

## Women's reservation and delimitation should be delinked

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

### 1. Context

- Parliament will discuss two Bills for **one-third reservation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies**:
  - ➔ **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026:** increases Lok Sabha seats to **850** and provides women's reservation after delimitation.
  - ➔ **Delimitation Bill, 2026:** sets up a **Delimitation Commission** based on **2011 Census**.
- Critics argue these Bills unnecessarily link women's reservation with **Census and delimitation**, delaying implementation.

### 2. Unnecessary Linkage and Its Impact

- The **2023 Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (NSVA)** links women's reservation to **Census + delimitation**, unlike the **2010 Rajya Sabha Bill** which had no such conditions.
- This makes implementation dependent on:
  - ➔ Completion of Census
  - ➔ Delimitation exercise
- Result:
  - ➔ Women's reservation **not implemented in 2024 elections**.
  - ➔ Women MPs reduced from **78 to 74 (13.6%)** in 2024 Lok Sabha.

- ➔ In 10 State elections (1,276 seats), only **123 women (<10%)** were elected.
- Critics say the 131st Amendment adds another delay by linking it to **increase in total seats (850)**.
- Allegations include:
  - ➔ Use of outdated **2011 Census**
  - ➔ Delay in caste census urgency
  - ➔ Possible political use of delimitation process

### 3. Census, SC/ST Representation and Delimitation Concerns

- Delimitation in India has always been based on **latest Census data**.
- SC/ST reserved seats earlier:
  - ➔ Post-1971: **79 SC, 41 ST seats**
  - ➔ Post-2001: **84 SC, 47 ST seats (24.4% combined)**
- Using outdated 2011 Census may:
  - ➔ Under-represent **SCs/STs**
  - ➔ Reduce **SC/ST women's representation** under quota system
- Delimitation concerns:
  - ➔ 2002–2008 exercise took **6 years**
  - ➔ Assam and J&K delimitation faced criticism for **bias and political influence**
- Hence, linking women's reservation to delimitation is seen as **politically risky and delaying**.

### 4. Way Forward

- Women's reservation should be a **standalone reform**, not linked to Census or delimitation.
- The **2010 Bill model** had no such linkages and is considered more appropriate.

- Suggested steps:
  - ➔ Remove linkage clause from **106th Amendment (2023)**.
  - ➔ Implement women's reservation **immediately**.
  - ➔ Treat delimitation and seat expansion as **separate constitutional issues**.
- Core argument: Women's reservation is a **long-pending democratic demand** and should not be delayed due to administrative or political processes.

## Implications of increasing the size of the Lok Sabha

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### 1. Context

- Government has circulated **three Bills on delimitation and women's reservation**, to be discussed in the **extended Budget session (April 16–18)**.
- The Bills include:
  - ➔ **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill:**
    - ✎ Expands Lok Sabha from **550 to 850 seats**.
    - ✎ Seats allocated based on **State population share** using a Census specified by Parliament (not necessarily latest).
    - ✎ Women's reservation: **one-third seats**, effective after delimitation, valid for **15 years**.
  - ➔ **Delimitation Bill:**
    - ✎ Sets up a **Delimitation Commission** similar to the 2002 model.
    - ✎ Uses **latest published Census**, effectively the **2011 Census**.
  - ➔ Third Bill extends provisions to **Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, and Puducherry**.

### 2. Redistribution of Seats and Federal Imbalance

- Freezing of seats until post-2026 Census is removed; **2011 Census becomes the basis**.
- Major shifts in representation:
  - ➔ **Gainers:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan.
  - ➔ **Losers:** Kerala, Tamil Nadu.
- Uttar Pradesh and Bihar's combined share rises to **25% of Lok Sabha seats (from 22%)**, increasing their influence in national policy.
- While it aims to equalise voter value, it creates a **regional imbalance in federal representation** and strengthens a few populous states.

### 3. Institutional and Governance Implications

- Parliament gains flexibility to decide **timing of delimitation and Census base through simple majority law**, weakening automatic constitutional linkage with Census cycles.
- Lok Sabha expands to **850 seats**, while Rajya Sabha remains at **245 seats**, creating imbalance:
  - ➔ Lok Sabha becomes **~3.3 times larger in joint sittings**, enabling easier passage of Bills even with weaker Rajya Sabha support.
- Other impacts:
  - ➔ **Council of Ministers cap (15%)** rises from **81 to 122 ministers**.
  - ➔ Larger House reduces MPs' participation in **Questions and Zero Hour**.
  - ➔ Weak committee scrutiny: **less than 1/5th of Bills referred to committees**, unlike stronger systems like the UK.

### 4. State Legislatures and Way Forward

- Delimitation may also expand State Assemblies:
  - ➔ Uttar Pradesh could exceed **600 seats**.
  - ➔ Maharashtra and West Bengal could reach **around 450 seats each**.
- Concerns include **oversized legislatures, reduced efficiency, and limited public debate on structural changes**.

- Way forward:
  - ➔ Ensure **wide public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny.**
  - ➔ Mandatory referral of such Bills to **Parliamentary Committees.**
  - ➔ Maintain balance between **representation, federalism, and legislative efficiency.**

### What changed in Hungary's election?

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

#### 1. Election Outcome & Significance

- **Viktor Orban**, the Christian nationalist Prime Minister who had been in power since 2010 and his party **Fidesz** suffered a **shock defeat** in Hungary's 2026 elections.
- The opposition **Tisza Party**, led by **Peter Magyar**, secured a **two-thirds majority.**
- Orban's rule had transformed Hungary into an **"electoral autocracy"** with weakened **democratic institutions.**
- His defeat marks a **historic turning point** against **illiberal democracy.**

#### 2. Reasons for Orban's Defeat

- **Economic distress:** **stagnant economy** and **high unemployment.**
- **Governance failures:** **weak healthcare system** and rising **public dissatisfaction.**
- **Corruption narrative:** perception of **"kleptocracy"** and strong **anti-corruption campaign.**
- **Political mobilisation:** **Gen Z voters** and **high voter turnout (76.5%)** demanding change.

#### 3. Rise of Peter Magyar

- A **former ally of Mr. Orban**, Mr. Magyar **broke away from the party and resigned from all government positions in 2024** following a political scandal.

- ➔ The scandal involved the **then-President pardoning the head of a children's home** who had been **convicted of covering up child sexual abuse.**

- Used **corruption allegations** and **media campaigns** to challenge Orban.
- Joined **Tisza Party** and gained prominence after becoming a **Member of the European Parliament (MEP) (2024).**
- Led **mass mobilisation campaigns** with the slogan **"Now or never".**

#### 4. Future Implications

- Likely rollback of **anti-democratic constitutional changes** and restoration of **institutional autonomy.**
- Shift in foreign policy from **pro-Russia & anti-EU** to **pro-EU & anti-Russia** stance.
- Continued **caution on Ukraine joining the EU** and **reducing dependence on Russian energy.**
- Signals **limits of populism** even entrenched regimes can be defeated through **strong opposition unity and youth engagement.**

### Why is the Strait of Hormuz critical to global energy flows?

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#### 1. Crisis in the Strait of Hormuz

- Since **late February**, the **Strait of Hormuz** has become a centre of **energy and security crisis.**
- Triggered by **U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran** and Iran's **restrictions on the waterway.**
- The U.S. imposed a **naval blockade** on ships linked to Iran.
- **Ship traffic declined sharply** (from ~130 vessels to very few), disrupting oil transport.

## 2. Maritime Chokepoints – Meaning & Impact

- A **maritime chokepoint** is a **narrow sea route** critical for **global trade** with **no easy alternative**.
- Around **70-80% of global oil trade** passes through such routes.
- Disruptions can cause:
  - ➔ **Rising energy prices**
  - ➔ **Higher shipping costs**
  - ➔ **Supply chain disruptions**
  - ➔ **Inflation and slower economic growth**

## 3. Importance of the Strait of Hormuz

- Considered the **world's most important chokepoint**.
- Connects **Persian Gulf → Gulf of Oman → Indian Ocean**.
- Handles about **21 million barrels/day (20% of global oil consumption)**.
- Major route for **LNG exports** from **Qatar and UAE**.
- **Asia (India, China, Japan, South Korea)** depends heavily on this route.

## 4. Other Key Chokepoints & Legal Framework

### Major chokepoints:

- **Strait of Malacca** - shortest route between **Indian Ocean & South China Sea**
- **Bab el-Mandeb**- gateway to **Red Sea & Suez Canal**
- **Suez Canal**- connects **Red Sea & Mediterranean**
- **Panama Canal**- connects **Atlantic & Pacific Oceans**

### Governed by UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):

- Ensures **"transit passage"** for all ships.
- Countries can regulate for **safety/environment**, but **cannot block passage**.
- Enforcement depends on **naval power and cooperation**.

## KEYWORDS

### Pacific Alliance

- The **Pacific Alliance** is a **regional integration initiative** comprising **Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru**, formally established on **April 28, 2011**. Its key objectives are:
  - To **create a deeply integrated region** through a **participatory and consensual approach**, ensuring the **free movement of goods, services, capital, and people**.
  - To promote **economic growth, development, and competitiveness**, while enhancing **well-being**, reducing **socioeconomic inequality**, and fostering **social inclusion**.
  - To function as a **platform for political coordination and economic integration**, with a strong focus on engagement with the **Asia-Pacific region**.

### LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging)

- LiDAR is an **active remote sensing technology** that emits rapid **laser pulses** to measure precise distances, generating highly accurate **3D maps** of the Earth's surface.
- Unlike RADAR, which uses radio waves, LiDAR uses shorter **light waves**, allowing it to detect microscopic targets like atmospheric aerosols, clouds, and **airborne biological particles like pollen**.
- In forestry, it accurately measures **canopy structure and leaf density**. Scientists use this data to model wind patterns and track the **dispersal of pollen**, aiding in healthier urban planning.
- LiDAR can map terrain beneath dense vegetation. By filtering out tree canopies, it generates **bare-earth Digital Elevation Models (DEMs)**, which has revolutionized the discovery of **hidden ancient civilizations** beneath thick jungles.
- It is a critical sensor for **autonomous (self-driving) vehicles**, allowing them to map real-time surroundings to avoid obstacles. Furthermore, a specialized **Bathymetric LiDAR** uses water-penetrating green lasers to map **seafloors and riverbeds**.