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**DAILY EDITORIAL
ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

**DELIMITATION OF LOK SABHA & ITS
IMPLICATIONS**

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Context

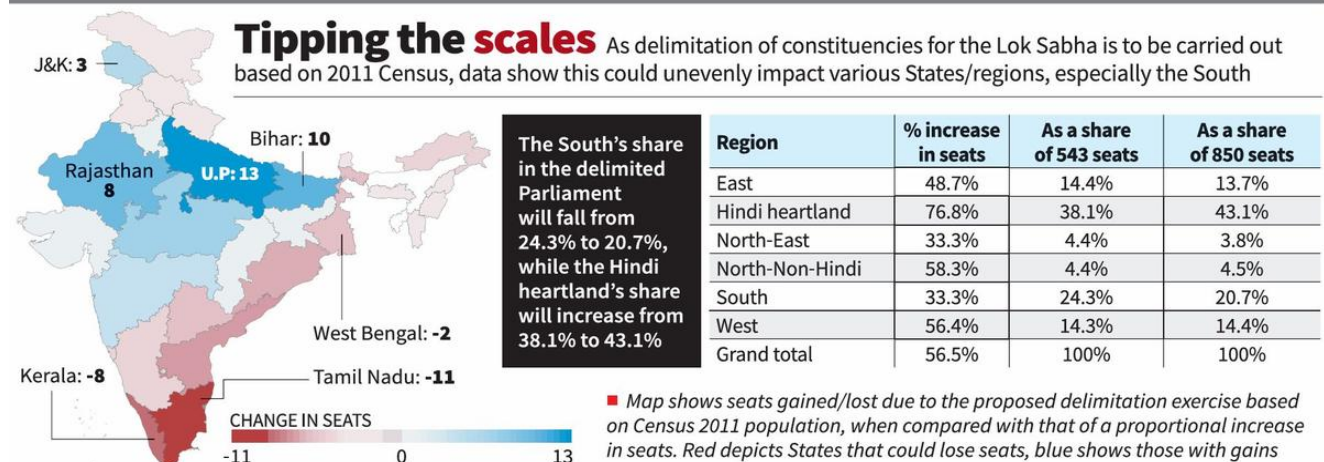
- Recently, the Union Government has introduced **three crucial Bills** including the 'Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty First Amendment) Bill, 2026' that is expected to reshape **India's parliamentary structure** and **federal balance**.

Phases of Seat Increase in Lok Sabha

- Initial Phase (Post-Independence Expansion):**
 - First Lok Sabha (1952):** 489 (total seats); based on **1951 Census**; First Delimitation Commission (1952).
 - Second & Third Lok Sabha (1957–1962):** Seats increased gradually due to population growth, and reorganisation of States.
- Major Expansion Phase (1960s–1970s):** After **1961 Census (Delimitation Commission, 1963)**, seats increased to around **520**.
 - After **1971 Census (Delimitation Commission, 1973)**: Seats increased to **543 (current strength)**; It reflected **rapid population growth**.
- Freeze Period (1976–2026):**
 - 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976):** It froze seat allocation based on **1971 Census**; Objectives were to encourage **population control**, and avoid penalising states with successful family planning.
 - 84th Amendment (2001):** It extended freeze till **2026**; During this period, **no increase in total seats**; and only **readjustment of boundaries** (2002 delimitation).

Key Provisions of Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026

- Increase in Strength of Lok Sabha:** The Bill proposes to **raise the maximum strength of the Lok Sabha from 550 to 850**.
 - It includes elected members from States, and representation from **Union Territories (Delhi, J&K, and Puducherry)**.
 - It aims to ensure **better representation in line with population growth**.
- Basis of Seat Allocation:** Seats for each State will be allocated based on **proportion of population of the State to total population of India**.
 - Population will be based on **such Census as Parliament may specify by law**; and not necessarily the latest Census.
 - It gives **flexibility to Parliament** in choosing the reference Census.



- Delimitation Requirement:** The Bill links **reallocation of seats**, and **women's reservation implementation**.
 - Both will take effect **only after a delimitation exercise**.

- **Women's Reservation Clause:** It provides that **one-third of seats shall be reserved for women**. Key conditions include:
 - ♦ Effective **after delimitation**, and reservation valid for **15 years from commencement**.
- **Amendment to Existing Constitutional Scheme:** The Bill modifies provisions related to:
 - ♦ **Article 81** (composition of Lok Sabha)
 - ♦ **Delimitation framework linked to Census**
 - ♦ Related provisions concerning **reservation and seat allocation**

Constitution Amendment Bill

- It is a legislative proposal introduced in Parliament to **modify, add, or repeal provisions of the Constitution of India**.

Who Can Introduce?

- Can be introduced in **either House of Parliament (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha)**
- Only **Parliament** has the power to initiate (States cannot introduce such Bills)

Procedure (Article 368)

- **Special Majority in Parliament:** Must be passed by majority of total membership, and **2/3rd of members present and voting** in each House.
- **State Ratification (if required):** Needed when amendment affects federal provisions such as the President's election, distribution of powers, and judiciary.
 - ♦ It requires approval by **at least half of State Legislatures**.
- **President's Assent:** After passage, the Bill is sent to the **President for assent**.
 - ♦ After assent, the bill becomes a **Constitutional Amendment Act**.

Key Features

- No provision for **joint sitting** in case of deadlock;
- **Judicial Review applicable** (Basic Structure Doctrine);
- Parliament's power is **limited** and cannot alter the **basic structure**

Major Implications

- **Redistribution of Political Power:** End of freeze on seat allocation (post-2026 condition removed)
 - ♦ Seat distribution based on **2011 Census**.
 - ♦ It leads to **greater representation for populous northern States**, and ensures '**one person, one vote, one value**'.
 - ♦ Such redistribution may **intensify regional political asymmetry**.
- **Strengthening of Lok Sabha vis-à-vis Rajya Sabha:** Lok Sabha expanded; **Rajya Sabha unchanged**.
 - ♦ Lok Sabha dominance increases in joint sittings.
 - ♦ It weakens **bicameral balance and federal safeguards**.
- **Executive Dominance in Delimitation Decisions:** Parliament can decide when to conduct delimitation, and which Census to use.
 - ♦ It requires a **simple majority**, and gives the ruling government significant control.
 - ♦ It raises concerns about **politicisation of delimitation**.
- **Expansion of Council of Ministers:** Cap of **15% of Lok Sabha strength** may lead to increased **executive patronage**, and governance complexity.
- **Reduced Legislative Participation:** Larger Lok Sabha leads to **lower individual MP participation**. There are fewer chances in Question Hour, and Zero Hour.
 - ♦ Problem aggravated by Parliament sitting which is less than **70 days/year**.

Comparative Perspective

- **United Kingdom Example:** House of Commons include **650 members**; and key strengths include more than **150 sitting days/year**, strong **committee system**, and mandatory scrutiny of Bills.

Conclusion

- The proposed reforms aim to **enhance representational equity**, but they simultaneously alter **federal balance**, strengthen **executive control**, weaken **bicameralism**, and risk reducing **legislative deliberation quality**.

Daily Mains Practice Question

- [Q] The proposed delimitation of Lok Sabha seats after 2026 is likely to reshape India's federal balance. Discuss the implications of delimitation on representation, federalism, and political power dynamics.

Source: TH

