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COMPILED BY

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TOPIC 01 GS 2 POLITY · PARLIAMENT · THE HINDU, PAGE 1

Prorogation Delay: Why Closing a Session Matters

WHY IN NEWS

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh flagged a **10-day delay in proroguing the Lok Sabha** after it was adjourned *sine die* on **August 13** at the end of the Monsoon Session, asking whether the gap signals the Centre's effort to muster a **two-thirds majority for a Constitutional Amendment Bill on delimitation** in a Special Session.

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.

> 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)

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.

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KEY ANALYSIS

- **Normal practice:** As per parliamentary convention, the gap between adjournment *sine die* and prorogation is generally **two to four days**. Longer gaps have occurred: **28 days** (Monsoon Session, 2015) and **20 days** (2021).

- **The authority cited:** Mr. Ramesh cited *Practice and Procedure of Parliament* by **M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shakdher**, which underlines that it is **prorogation, not adjournment**, that formally closes a session and clears the way for the next one.
- **Why the delay is significant:** As long as the House is only adjourned *sine die*, the session technically continues; the Speaker can recall the House **without a fresh summons by the President**. This allows the government to reconvene the same session at short notice, e.g. to take up a Bill.
- **The delimitation angle:** Delimitation of Lok Sabha seats is frozen till the first Census after 2026 (**84th Amendment, 2001**). Any amendment that changes the **representation of States in Parliament** needs a **special majority** under Art. 368(2) and **ratification by half the State Legislatures**.
- **Wider concern:** Procedural conventions are part of parliamentary accountability. Using the gap between adjournment and prorogation strategically can reduce predictability for the Opposition and weaken deliberative scrutiny.

VALUE ADDITION · SUMMONING · ADJOURNMENT · PROROGATION · DISSOLUTION

Term	Done by	What it does
Summoning (Art. 85(1))	President	Calls each House to meet; gap between two sessions cannot exceed **6 months**.
Adjournment	Presiding Officer	Ends a *sitting*; House meets again at a fixed time (hours, days or weeks).
Adjournment *sine die*	Presiding Officer	Ends a sitting **without fixing** a date for the next meeting.
Prorogation (Art. 85(2)(a))	President	Ends a *session*. Pending notices lapse (except notices for introducing Bills); **pending Bills do not lapse**. Period till reassembly = **Recess**.
Dissolution (Art. 85(2)(b))	President	Ends the **life of Lok Sabha** (Rajya Sabha is permanent); Bills pending in LS lapse.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Ordinances (Art. 123) can be issued only when **both Houses are not in session** — prorogation of a House opens this window.
- The three-session pattern (Budget, Monsoon, Winter) is a **convention**, not a constitutional requirement.
- Quorum of either House = **one-tenth** of total members (Art. 100).
- Joint sitting (Art. 108) does not lapse on dissolution if notified before it.

SYLLABUS LINK GS 2 — Parliament: structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges.

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TOPIC 02 GS 1 & 3 FEDERALISM · MINERAL RESOURCES · THE HINDU, PAGE 4

MMDR Amendment Act, 2026: Who Taxes the Minerals?

WHY IN NEWS

Parliament passed the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026** (assented to by President Droupadi Murmu), which bars States from levying taxes, cesses or other levies on **mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands** except as permitted by the Centre. Mineral-rich **Odisha** fears a major hit to its finances.

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.

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.

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

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.

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KEY ANALYSIS

- **Key provisions: Sec. 2 amended** to bring 'mineral-bearing lands' under Union regulatory control; **new Sec. 9D** bars State levies on mineral rights or mineral-bearing lands (whether based on quantity, value or royalty) except under conditions prescribed by the Centre; **Sec. 13** empowers the Centre to frame rules on future levies; **unpaid past levies become invalid**, but amounts already paid will **not be refunded**.
- **Centre's rationale:** Heavy and non-uniform State taxes hurt mineral production and push up costs; a **uniform, predictable fiscal regime** is needed as "extraction and management have to be guided by long-term national goals". Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy says it prevents supply-chain bypass and sub-optimal market development.
- **Concentration of minerals:** As per the Ministry of Mines' 2024-25 report, **~97.70%** of mineral value comes from eight States: **Odisha (43.49%)**, Rajasthan (16.26%), Chhattisgarh (13.69%), Karnataka (12.42%), Maharashtra (4.76%), Jharkhand (3.26%), M.P. (2.78%), A.P. (1.04%).
- **Odisha's stake:** Mining accounts for **37.59%** of projected State revenue (2026-27). After the 2024 SC verdict Odisha stood to reclaim over **₹1 lakh crore** in retrospective dues and could have earned **~₹50,000 crore a year**. Its **ORISED Act, 2004** cess was struck down by the Orissa High Court, and the fight reached the Supreme Court.
- **Human cost:** Odisha's **Sukinda valley (Jajpur)** holds **98% of India's chromite**; residents link **hexavalent chromium** pollution to cancer. Critics fear accountability for rehabilitation and environmental protection will blur, with the burden staying on tribal mining communities.

- **Constitutional questions:** (i) **Federalism:** Parliament may limit taxes on mineral rights under **Entry 50**, but its power over land taxes under **Entry 49** is contested. (ii) **Separation of powers:** invalidating dues upheld by the SC may amount to overriding a judgment rather than curing its basis. (iii) **Art. 14:** defaulters gain while compliant payers get no refund.

VALUE ADDITION · CONSTITUTIONAL MAP & THE 2024 VERDICT

Provision	Subject
Entry 54, Union List	Regulation of mines & mineral development to the extent Parliament declares expedient in public interest.
Entry 23, State List	Regulation of mines & mineral development, *subject to* Entry 54.
Entry 49, State List	Taxes on lands and buildings (incl. mineral-bearing land).
Entry 50, State List	Taxes on mineral rights, subject to limitations imposed by Parliament.

Mineral Area Development Authority v. SAIL (July 2024): 9-judge Bench, **8:1** majority (dissent: Justice B.V. Nagarathna) — **royalty is not a tax**; States have legislative competence to tax mineral rights (Entry 50) and mineral-bearing lands (Entry 49); MMDR Act does not limit this. A follow-up order allowed recovery of dues from **1 April 2005**, payable in staggered instalments, with interest and penalty waived.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Royalty is fixed by the **Centre** for major minerals but collected by the **States**; minor minerals are regulated by States.
- **District Mineral Foundation (DMF)** was created by the MMDR Amendment, 2015, along with the auction regime.
- Chromite is an ore of chromium used in **stainless steel**; its **hexavalent** form Cr(VI) is carcinogenic.
- Prafulla Samantara, quoted in the story, is a recipient of the **Goldman Environmental Prize**.

SYLLABUS LINK GS 1 — Distribution of key natural resources · GS 2 — Federal structure, Centre-State relations · GS 3 — Mobilisation of resources, environment.

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TOPIC 03 GS 3 EDUCATION · DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE · THE HINDU, PAGE 8

An AI Tutor for Every Child: Public Rail, Private Engines

WHY IN NEWS

In an op-ed, IAS officer **Srivatsa Krishna** proposes using **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** to deliver a free AI coach and tutor to every Indian child — echoing the Prime Minister's call — without nationalising or destroying the private coaching industry.

KEY ANALYSIS

- **Scale of coaching:** Redseer pegs India's test-prep market at **$14.8 billion (FY26)**, projected at $23-26 billion by FY30 (12-15% CAGR), with ~**2,00,000 coaching centres**. Of **65 million** students in classes 9-12, ~27 million are in government schools; a **2025 NSO survey** found **27%** took private coaching (30.7% urban, 25.5% rural).
- **Why a platform, not a vendor:** No single private player has the capacity (PhysicsWallah has ~4.9 million paid users vs a target population 10-100 times larger). Hence a **'public rail, private engines'**

model: the State supplies identity, payments, discovery, data and credentialing; star teachers, ed-tech firms and local tutors supply content — as **UPI** did for payments and **ONDC** attempts for commerce.

- **Unbundling coaching:** Coaching bundles four things: **content; doubt-solving/mentoring; peer group & discipline; a credible quality signal**. DPI can unbundle them and push the marginal cost of the first two towards 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

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- **Design proposed:** Start with **NEET and JEE** (objective, machine-gradable, high-volume); anchor at **Bodhan.ai, IIT Madras** (₹500 crore, five-year grant) or an NPCI-like Section 8 body; use **Aadhaar/ DigiLocker** and **APAAR ID**; open APIs (DIKSHA, apps, YouTube); a student-owned learning wallet and progress ledger shared through **DEPA/Account Aggregator** consent; UPI-linked premium add-ons with an optional **DBT-like e-Shiksha wallet**.

- **Governance guard-rails:** Government should publish **open ratings and outcome data** per provider; ensure **independent accreditation** with delisting teeth; and enforce a **no-lock-in rule** so that student data is portable. Equity: data-light streaming, offline content and the **5 lakh+ Common Service Centres**.
- **Concerns to weigh:** Digital divide and device access; AI hallucination and content accuracy; children's data protection under the **DPDP Act, 2023**; Indian-language coverage; risk of exam-centric learning crowding out foundational learning and the role of teachers.

VALUE ADDITION · INDIA'S DPI STACK FOR EDUCATION

APAAR ID	Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry — 'One Nation, One Student ID' under NEP 2020, linked to DigiLocker.
DIKSHA	Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (2017) — national platform for school education content.
DEPA	Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (NITI Aayog) — consent-based data sharing; basis of RBI's **Account Aggregator** framework.
CoE in AI for Education	Announced in Union Budget 2025-26 with an outlay of ₹500 crore.
Coaching Guidelines, 2024	Ministry of Education guidelines for registration and regulation of coaching centres (incl. no enrolment below 16 years).

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Author's cost claim: open-source models such as **Gemma** offer a million tokens for about 20-30 cents.
- **Common Service Centres** are run under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (Digital India).
- The op-ed borrows 'delulu' (Gen Z slang for delusional) to argue government should **enable**, not become, the AI tutor.

SYLLABUS LINK GS 2 — Education, government policies · GS 3 — Science & technology, IT, inclusive growth.

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TOPIC 04 GS 3 SOCIETY · TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE · THE HINDU, PAGE 9

Social Media and Minors: Beyond the Ban

WHY IN NEWS

As countries move to restrict children's access to social media — **Australia's under-16 ban**, proposals in the U.K., and varying approaches in the U.S. — former Sri Lankan Minister **Milinda Moragoda** argues India should draw on its own civilisational experience rather than simply copy bans.

KEY ANALYSIS

- **Real dangers:** Social media exposes young people to **manipulation, addiction, bullying and harmful content**. But it does not automatically follow that bans are the answer; the bigger question is whether regulation alone can prepare a generation for a world shaped by AI.

- **Fear is not the answer:** Every communications revolution — printing press, radio, TV, Internet — triggered anxiety. The challenge was never *whether* information should flow but **how societies encourage its responsible use**. Fear should not become the principal driver of policy.
- **Limits of bans:** VPNs, encrypted apps, alternative platforms and AI tools make **circumvention easy**. The next generation will interact with **intelligent AI systems** that educate, mentor and potentially manipulate — a challenge bigger than social media.

A civilisational approach to social media

Milinda Moragoda

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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- **Role of government:** Demand **platform transparency**, set clear **child-protection standards**, combat criminal activity and encourage responsible innovation.

- **Civilisational response:** Revive the spirit of the **guru-shishya** tradition — character, self-discipline, responsibility. Parents must be digitally literate and engaged; schools should teach **digital citizenship, critical thinking, ethical reasoning and resilience**; religious and cultural bodies, tech firms and civil society should cooperate.

VALUE ADDITION · INDIA'S LEGAL TOOLKIT FOR CHILD ONLINE SAFETY

DPDP Act, 2023 (Sec. 9)	'Child' = below 18; **verifiable parental consent** required; bars processing detrimental to well-being, **tracking, behavioural monitoring and targeted advertising** directed at children.
IT Rules, 2021	Due-diligence and grievance obligations on intermediaries; additional duties for significant social media intermediaries.
POCSO Act, 2012	Criminalises sexual offences against children, including online material.
Australia, 2024 law	Minimum age of **16** for social media accounts; onus on **platforms** to take reasonable steps, not on parents or children.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The article frames the issue as **social, cultural and civilisational**, not merely technological.
- Key ethics vocabulary for GS 4: digital citizenship, resilience, responsible use, intergenerational transmission of values.

SYLLABUS LINK GS 1 — Effects of globalisation on Indian society · GS 2 — Vulnerable sections · GS 3 — Challenges to internal security via communication networks · Essay.

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TOPIC 05 GS 3 ECONOMY · EMPLOYMENT & GENDER · THE HINDU, PAGE 9

Female Labour Force Participation: The Rural-Urban Divide

WHY IN NEWS

Data from **PLFS 2025** show the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR, age 15+) rising from **30% in 2019-20 to 40% in 2025**, with the rise far sharper in **rural areas (33% → 45.9%)** than in **urban areas (23.3% → 27.7%)**.

KEY ANALYSIS

- **Rural pace (AAPP):** Average Annual Percentage Point change, 2019-20 to 2025: **West Bengal (3.68), U.P. (3.64), Gujarat (3.38), Odisha & Bihar (3.28), Rajasthan (3.06)** and Haryana were above the all-India rural average. M.P., Punjab, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Goa, H.P. and the southern States were below it.
- **Urban pace: Rajasthan (2.30)** and **Gujarat (2.26)** led; Uttarakhand, Keralam, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Odisha, Bihar and A.P. were above the urban average. **Goa (−0.50)** was the only State with a clearly negative urban AAPP.
- **Baseline matters:** AAPP measures only the **pace**, not the level. Bihar, U.P., W.B. and Haryana started low but improved fast; Odisha, Gujarat and Rajasthan started relatively high and still improved fast;

States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, W.B., Maharashtra, M.P., H.P. and Goa saw slower urban gains despite high starting levels.

- **Himachal Pradesh (HPAS angle):** H.P. recorded a **marginally negative rural AAPP (−0.02)** despite nearly **90% of its population being rural** — but it started from among the **highest rural FLFPR** in the country, so the plateau reflects saturation, not decline.
- **Reading the rise:** Rural gains are partly linked to **self-employment and unpaid work in household enterprises**, SHG-led livelihoods and time freed by water and clean-cooking access; quality and earnings of such work remain concerns. Urban stagnation reflects **safety, mobility, childcare gaps, social norms** and a shortage of suitable jobs.

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, Kerala, 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, Kerala, 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.

Wide variations

The data for the charts were sourced from PLFS 2025. The author is an Indian Statistical Service Officer serving as Joint Director in MoS&PI

Chart 1: Average annual percentage point (AAPP) change in rural FLFPR for each State between 2019-20 and 2025

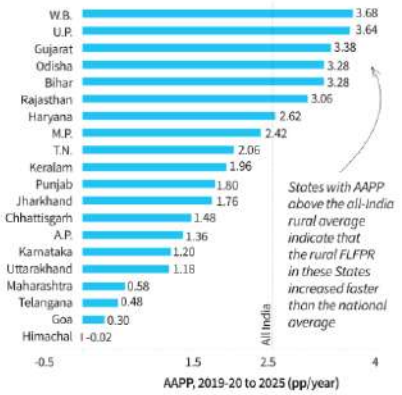
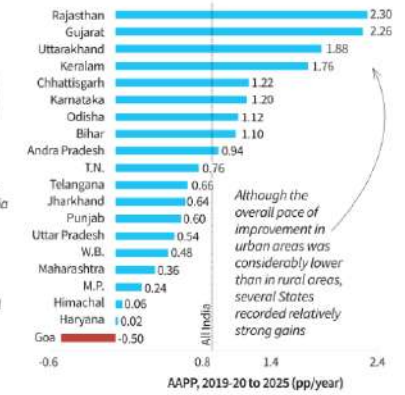


Chart 2: Average annual percentage point (AAPP) change in urban FLFPR for each State between 2019-20 and 2025



1 Average annual percentage point change (AAPP) is used to indicate the pace of improvement and is not intended to rank States

2 In Chart 1, Himachal Pradesh is particularly notable, with a marginally negative AAPP, despite nearly 90% of its population residing in rural areas

3 As shown in Chart 4, States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Goa recorded slower improvement despite their relatively higher starting levels

Chart 3: Baseline (2019-20 LFPR) and AAAP relation for rural FLFPR

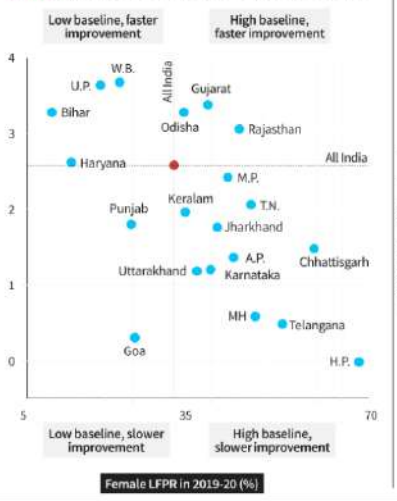
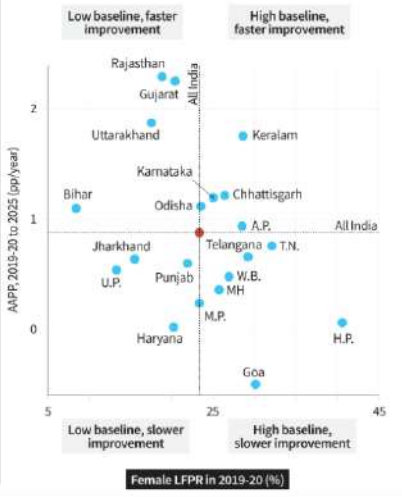


Chart 4: Baseline (2019-20 LFPR) and AAAP relation for urban FLFPR



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VALUE ADDITION · LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS & PLFS

LFPR	(Employed + Unemployed) ÷ Population × 100 — those working *or* seeking work.

WPR	Employed ÷ Population × 100.
Unemployment Rate	Unemployed ÷ Labour force × 100.
PLFS	Launched **April 2017** by the **NSO, MoSPI**; India's official source on employment. Revamped from January 2025 to give **monthly** estimates (Current Weekly Status) for rural and urban areas.
Usual Status vs CWS	Usual Status uses a 365-day reference period (principal + subsidiary); Current Weekly Status uses the last 7 days.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Overall FLFPR (15+): **30% → 40%** (2019-20 to 2025).
- Rural: 33% → **45.9%**; Urban: 23.3% → **27.7%**.
- Highest rural AAPP: **West Bengal**; highest urban AAPP: **Rajasthan**; negative urban AAPP: **Goa**.

SYLLABUS LINK GS 1 — Role of women, social empowerment · GS 3 — Growth, development and employment.

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TOPIC 06 GS 2 JUDICIARY · LABOUR LAW · THE HINDU, PAGE 8

'Industry' Redefined? The Triple Test Adrift

WHY IN NEWS

On **August 20**, a **nine-judge Bench** of the Supreme Court led by **CJI Surya Kant** ruled on the correctness of *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa* (1978). The editorial argues the Court should not have discarded the workable 'Triple Test' on what counts as an 'industry'.

KEY ANALYSIS

- **The Triple Test (1978):** Justice **V.R. Krishna Iyer** held that an activity is an 'industry' under **Sec. 2(j), Industrial Disputes Act, 1947** if there is (i) **systematic activity**, (ii) **employer-employee cooperation**, and (iii) **production/distribution of goods and services** to satisfy human wants (other than purely religious/spiritual). **Profit motive was irrelevant**; only **sovereign functions** stood outside.
- **Long road to nine judges:** A five-judge Bench in ***State of U.P. v. Jai Bir Singh* (2005)** doubted the definition; a seven-judge Bench referred it to the present nine-judge Bench. The dispute: whether hospitals, universities, charities and government departments are 'industries' whose staff get statutory protection.
- **What the Court held:** The Triple Test continues for **all pending disputes** under the ID Act, which was **repealed on November 21, 2025** when the **Industrial Relations Code, 2020** came into force. But the majority ruled BWSSB will **not be a 'sheet anchor'** for interpreting **Sec. 2(p) of the IRC**.
- **The dissent:** Justice **B.V. Nagarathna** held the reference itself was unnecessary and the Triple Test needs no interference — a view shared by three other judges. Since 1978, and especially after the **1991 reforms**, far more workers are in the private sector, so an expansive definition is even more necessary as a bulwark for the worker.
- **Editorial's critique:** Sec. 2(p) of the IRC largely **reproduces the essence** of the Triple Test. The Test was not merely pro-labour: it also brought the ID Act's **restrictions** — a regulated route to

retrenchment and closure, and a bar on strikes at will — serving **industrial peace**. Courts must ensure a **change of statute is not read as a change of intent**.

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.

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VALUE ADDITION · INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CODE, 2020 AT A GLANCE

One of the **four Labour Codes** (Wages 2019; Industrial Relations 2020; Social Security 2020; Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions 2020), together subsuming **29 central labour laws**; all came into force on **November 21, 2025**.

Sec. 2(p) exclusions	Charitable, social or philanthropic institutions; **sovereign functions** (incl. defence research, atomic energy, space); **domestic service**; any activity notified by the Centre.
Lay-off / retrenchment	Prior government permission threshold raised from 100 to **300 workers** (States may raise further).
Strikes	Notice requirement (60 days; no strike within 14 days of notice) extended to **all industrial establishments**.

New features	Fixed-term employment; negotiating union/council; **Worker Re-skilling Fund**.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- BWSSB (1978) was decided by a **seven-judge** Bench; the 2026 ruling is by a **nine-judge** Bench.
- The 1982 amendment to Sec. 2(j) of the ID Act was **never notified**.

SYLLABUS LINK GS 2 — Structure & functioning of the Judiciary; statutory bodies · GS 3 — Labour reforms, effects of liberalisation.

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TOPIC 07 GS 3 ECONOMY · INDUSTRY · THE HINDU, PAGE 8

Core Concerns: Eight-Plus-One Industries Slow Down

WHY IN NEWS

Growth in the **Index of Core Industries (ICI)** slowed to **5.4% in July** from 6% in June, in step with the **Manufacturing PMI**, which eased to its **lowest level since August 2021** on weak domestic demand. The editorial warns of slack demand, higher costs and moderating growth.

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.

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KEY ANALYSIS

- **Base effect at work: Coal** grew at an 11-month high of **7.6%**, but on a contraction of 12.3% a year ago; **refinery products** grew **2.7%** after a three-month contraction, again on a low base.

- **Mixed signals: Iron ore** grew a robust **29.5%** (44.5% in June), but **steel** slowed sharply to **2.9%** (5.6% in June; 15.7% in July last year).
- **Energy drag: Crude oil and natural gas** have contracted for at least **14 straight months**. Crude imports rose **13.3%** (volume) and LNG imports **1.5%**; high prices pushed the **crude import bill up 41%**. The **100% U.S. tariffs** on countries importing Russian oil will burden exporters; **20% ethanol blending** has not yet cut imports materially.
- **Bright spots: Electricity** grew a robust **9%** (after double-digit growth in May-June due to heatwaves) and **cement** accelerated to **13.1%**.
- **Takeaway:** High external dependence for energy is proving expensive; the economy looks set for a period of **slack demand, higher costs and moderating growth**.

VALUE ADDITION · THE NEW ICI SERIES (BASE 2022-23)

Released by the **Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT** (Ministry of Commerce & Industry). The new series replaces the 2011-12 base, applies from **April 2023** with a back series, and adds **Iron Ore**, taking coverage from **eight to nine** industries.

Industry	Weight (%)	Industry	Weight (%)
Electricity	**30.93**	Iron Ore	4.90
Refinery Products	22.57	Cement	4.41
Steel	17.58	Natural Gas	3.84
Crude Oil	7.43	Fertilizers	**2.73**
Coal	5.59		

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ICI is released by **OEA, DPIIT**; the **IIP** is released by **NSO, MoSPI**.
- PMI above **50** = expansion; below 50 = contraction.
- **Base effect:** a low value in the comparison period inflates current growth rates.

SYLLABUS LINK GS 3 — Indian economy: growth, industrial policy, energy security.

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PRACTICE ZONE · 24 AUGUST 2026

Test Yourself

Mains Practice Questions

Q1 · GS 2 · 250 words · 15 marks

In *Mineral Area Development Authority v.* SAIL (2024), the Supreme Court upheld the States' power to tax mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands. Critically examine whether the MMDR Amendment Act, 2026 is consistent with the principles of cooperative fiscal federalism and separation of powers.

खनिज क्षेत्र विकास प्राधिकरण बनाम सेल (2024) मामले में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने खनिज अधिकारों और खनिज-युक्त भूमि पर कर लगाने की राज्यों की शक्ति को बरकरार रखा था। आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए कि क्या खान और खनिज (विकास और विनियमन) संशोधन अधिनियम, 2026 सहकारी राजकोषीय संघवाद तथा शक्तियों के पृथक्करण के सिद्धांतों के अनुरूप है। (250 शब्द, 15 अंक)

APPROACH

Intro → State the Act's core change (Sec. 9D bar on State levies; invalidation of unpaid past dues) and the 2024 verdict (8:1, royalty not a tax).

For the Act → Uniform fiscal regime, investor certainty, mineral security and critical minerals push; Entry 54 UL and Entry 50 SL allow Parliament to limit taxes on mineral rights.

Against → Entry 49 land taxes outside Parliament's limiting power; nullifying dues may override a judgment rather than cure its basis; Art. 14 issue (no refund to compliant payers); fiscal loss to Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh; tribal welfare.

Way forward → Compensation or revenue-sharing formula, consultation via Inter-State Council/GST-style council for minerals, DMF strengthening, rules framed with States.

Conclusion → Balance national mineral goals with States' fiscal autonomy — cooperative, not coercive, federalism.

Q2 · GS 1 / GS 3 · 250 words · 15 marks

Despite a sharp rise in the female labour force participation rate since 2019-20, a wide rural-urban divide persists. Analyse the reasons behind this divergence and suggest measures to improve both the level and the quality of women's participation in the urban labour market.

वर्ष 2019-20 के बाद से महिला श्रम बल भागीदारी दर में तीव्र वृद्धि के बावजूद एक व्यापक ग्रामीण-शहरी अंतराल बना हुआ है। इस विचलन के कारणों का विश्लेषण कीजिए तथा शहरी श्रम बाज़ार में महिलाओं की भागीदारी के स्तर और गुणवत्ता दोनों को बढ़ाने हेतु उपाय सुझाइए। (250 शब्द, 15 अंक)

APPROACH

Intro → PLFS 2025 data: FLFPR 30% → 40%; rural 33% → 45.9% vs urban 23.3% → 27.7%.

Rural drivers → Self-employment and unpaid family work, SHGs/DAY-NRLM, time saved by water and LPG access, post-COVID income needs (partly distress-driven).

Urban constraints → Safety and transport, childcare and care burden, social norms, mismatch of skills and jobs, wage gaps, few part-time/flexible jobs; U-shaped FLFP curve.

Measures → Creches and care economy, safe public transport, hostels for working women, flexible work and Labour Code provisions, skilling in services/STEM, MSME and gig-worker social security, gender budgeting.

Conclusion → Move from participation to **decent, paid, secure** work for a Viksit Bharat.

Prelims MCQs

1 Consider the following statements regarding the sessions of Parliament:

1. Prorogation of a House is done by the President.
2. All Bills pending before the Lok Sabha lapse on its prorogation.
3. Adjournment *sine die* is done by the Presiding Officer of the House.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

2 With reference to the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:
1. The Constitution prescribes that Parliament shall hold three sessions in a year.
2. The gap between two sessions of Parliament cannot exceed six months.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3 "Taxes on mineral rights subject to any limitations imposed by Parliament by law relating to mineral development" is an entry in:
(a) Entry 54, Union List (b) Entry 50, State List (c) Entry 49, State List (d) Entry 23, State List

4 With reference to *Mineral Area Development Authority v. Steel Authority of India* (2024), consider the following statements:
1. It held that royalty is not a tax.
2. It was decided by a nine-judge Bench by an 8:1 majority.
3. States were allowed to recover past dues from 1 April 2005.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

5 The Sukinda valley, which holds about 98% of India's chromite reserves, is located in:
(a) Jharkhand (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Odisha (d) Karnataka

6 Consider the following statements:
1. APAAR ID is promoted as 'One Nation, One Student ID'.
2. DIKSHA is a national digital platform for school education.
3. The Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) was framed by the Reserve Bank of India.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

7 Under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, which of the following is/are correct regarding children's data?
1. A 'child' is a person below 18 years of age.
2. Verifiable consent of the parent is required before processing a child's data.
3. Targeted advertising to children is permitted if parental consent is obtained.
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

8 With reference to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), consider the following statements:
1. It is conducted by the National Statistical Office under MoSPI.
2. It was launched in April 2017.
3. The Worker Population Ratio includes persons who are seeking work.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

9 Which one of the following was **NOT** a component of the 'Triple Test' laid down in *Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa* (1978)?
(a) Systematic activity
(b) Employer-employee cooperation
(c) Presence of a profit motive
(d) Production/distribution of goods and services

10 With reference to the Index of Core Industries (ICI), consider the following statements:
1. It is released by the National Statistical Office.
2. The new series with base 2022-23 covers nine industries including iron ore.
3. Electricity has the highest weight in the new series.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer Key & Rationale

Q1 (b)	Prorogation (Art. 85(2)(a)) is by the President; adjournment *sine die* by the Speaker/Chairman. Prorogation does **not** make pending Bills lapse — only dissolution of Lok Sabha does.
Q2 (b)	Art. 85 only caps the gap between two sessions at six months. Budget, Monsoon and Winter sessions are a **convention**.
Q3 (b)	Entry 50, State List. Entry 49 SL covers taxes on lands and buildings; Entry 54 UL and Entry 23 SL deal with regulation of mines.
Q4 (d)	All three are correct. Justice B.V. Nagarathna dissented.
Q5 (c)	Sukinda is in **Jajpur district, Odisha**. Chromite mining here is linked to hexavalent chromium pollution.
Q6 (b)	DEPA was framed by **NITI Aayog**; RBI's Account Aggregator framework is built on it.
Q7 (b)	Sec. 9 bars tracking, behavioural monitoring and targeted advertising directed at children altogether.
Q8 (b)	WPR counts only the **employed**; those seeking work are included in the LFPR, not the WPR.
Q9 (c)	Profit motive was expressly held **irrelevant**; only sovereign functions were excluded.
Q10 (c)	ICI is released by the **Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT**; the IIP is released by NSO.

Quick Revision Recap

Parliament: Lok Sabha adjourned *sine die* on Aug 13 but not prorogued for 10 days; convention is 2-4 days; prorogation by President ends a session, adjournment by the Presiding Officer ends a sitting. **Minerals:** MMDR Amendment Act, 2026 adds Sec. 9D barring State levies on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands, voids unpaid past dues without refunds, and is in tension with the 8:1 MADA v. SAIL (2024) ruling; Odisha holds 43.49% of mineral output value. **Education:** 'public rail, private engines' DPI model for a free AI tutor — start with NEET/JEE, APAAR, DEPA, no-lock-in, open outcome data. **Social media:** bans are easy to circumvent; India should combine safeguards with digital citizenship rooted in the guru-shishya ethos. **Labour:** FLFPR 30% → 40% (2019-20 to 2025); rural 45.9% vs urban 27.7%; W.B. leads rural AAPP, Rajasthan urban; H.P. flat at a high base. **Judiciary:** nine-judge Bench keeps the Triple Test only for pending ID Act cases; not a 'sheet anchor' for Sec. 2(p) IRC; Justice Nagarathna dissents. **Economy:** ICI growth 5.4% in July; crude and gas in 14-month contraction; cement 13.1%, electricity 9%; new ICI base 2022-23 with nine industries.

Prelims Trap-Setters

Adjournment *sine die* = end of session?	No. Only **prorogation** ends a session; adjournment *sine die* ends a sitting.

Prorogation kills pending Bills?	No. Only **dissolution** of Lok Sabha causes Bills to lapse.
Royalty is a tax?	No — the 2024 nine-judge verdict held **royalty is not a tax**.
Who releases the ICI?	**OEA, DPIIT** — not NSO (which releases the IIP).
Highest ICI weight?	**Electricity (30.93%)**, not Refinery Products (22.57%).
Triple Test needs profit motive?	No — profit motive is **irrelevant**.
DEPA framed by RBI?	No — by **NITI Aayog**; RBI built Account Aggregators on it.
DPDP child = below 16?	No — **below 18** under India's DPDP Act (Australia's social media floor is 16).

Persons & Places in News

Jairam Ramesh	Congress general secretary (communications); flagged the prorogation delay.
M.N. Kaul & S.L. Shakdher	Authors of *Practice and Procedure of Parliament*.
G. Kishan Reddy	Union Minister of Coal and Mines; defended the MMDR amendment.
Naveen Patnaik / Mohan Charan Majhi	Former and present Odisha CMs; Patnaik sought a special Assembly session.
Sukinda Valley (Jajpur, Odisha)	Holds ~98% of India's chromite; hexavalent chromium pollution.
Prafulla Samantara	Odisha environmentalist, Goldman Environmental Prize recipient.
Bodhan.ai, IIT Madras	Suggested anchor for a national AI-tutor platform.
Milinda Moragoda	Former Sri Lankan minister; founder, Pathfinder Foundation.
CJI Surya Kant	Led the nine-judge Bench on the definition of 'industry'.
Justice B.V. Nagarathna	Dissented: Triple Test needs no interference.
Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer	Authored the 1978 'Triple Test' in BWSSB.

Connect the Dots

Federalism runs through the day's news. The MMDR amendment narrows States' taxing room over minerals, while the delimitation debate behind the prorogation row is about how seats — and therefore power — are shared among States. **Institutions and conventions:** a delayed prorogation and a nine-judge ruling that unanchors a 48-year-old precedent both raise the same question — how far settled practice should bind present choices. **Human capital:** a DPI-based AI tutor, a civilisational approach to children's digital lives and the rising (but uneven) participation of women in work are three faces of one goal: converting India's demographic dividend into productive, confident citizens. **Economy:** a slowing core sector, costly energy imports and Odisha's fiscal anxiety show how growth, resources and federal finance are intertwined.

Quotable Lines for Answer Writing

> *"Prorogation, not adjournment, formally closes a session and clears the way for the next one."*
> — Kaul & Shakdher, cited in the news

> *"Government becomes the platform and market-maker, not the content producer."*
> — Srivatsa Krishna, on the AI tutor

> *"Regulation alone cannot solve what is fundamentally a social, cultural and civilisational challenge."*
> — Milinda Moragoda

> *"A change of statute is not to be read as a change of intent."*
> — The Hindu editorial on the Triple Test

Static Linkage

Prorogation delay	Art. 85 (summoning, prorogation, dissolution), Art. 100 (quorum), Art. 108 (joint sitting), Art. 123 (ordinances), Art. 368 (amendment procedure), Arts. 81-82 (composition & readjustment).
MMDR Amendment	Seventh Schedule — Entry 54 UL; Entries 23, 49, 50 SL; Art. 246 (distribution of legislative powers); Art. 265 (no tax save by authority of law); Art. 14 (equality).
AI tutor	Art. 21A (right to education, 86th Amendment, 2002); NEP 2020; Art. 41 & 45 (DPSP on education).
Social media & minors	Art. 19(1)(a) & 19(2) (speech and its limits); Art. 21 — privacy as a fundamental right (K.S. *Puttaswamy*, 2017).
Female LFPR	Art. 39(d) (equal pay for equal work); Art. 42 (maternity relief); Art. 15(3) (special provisions for women).
Triple Test	Art. 43 (living wage), Art. 43A (workers' participation in management, 42nd Amendment, 1976); Entry 22, Concurrent List (trade unions, industrial and labour disputes).
Core industries	Index of Industrial Production (IIP), base effect, PMI; energy security and import dependence.

Prelims Bytes

- Royalty rates for major minerals are specified in the **Second Schedule** of the MMDR Act, 1957; dead rent in the **Third Schedule**.
- The proviso to **Art. 368(2)** requires ratification by **half the States** for amendments affecting the representation of States in Parliament.
- **Rajya Sabha** is a permanent House; one-third of its members retire every second year (Art. 83(1)).
- **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India** (2017): a nine-judge Bench declared privacy a fundamental right under Art. 21.

◆ *Stay consistent. Read, revise, repeat.* ◆