



“ We help you reach for the star ”

VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 18/04/2026 (SATURDAY)



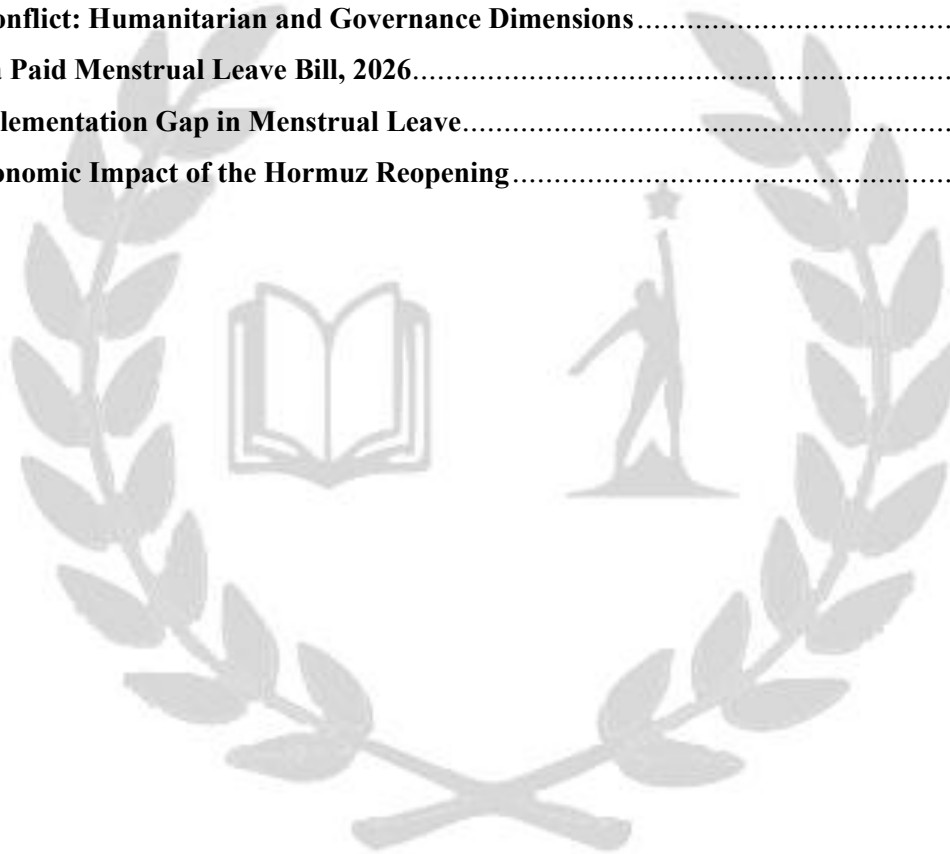
 **9972258970 & 9740702455**

**#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004**



Table of Contents

1. Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026: Defeat and Implications.....	2
2. Debate on “One Person, One Vote, One Value”	2
3. Women’s Representation Gap in Legislatures	3
4. Reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.....	3
5. West Asia Ceasefire Dynamics: Implications for Regional Stability.....	4
6. Delhi High Court Ruling on EWS Reservation Standards	5
7. Distinction Between Social and Economic Backwardness	5
8. Manipur Peace Initiative: Kuki-Naga Dialogue	6
9. Manipur Conflict: Humanitarian and Governance Dimensions	7
10. Karnataka Paid Menstrual Leave Bill, 2026.....	7
11. Policy Implementation Gap in Menstrual Leave.....	8
12. Global Economic Impact of the Hormuz Reopening.....	9



VIDHVATH IAS ACADEMY



1. Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026: Defeat and Implications

- **Legislative Failure:** The Lok Sabha rejected the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, which failed to secure the mandatory **special majority** under Article 368.
- **The Vote Count:** Of the 528 members present, 298 voted in favor and 230 against; the Bill fell short of the required **two-thirds majority (352 votes)** of the members present and voting.
- **Linkage to Delimitation:** The Bill sought to bypass the 2026 freeze on delimitation by using **2011 Census** data to redraw constituencies and increase Lok Sabha seats from 543 to **850**.
- **Withdrawal of Allied Bills:** Following the defeat, the government withdrew the **Delimitation Bill, 2026**, and the **Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, as they were contingent on the constitutional amendment.
- **Core Objective:** The primary aim was to expedite the implementation of the **106th Amendment (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam)** by decoupling it from the "first census after 2026" requirement.
- **Federal Concerns:** Opposition parties argued that delimitation based on 2011 data would unfairly reduce the political weight of Southern and North-Eastern states that successfully implemented population control.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 368:** Power of Parliament to amend the Constitution and procedure thereof.
- **Article 82:** Readjustment of constituencies after each census (currently frozen until the first census after 2026 via the 84th Amendment).
- **Article 170:** Composition of Legislative Assemblies and their delimitation.

Key Definition:

- **Delimitation:** The act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body.

Conclusion: The defeat highlights the complexities of balancing democratic proportionality with federal equity. It signifies a temporary halt to the immediate rollout of women's reservation, which remains legally tied to the post-2026 delimitation process.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II (Polity & Governance) – Amendment procedure, Federalism, and Representation of People's Act.

2. Debate on “One Person, One Vote, One Value”

- **Democratic Principle:** This principle implies that every citizen's vote should have equal weight in determining the outcome of elections and the composition of the legislature.
- **Proportionality vs. Federalism:** The debate pits the need for **equal representation** (based on current population) against **federal stability** (protecting the interests of states with lower population growth).
- **Current Disparity:** At present, the ratio of voters to representatives varies significantly; for instance, an MP in a high-population state like Uttar Pradesh represents far more voters than an MP in states like Kerala.
- **Delimitation as a Tool:** The government argues that redrawing boundaries is essential to restore this value, which has been diluted due to the 50-year freeze on seat redistribution.



- **Counter-Argument:** Critics argue that "One Value" should not come at the cost of rewarding states that failed in population management, thereby punishing states that met national family planning goals.
- **Constituent Assembly Intent:** The principle was foundational to the Indian democratic setup, aimed at ensuring that no individual's political voice is marginalized by geography.

Key Definition:

- **One Person, One Vote, One Value:** A concept where every individual has one vote, and each vote has the same power to influence an election, ensuring "numerical equality" in representation.

Conclusion: While "One Person, One Vote" is a pillar of democracy, its literal application via delimitation threatens the "Federal Contract" between the Union and the States.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II – Fundamental Rights, Electoral Reforms, and Constitutional values.

3. Women's Representation Gap in Legislatures

- **Current Statistics:** Despite the passage of the 106th Constitutional Amendment in 2023, women's presence remains low, at approximately **14–15% in Parliament** and a mere **9% in State Assemblies**.
- **The Legislative Deadlock:** The implementation of 33% reservation is currently "sunset-linked" to the completion of the delimitation exercise, which is now delayed following the defeat of the 131st Amendment Bill.
- **Global Context:** India lags significantly behind the global average of ~27%, as reported by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in early 2026.
- **Gender Gap in Governance:** The lack of representation is seen as a barrier to gender-sensitive policymaking and inclusive development.
- **Structural Barriers:** Factors such as "muscle and money power," patriarchal political structures, and lack of internal party quotas continue to hinder women's entry into active politics.
- **Comparison:** While local bodies (Panchayats and Municipalities) have 33-50% reservation, the "glass ceiling" persists at the higher legislative levels.

Legal Provision:

- **Article 243D & 243T:** Provides for reservation for women in Panchayats and Municipalities.
- **106th Amendment Act (2023):** Inserted **Article 334A**, which mandates 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and Assemblies after the delimitation following the first census after 2026.

Conclusion: The persistent gap in representation underscores the need for urgent legislative or political intervention, as the current timeline for mandatory reservation remains uncertain.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper I (Social Issues - Women empowerment) and GS Paper II (Governance).

4. Reopening of the Strait of Hormuz

- **Strategic Reopening:** Iran has declared the Strait of Hormuz "completely open" for commercial shipping following a U.S.-Iran truce and a ceasefire in Lebanon.
- **Global Energy Chokepoint:** The Strait is the world's most important oil transit point, handling approximately **20% of the world's total oil consumption** (around 20-21 million barrels per day).



- **LNG Trade:** It is the primary route for nearly all Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports from Qatar, making it vital for global energy security.
- **Economic Impact:** The reopening has led to a cooling of global oil prices and reduced maritime insurance premiums for tankers operating in the Persian Gulf.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** The passage connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, serving as the sole sea link for major producers like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, and Iraq.
- **Regional Stability:** The reopening is tied to a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah and a broader diplomatic engagement involving the U.S. and China.

Key Definition:

- **Maritime Chokepoint:** A narrow channel along widely used global sea routes that is strategic due to its high volume of traffic and vulnerability to blockades.

Conclusion: The reopening of the Strait provides a temporary reprieve for the global economy; however, the corridor remains a volatile geopolitical lever used by regional powers.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II (International Relations) and GS Paper III (Energy Security & Economy).

5. West Asia Ceasefire Dynamics: Implications for Regional Stability

- **Multi-Party Truce:** A fragile 10-day ceasefire has been brokered involving the U.S., Iran, and Israel, primarily focusing on de-escalation in Lebanon and the reopening of maritime routes.
- **Hezbollah's Position:** While the ceasefire directly impacts the Lebanon-Israel border, Hezbollah remains formally outside the direct negotiation framework, highlighting the complexity of dealing with non-state actors.
- **The "Truce-for-Trade" Strategy:** The agreement appears to be a strategic trade-off where Iran eases maritime pressure in the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for reduced military pressure on its regional proxies.
- **U.S. Diplomatic Role:** The United States has acted as the primary mediator, aiming to stabilize global energy prices and prevent a full-scale regional war involving Iran.
- **Internal Lebanese Crisis:** The ceasefire is also a response to the collapsing Lebanese economy, which cannot sustain continued bombardment and displacement.
- **Fragility of Peace:** Military analysts warn that without a formal treaty involving Hezbollah and a resolution to the Gaza conflict, the current lull may only serve as a tactical regrouping period.

Constitutional & International Context:

- **Article 51 of Indian Constitution:** Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) promote international peace and security.
- **Role of Non-State Actors:** These are organized groups with political influence but no formal state affiliation (e.g., Hezbollah), which complicate traditional Westphalian diplomacy.

Key Definition:

- **Westphalian Sovereignty:** The principle in international law that each state has exclusive sovereignty over its territory. Non-state actors challenge this by operating across borders without state accountability.



Conclusion: The ceasefire reflects a shift toward pragmatic diplomacy over ideological warfare, though the exclusion of key militant groups leaves the "long peace" in jeopardy.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II (International Relations) – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

6. Delhi High Court Ruling on EWS Reservation Standards

- **Judicial Clarification:** The Delhi High Court recently ruled that candidates belonging to the **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** category are not entitled to the same relaxations as SC, ST, and OBC candidates.
- **No Age Relaxation:** The court held that EWS candidates must adhere to the general category age limits for government recruitment and competitive exams.
- **Restriction on Attempts:** Unlike reserved categories based on social backwardness, EWS candidates cannot claim additional attempts beyond what is prescribed for the unreserved category.
- **Nature of the 103rd Amendment:** The court observed that the EWS quota was intended as a financial support mechanism, not a remedy for historical structural exclusion.
- **Parity with General Category:** The ruling reinforces the principle that EWS is a subset of the General Category, inheriting its fundamental eligibility criteria except for the 10% seat reservation.
- **Uniformity in Selection:** This judgment aims to prevent the "dilution of merit" beyond the mandated reservation percentage for economically disadvantaged groups.

Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 15(6):** Added by the 103rd Amendment; allows the State to make special provisions for the advancement of any economically weaker sections.
- **Article 16(6):** Enables the State to make provisions for reservation in appointments for EWS, in addition to existing reservations.

Key Definition:

- **Economic Weaker Section (EWS):** A sub-category of people having an annual family income less than ₹8 lakh and belonging to the non-reserved category (General).

Conclusion: The judgment draws a sharp line between "economic support" and "compensatory discrimination," preserving the traditional framework of age and attempt limits for the general pool.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II (Polity & Governance) – Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.

7. Distinction Between Social and Economic Backwardness

- **Structural vs. Fluctuating:** The Delhi High Court emphasized that caste-based (social) backwardness is **structural, historical, and lifelong**, whereas economic backwardness is **transient and variable**.
- **The "Lifelong" Criterion:** Social backwardness is an "ascriptive" status that an individual carries regardless of their wealth, whereas economic status can change with employment or inheritance.
- **Historical Context:** Social reservation (SC/ST) is rooted in the "Compensatory Justice" theory to rectify centuries of untouchability and exclusion.



- **Economic Quota Intent:** EWS reservation is based on "Distributive Justice," aimed at providing equal opportunity to those hampered by current financial poverty.
- **Creamy Layer Logic:** This distinction explains why the "creamy layer" applies to OBCs (to filter out the socially advanced) but is the very basis for defining EWS.
- **Constitutional Philosophy:** The court noted that treating both types of backwardness identically would violate the "Equality of Status and Opportunity" enshrined in the Preamble.

Key Definition:

- **Social Backwardness:** A condition where a group is hindered by traditional social stigmas and lack of representation, often independent of their current financial state.

Conclusion: This judicial distinction preserves the sanctity of the original reservation framework while justifying the separate, more restricted nature of the EWS quota.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II (Social Justice) – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

8. Manipur Peace Initiative: Kuki-Naga Dialogue

- **State-Led Mediation:** The Chief Minister of Manipur has initiated a fresh round of dialogue specifically targeting the Kuki and Naga tribal leadership to prevent the widening of ethnic fractures.
- **Restoring Trust:** The primary focus is on "Confidence Building Measures" (CBMs) to ensure that the ongoing Meitei-Kuki conflict does not draw in the Naga communities, which could lead to a multi-polar civil crisis.
- **Conflict De-escalation:** By engaging these two influential tribal groups, the government aims to secure highways and essential supply lines often disrupted by blockades.
- **Role of Civil Society:** Peace committees involving church leaders and tribal elders are being utilized as intermediaries to bridge the communication gap between the state and the hill tribes.
- **Internal Security Imperative:** Preventing a "pan-tribal" alliance or clash is critical for the Indian Army and Paramilitary forces to maintain the current status quo.
- **Long-term Stability:** The initiative seeks to create a roadmap for the return of displaced persons and the eventual restoration of the administrative machinery in the hill districts.

Legal & Security Provisions:

- **Sixth Schedule:** Provides for the administration of tribal areas in certain North-Eastern states to protect their autonomy.
- **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA):** Currently active in several parts of Manipur, influencing the nature of the peace process.

Key Definition:

- **Track II Diplomacy:** Informal, non-governmental ties between different groups to build trust and resolve conflicts, often used alongside formal government talks.

Conclusion: While the dialogue is a positive step, the success of the Manipur Peace Initiative depends on addressing the underlying land and identity grievances that fueled the initial violence.



UPSC Relevance: GS Paper III (Internal Security) – Linkages between development and spread of extremism; Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

9. Manipur Conflict: Humanitarian and Governance Dimensions

- **Casualty and Displacement:** Since the eruption of ethnic violence in May 2023, the state has recorded approximately **260 deaths** and the internal displacement of over **62,000 individuals**.
- **Societal Fracture:** The prolonged nature of the conflict has led to a near-total geographic and social separation between the Meitei and Kuki communities, creating "buffer zones" monitored by security forces.
- **Education and Livelihood:** The crisis has caused a massive disruption in the academic calendar and destroyed local economies, particularly in the agricultural and handloom sectors.
- **Governance Paralysis:** The state machinery faces the challenge of "dual administration," where civil authority is contested in hill areas, complicating the delivery of essential services and relief materials.
- **Human Rights Concerns:** International and national observers have raised alarms regarding the conditions in relief camps, including hygiene, mental health issues, and the lack of long-term rehabilitation plans.
- **Weaponization of Misinformation:** The conflict has been exacerbated by the frequent use of internet shutdowns to curb the spread of inflammatory content, which simultaneously hinders emergency communication.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 355:** Duty of the Union to protect States against internal disturbance.
- **Article 21:** Right to Life and Personal Liberty, which includes the right to a dignified life, currently at risk for the displaced population.

Key Definition:

- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** Persons forced to flee their homes to avoid the effects of armed conflict or violations of human rights, who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

Conclusion: The humanitarian crisis in Manipur is no longer a localized ethnic clash but a significant internal security challenge requiring a combined approach of political reconciliation and robust administrative rehabilitation.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper III (Internal Security) and GS Paper II (Governance - Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services).

10. Karnataka Paid Menstrual Leave Bill, 2026

- **Pioneering Legislation:** Karnataka is proposing a law to mandate paid menstrual leave, making it one of the first Indian states to provide a statutory framework for such benefits in the private sector.
- **Inclusive Coverage:** The Bill is notably progressive, extending coverage to **women, adolescent girls, and transgender persons** up to the age of **52 years**.
- **Penal Provisions:** To ensure corporate accountability, the proposed law includes strict **penalties and fines** for employers who fail to comply or discriminate against employees seeking leave.



- **Health-Centric Approach:** The policy recognizes dysmenorrhea (painful periods) as a legitimate health reason that impacts workplace productivity and employee well-being.
- **Public vs. Private Sector:** While some government departments already allow such leave, this Bill seeks to bridge the gap by mandating it across all industrial and commercial establishments.
- **Transgender Rights:** By explicitly including transgender persons, the law aligns with the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**, ensuring intersectional gender justice.

Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 15(3):** Enables the State to make "special provisions for women and children."
- **Article 42:** Directive Principle (DPSP) requiring the State to provide "just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief."

Key Definition:

- **Dysmenorrhea:** Medical term for painful menstruation that interferes with daily activities; the primary physiological basis for menstrual leave policies.

Conclusion: If enacted, this legislation will mark a paradigm shift in Indian labor laws, moving from gender-neutral to gender-sensitive workplace environments.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II (Social Justice and Welfare Schemes) and GS Paper III (Indian Economy - Labour Laws).

11. Policy Implementation Gap in Menstrual Leave

- **Enforcement Deficit:** Despite several companies and a few states announcing menstrual leave policies, there is a significant "implementation gap" where the benefit remains only on paper.
- **Workplace Stigma:** Many eligible employees hesitate to claim the leave due to the fear of being perceived as "less productive" or facing "motherhood penalty" biases in promotions.
- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):** Compliance is particularly low in the MSME sector, where thin margins and lack of HR oversight lead to the dismissal of gender-sensitive benefits.
- **Lack of Inspection:** There is an absence of a dedicated monitoring mechanism or periodic audits by labor departments to verify if companies are adhering to leave mandates.
- **Informal Sector Exclusion:** The biggest gap exists in the informal economy (e.g., domestic help, construction labor), where workers have no job security, making the concept of menstrual leave non-existent.
- **The "Double Burden":** Without legislative backing (like the proposed Karnataka law), menstrual leave remains a "discretionary perk" rather than a "worker's right."

Key Definition:

- **Implementation Gap:** The discrepancy between the stated objectives of a policy or law and the actual outcomes achieved during its execution on the ground.

Conclusion: Legal mandates without robust enforcement and cultural sensitization are insufficient. Bridging this gap requires strict labor inspections and a shift in corporate culture.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors).



12. Global Economic Impact of the Hormuz Reopening

- **Crude Oil Price Correction:** Global Brent crude prices witnessed a sharp decline (approx. 4–5%) immediately following the announcement that the Strait of Hormuz is open for commercial traffic.
- **Risk Premium Reduction:** The reopening has significantly lowered the "Geopolitical Risk Premium"—the extra cost added to oil prices due to the threat of supply disruptions.
- **Insurance and Logistics:** Maritime insurance rates for tankers, which had spiked during the blockade, have begun to stabilize, reducing the overall landed cost of crude for importing nations like India.
- **Inflationary Relief:** For energy-dependent economies, lower oil prices translate to lower transportation costs, potentially easing the pressure on retail inflation (CPI).
- **Supply Chain Fluidity:** Beyond oil, the reopening ensures the steady flow of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), which is critical for the fertilizer and power industries in South Asia and Europe.
- **Strategic Reserve Management:** Nations that were contemplating tapping into their Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) have now shifted back to normal procurement patterns.

Economic Linkages:

- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** As India imports ~85% of its oil, a price drop directly improves India's trade balance and reduces the CAD.
- **Energy Security:** Stable access to maritime chokepoints is a prerequisite for national economic planning and industrial growth.

Conclusion: The reopening of the Strait serves as a vital "economic lung" for the global market, proving that maritime stability is as crucial to energy security as actual production levels.

UPSC Relevance: GS Paper III (Indian Economy - Infrastructure: Energy; and Global Trade).