

DAILY NEWSP APER ANALYSIS

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United Opposition defeats Delimitation Bill

The Bill falls short of the two-thirds mark of 352 votes, with 298 in favour and 230 against in the House where 528 members were present at the time of voting. Home Minister Amit Shah warns Opposition that it will face the "wrath of women voters, claims opposition to delimitation meant opposition to increasing the number of seats for SCs/STs

Subhana K. Nair
Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A united Opposition on Friday defeated the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, which sought to re-distribute Lok Sabha seats on the basis of the 2011 Census to expedite the implementation of women's reservation.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah accused the Opposition of playing "ruthless politics" and warned that it would face the "wrath of women voters." A total of 298 members voted in favour of the Bill and 230 against it, with the House strength at the time of voting being 528. It failed to meet the two-thirds majority mark of 352 required for a Constitution Amendment Bill to pass. Following the defeat, the government withdrew two allied legislations – the

Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the Delimitation Bill, 2026 – which were linked to the constitutional amendment. The government extended the Budget session after a short interlude for deliberating on these Bills. Mr. Shah said that the legislative package of three Bills was aimed at fulfilling two objectives – time-bound implementation of the women's reservation Bill for the 2029 general election and to apply the "foundational" democratic principle of "one person, one vote and one value".

Maintaining that the government remained committed to women's reservation, Mr. Shah said this was the "fifth time" that parties of the Indian National Congress had stalled the legislation.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in post

Opposition joins hands

Opposition parties defeated a Constitution Amendment Bill which sought to implement delimitation and increase Lok Sabha seats based on the 2011 Census.

Category	Number of MPs	Share
In favour	298	56.4%
Against	230	43.6%
Abstentions	0	0%
Total present and voting	528	100%
Required (2/3 majority)	352	66.7%

On X, described the government's move to link women's reservation with delimitation based on the 2011 Census as a "hollow attempt" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to project himself as the "messiah of women".

Responding to a key opposition objection that the Bill lacked an explicit guarantee that representation of all States in the Lok Sabha would rise uniformly by 50%, Mr. Shah offered to

move an amendment incorporating this assurance if the House agreed to suspend proceedings for an hour.

Senior Congress leader and Kerala MP K.C. Venugopal countered this offer with two conditions: that not only should the provision be written into the Bill, but the government should also introduce a separate amendment delinking the implementation of women's reservation

from delimitation. Mr. Shah rejected the second demand, calling it a "trap". He and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier given verbal assurances that all States would see a uniform 50% increase in Lok Sabha seats as the House goes from the current cap of 550 to about 850 members. Mr. Shah accused the Opposition of manufacturing a north-south divide by propagating what he called

South made its voice heard, says Stalin

CHENNAI
After the Bill, introduced by the BJP-led Union government, was defeated in the Lok Sabha, DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said the South stood united, made its voice heard and democracy prevailed. » PAGE 3

a false narrative that southern States would lose Parliamentary representation. "Southern States have equal rights in this House as northern States. In fact, Lakshadweep has the same rights as Uttar Pradesh or Bihar," he said. Lakshadweep has fewer than 50,000 voters.

Making a strong pitch for delimitation, Mr. Shah argued that the principle of "one person, one vote, one value" has been violated

due to the freeze based on the 1971 Census. He pointed out that India's population has grown from about 54.79 crore then to nearly 140 crore in 2026, leading to stark disparities in constituency sizes. Citing Malkajgiri in Telangana, which has about 48 lakh voters, he asked how a single MP could represent such a large electorate. Mr. Shah also argued that opposition to delimitation effectively meant opposition to increasing the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

He also addressed Opposition allegations that the government was trying to sidestep the ongoing caste count while implementing women's reservation.

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context

- Lok Sabha failed to pass the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026.
- Voting: 298 (for) vs 230 (against); required special majority not met.
- Bill aimed to:
 - Redistribute Lok Sabha seats (based on 2011 Census)
 - Enable implementation of women's reservation by 2029
- Government withdrew allied legislations:
 - Delimitation Bill, 2026
 - UT Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026

Key Points

- Article 368 → Special majority required for Constitutional Amendment.
- Delimitation = Redrawing of constituency boundaries based on population.
- Freeze on delimitation:
 - Based on 1971 Census, extended till 2026.
- Current Issue:
 - Unequal representation (e.g., some constituencies >40 lakh voters).
- Government's Stand:
 - "One person, one vote, one value"
 - Seat increase: ~550 → ~850
- Opposition Concerns:
 - Possible North-South imbalance
 - Demand to separate women's reservation from delimitation

Static Concepts

- Article 81 → Lok Sabha composition
- Article 82 → Delimitation after Census
- 42nd Amendment (1976) → Freeze on seats
- 84th & 87th Amendments → Extended freeze till 2026
- Delimitation Commission → Independent statutory body
- Principle: Population vs Federal balance

Critical Analysis

Advantages

- Promotes electoral equality by correcting malapportionment
- Facilitates greater political participation of women
- Enhances representation of SC/ST communities
- Reflects current demographic realities

Concerns

- Potential federal imbalance, disadvantaging states with lower population growth
- Penalizes states that implemented population control measures
- Linking delimitation with reservation may delay gender justice
- Infrastructure and procedural challenges with expanding Parliament
- Risk of politicization of delimitation process

Way Forward

- Delink women's reservation from delimitation to ensure timely implementation
- Develop a balanced formula combining population and federal equity
- Provide constitutional safeguards for fair state representation
- Strengthen independence and transparency of the Delimitation Commission
- Build political consensus through consultations
- Consider phased expansion of Lok Sabha seats

Iran declares the Strait of Hormuz open; Trump says U.S. blockade will continue

Stanley John

A day after U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iran said on Friday the Strait of Hormuz is "completely open" for commercial vessels for the remainder of the two-week U.S.-Iran truce.

Mr. Trump "thanked" Iran for reopening the waterway but said the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports would continue until there is a deal between Tehran and Washington. Oil prices fell on Friday after the Strait was declared open.

"In line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage for all commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz is declared completely open for the remaining period of the ceasefire, on the coordinated route as already announced by the International Maritime Organisation of Iran," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote in a social media post on Friday.

About 20% of the world's crude oil supply passed through the Strait, which links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, before the U.S. and Israel launched their war on Iran. The waterway also carries a significant share of global LNG exports, mainly from Qatar.

After the war broke out, Iran took control of the waterway. Daily ship traffic through the Strait fell sharply, dropping from more than 100 vessels a day to single digits.

Mr. Trump welcomed Iran's decision. "Iran has just announced that the



After the war began daily ship traffic through the Strait fell sharply, dropping from over 100 vessels a day to single digits. FILE PHOTO

Strait of Hormuz is fully open and ready for full passage. Thank you," he said in a post in capital letters.

He also said Iran, "with the help of the U.S., has removed or is removing all sea mines" in the waterway. "Iran has agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again. It will no longer be used as a weapon against the world," he added.

Mr. Trump, however, said the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports, which he announced on April 12, "will remain in full force and effect... until such time as our transaction with Iran is 100% complete. This process should go very quickly in that most of the points are already negotiated".

The U.S. Central Command has said it has enforced a complete blockade of ships going to and coming from Iranian ports, though shipping data suggest some Iran-linked ships have crossed the U.S. blockade.

France and Britain said on Friday that they will lead a multinational mission to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, while emphasizing the force would be entirely defensive and only

deployed once lasting peace in the region was agreed.

The war in Lebanon was a key sticking point in the U.S.-Iran ceasefire that was announced on April 8. Iran said Lebanon was covered under the ceasefire agreement, but Israel initially rejected it and said its war against Hezbollah would continue. Mr. Trump said last week that he had asked Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to scale back attacks on Lebanon. On April 14, the U.S. held talks between Israel and Lebanese government officials in Washington. On Thursday, after announcing the 10-day ceasefire in Lebanon, Mr. Trump said he would invite Mr. Netanyahu and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun to Washington for the first high-level summit between the two countries.

Iran said on Thursday it would halt attacks on Lebanon but its troops would stay in the seized territory in southern Lebanon.

Brent crude futures were down roughly 10% on Friday, extending earlier losses, at below \$90 a barrel. The U.S. benchmark WTI was also down 10% at around \$82 a barrel.

- European response:
 - France and Britain to lead a defensive maritime security mission post-conflict.
- Lebanon dimension:
 - Ceasefire linked to broader U.S.-Iran negotiations.
 - Israel halts attacks but retains military presence in southern Lebanon.

Static Linkages

- Strait of Hormuz as a strategic choke point in global trade routes.
- Concept of freedom of navigation under international maritime norms.
- Importance of West Asia in global energy security.
- Role of naval blockades in international relations and economic warfare.
- Link between geopolitical conflicts and commodity price volatility.
- India's dependence on crude oil imports (~85% import dependence).

Critical Analysis

Positives

- Reopening ensures stability in global oil supply chains.
- Reduction in crude prices may ease inflationary pressures globally, including India.
- Signals de-escalation and diplomatic engagement between major actors.

Concerns

- Continued U.S. blockade creates uncertainty in maritime trade.
- Iran's earlier control highlights vulnerability of chokepoints.
- Fragile ceasefire in Lebanon may collapse and disrupt flows again.
- Militarisation of sea lanes risks global trade disruptions.

Stakeholder Perspectives

- Iran: Seeks leverage in negotiations and sanctions relief.
- U.S.: Balances diplomacy with coercive economic measures.
- Europe: Focus on securing trade routes.
- India & import-dependent economies: Concerned about energy security and price volatility.

Way Forward

- Strengthen multilateral maritime security frameworks.
- Promote diplomatic resolution of West Asian conflicts.
- Diversify energy sources and suppliers (strategic reserves, renewables).
- Enhance India's engagement in regional groupings (e.g., I2U2, INSTC).
- Develop early warning and risk mitigation systems for supply disruptions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- The Donald Trump administration announced a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- Following this, Iran declared the Strait of Hormuz open for commercial shipping during the ongoing U.S.-Iran truce.
- Iran had earlier restricted maritime movement after escalation involving U.S. and Israel.
- Despite reopening, the U.S. continues a naval blockade on Iranian ports until a comprehensive agreement is reached.
- Global oil prices fell sharply (~10%) after the reopening announcement.

Key Points

- The Strait of Hormuz:
 - Connects the Persian Gulf → Gulf of Oman → Arabian Sea.
 - Handles ~20% of global crude oil trade and significant LNG exports (notably from Qatar).
- Iran's role:
 - Temporarily controlled and restricted access during conflict.
 - Now reopening under a coordinated maritime route system.
- Shipping impact:
 - Traffic dropped from 100+ ships/day to single digits during conflict.
- U.S. stance:
 - Appreciated reopening but continues economic and naval pressure.

Why women's reservation cannot wait any longer

India stands at a curious democratic crossroads. It is one of the world's most vibrant democracies, marked by high voter participation and an increasingly engaged female electorate. Yet within its legislative institutions, women remain conspicuously underrepresented. This contradiction – between participation and representation – makes a compelling case for the immediate implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill. This gap has been repeatedly highlighted. While Indian women have emerged as a decisive electoral force, their presence in law-making bodies remains disproportionately low. Nowhere is this imbalance more evident than in the stark difference between State and national representation.



Shamika Ravi
Member, LAC PM

Women constitute, on average, only about 9% of legislators in State Assemblies, while their representation in Parliament hovers around 14%-15%. This is far from reflecting women's share in the total population of the country, which is nearly 50%.

This disparity is not just numerical – it is structural. Over the past two decades, women in India have transformed from passive voters into active political participants. In several States, female voter turnout now equals or even surpasses that of men. This is a remarkable democratic achievement. It signals agency, awareness, and a growing sense of political ownership among women. However, this surge in participation has not translated into equivalent gains in representation.

Structural faults
The reasons are deeply embedded in the functioning of India's political system. Political parties act as gatekeepers, and continue to nominate far fewer women candidates than men. Electoral politics is resource-intensive, requiring financial backing, networks, and social capital – areas where women often face systemic disadvantages. Cultural norms and safety concerns further discourage women from entering the political arena. The result is a cycle of exclusion that reproduces itself with each election. This is precisely why the Women's Reservation Bill is not just desirable but necessary. By mandating a fixed share of seats for women in legislatures, it directly addresses the structural barriers that prevent fair representation. Critics often argue that such

quotas compromise merit or lead to tokenism. But this argument assumes that the current system is meritocratic, which it clearly is not. Access to political power in India is shaped as much by privilege and networks as by competence.

Evidence from India's own experience with reservation at the local level offers a powerful counterpoint. In the Panchayati Raj institutions, where seats have been reserved for women, the results have been transformative. Women leaders have not only participated effectively but have also shifted policy priorities toward issues such as health, education, water, and sanitation. These are not marginal concerns; they are central to human development and economic progress.

Moreover, representation has a ripple effect. When women occupy positions of authority, they challenge entrenched social norms. Young girls grow up seeing leadership as attainable. Families and communities begin to accept women's public roles more readily, and over time, this creates a pipeline of future leaders. Reservation, therefore, is not a permanent solution but a catalytic intervention; one that helps correct historical imbalances and sets the stage for a more equitable system.

On State legislatures and Parliament
The comparison between State Assemblies and Parliament further underscores the urgency of the reform.

If representation is as low as 9% at the State level, it indicates that the problem is even more severe at the grassroots of legislative power. State governments play a critical role in shaping policies around healthcare, education, law and order, and local development, which directly affect citizens' daily lives. The near absence of women in these decision-making bodies means that half the population has a limited voice in shaping them.

At the national level, the slightly higher figure of 14%-15% in Parliament is often cited as progress. But this too falls short of global benchmarks and democratic ideals. A representative democracy must reflect the diversity of its people, not just in theory but in practice. The underrepresentation of women weakens the legitimacy and inclusiveness of India's democratic institutions.

Timing is another crucial factor. India is undergoing rapid social and economic

transformation. More women are entering higher education, joining the workforce, and asserting their rights. Their aspirations are evolving faster than the institutions meant to represent them. Delaying the implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill risks widening this gap, and will lead to frustration and disengagement.

Some argue that political parties should voluntarily field more women candidates instead of relying on legislative mandates. While this is a desirable goal, past experience suggests that voluntary measures have not been effective. Despite repeated promises, the proportion of women candidates has remained low. Structural problems require structural solutions, and reservation is one such solution.

Deepening democracy

At its core, the argument for the Women's Reservation Bill is about deepening democracy. High turnout among women voters is a sign of democratic vitality, but true empowerment requires a seat at the decision-making table. Moving from participation to representation is the next logical step in India's democratic evolution.

There is also a strong developmental argument. Research across countries shows that gender-inclusive governance leads to better outcomes – more equitable policies, improved social indicators, and sustainable growth. In a country as diverse and complex as India, excluding half the population from political leadership is not just unjust, it is inefficient. India has already shown that institutional reform can drive social change. The success of reservation in local governance demonstrates that change is possible when there is political will. Extending this principle to State Assemblies and Parliament is not a radical step, it is a necessary progression. Ultimately, the question is not whether India is ready for the Women's Reservation Bill, it is whether its democracy can afford to wait any longer for women's reservation; the gap between participation and representation is too large to ignore.

India's democratic journey has been remarkable, but it remains incomplete.

Bridging this gap requires bold action. Implementing the Women's Reservation Bill immediately is not just about fairness – it is about building a more representative, responsive, and resilient democracy.

- Voluntary party-level reforms have failed to significantly increase women candidates.
- Women's leadership has a multiplier effect:
 - Breaks social norms
 - Encourages political participation
 - Creates leadership pipeline

Static Linkages

- Equality before law and prohibition of discrimination (Articles 14, 15)
- Special provisions for women and children (Article 15(3))
- Directive Principles promoting social justice and inclusive governance
- 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments – reservation in local bodies
- Concept of substantive equality vs formal equality
- Representative democracy and legitimacy of institutions
- Role of political parties as intermediaries in electoral democracy

Critical Analysis

Advantages:

- Strengthens inclusive and representative democracy
- Helps overcome structural barriers in politics
- Leads to better policy outcomes in social sectors
- Creates a pipeline for future women leaders

Challenges:

- Possibility of proxy representation
- Rotation of seats may affect continuity and accountability
- Implementation dependent on delimitation exercise
- Risk of elite capture within reserved categories

Way Forward

- Expedite Census and delimitation for implementation
- Ensure capacity building and leadership training
- Encourage mandatory party-level quotas for women candidates
- Provide financial and institutional support mechanisms
- Ensure inclusive representation across socio-economic groups

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- India continues to witness high female voter participation, often matching or exceeding male turnout in several states.
- Despite this, women's representation remains low:
 - ~9% in State Assemblies
 - ~14-15% in Parliament
- The ongoing debate around the Women's Reservation Bill (106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023 – Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) has gained renewed attention due to this gap between participation and representation.
- The issue reflects a structural imbalance in India's democratic framework, where electoral engagement has not translated into legislative power.

Key Points

- Women constitute nearly 50% of India's population, but remain underrepresented in legislatures.
- Structural barriers:
 - Political party nomination bias
 - High cost of elections
 - Lack of financial and social capital
 - Socio-cultural constraints and safety concerns
- Evidence from Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs):
 - 33% (and in many states 50%) reservation for women
 - Improved focus on health, education, sanitation, water governance
- Representation gap is more severe at the State level, impacting grassroots governance.

Deservedly dead

A ramrod approach to delimitation was bound to fail

In what was a foregone conclusion, the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 failed to secure the two-thirds majority required for a constitutional amendment. While 298 members voted in its favour and 230 against, the Bill needed 352 votes – two-thirds of the 528 present and voting – to pass. The government subsequently shelved the companion Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, saying they could not be viewed in isolation. During his reply to the debate, Home Minister Amit Shah gave a verbal guarantee that southern States would see their presence in an 816-member Lok Sabha increase in the same proportion as their current share, even offering to adjourn the House for an hour to redraft the Bill with a 50% uniform increase as an official amendment. The Opposition dismissed this. The obvious question: if proportional increase was always the intent, why was it not in the Bill? The language as tabled clearly mandated delimitation on the basis of the latest Census – currently 2011 – which would have reduced the share of southern, eastern, and northeastern States due to their lower population growth relative to the Hindi heartland States. Why the haste to push through a controversial constitutional amendment when the 2026-27 Census is still under way? Also, there was no reason to link women's reservation, on which there is all-party consensus, to delimitation in this manner. The bizarre smoke-and-mirrors approach, no doubt intended to confuse and divide the Opposition, made a mockery of the parliamentary process.

It is to the credit of the INDIA bloc that it voted as one against this methodical madness; overlooking their differences, parties such as the Congress, the Samajwadi Party, the Trinamool Congress, the Left and the DMK ensured floor coordination. Conversely, one must note the naivety of the Telugu Desam Party and the AIADMK, which spoke in favour of the Bill, on the strength of the Home Minister's verbal assurances despite the conflicting language in the text, when Andhra Pradesh stood to lose five seats and Tamil Nadu 11 under the Bill's own terms. This defeat should chasten the government. It would now have to implement women's reservation through the constitutionally mandated route: complete the 2026-27 Census, and refer delimitation and Lok Sabha expansion to a parliamentary committee for genuine consensus. The two-thirds threshold exists precisely to prevent far-reaching structural changes from being rammed through without broad agreement and this safeguard held today.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 failed in the Lok Sabha as it did not secure the required two-thirds majority.
- Voting outcome: 298 in favour, 230 against, while 352 votes were needed (2/3rd of 528 members present and voting).
- The Bill sought to link women's reservation implementation with delimitation based on the latest Census.
- The government also withdrew the Delimitation Bill and Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, stating interdependence.
- Concerns were raised that delimitation based on the 2011 Census would reduce representation of southern, eastern, and northeastern States.
- The Opposition opposed both the timing (before 2026 Census completion) and the linkage with women's reservation.

Key Points

- Article 368 mandates a special majority (2/3rd of members present and voting + majority of total membership) for constitutional amendments.

- The Bill proposed delimitation based on latest Census, potentially altering federal representation.
- Southern States feared loss of parliamentary seats due to lower population growth (success in population control).
- The government verbally assured proportional increase in Lok Sabha seats, but this was not codified in the Bill.
- The two-thirds safeguard worked, preventing passage without broad political consensus.
- Women's reservation enjoys broad political support, but its linkage to delimitation created controversy.

Static Linkages

- Constitutional amendment procedure requires special majority under Article 368.
- Delimitation Commission is a statutory body established under the Delimitation Act.
- 42nd, 84th, and 87th Amendments froze and later adjusted delimitation based on Census.
- Principle of "one person, one vote, one value" underpins delimitation.
- Federalism and balance between population and state representation are key constitutional concerns.
- Census conducted under the Census Act, 1948 forms the basis of delimitation.

Critical Analysis

Advantages

- Upholds the sanctity of constitutional amendment procedure.
- Prevents majoritarian imposition on sensitive federal issues.
- Reinforces need for consensus-based governance.

Issues/Concerns

- Linking women's reservation with delimitation delays a widely accepted reform.
- Use of 2011 Census undermines representational fairness.
- Risk of penalizing States with effective population control policies.
- Raises concerns about transparency and legislative intent.

Federal Dimension

- Tension between:
 - Population-based representation (democratic principle)
 - Equitable State representation (federal principle)

Way Forward

- Complete the 2026-27 Census before delimitation.
- Decouple women's reservation from delimitation for immediate implementation.
- Refer the issue to a Parliamentary Standing Committee / Joint Committee.
- Develop a balanced formula ensuring both population proportionality and federal fairness.
- Strengthen cooperative federalism through structured Centre-State dialogue.
- Ensure clarity and precision in legislative drafting.

Temporary truce

The U.S.-Israel ceasefire with Iran must hold across all fronts

The 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, announced by U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday, could strengthen the fragile two-week truce between the U.S. and Iran and improve the prospects for a broader diplomatic settlement. The war in Lebanon, launched on March 2, on the third day of the U.S.-Israel war on Iran, has been a key sticking point in U.S.-Iran talks. When Mr. Trump announced the ceasefire with Tehran on April 8, both Iran and Pakistan, which mediated the truce, said the agreement also covered Lebanon. A ceasefire on all fronts was one of the 10 points Iran submitted to the U.S. as a framework for ending the war. But Israel, apparently dissatisfied with the U.S.-Iran deal, rejected a ceasefire with Lebanon and stepped up attacks, killing at least 200 people within 24 hours of the U.S.-Iran truce taking effect. Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who travelled to Islamabad to hold direct talks with a U.S. delegation headed by Vice President J.D. Vance, insisted that a ceasefire in Lebanon was a precondition for advancing diplomacy. The Islamabad talks failed to produce a breakthrough, but both sides remained engaged, communicating through Pakistan.

Yet, despite the truce, a fundamental problem remains. The war in Lebanon is not between Israel and the Lebanese army, but between Israel and Hezbollah. Hezbollah has not been part of the talks. Some Hezbollah leaders have said the party would halt attacking Israel if Israeli strikes stop. The Shia militant group has been weakened but is far from defeated. Israel has also said it would not withdraw troops from the territory it has seized in southern Lebanon, while Hezbollah insists on a return to pre-March 2 positions. Mr. Netanyahu says there is a 'historic opportunity' for a peace deal with Lebanon, but any such agreement is unlikely to include Hezbollah, which remains stronger than the Lebanese army and retains an extensive political and social network. While the ceasefire is now in effect, peace remains elusive. The wars on Iran and Lebanon should serve as a reminder to Israel of its own limitations. Mr. Netanyahu sought regime change in Iran and the disarmament of Hezbollah in Lebanon. As the U.S.-Israeli push for regime change in Iran faltered, prompting Mr. Trump to seek a negotiated exit from the Iran mess, Israel's war with Hezbollah has also run into a wall. The ceasefire reflects this ground reality. If Mr. Trump wants a durable negotiated settlement with Iran based on a give-and-take formula, he must ensure that the ceasefire is sustained across all fronts.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- A 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon was announced by Donald Trump.
- It is expected to reinforce the ongoing U.S.-Iran truce (April 8), mediated by Pakistan.
- The Lebanon conflict (since March 2) became a major obstacle in U.S.-Iran negotiations.
- Despite the truce, Israel continued military operations in Lebanon, causing heavy casualties.
- Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf stressed that a Lebanon ceasefire is essential for diplomatic progress.
- Talks involving J. D. Vance in Islamabad failed to produce a breakthrough but maintained dialogue.
- The conflict remains primarily between Israel and Hezbollah, not the Lebanese state.

Key Points

- Hezbollah, a non-state actor, is not formally part of negotiations.
- Israel refuses withdrawal from captured areas in southern Lebanon.
- Hezbollah demands restoration of pre-conflict territorial positions.
- Benjamin Netanyahu hinted at a broader peace deal, excluding Hezbollah.

- Iran proposed a multi-front ceasefire as part of a diplomatic framework.
- The ceasefire reflects limitations of military solutions and compulsion for diplomacy.

Static Linkages

- Principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and territorial integrity.
- Role of non-state actors in international conflicts.
- Proxy wars and regional geopolitics.
- Balance of power and deterrence.
- Importance of multilateral diplomacy and mediation.
- Strategic importance of West Asia for energy security and global trade routes.

Critical Analysis

Positives

- Immediate reduction in violence and humanitarian relief.
- Creates space for diplomatic negotiations between U.S. and Iran.
- Indicates shift from military escalation to negotiation.

Challenges

- Exclusion of Hezbollah weakens durability of ceasefire.
- Divergence between U.S. and Israeli objectives.
- Territorial disputes remain unresolved.
- Risk of ceasefire breakdown due to mistrust.

Stakeholder Issues

- U.S.: Seeking strategic exit and stability.
- Iran: Wants comprehensive ceasefire across regions.
- Israel: Focus on security and eliminating threats.
- Hezbollah: Seeks legitimacy and territorial rollback.
- Lebanon: Limited control over internal armed actors.

Way Forward

- Ensure inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders, including non-state actors.
- Strengthen ceasefire monitoring through international mechanisms (e.g., UN).
- Promote confidence-building measures (humanitarian aid, prisoner exchanges).
- Align major power strategies to avoid conflicting objectives.
- Focus on long-term political settlement instead of temporary ceasefires.

RBI asks state oil refiners to curb spot dollar buying, sources say

Reuters
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

India's central bank has urged state-run oil refiners to curb spot dollar purchases and tap a special credit line for their foreign exchange needs, three sources said, reviving measures used earlier in the Ukraine war to ease pressure on the rupee.

A surge in oil prices and heavy foreign portfolio outflows have battered the Indian currency. The rupee has fallen more than 3% to record lows this year, making it Asia's worst-performing major currency.

Using the special credit facility would reduce dollar demand from refiners, helping ease pressure on the rupee, two of the sources said. Refiners are major buyers of dollars to pay for oil imports.

When Indian markets opened on Friday morning, the rupee strengthened by 0.4% to 92.80 against the dollar, its strongest level in a week.

The state-run refiners have been asked to access the credit line via the State Bank of India, the sources said. SBI is India's largest bank and is state-backed.



Single window: The refiners are being encouraged to route daily dollar purchases through SBI instead of multiple banks. REUTERS

Since the large state-run lender already handles sizeable merchant flows, funneling oil-related FX demand through SBI can help reduce the overall market impact, one of the sources said.

The refiners are also being encouraged to route daily dollar purchases through SBI instead of multiple banks, the source said, because pooling dollar demand with one lender would help better manage the market impact.

All three sources declined to be named as they

were not authorised to speak to the media.

The Reserve Bank of India and SBI did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

The credit line is available to major state-run refiners Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Bharat Petroleum Corp, which together control about half of India's 5.2 million barrels per day of refining capacity.

Refiners can either buy dollars at the RBI reference rate or draw on the credit line for their FX needs, a second source said. The

credit line can alleviate immediate dollar demand from the market, supporting the rupee.

None of the refiners responded to emails seeking comment.

Three spot FX traders, separate from the three sources cited earlier, said they had seen an anecdotal decline in the oil companies' activity in the spot market in recent days.

Rupee strain

The RBI has turned to crisis-era measures, which sources said have been in place for about two weeks, to support the rupee amid pressure linked to the Iran war.

Concerns about spillovers from the conflict helped push the rupee to an all-time low past 95 per dollar in late March.

The central bank has taken other steps to shore up the currency.

It has clamped down on arbitrage trades that it said exacerbated market volatility and barred Indian banks from offering corporates non-deliverable forward contracts.

The RBI has also sold dollars from its FX reserves to support the currency.

- RBI's broader interventions:
 - Sale of forex reserves to smooth volatility
 - Regulation of arbitrage trades
 - Restrictions on offshore NDF exposure of domestic banks
- Consolidating forex demand via SBI improves market depth management and reduces fragmentation.

Static Linkages

- Exchange Rate Systems: Managed Floating Exchange Rate
- Balance of Payments (BoP): Current Account Deficit driven by oil imports
- Demand-supply dynamics of foreign exchange
- Role of central bank in currency stabilisation
- Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999
- Concepts:
 - Depreciation vs Devaluation
 - Forex reserves and import cover
 - Capital flows (FPI vs FDI)

Critical Analysis

Advantages

- Reduces immediate demand for dollars, stabilising rupee
- Limits speculative pressure and exchange rate volatility
- Enhances coordination in forex market via a nodal bank
- Provides liquidity support without exhausting reserves rapidly

Limitations

- Short-term administrative intervention; does not address structural issues
- May distort free market functioning of forex markets
- Continued reliance on RBI intervention may deplete forex reserves
- Indicates vulnerability due to high import dependence and volatile capital flows

Challenges

- Persistent high crude oil prices
- Volatility in global capital flows
- Geopolitical uncertainties affecting trade routes and energy supply
- Maintaining balance between currency stability and export competitiveness

Way Forward

- Reduce oil import dependence through renewable energy transition
- Promote rupee-denominated trade agreements (internationalisation of rupee)
- Strengthen export competitiveness to reduce CAD
- Maintain adequate forex reserves as per IMF benchmarks
- Deepen domestic financial markets to absorb external shocks
- Ensure calibrated RBI intervention to avoid market distortions

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- The Reserve Bank of India has advised public sector oil refiners to limit spot US dollar purchases and utilise a special forex credit facility.
- The measure aims to stabilise the rupee amid depreciation pressures caused by rising crude oil prices and capital outflows.
- Similar liquidity-management measures were earlier adopted during the Russia-Ukraine War to cushion external sector shocks.
- Major refiners such as Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited—key importers of crude oil—are being targeted under this framework.
- Forex demand is being consolidated through State Bank of India to reduce volatility in currency markets.

Key Points

- India imports ~85% of its crude oil requirement (Economic Survey).
- Oil marketing companies (OMCs) are among the largest contributors to dollar demand in the forex market.
- The rupee has depreciated significantly in 2026 due to:
 - Rising crude oil prices
 - Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) outflows
 - Global geopolitical uncertainty
- Special forex credit line:
 - Provides dollar liquidity without immediate spot market purchases
 - Reduces short-term pressure on exchange rate

A political setback for government, a democratic opening for Opposition

THE DEFEAT of the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026, is an embarrassment for the government, a reminder of the potential of a united Opposition, and most importantly, a reprieve for a proper conversation over the Constitution.

The introduction of the Bill had all the hallmarks of the BJP's governing style. This was yet another attempt to further a sense of what this column had described as a permanent revolution. The governing style of permanent revolution is to destroy the power of all countervailing institutions, break all restraints, and consolidate executive power. The manner of introducing this Bill signified this. A far-reaching constitutional amendment, which would have deep implications for all constitutional bodies, the power of the Rajya Sabha, the constitutional status of the delimitation process, the transformation of federalism, and the character of the Lok Sabha, was introduced in a throw-away manner. It duplicitously linked delimitation and women's reservation. The second feature of the permanent revolution is wresting personal ownership and credit for issues on which there is a wider political consensus.

The one constant feature of Narendra Modi's career as Prime Minister is that he has politically weaponised the issues of gender and sought to claim the moral and political high ground on those issues. In some areas of welfare and legal reform, these have yielded dividends. But these have also been accompanied by the normalisation of mis-

ogyny by the BJP. But these contradictions don't matter to the permanent revolution. It wants to own every issue and use it as a weapon when needed.

The third hallmark of the permanent revolution is the constant need for mobilisation, in victory or defeat. In this case, as in so many others, a combination of hubris and unpreparedness led to defeat. But we also know in the past, for instance, in the moment of demoralisation, they can even turn hubris and incompetence into a rallying cry for mobilisation. One of the challenges for the Opposition is going to be to prevent the BJP from doing what it does best — play the aggrieved and hurt party, which casts the Opposition as obstructionist. And the final feature of the permanent revolution is institutional price discovery. Keep pushing the boundaries of what we think is possible within the current constitutional framework and see what you can get away with.

Indeed, the most sinister aspect of this moment is how much the BJP's experiments in Assam and Bengal, with delimitation and the SIR, respectively, were part of this template. They have created a precedent for how much havoc can be caused to voters through different forms of institutional gerrymandering. In Bengal, it may backfire politically. But these are attempts to experiment with and acquire instruments that could be used to shape, control and manipulate elections. Like demoralisation, they impose the greatest cost on the poorest of citizens in the name of abstract national inter-



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

est: Tens of thousands having to rush to their home states from long distances to preserve their citizenship status. The courts did not put a stop to some of these measures. It is some relief that at least the Opposition was able to show the BJP that there are still limits to the project of permanent revolution.

This defeat allows a more sober reconsideration of important institutional and constitutional questions. But it has to be said, our constitutional discussion seems to be producing anomaly upon anomaly, and not facing up to the internal tensions that arise out of the way we think of representation. For years, political parties have been trying to find pretexts for avoiding implementing their own commitments on reservation. This may be yet one more attempt to complicate matters. But the constitutional anomaly of trying to produce semi-proportional outcomes from a first-past-the-post system and the deepening of the rotation of reserved constituencies does put a strain on other principles of representation, including the rights of voters not to have their choices restricted by the identity of the candidate.

Other ways of achieving this objective that would have displayed a more consistent logic — multi-member districts or party lists — were summarily thrown out. The anomaly of accepting the principle of caste reservation in one part of the political system while denying it in another, the tension between federal balance and the principle of the equal value of the vote, are all complex issues. The

integrity of the delimitation process needs to be protected at all costs. They need to be dealt with by building consensus.

On balance, given India's history and sensitivities, the federalism question and the balance of power between the Centre and the states have to be dealt with through consensus. But even here, three things have to be said. First, while linguistic imposition must be resisted and regional fairness in representation ensured, reducing the debate to regional antagonism risks legitimising the very ugly politics we ought to resist. The cultural trope of north versus south is dangerous and analytically unfounded. Second, at least on constitutional issues, considerations cannot be governed by which political party benefits in the short run. We need more principled arguments. And third, at all levels of government — state legislatures, panchayats, urban local bodies, Parliament's functioning and procedures — we need to take a long, hard look at what form a genuine representative process should take.

The Opposition has won an opening. But if it is to continue the momentum on behalf of democracy, it will have to go into constant mobilisation and convince citizens that it stands for genuine democratic empowerment and institutional integrity. Discussions of democracy and institutions must now be rescued from the taint of opportunism and bad faith. The permanent revolution has been thwarted. But democracy is still in peril.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

Our constitutional discussion seems to be producing anomaly upon anomaly, and not facing up to the internal tensions that arise out of the way we think of representation

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 failed to pass in Parliament as it did not secure the required special majority.
- The Bill attempted to link delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies with the implementation of women's reservation.
- A united Opposition opposed the Bill citing concerns over federal balance, representation, and institutional integrity.
- The defeat has reopened debate on electoral reforms, delimitation, and constitutional processes.

Key Points

- Constitutional amendment requires:
 - Special majority under Article 368 (2/3rd present & voting + majority of total strength).
- Delimitation:
 - Redrawing of constituencies based on population.
 - Frozen till 2026 (84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001).
- Key issues raised:
 - Linking delimitation with women's reservation complicates implementation.
 - Potential regional imbalance (states with higher population gain more seats).
 - Concerns over politicisation of delimitation process.
- Electoral system:
 - India follows First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system.
 - Leads to disproportionate representation in some cases.

- Rotation of reserved seats:
 - May affect continuity of representation and voter choice.

Static Linkages

- Article 368 – Constitutional Amendment procedure
- Delimitation Commission (appointed under Delimitation Act)
- 42nd, 84th, 87th Constitutional Amendments
- First-Past-The-Post electoral system
- Principle of political equality (one person, one vote)
- Federalism – balance between Union and States
- Representation of People Act, 1951

Critical Analysis

Positives

- Reinforces parliamentary scrutiny and checks on executive.
- Prevents hasty constitutional changes without consensus.
- Highlights need for debate on electoral reforms.

Negatives

- Delay in implementation of women's reservation.
- Creates uncertainty over post-2026 delimitation.
- Risk of politicisation of constitutional mechanisms.

Challenges

- Balancing population-based representation vs federal fairness.
- Ensuring transparency in delimitation.
- Addressing flaws of FPTP system.

Way Forward

- Build political consensus on constitutional reforms.
- Implement women's reservation independently of delimitation.
- Ensure independent and transparent delimitation process.
- Consider electoral reforms (proportional representation elements).
- Maintain federal balance while ensuring equal representation.

When animals become instruments of power



SONAKSHI SRIVASTAVA

LAST WEEK, it was reported that the Border Security Forces (BSF) had been asked to explore the use of snakes and crocodiles on the India-Bangladesh border to stop illegal border crossings. In swamps and river beds where fences can't be erected, the government wants deterrents of a reptilian kind. In a less publicised report, it was also revealed that all tiger reserves in Karnataka will have canine units to prevent poaching — the latest in a long line of protected areas to add a canine unit to track poachers.

Both policies see animals as agents of the state. In many ways, the Indian state's view of animals remains consistent with the colonial view of animals as beasts that ought to be exterminated. In the last 100 years, the policies have gone from exterminating the beast to protecting the beast. Nevertheless, the beast remains.

Take India's most protected animal, the tiger. Since the launch of Project Tiger in 1973, the relocation of forest-dwelling communities to make space for the tiger has been the state's key policy. Even though co-existence has been in vogue for decades, the state insists it is simply not possible because how can anyone live with beasts? Even when Adivasi communities argue that they can co-exist with tigers — like in Jenu Kuruba in Nagarhole Tiger Reserve — they are faced with eviction and violence.

The state sees many animals as beasts that need to be confined to protected areas. When animals step out of these boundaries, they become "problem animals". Like all things Indian, there is a hierarchy among beasts. If tigers were guarding princesses in the fortress before, they have now become the princesses. Others are saddled with the responsibility of protecting humans and their favourite beast — the crocodile in the moat, the snakes at the entrance, and man's best friend at his side, ready to do his bidding.

The problem snowballs when people buy into the logic of the fortress: they start expecting the beasts to remain confined. People who gave up their land to build the fortress are not wrong to ask why there is a tiger still sitting in their backyard if the fortress was built specifically for him. The fortresses are not impenetrable; the high and mighty can always find a way in. Money goes a long way.

The cheetahs that have been packed up from Namibia, South Africa, Botswana and dropped in Kuno National Park are being tranquilised and moved back into the park every time they move out. They should somehow understand that they must stay within the fortress that is too small for them (don't worry, cheetahs, other fortresses are under construction in other parts of the country). Did the government not plan for what happens when the cheetahs — known for travelling long distances — disperse? The BSF has raised important questions of where it is supposed to get these animals and what their ecological impact will be. What about the people who traverse these swamps and river beds? The steepest price, as always, will be paid by them.

The state, it seems, will continue to confine and unleash the beasts.

Srivastava writes on wildlife conservation and human-animal relationship

The BSF has raised important questions of where it is supposed to get these animals and what their ecological impact will be. What about the people who traverse these swamps and river beds?

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- The Border Security Force (BSF) has considered deploying reptiles (snakes/crocodiles) in unfenced riverine stretches of the India-Bangladesh border as deterrents.
- Tiger reserves (e.g., in Karnataka) are increasingly using canine units for anti-poaching operations.
- The developments highlight the continued reliance on a "fortress conservation" approach, involving strict protected areas and relocation of forest communities.
- Issues such as human-wildlife conflict, ecological imbalance, and ethical concerns have come to the forefront.
- Recent experiences like cheetah reintroduction in Kuno National Park underline challenges in wildlife management and habitat adequacy.

Key Points

- Use of animals in governance
 - Reptiles proposed for border security in ecologically sensitive terrains.
 - Dogs used in wildlife protection for tracking and surveillance.
- Fortress conservation model
 - Segregation of wildlife and humans through protected areas.
 - Often leads to displacement of forest-dwelling communities.
- Human-wildlife conflict
 - Increasing due to habitat fragmentation and shrinking ecosystems.
 - Animals outside protected areas termed "problem animals".

- Ecological concerns
 - Artificial introduction/use of species may disturb ecological balance.
 - Wildlife reintroduction (e.g., cheetahs) shows planning challenges.
- Governance issues
 - Questions on legality, ethics, and environmental impact.
 - Lack of integration of local community perspectives.

Static Linkages

- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 – Legal basis for wildlife conservation and protected areas.
- Forest Rights Act, 2006 – Recognizes rights of Scheduled Tribes and forest dwellers.
- Project Tiger (1973) – Flagship species conservation programme.
- National Wildlife Action Plan (2017–2031) – Framework for wildlife management.
- Key Concepts:
 - Carrying capacity of ecosystems
 - Habitat fragmentation and wildlife corridors
 - In-situ conservation vs community-based conservation
- Constitutional Provisions:
 - Article 21 – Right to life (expanded to environmental protection)
 - Article 48A – State duty to protect environment
 - Article 51A(g) – Fundamental duty of citizens

Critical Analysis

Pros

- Innovative solutions for difficult border terrains.
- Strengthens anti-poaching mechanisms.
- Enhances conservation enforcement.

Cons

- Ethical concerns: animals used as instruments of state power.
- Ecological risks: disturbance of natural ecosystems.
- Human safety risks in border and forest areas.
- Displacement contradicts rights-based approach (FRA, 2006).
- Poor planning in wildlife reintroduction and habitat management.

Challenges

- Balancing conservation with community rights.
- Scientific and ecological viability of such measures.
- Institutional coordination.
- Managing rising human-wildlife conflicts.

Way Forward

- Shift to community-based conservation.
- Ensure consent-based rehabilitation under FRA, 2006.
- Use technology (drones, smart fencing) instead of animals for border security.
- Strengthen wildlife corridors and habitat planning.
- Adopt scientific and ethical frameworks in wildlife policies.
- Increase local participation in conservation efforts.

In Parliament pushback, lesson for government

THE DEFEAT of the constitutional amendment to implement women's reservation in Lok Sabha is not a full stop, but an enormously welcome and extremely consequential pause. Even after the collapse of the bills piloted by the Narendra Modi government on Friday, Parliament's commitment to women's reservation stands enshrined in the 2023 law. But for the Modi government, the failure of its bid to link women's reservation to expansion of the number of seats in Lok Sabha and state assemblies, and a fresh delimitation after lifting the five decades-long freeze, is a setback it has not faced before. Ironically, it comes on an issue on which there is a broad political consensus. On the other side of the aisle, this is a moment of assertion for a unified Opposition, which spoke in one voice, held together, forcefully articulated its concerns. It pointed to the government's haste and its inexplicable turnaround from its 2023 position. It questioned the refusal to wait for data of the ongoing census, which will include caste numbers. Most of all, it flagged the cloud of distrust on delimitation's institutional mechanism, giving rise to apprehensions that the intricate balance between equity in representation and federal fairness would be disturbed. That states would be pitted against each other.

The Modi government will use this defeat to lay claim to custodianship of the cause of women's empowerment, and add it to its repertoire of political ideological projects. It will try to turn the political tables by painting the Opposition as obstructionist, and anti-women in particular. Prime Minister Modi invoked a "nari shakti" that was gathering force on the ground; Home Minister Amit Shah clubbed the Opposition's objections to the constitutional amendment with its resistance to other large moves, from the abrogation of Article 370 to the building of Ram Mandir, from CAA to triple talaq and the surgical strikes on Pakistan and, even, Operation Sindoor. But the government cannot escape the verdict written plainly on the Lok Sabha wall: Its failure to pass its own bill exposes the limits of governing by fiat, of pursuing transformative change without consultation, and with a fraught record of institutional integrity. Numbers in Parliament are not a substitute for trust.

The Opposition cannot afford to savour this moment for long. Stalling the Bill and winning the national argument are two different things. It must find the language not just to sidestep the BJP's trap, but also to communicate to the people why it opposed the Bill and what it proposes instead. Much more than its own political-electoral fortunes depend on it. While women's reservation is long delayed and also backed by a political consensus, the process of implementation matters. It must not stoke spectres, like north vs south, peninsula vs heartland. It must navigate the thorny question of caste. Most of all, it must be institutionalised in good faith, not poisoned by a delimitation exercise the nation does not yet trust. The Lok Sabha battle is over. The larger fight for women, and for the polity, is not. The government must learn its lesson from this defeat. The Opposition must remain mindful of its unfinished challenge.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Context of the News

- The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2026 aimed at linking implementation of women's reservation with fresh delimitation and seat expansion failed to secure the special majority in Lok Sabha.
- This comes after enactment of the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023, which provides 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- The government proposed implementation only after:
 - Completion of next Census (including caste data debate)
 - Delimitation exercise post-2026 (end of freeze period)
- Opposition opposed citing:
 - Lack of updated Census data
 - Concerns over federal imbalance
 - Trust deficit in delimitation process

Key Points

- Constitutional amendment procedure governed by Article 368 of the Indian Constitution:
 - Requires 2/3rd majority of members present and voting + majority of total strength
- Women's reservation law (2023):
 - 33% reservation in Lok Sabha & State Assemblies
 - Includes SC/ST quota within women's reservation
 - Not yet operational due to delimitation condition

- Delimitation:
 - Based on latest Census population data
 - Current freeze (since 1976) extended till 2026
- Core concern:
 - Population-based redistribution may favour high-growth states → federal tensions
- Census delay:
 - Absence of 2021 Census data affects policy decisions

Static Linkages

- Representative democracy – equal representation principle
- Affirmative action – enabling substantive equality
- Delimitation Commission – independent statutory body
- 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976) – freeze on seat redistribution
- Federalism – balance between states in parliamentary representation
- Census – basis for governance, welfare targeting, and political representation
- Distinction between ordinary law vs constitutional amendment

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Highlights limits of majoritarianism in constitutional amendments
- Reinforces need for consensus and institutional trust
- Brings focus back on implementation challenges of women's reservation

Concerns

- Delay in actual political empowerment of women
- Risk of politicisation of gender justice issue
- Possibility of regional imbalance (North vs South)
- Lack of clarity on OBC representation within women's quota

Institutional Issues

- Trust deficit in delimitation mechanism
- Absence of updated Census data
- Weak consultation with stakeholders

Way Forward

- Conduct early Census with caste-based data for informed policymaking
- Decouple women's reservation from delimitation delays
- Ensure transparent and independent delimitation process
- Build multi-party consensus for constitutional reforms
- Consider sub-classification within women's quota (OBC representation)
- Strengthen federal consultation mechanisms (Inter-State Council, etc.)