:** terminates a sitting to a stated time; **adjournment sine die** ends a sitting without fixing the next.
- **Prorogation:** the President ends a session; the period between prorogation and reassembly is the **Recess**. It does not dissolve the House.



Congress highlights 'abnormal' delay in Lok Sabha prorogation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Flagging a 10-day delay in proroguing the Lok Sabha after it was adjourned *sine die* on August 13, in accordance with the schedule of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh on Sunday asked whether the "abnormal" time gap was an indication of the Centre's efforts to cobble together the necessary numbers to clear the Bill on delimitation.

Normal practice

Under normal parliamentary practice, "the time gap between the adjournment of the Lok Sabha *sine die* and its prorogation is generally two to four days", Mr. Ramesh said in a social media post.

He also posted a photograph of a page from *Practice and Procedure of Parliament* by M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shakdher, which underscored that prorogation, not adjournment, formally closes a session and clears the way for the next one to be convened.

The gap has occasionally run longer, including 28 days during the Monsoon Session of 2015, and 20 days in 2021, however, "there were no diabolical moves afoot then," Mr. Ramesh said.

"What explains the abnormal delay now? Is the Union Home Minister still in search of his *bahukalakit* (tarnished) 2/3rd majority to get the constitutional amendment Bill on delimitation passed in a special session?" he said.

> Is the Union Home Minister still in search of 2/3rd majority to get the Constitutional Amendment Bill on Delimitation passed in a Special Session?
>
> JAIRAM RAMESH
> Congress general secretary (communications)

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

'Congress highlights abnormal delay in Lok Sabha prorogation.'

VALUE ADDITION — PARLIAMENTARY DEVICES

- **Article 85:** summoning, prorogation and dissolution of Parliament.
- **Dissolution:** ends the life of the Lok Sabha (Rajya Sabha, a permanent House, is never dissolved).
- **Pending business:** a Bill pending in the Lok Sabha lapses on dissolution, but not on prorogation/ adjournment.
- **Quorum:** one-tenth of the total members of the House (Art. 100).

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **Adjournment sine die** is done by the presiding officer; **prorogation** by the President.
- A **question hour** or motion pending at adjournment survives; on prorogation, pending notices lapse.
- **Special Session** can be summoned any time within the six-month rule.

Syllabus link — GS 2: Parliament & State Legislatures — structure, functioning, conduct of business.

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02 MMDR Amendment — 'Digging for Gold'

GS 1 · GS 3 The Hindu · Page 4

WHY IN NEWS

Parliament passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, restricting State taxes and levies on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands to create a uniform, predictable fiscal framework.

- Per the Ministry of Mines' 2024-25 report, ~**97.70%** of mineral value (excl. atomic, fuel and minor minerals) is confined to eight States — **Odisha (43.49%)**, Rajasthan (16.26%), Chhattisgarh (13.69%), Karnataka (12.42%) leading.

What the Bill does

- **Union control (Sec. 2):** explicitly brings 'mineral-bearing lands' under the Union's regulatory control.
- **New Section 9D:** States cannot impose tax, cess or levy on mineral rights or mineral-bearing lands except under conditions prescribed by the Centre.
- **Retrospective relief:** unpaid/unrecovered past levies become invalid, while amounts already paid will not be refunded.
- **Rule-making (Sec. 13):** the Centre may frame rules on parameters for future State levies.

SPOTLIGHT

Digging for gold

Parliament passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, which put the extraction and management of minerals in the hands of the Central government. Many in Odisha fear that the new law will impact the State's fiscal health

Satyasundar Barik

In the second week of August, former Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik wrote to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi urging him to convene a special session of the State Legislative Assembly.

The immediate trigger was the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Bill, 2026, which was passed by both Houses of Parliament on August 13. It became an Act after it got the assent of President Droupadi Murmu.

According to the Ministry of Mines' 2024-25 annual report, mineral production (excluding Atomic, Fuel and Minor Minerals) was estimated in 20 States, of which about 97.70% of the total value was confined to eight States.

Odisha accounted for the largest share, at 43.49%, followed by Rajasthan (16.26%), Chhattisgarh (13.69%), Karnataka (12.42%), Maharashtra (4.76%), Jharkhand (3.26%), Madhya Pradesh (2.78%) and Andhra Pradesh (1.04%). Remaining States contributed 2.30%.

The MMDR Act states its objective: "extraction and management have to be guided by long-term national goals". It also cites heavy and non-uniform taxes as adversely affecting mineral production. Under the MMDR Act, "the Union will take under its control the regulation of mineral-bearing lands". It also provides that "no tax, cess or such other levy (by whatever name called) shall be imposed by the State government on mineral rights or mineral-bearing lands".

In its press release, the Central government stated, "The amendment... will not take away any of the rights of the States on land and minerals or any tax on minerals collected by the States." It also stated the amendment will not impact minor minerals.

Several stakeholders in Odisha, however, feel that they could significantly erode the State's authority over its mineral resources and adversely affect its fiscal interests. This is not just about mining policy or government revenue, but also about the people, mostly tribals, who have been living with the environmental and social costs of mining for generations.

In Jajpur's Sukinda valley, residents say monsoon run-off from mines turns the area red. BISWARANJAN ROUT

People impacted

In Ransol village, in Odisha's Jajpur district, Ishwar Chandra Mohanta is battling cancer. He does not know how he developed the disease. However, Mohanta claims seven other people from his village have already died of cancer. His home lies in the Sukinda valley, which contains 98% of India's chromite resources.

The first chromite mine near his village was suspended in 2000, but for people like Mohanta, the consequences of decades of mining have not disappeared with the closure of a mine. Chromite mines are a source of dangerous hexavalent chromium pollution that has carcinogenic effects. While the State's vast reserves of iron ore, coal, chromite, and other minerals have attracted industries and generated enormous revenues, communities living around mining belts have often borne the environmental and health burdens.

Their grievances have traditionally been directed at the State government, which remains accountable to them for regulation, rehabilitation, environmental protection, and local development. The concern now is that the MMDR amendment could create a situation in which that accountability is blurred.

Patnaik says, "If the Central government takes away the State's authority over mineral-bearing lands and its right to levy cesses, only pollution, displacement, and the burden of mining will remain with Odisha."

What the tweak means

The MMDR Amendment Act, 2026 is an amendment to the 1957 Act. Section 2 now provides that the phrase "regulation of mines" will be followed by "and mineral-bearing land".

"By insertion of 'mineral bearing land', the Union government has expanded its control over larger areas. It is tampering with the State's power. Land is a subject which is on the State List," says Umesh Jena, former Additional Director of Mines, who has over 30 years of experience in dealing with regulation pertaining to mining.

Umesh says the insertion of Section 9D has two implications: it prohibits States from earning from new taxes, and also stops States from collecting taxes due through court orders.

The immediate repercussion for Odisha is the loss of thousands of crores in penalties. In 2021-22, the State had imposed a ₹22,000 crore penalty on different miners for excess mining in violation of environmental clearance.

"The State had collected ₹16,000 crore from defaulting lessees before my retirement. Still, a large chunk is left to be collected. This will not come to the State's exchequer because of the amendment," says Umesh.

In a statement accompanying the Act, justifying the amendment, G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Coal and Mines, says, "Unbalanced imposition of steep taxes and levies will prompt the industry to completely bypass local supply lines, leading to sub-optimal development of markets, increased transportation costs and the resultant pollution load."

In 2004, the Odisha government had enacted the Odisha Rural Infrastructure and Socio Economic Development (ORISED) Act. This was challenged by miners in the Orissa High Court. The High Court subsequently struck down the law. The State government took the fight to the Supreme Court. Now, the Odisha government's two-decade-long efforts to tax miners have come to an end. The taxes raised under ORISED were meant to benefit mining-affected areas and communities through spending on infrastructure, education and employment.

Srikant, the former Union Minister, asserts that following the Supreme Court judgment, Odisha stood to reclaim over ₹1 lakh crore in retrospective dues since 2005, which it could have collected from April 1, 2026. Besides, the State would have earned ₹50,000 crore annually through the cess on future mining operations, he says. The State has, however, not officially estimated the extent of potential loss.

A mineral powerhouse

The scale of Odisha's mineral resources explains why the amendment has triggered such strong apprehension in the State.

According to the Ministry of Mines' 2024-25 report, the State produced minerals valued at ₹67,955.89 crore, the highest among Indian States.

Mining accounted for 37.59% of Odisha's total projected State revenue in 2026-27.

"In the aftermath of the MMDR Act, the possibility of losing such a substantial amount of potential revenue is a matter of serious concern for Odisha's economic interests," says Suresh Panigrahi, State secretary of the CPI(M).

The economic debate also has a human dimension. Environmentalist Prafulla Samantara points out that much of Odisha's mineral-bearing land is inhabited by tribal communities, many of whom continue to remain poor despite living amid some of the country's richest mineral deposits.

"In one stroke, the Centre has taken away the State's ability to design welfare programmes for these tribal communities," alleges Samantara, a recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize, an international award honouring those working at the grassroots.

Political tensions rise

Opposition parties alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party's MPs did not raise their voices against the amendment in Parliament.

"It is clear that the main objective of this amendment is to centralise powers," Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das alleges.

Social media platforms, meanwhile, have been flooded with reactions from political parties and civil society groups, with voices across the spectrum demanding that the Majhi government clarify its position and explain how it proposes to protect the State's fiscal and constitutional interests.

Despite repeated attempts to contact State Steel and Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena and Steel and Mines Secretary Deoranjan Kumar Singh for comment, they were unavailable.

satyasundar.b@thehindu.co.in

'Digging for gold' — the MMDR Amendment and its impact on mineral-rich States.

VALUE ADDITION — CONSTITUTIONAL SCHEME

- **Entry 54, Union List:** Parliament can regulate mines when it declares regulation expedient in public interest.
- **Entry 23, State List:** State power over mines, subject to Union law.
- **Entry 50, State List:** taxes on mineral rights, subject to limits by Parliament.
- **Entry 49, State List:** taxes on lands & buildings — includes mineral-bearing land.
- **MADA v. SAIL (2024):** 9-judge Bench (8:1) upheld States' power to tax mineral rights (Entry 50) and mineral-bearing land (Entry 49), allowing recovery of dues from 1 April 2005.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- MMDR Act, **1957** is the principal central law on mines & minerals.
- **Royalty** is not a tax — held so in *India Cement* (1990), revisited in MADA (2024).
- **Article 14** concern: invalidating unpaid dues but not refunding paid dues may create unequal treatment.

Syllabus link — GS 1: Distribution of resources · GS 3: Growth & federal fiscal relations.

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03 Not 'Delulu' — An AI Tutor for Every Child

GS 3 The Hindu · Page 8

WHY IN NEWS

With India's test-prep market projected to reach $23–26 billion by FY30, the piece argues the government should use AI to deliver a free tutor to every child via a 'public rail, private engines' model.

- A 2025 NSO survey found **27% of students** took private coaching (30.7% urban, 25.5% rural) — 17–20 million students in classes 9–12.
- No single private platform has the breadth to be the sole national provider — this must be a **platform-and-network play**, not a vendor contract.

The 'public rail, private engines' model

- The state supplies **Digital Public Infrastructure** (identity, payments, discovery, data, credentialing) and aggregates demand; private players supply content and last-mile delivery.
- Government becomes the **platform and market-maker**, not the content producer.
- Publish open ratings and per-provider outcome data on official mocks — making quality signals objective, not marketing.
- Enforce **no-lock-in**: providers cannot hold a student's progress data hostage; portability at the protocol level. DPI unbundles content, doubt-solving, peer group and credentialing, driving marginal cost toward zero.

Not 'delulu' — an AI tutor for every child in India

Srivatsa Krishna

IAS officer

Indian students rank among the top students almost anywhere in the world. The joke is that, from the womb to the afterlife, they are taught to study maths and science which serves them well throughout life. A report by Redseer says that India's test-preparation market has been estimated at $14.8 billion in FY26, projected to reach $23-$26 billion by FY30 (12%-15% CAGR), with around 2,00,000 coaching centres nationwide. There are 65 million students in classes 9-12, of whom around 27 million attend government schools. A 2025 National Statistical Office survey found that 27% of students were taking or had taken private coaching in the academic year (30.7% urban, 25.5% rural). Across datasets, coaching incidence is around 27%-30%, implying that 17 million to 20 million students in classes 9-12 participate in some form of test-prep coaching.

No single private platform has the capacity or curriculum breadth to serve as the sole national provider. PhysicsWallah, for example, has around 4.9 million paid online users – while the target population is 10 to 100 times larger. This needs to be built as a platform and network play, not a vendor contract.

Better learning, better outcomes

How can the government take the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to deliver a free coach and tutor to every Indian child? The objective should not be to bring down the private coaching industry but to improve the learning standards and examination outcomes of the last child in the line who today spends thousands of rupees on dubious coaching centres without achieving the necessary results. Bring the industry in as suppliers, or they will lobby against it and the reputational risk of failing completely, is high for the government to sustain.

We should not nationalise coaching. Build a public rail, private engines model: the state supplies the digital public infrastructure (identity, payments, discovery, data, credentialing) and aggregates demand; the private sector – star teachers, ed-tech firms, local tutors – supplies content and last-mile delivery shared by both. Government becomes the platform and market-maker, not the content producer. This is exactly how UPI beat closed payment apps and how the pen Network for Digital Commerce is attempting to beat closed commerce: unbundle the monopoly, open the protocol, let a thousand providers compete on an open network.

The Indian coaching industry charges high fees because it bundles four things that do not have to be bundled: content; doubt-solving/mentoring; peer group and discipline, a credible signal of quality. DPI lets us unbundle these and drive the marginal cost of the first two toward zero. This can be anchored in an existing centre of excellence such as Bodhan.ai at IIT Madras (which has a ₹500 crore, five year government grant) or a similar National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)-like body that needs to be created for education (a Section 8 not-for-profit steward).

The government can create the digital infrastructure for every Indian child to access a free Artificial Intelligence (AI) tutor — which was the vision behind the Prime Minister's call

Where it should begin

It should start with the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), or NEET, and the Joint Entrance Examination, the two most widely taken examinations in India. JEE/NEET are objective, machine-gradable, and high-volume. The content is already freely available on YouTube; what is scarce is a trusted, standardised rank signal and personalised doubt-solving.

An IIT professor who teaches students who have cleared JEE 30 years ago may not be the best option for teaching test prep. Today's test prep skill and requirement is in a very different age, time, and pedagogy.

Government aggregates demand thereby drives down the customer acquisition cost for the private sector and owns the rails and the trust layer; the private sector and star teachers compete to deliver content and mentoring on an open network; the student owns the data and carries a voucher (optional). That is how you turn a $15b paywall industry into free, plural, high-quality prep – without the state trying to become the teacher.

As with any private good using public rails, it will use Aadhaar/DigiLocker for student sign-up and to de-duplicate; APAAR ID to tie learning to the academic record. Along with this will be a curated content registry, an open catalogue where any accredited provider publishes lessons, problem sets, and mock tests against a standard syllabus taxonomy (NEET/JEE topic tree) and open metadata (language, difficulty, medium, accessibility tags). The government will set the taxonomy and standards for the content and ensure interoperability.

Content interoperability is the whole game – a student's progress in one provider's module must be portable to another's. There shall be a discovery layer, a government-run reference app plus open APIs so third parties (including the DIKSHA app, state apps, even Google/YouTube) can surface the same content – multiple front ends, one network. For example, PhysicsWallah, Vedantu, Allen or Narayana could offer their material for free and charge for doubt-solving or premium sessions with ranked professors. IIT professors could also upload their lectures and be rated and ranked on the platform. Adaptive personalisation should be a core feature and as a network service, an open recommendation/diagnostic engine that routes say a weak-in-organic-chemistry student to the best-rated module on that topic, regardless of provider. These will be accompanied by a learning wallet and a progress ledger, a student-owned record of what they have studied, mock scores, and mastery per topic, consent-gated through the DEPA/Account Aggregator pattern. The student – not the ed-tech firm – owns the data, which is the single biggest structural break from today's walled-garden apps. Lastly, while the platform will be mostly free at the point of use, UPI-plumbed premium add-ons (live mentoring, graded assignments) can be micro-charged or voucher-funded, should the government wish to create a DBT-like e-Shiksha wallet. Deliberately thin the government software: The state builds protocols and a reference app; it does not try to build the best learning app. It will not win that race and should not try this. Government alone can aggregate the demand and credential the supply and outcomes – that is all it should do. It should auto-invite every registered Class 11-12 student through schools, CBSE/State boards, and the DIKSHA install base. The system should guarantee reach through free data-light streaming, downloadable content for low-bandwidth areas, and distribution through the five lakh-plus Common Service Centres and school computer labs for students without personal devices. Equity is the mandate – the ₹60,000 crore industry already serves the affluent; the gap is everyone else.

Government should publish open ratings and outcome data: publish, per provider and per module, how students who used it scored on official mocks and the real exam. Quality signal becomes objective, not marketing. This is the credential the coaching industry currently monopolises. Government alone can ensure independent accreditation of providers (content accuracy, no misleading claims), with delisting teeth. Further there should be a no-lock-in rule to ensure that providers cannot hold a student's progress data hostage; portability is enforced at the protocol level.

Models on offer

There is no dearth of content, good and bad, on YouTube but where an AI tutor helps is in practice, doubt solving and adaptive personalisation, which only AI can do. There are good open-source models such as Gemma, which give a million tokens for about 20 to 30 cents or 10,000 tokens per day or 3.6 million tokens per year for just ₹100. Further, every AI minute is equivalent to 1,000 voice minutes of a human; frontier tech companies such as Meta and Google are paying star Kota teachers $25 to $30 per hour for commoditising their content. Further, their models will get trained on it and Generative Inference will do the rest on top of it.

We should not be delulu – as Gen Z would put it – government should not become the AI tutor itself. It should only enable the AI tutor through the blueprint given.

The views expressed are personal

'Not delulu — an AI tutor for every child in India.'

VALUE ADDITION — DPI IN EDUCATION

- **DIKSHA:** national platform for school education (NCERT/CBSE/State boards).
- **DPI stack:** Aadhaar (identity), UPI (payments), DigiLocker/APAAR (records).
- **APAAR ID:** 'One Nation, One Student ID' linking learning to the academic record.
- **NEP 2020:** pushes technology-enabled, equitable learning.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **Redseer** estimated India's test-prep market at $14.8 bn (FY26).
- **DEPA** (Data Empowerment & Protection Architecture) underpins consent-based data sharing.
- **APAAR** = Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry.

Syllabus link — GS 3: Science & Technology · Digital Public Infrastructure in education.

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04 A Civilisational Approach to Social Media

GS 3 The Hindu · Page 9

WHY IN NEWS

As countries move to ban social media for minors, the article argues India should draw on its own civilisational traditions rather than simply importing regulatory models from Australia, the UK or the US.

- Social media can expose young people to manipulation, addiction, bullying and harmful content — but it does not automatically follow that **bans are the answer**.
- The deeper question is whether regulation alone can prepare the next generation for a world shaped by AI and digital technologies.

Fear is not the answer

- Every communications revolution generated anxiety — the printing press, radio, television, the Internet. The enduring challenge is not whether information should flow, but **how societies encourage responsible use**.
- Governments should demand platform transparency, set child-protection standards, combat crime and encourage responsible innovation — but regulation alone cannot solve a **social, cultural and civilisational challenge**.
- Just as earlier generations learned to navigate the physical world, future generations must learn to navigate the digital world responsibly — an educational and cultural task.
- India's civilisational strength is absorbing external influences without losing its core — demonstrating that **tech progress and cultural continuity can coexist**.

A civilisational approach to social media

The debate over banning social media for minors is rapidly becoming one of the defining policy questions of the digital age. As countries around the world move toward restrictions, India is faced with a choice: follow regulatory models developed elsewhere or draw upon its own traditions to address the challenge.

Recent measures in Australia, proposals in the U.K., and differing approaches in the U.S. have intensified calls for similar action elsewhere. The arguments are often compelling, particularly when framed around the safety and well-being of children.

The concerns are not imaginary; social media can expose young people to manipulation, addiction, bullying, and harmful content. While these dangers deserve serious attention, it does not automatically follow that bans are the answer. Regulation is important but the more important question is whether regulation alone can prepare the next generation for a world increasingly shaped by AI and digital technologies.

Milinda Moragoda

Former Sri Lankan Cabinet Minister, diplomat, and founder of the Pathfinder Foundation, a strategic affairs think tank

Fear is not the answer

History suggests that every major communications revolution has generated anxiety. The printing press triggered fears about the uncontrolled spread of information; radio, television, and the Internet provoked similar concerns. The enduring challenge has never been about whether information should flow but how societies can encourage its responsible use.

Today's challenge is magnified by scale and speed. The smartphone has become the printing press, library, marketplace, classroom, and public square of the modern age combined. Social media, AI, and emerging digital technologies are together driving perhaps the greatest transformation in society since the Industrial Revolution.

Many young people understandably find this transition unsettling. They are growing up amid rapid technological disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, widening inequality, and a pervasive sense of instability. In such an environment, fear can become a powerful political force. However, societies should be careful not to allow fear to become the principal driver of policy. Policymakers should ensure that legitimate concerns about children's well-being do not evolve into a broader resistance to innovation itself. The challenge is not to stop technological change, but to ensure that society develops the institutions to manage it.

Governments are now attempting to erect barriers against technologies that are becoming more sophisticated, personalised, and difficult to control. The contest between regulation and innovation is increasingly unequal. Sophisticated technology will easily enable people to circumvent the barriers the government creates. Virtual private networks, encrypted applications, alternative platforms, and future AI-driven tools will make circumvention increasingly easy. The real question is therefore not how to keep young people away from technology, but how to prepare them to live with it.

Indeed, the debate may already be overtaken by events. The next generation will interact not merely with social media platforms but with intelligent AI systems that can educate, entertain, mentor, and potentially manipulate. The challenge before us is therefore much larger than social media.

Governments unquestionably have a role. They should demand greater transparency from platforms, establish clear standards for child protection, combat criminal activity, and encourage responsible innovation. However, regulation alone cannot solve what is fundamentally a social, cultural, and civilisational challenge. India should explore a broader response rooted in its own civilisational experience.

> Regulation alone cannot solve what is fundamentally a social, cultural, and civilisational challenge

Drawing from one's roots

For centuries, Indian society developed mechanisms to transmit values, wisdom, and social responsibility across generations. Family structures, religious traditions, and educational institutions helped young people navigate periods of change and uncertainty. Among the most enduring of these was the *guru-shishya* tradition, a relationship that extended far beyond the transmission of knowledge. It sought to cultivate character, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility.

The challenge today is not to recreate the past but to adapt its strengths to the realities of the 21st century. Parents must become more digitally literate and engaged in the online lives of their children. Schools should teach not only technological skills but also digital citizenship, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and resilience. Religious and cultural organisations should engage with technology rather than retreat from it. Technology companies, educators and civil society should work together to encourage responsible behaviour online.

Just as previous generations learned how to navigate the physical world responsibly, future generations must learn how to navigate the digital world responsibly. This is not simply a technological challenge. It is an educational and cultural one.

India's civilisational strength has always been its ability to absorb powerful external influences without losing its cultural core. As one of the world's oldest civilisations with a growing digital society, India is positioned to demonstrate that tech progress and cultural continuity can coexist. The challenges posed by social media will not be resolved by building a bigger firewall. They will be addressed by combining safeguards with the human institutions that shape judgment, resilience, and responsibility.

'A civilisational approach to social media.'

VALUE ADDITION — REGULATING MINORS ONLINE

- **Australia (2024):** law banning under-16s from social media — a global reference point.
- **DPDP Act, 2023:** India's data law requires verifiable parental consent for children (<18).
- **IT Rules, 2021:** due-diligence and grievance obligations for intermediaries.
- **Guru–shishya** tradition cited as a model of character and responsibility transmission.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **DPDPA 2023** defines a child as anyone under **18**.
- **K.S. Puttaswamy (2017):** privacy is a fundamental right under Art. 21.
- Screen-time & 'addiction-by-design' are emerging policy concerns.

Syllabus link — GS 2/3: Governance & technology · Child protection and digital regulation.

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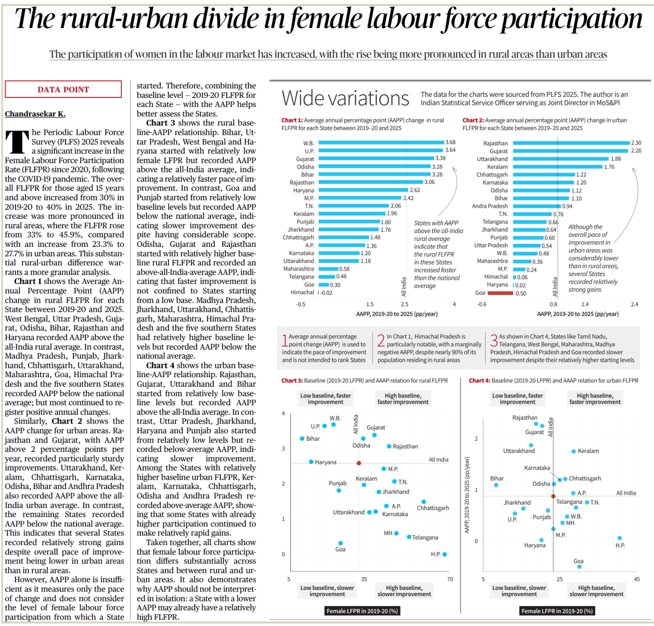
05 The Rural–Urban Divide in Female Labour Force

GS 3 The Hindu (Data Point) · Page 9

> **WHY IN NEWS**
>
> PLFS 2025 shows a significant rise in the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) since 2020, with the increase far sharper in rural than urban India.

- Overall FLFPR (15+) rose from **30% (2019-20) to 40% (2025)**.
- The rise was more pronounced in **rural areas — 33% to 45.9%** — versus urban (23.3% to 27.7%).
- AAPP (Average Annual Percentage Point) change shows West Bengal, UP, Gujarat, Odisha, Bihar, Rajasthan and Haryana above the all-India rural average.
- States with a higher baseline but slower improvement (e.g., southern States) reveal that AAPP alone can mislead — it must be read with the level of FLFPR.



The rural-urban divide in female labour force participation

The participation of women in the labour market has increased, with the rise being more pronounced in rural areas than urban areas

DATA POINT

Chandrasekar K.

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025 reveals a significant increase in the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) since 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall FLFPR for those aged 15 years and above increased from 30% in 2019-20 to 40% in 2025. The increase was more pronounced in rural areas, where the FLFPR rose from 33% to 45.9%, compared with an increase from 23.3% to 27.7% in urban areas. This substantial rural-urban difference warrants a more granular analysis.

Chart 1 shows the Average Annual Percentage Point (AAPP) change in rural FLFPR for each State between 2019-20 and 2025. West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Bihar, Rajasthan and Haryana recorded AAPP above the all-India rural average. In contrast, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Goa, Himachal Pradesh and the five southern States recorded AAPP below the national average; but most continued to register positive annual changes.

Similarly, **Chart 2** shows the AAPP change for urban areas. Rajasthan and Gujarat, with AAPP above 2 percentage points per year, recorded particularly sturdy improvements. Uttarakhand, Keralam, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Odisha, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh also recorded AAPP above the all-India urban average. In contrast, the remaining States recorded AAPP below the national average. This indicates that several States recorded relatively strong gains despite overall pace of improvement being lower in urban areas than in rural areas.

However, AAPP alone is insufficient as it measures only the pace of change and does not consider the level of female labour force participation from which a State started. Therefore, combining the baseline level – 2019-20 FLFPR for each State – with the AAPP helps better assess the States.

Chart 3 shows the rural baseline-AAPP relationship. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Haryana started with relatively low female LFPR but recorded AAPP above the all-India average, indicating a relatively faster pace of improvement. In contrast, Goa and Punjab started from relatively low baseline levels but recorded AAPP below the national average, indicating slower improvement despite having considerable scope. Odisha, Gujarat and Rajasthan started with relatively higher baseline rural FLFPR and recorded an above-all-India-average AAPP, indicating that faster improvement is not confined to States starting from a low base. Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and the five southern States had relatively higher baseline levels but recorded AAPP below the national average.

Chart 4 shows the urban baseline-AAPP relationship. Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Bihar started from relatively low baseline levels but recorded AAPP above the all-India average. In contrast, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Haryana and Punjab also started from relatively low levels but recorded below-average AAPP, indicating slower improvement. Among the States with relatively higher baseline urban FLFPR, Keralam, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh recorded above-average AAPP, showing that some States with already higher participation continued to make relatively rapid gains.

Taken together, all charts show that female labour force participation differs substantially across States and between rural and urban areas. It also demonstrates why AAPP should not be interpreted in isolation: a State with a lower AAPP may already have a relatively high FLFPR.

Data Point: the rural–urban divide in female labour force participation.

> **VALUE ADDITION — LABOUR METRICS**
>
> - **LFPR:** (Employed + Unemployed) ÷ Population × 100.
> - **WPR:** Employed ÷ Population × 100.
> - **UR:** Unemployed ÷ Labour Force × 100.
> - **PLFS:** launched April 2017 by NSO (MoSPI) — the definitive labour-market data source.

> **PRELIMS POINTERS**
>
> - **Usual Status** & **Current Weekly Status** are the two PLFS reference periods.
> - Rising rural FLFPR is partly linked to **self-employment & agriculture**.
> - **AAPP** measures pace of change, not the level attained.

Syllabus link — GS 1/3: Role of women · Employment, growth and inclusive development.

✦ ✦ ✦

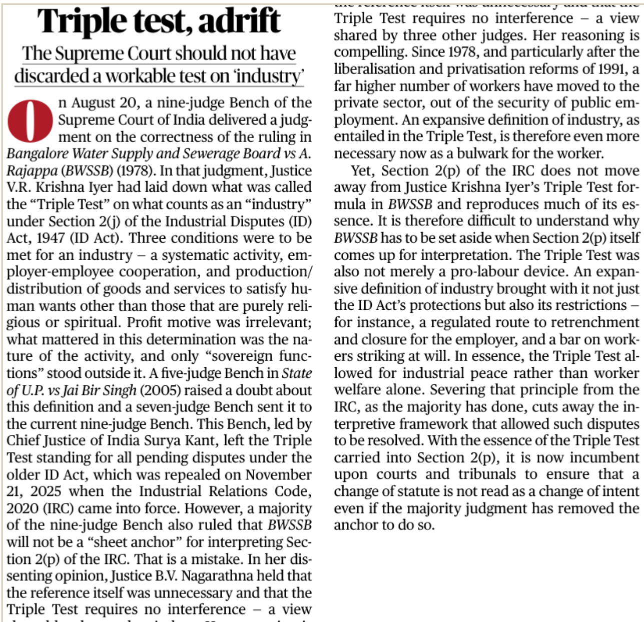
06 Triple Test, Adrift — What Counts as 'Industry'

GS 2 The Hindu · Page 8

WHY IN NEWS

A nine-judge Bench ruled on the correctness of the 1978 Bangalore Water Supply (BWSSB) judgment, which laid down the 'Triple Test' for defining an 'industry' under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

- In **BWSSB (1978)**, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer laid down the Triple Test — an activity qualifies as an 'industry' if there is: **(i) systematic activity, (ii) employer–employee cooperation, and (iii) production/distribution of goods or services** to satisfy human wants (other than purely religious/spiritual).
- Profit motive was irrelevant; only **'sovereign functions'** stood outside the definition.
- *State of U.P. vs Jai Bir Singh* (2005) doubted this, and a seven-judge Bench referred it to the current nine-judge Bench (led by CJI Surya Kant).
- The Bench left the Triple Test standing for pending disputes under the old ID Act, repealed on 21 November 2025 when the **Industrial Relations Code, 2020 (IRC)** came into force.
- A majority held that BWSSB will not be a 'sheet anchor' for interpreting **Section 2(p) of the IRC** — a move criticised, since 2(p) reproduces much of the Triple Test's essence.
- Justice B.V. Nagarathna dissented: the reference was unnecessary and the Triple Test requires no interference.



Triple test, adrift

The Supreme Court should not have discarded a workable test on 'industry'

On August 20, a nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India delivered a judgment on the correctness of the ruling in *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board vs A. Rajappa* (*BWSSB*) (1978). In that judgment, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer had laid down what was called the "Triple Test" on what counts as an "industry" under Section 2(j) of the Industrial Disputes (ID) Act, 1947 (ID Act). Three conditions were to be met for an industry – a systematic activity, employer-employee cooperation, and production/distribution of goods and services to satisfy human wants other than those that are purely religious or spiritual. Profit motive was irrelevant; what mattered in this determination was the nature of the activity, and only "sovereign functions" stood outside it. A five-judge Bench in *State of U.P. vs Jai Bir Singh* (2005) raised a doubt about this definition and a seven-judge Bench sent it to the current nine-judge Bench. This Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, left the Triple Test standing for all pending disputes under the older ID Act, which was repealed on November 21, 2025 when the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 (IRC) came into force. However, a majority of the nine-judge Bench also ruled that *BWSSB* will not be a "sheet anchor" for interpreting Section 2(p) of the IRC. That is a mistake. In her dissenting opinion, Justice B.V. Nagarathna held that the reference itself was unnecessary and that the Triple Test requires no interference – a view shared by three other judges. Her reasoning is compelling. Since 1978, and particularly after the liberalisation and privatisation reforms of 1991, a far higher number of workers have moved to the private sector, out of the security of public employment. An expansive definition of industry, as entailed in the Triple Test, is therefore even more necessary now as a bulwark for the worker.

Yet, Section 2(p) of the IRC does not move away from Justice Krishna Iyer's Triple Test formula in *BWSSB* and reproduces much of its essence. It is therefore difficult to understand why *BWSSB* has to be set aside when Section 2(p) itself comes up for interpretation. The Triple Test was also not merely a pro-labour device. An expansive definition of industry brought with it not just the ID Act's protections but also its restrictions – for instance, a regulated route to retrenchment and closure for the employer, and a bar on workers striking at will. In essence, the Triple Test allowed for industrial peace rather than worker welfare alone. Severing that principle from the IRC, as the majority has done, cuts away the interpretive framework that allowed such disputes to be resolved. With the essence of the Triple Test carried into Section 2(p), it is now incumbent upon courts and tribunals to ensure that a change of statute is not read as a change of intent even if the majority judgment has removed the anchor to do so.

'Triple test, adrift' — the definition of 'industry'.

VALUE ADDITION — LABOUR LAW

- **ID Act, 1947:** defined 'industry' under Section 2(j); repealed by the IRC, 2020.
- **Four Labour Codes:** Wages; Industrial Relations; Social Security; OSH.
- **Why it matters:** the definition decides whether hospitals, universities and charities' employees get ID-Act protections.
- The expansive definition also carried restrictions — regulated retrenchment/closure and limits on strikes.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **BWSSB** = Bangalore Water Supply & Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa (1978).
- **Sovereign functions** (e.g., defence, taxation) stay outside 'industry'.
- **IRC 2020** Section 2(p) now carries the industry definition forward.

Syllabus link — GS 2: Judiciary & statutory interpretation · GS 3: Labour reforms.

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07 Core Concerns — The Economy's Tough Times Ahead

GS 3 The Hindu (Editorial) · Page 8

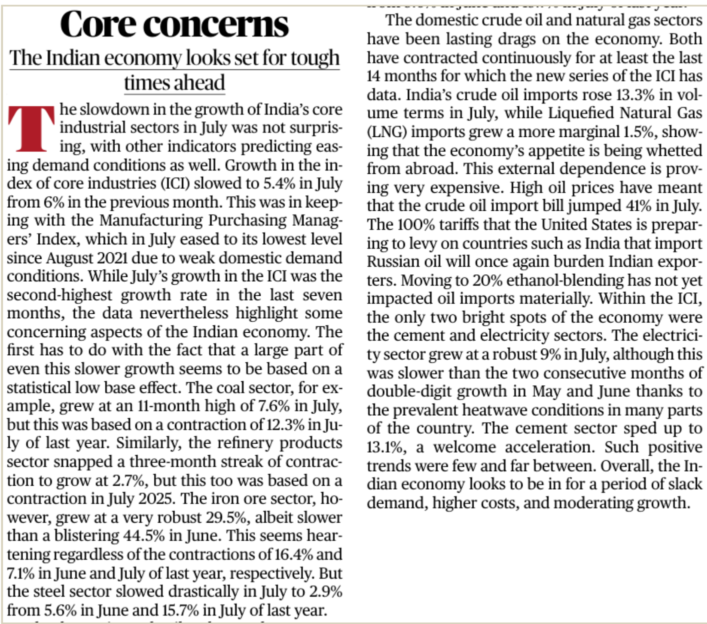
WHY IN NEWS

Growth in the Index of Core Industries (ICI) slowed to 5.4% in July from 6% — and much of even that growth rests on a low base, signalling slack demand and moderating growth.

- The Office of Economic Adviser (DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce) released the ICI under a **new series with base year 2022-23**, applied retrospectively from April 2023.
- The revised ICI expands core industries from **eight to nine** by adding **Iron Ore**.
- It now covers Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, Electricity and Iron Ore.

Weights (new series)

- **Electricity (30.93%)**, Refinery Products (22.57%), Steel (17.58%), Crude Oil (7.43%), Coal (5.59%), Iron Ore (4.90%), Cement (4.41%), Natural Gas (3.84%), Fertilizers (2.73%).
- Crude oil and natural gas have contracted for 14+ months; the crude import bill jumped 41% in July; the only bright spots were **cement (13.1%)** and **electricity (9%)**.



Core concerns

The Indian economy looks set for tough times ahead

The slowdown in the growth of India's core industrial sectors in July was not surprising, with other indicators predicting easing demand conditions as well. Growth in the index of core industries (ICI) slowed to 5.4% in July from 6% in the previous month. This was in keeping with the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, which in July eased to its lowest level since August 2021 due to weak domestic demand conditions. While July's growth in the ICI was the second-highest growth rate in the last seven months, the data nevertheless highlight some concerning aspects of the Indian economy. The first has to do with the fact that a large part of even this slower growth seems to be based on a statistical low base effect. The coal sector, for example, grew at an 11-month high of 7.6% in July, but this was based on a contraction of 12.3% in July of last year. Similarly, the refinery products sector snapped a three-month streak of contraction to grow at 2.7%, but this too was based on a contraction in July 2025. The iron ore sector, however, grew at a very robust 29.5%, albeit slower than a blistering 44.5% in June. This seems heartening regardless of the contractions of 16.4% and 7.1% in June and July of last year, respectively. But the steel sector slowed drastically in July to 2.9% from 5.6% in June and 15.7% in July of last year.

The domestic crude oil and natural gas sectors have been lasting drags on the economy. Both have contracted continuously for at least the last 14 months for which the new series of the ICI has data. India's crude oil imports rose 13.3% in volume terms in July, while Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports grew a more marginal 1.5%, showing that the economy's appetite is being whetted from abroad. This external dependence is proving very expensive. High oil prices have meant that the crude oil import bill jumped 41% in July. The 100% tariffs that the United States is preparing to levy on countries such as India that import Russian oil will once again burden Indian exporters. Moving to 20% ethanol-blending has not yet impacted oil imports materially. Within the ICI, the only two bright spots of the economy were the cement and electricity sectors. The electricity sector grew at a robust 9% in July, although this was slower than the two consecutive months of double-digit growth in May and June thanks to the prevalent heatwave conditions in many parts of the country. The cement sector sped up to 13.1%, a welcome acceleration. Such positive trends were few and far between. Overall, the Indian economy looks to be in for a period of slack demand, higher costs, and moderating growth.

Editorial: 'Core concerns' — the Indian economy looks set for tough times.

VALUE ADDITION — INDUSTRIAL INDICATORS

- **ICI:** tracks eight (now nine) core sectors; a lead indicator for the **IIP**.
- **IIP:** Index of Industrial Production (base 2011-12), released by NSO.
- **PMI:** Purchasing Managers' Index — a survey-based activity gauge.
- **Base effect:** high growth off a low prior-year base can overstate momentum.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ICI weight in IIP is about **40%**.
- New base year: **2022-23** (replaces 2011-12 for ICI).
- US **100% tariff** threat on Russian-oil buyers could burden Indian exporters.

Syllabus link — GS 3: Indian economy — industry, indices and growth.

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Practice Zone

MAINS · PRELIMS · ANSWER KEY

Q1 · GS 2

The MMDR Amendment Bill, 2026 restricts State taxation of mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands. Examine the constitutional and federal issues it raises in light of the Supreme Court's 2024 mineral-tax judgment. (250 words)

MMDR संशोधन विधेयक, 2026 खनिज अधिकारों एवं खनिज-युक्त भूमि पर राज्यों के कराधान को सीमित करता है। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के 2024 के खनिज-कर निर्णय के आलोक में इससे उत्पन्न संवैधानिक एवं संघीय मुद्दों का परीक्षण कीजिए। (250 शब्द)

Approach: Map Entries 23/49/50/54; explain New Section 9D and retrospective relief; contrast with MADA v. SAIL (2024); discuss separation of powers, fiscal federalism and Article 14; conclude with a balance between uniformity and State autonomy.

Q2 · GS 3

"India should build a 'public rail, private engines' model rather than nationalise coaching." Discuss how Digital Public Infrastructure can democratise quality education and reduce dependence on private coaching. (250 words)

“भारत को कोचिंग का राष्ट्रीयकरण करने के बजाय 'सार्वजनिक रेल, निजी इंजन' मॉडल अपनाना चाहिए।” चर्चा कीजिए कि डिजिटल सार्वजनिक अवसंरचना किस प्रकार गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा का लोकतंत्रीकरण कर निजी कोचिंग पर निर्भरता घटा सकती है। (250 शब्द)

Approach: Define DPI (identity/payments/data/credentialing); explain unbundling of content, mentoring, peer-group and credentialing; cite DIKSHA/APAAR; address portability, open outcome data and accreditation; balance access with quality and equity.

Prelims MCQs

10 QUESTIONS

Q1. **With reference to parliamentary procedure, consider the following statements:**
1. Prorogation of a House is done by the presiding officer of that House.
2. A Bill pending before the Lok Sabha lapses on prorogation.
Which of the statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. **'Adjournment sine die' means:**

(a) Ending a session of the House
(b) Terminating a sitting without fixing a date for the next
(c) Dissolving the House
(d) A recess between two sessions

Q3. **Under the Constitution, the maximum permissible gap between two sessions of Parliament is:**

(a) Three months
(b) Four months
(c) Six months
(d) One year

Q4. **With reference to the constitutional scheme on minerals, match the entries:**
1. Entry 50 (State List)
2. Entry 49 (State List)
3. Entry 54 (Union List)
Which pairing is correct?

(a) 1-Taxes on mineral rights; 2-Taxes on lands; 3-Union regulation of mines
(b) 1-Taxes on lands; 2-Union regulation; 3-Taxes on mineral rights
(c) 1-Union regulation; 2-Taxes on mineral rights; 3-Taxes on lands
(d) 1-Taxes on lands; 2-Taxes on mineral rights; 3-Union regulation

Q5. **In Mineral Area Development Authority v. Steel Authority of India (2024), the Supreme Court held that:**

(a) States cannot tax mineral rights
(b) Royalty is a tax
(c) States can tax mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands
(d) Only the Centre can levy any mineral cess

Q6. **The revised Index of Core Industries (ICI) recently introduced a new base year and added a ninth industry. The ninth industry added is:**

(a) Aluminium
(b) Iron Ore
(c) Copper
(d) Natural Gas

Q7. **In the revised ICI, which industry has the highest weight?**

(a) Steel
(b) Refinery Products
(c) Electricity
(d) Coal

Q8. **With reference to the 'Triple Test' laid down in Bangalore Water Supply (1978), which of the following is NOT one of its conditions?**

(a) Systematic activity
(b) Cooperation between employer and employee
(c) Presence of a profit motive
(d) Production/distribution of goods or services for human wants

Q9. **Consider the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025:**
1. Overall FLFPR (15+) rose from about 30% to 40%.
2. The rise was sharper in urban than rural areas.
Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q10. **The Industrial Relations Code, 2020, which replaced the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, came into force in:**

(a) August 2020
(b) November 2025
(c) January 2024
(d) April 2023

ANSWER KEY & RATIONALE

Q1 — D. Prorogation is done by the President, not the presiding officer (so 1 is wrong). A pending Bill lapses on dissolution, not on prorogation (so 2 is wrong).

Q2 — B. Adjournment sine die terminates a sitting without setting a date/time for the next meeting; it does not end the session (that is prorogation).

Q3 — C. Article 85 requires that six months shall not intervene between the last sitting of one session and the first of the next.

Q4 — A. Entry 50 (State) = taxes on mineral rights; Entry 49 (State) = taxes on lands & buildings; Entry 54 (Union) = regulation of mines in public interest.

Q5 — C. The 9-judge Bench (8:1) upheld States' competence to tax mineral rights (Entry 50) and mineral-bearing land (Entry 49), and permitted recovery of past dues from 1 April 2005.

Q6 — B. Iron Ore was added, taking the ICI from eight to nine industries; the new base year is 2022-23.

Q7 — C. Electricity has the highest weight at 30.93%, followed by Refinery Products (22.57%) and Steel (17.58%).

Q8 — C. Profit motive was held to be irrelevant to the definition of 'industry'; the three conditions are the other options.

Q9 — A. FLFPR rose ~30%→40% (statement 1 correct). The rise was sharper in RURAL areas (33%→45.9%) than urban (statement 2 incorrect).

Q10 — B. The old ID Act was repealed on 21 November 2025 when the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 came into force.

QUICK REVISION RECAP

- **Prorogation** (by President) ends a session; **adjournment sine die** (by presiding officer) ends a sitting; six-month rule (Art. 85).
- **MMDR Amendment 2026:** New Sec. 9D caps State levies; retrospective relief; potential conflict with **MADA v. SAIL (2024)**.
- **Mineral entries:** Entry 50 (mineral-rights tax), Entry 49 (land tax), Entry 54 Union (regulation).
- **AI tutor:** 'public rail, private engines' — DPI (Aadhaar/UPI/DigiLocker/APAAR, DIKSHA); portability & open outcome data.
- **FLFPR:** 30%→40% (2019-20 to 2025); rural rise (33%→45.9%) sharper than urban.
- **Triple Test** (BWSSB 1978): systematic activity + employer-employee cooperation + goods/services; profit motive irrelevant.
- **Revised ICI:** new base 2022-23, 9 industries (added Iron Ore); Electricity highest weight (30.93%).

PRELIMS TRAP-SETTERS

- **Prorogation** ends a session; **adjournment** ends a sitting; **dissolution** ends the House.
- **Rajya Sabha** is never dissolved; Lok Sabha term is 5 years (Art. 83).
- **Royalty is not a tax** (India Cement, 1990); MADA (2024) upheld State taxing powers.
- Entry 50 = mineral-rights tax; Entry 49 = land tax (both State List).
- Revised ICI: base year **2022-23**, nine industries, Electricity weight **30.93%**.
- Triple Test excludes **sovereign functions**; profit motive is irrelevant.