

### Why women's reservation cannot wait any longer

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

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

#### 1. Context

- India is witnessing a **contradiction between high female political participation and low legislative representation**, making it a “democratic crossroads”.
- Women form an increasingly engaged electoral force, yet remain underrepresented in decision-making bodies.
- The **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, introduced in the Lok Sabha on April 17, 2026**, brings urgency to the issue of women's reservation.
- The contradiction between participation and representation highlights the need for immediate implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill.

#### 2. Status of Women's Representation & Key Facts

- Women constitute only about **9% of legislators in State Assemblies** on average.
- Representation in Parliament is slightly higher at around **14%–15% (as of 2024)**.
- Women account for nearly **50% of India's population**, highlighting a stark mismatch with their legislative presence.
- The gap is not only numerical but structural, reflecting systemic exclusion from decision-making.
- Increased electoral participation has **not translated into proportional representation** in legislatures.
- Representation at the State level is even more concerning, indicating deeper exclusion at critical governance levels.

#### 3. Structural Barriers & Need for Reservation

- Political parties act as gatekeepers and **nominate fewer women candidates** compared to men.
- Electoral politics is resource-intensive, requiring **financial backing, networks, and social capital**, where women face disadvantages.
- Cultural norms and safety concerns** discourage women's participation in politics.
- These factors create a **self-reinforcing cycle of exclusion** across elections.
- The Women's Reservation Bill aims to **mandate a fixed share of seats**, directly addressing structural barriers.
- Criticism regarding **merit and tokenism is flawed**, as the current system itself is not purely meritocratic.
- Access to political power is shaped by **privilege, networks, and social structures**, not just competence.

#### 4. Impact, Democratic Significance & Way Forward

- Reservation in **Panchayati Raj institutions** has produced **transformative outcomes**.
- Women leaders have shifted priorities toward **health, education, water, and sanitation**.
- Representation has a **ripple effect**, challenging social norms and encouraging future generations of women leaders.
- Women's representation enhances **democratic legitimacy, inclusiveness, and responsiveness**.
- Gender-inclusive governance leads to **better social indicators, equitable policies, and sustainable growth**.
- Delay in implementation risks **widening the gap between rising aspirations and institutional representation**, leading to frustration and disengagement.

- Voluntary measures by political parties have **failed to significantly increase women’s representation**, necessitating structural intervention
- **Way Forward:** Immediate implementation of the Women’s Reservation Bill to bridge the gap between participation and representation and strengthen democratic inclusiveness.

## Pope Leo and Trump, the battle for America’s soul

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

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Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.

### 1. Trigger and Escalation of Conflict

- Donald Trump criticised Pope Leo XIV for opposing him publicly.
- At a prayer vigil, **Pope Leo XIV criticised the U.S.-Israel war on Iran**, calling it driven by a “false sense of unlimited power” **and** described Donald Trump’s **threat to destroy a civilisation as “unacceptable.”**
- Trump responded with **personal attacks** and even used **religious imagery** (AI-generated Christ-like image).
- Tensions had already been building through **U.S.-Vatican diplomatic friction.**

### 2. Use of Religion in Politics and War

- U.S. leadership invoked **religion to justify war**, claiming **God supports their actions.**
- Concept of **“vessel theology”**: Trump seen as a **flawed but divinely chosen leader** to save America from its enemies.
- Religious language used to legitimise **violence and strategic decisions.**
- Reflects **fusion of faith with political power.**

### 3. Pope and Church’s Response

- The Pope emphasised **peace, moral limits, and rejection of war.**

- Clearly stated that **religion cannot justify violence.**
- Catholic leadership criticised misuse of **“just war doctrine”.**
- The Church maintained **institutional independence** and moral stance despite pressure.

### 4. Broader Implications (Global & Ethical)

- Highlights danger of **politicisation of religion** in global politics.
- Shows how **faith can become a tool of domination** if misused.
- Important for countries like **India**: reflects patterns of **power + moral justification.**
- Core idea: without **ethical boundaries**, religion loses its **moral authority** and becomes an **instrument of power.**

## Deservedly dead: On the defeat of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026

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

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

### 1.Context

- The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 **aimed to expand the Lok Sabha to 816 seats and enable fresh delimitation based on the latest Census**, while linking it to implementation of women’s reservation.
- It **received 298 votes in favour and 230 against.**
- **Required 352 votes** (two-thirds majority of 528 present) to pass.
- The government withdrew related Bills after the defeat.

### 2.Issues with Delimitation and Representation

- Bill proposed **delimitation based on 2011 Census data.**
- This **would reduce representation of southern, eastern, and northeastern states.**
- States with lower population growth would lose seats.

- **Hindi heartland states would gain** relatively more representation.
- Concerns over regional imbalance and fairness dominated the debate.

### 3. Government's Position and Assurances

- Home Minister Amit Shah assured **proportional seat increase for southern states**.
- **Proposed 816-member Lok Sabha** with uniform 50% increase.
- The government linked delimitation with women's reservation.
- Critics questioned why safeguards were not written into the Bill.

### 4. Opposition and Political Reactions

- **INDIA bloc parties voted unitedly against** the Bill.
- The opposition called the process confusing and misleading.
- Criticized linking women's reservation with delimitation.
- TDP and AIADMK supported the Bill despite risks to their states.

### 5. Implications and Way Forward

- The **defeat reinforces the importance of two-thirds majority** safeguard.
- **Prevents major constitutional changes** without broad consensus.
- The government must now follow constitutional procedure.
- Needs to **complete 2026–27 Census before delimitation**.
- Refer reforms to a parliamentary committee for consensus-building.

## KEYWORDS

### Urban Heat Island (UHI)

- Urban Heat Island (UHI) is a **phenomenon where urban areas experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural regions**.
- It **occurs due to human activities and changes in land surfaces** caused by urbanization.
- **Reduced vegetation limits shade and evapotranspiration (the process by which water is transferred from the land surface to the atmosphere through evaporation from soil and water bodies and transpiration from plants.)**
- **Concrete buildings, asphalt roads, and dense infrastructure absorb** and retain more heat.
- Urban layouts with tall buildings and **narrow streets trap heat, while vehicles and industries release additional heat**.
- As a result, cities remain warmer even at night, with **temperature differences sometimes reaching up to 12°C compared to rural areas**.

### Heat stroke

- **Heat stroke** is the **most severe form of heat-related illness (hyperthermia)**.
- It happens when the body **overheats** and **fails to cool itself** effectively.
- This condition is **life-threatening** and requires **immediate medical treatment**.
- The **longer the temperature remains high**, the greater the risk of **serious complications**, such as **organ damage or death**.