Centre proposes freeze on LS seat share for States until 2051

The new Constitutional Amendment Bill, accompanied by a fresh Delimitation Bill, proposes to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats in each State by 50 per cent; they also bring into force the 33% reservation for women in the Lower House

Varghese K. George
Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

A new Constitution Amendment Bill approved by the Union Cabinet on Friday proposes an extension of the existing freeze on the inter-State distribution of Lok Sabha seats for another 25 years, until 2051, addressing the core concern of States that feared a loss of their proportionate strength due to the decline in their share of the national population.

The 132nd Constitutional Amendment Bill marks a significant turn from the 131st Amendment Bill moved by the Centre in April that sought to redistribute Lok Sabha seats among States according to the 2011 Census population.

The proposed amendment removes the linkage of the existing distribution of Lok Sabha seats to the 1971 Census and links it with provisions related to women's reservation in Article 334A of the Constitution. The guarantee for a 50% increase in the number of Lok Sabha seats for each State is being written into this, providing that, for the purposes of giving immediate effect to such reservation for women, "the delimitation so undertaken shall provide for an increase of fifty per cent in the number of seats allocated to each State and Union territory in the House of the People." The total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of each State and Union territory will also increase similarly, "over and above the number of seats existing immediately before such delimitation".

The new Bill, accompanied by a fresh Delimitation Bill, proposes to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats in each State by 50%, while the maximum strength of the Lower House will rise from the current 550 to 850. If these Bills are passed by Parliament in its special sittings from November 30 to December 3, the path to immediate delimitation will open, which will also bring into force the 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha. Amendments to Articles 81 and 82, which mandate the distribution of Lok Sabha seats among the States, propose to extend a sunset clause for the existing proportion until the first Census after 2051.

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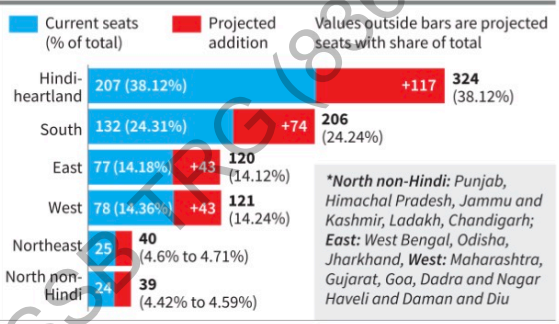
Possible change

The projected region-wise changes, assuming 850 Lok Sabha seats (815 for States and 35 for UTs). Minor changes in shares are due to seats rounded off as per the largest remainder method used in delimitation exercises



**North non-Hindi: Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Chandigarh; East: West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, West: Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu*

DMK stands firm on two demands, maintains Stalin

CHENNAI

DMK chief M.K. Stalin reiterated that the party stands firm on two demands: protecting Tamil Nadu's 7.18% Lok Sabha seat share, and freezing State seat proportions based on 1971 Census for 25 years. » PAGE 9

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8368104529)

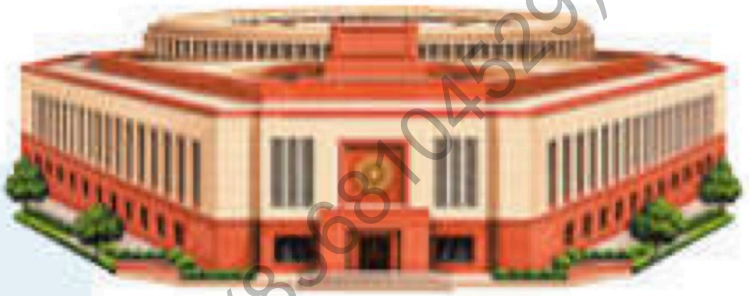
Centre moots freeze on States' LS share till 2051

The existing provision in Article 82 that says that "until the relevant figures for the first Census taken after the year 2026 have been published, it shall not be necessary to readjust" the distribution of seats is being amended in the Bill and will be changed to read "until the year 2051". Article 82 currently has two definitions for population: for the purposes of distribution among States, the 1971 population; and for the purposes of delimitation of individual constituencies within the States, the 2001 Census. The proposed amendment will extend the sunset clause to "until the year 2051", but the reference to the 1971 Census has been dropped.

The Bill proposes that the distribution among States will be determined "in accordance with Article 334A", while the boundaries of individual constituencies will be determined by the "latest published Census figures available on the date of the commencement of the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-second Amendment) Act, 2026".

SHAURYA SSB ERG (8366104523)

• WHAT'S NEW IN THE BILL



INCREASE IN THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF LOK SABHA AND ASSEMBLY SEATS IN EACH STATE BY 50% OF EXISTING STRENGTH

to states until after the relevant figures of the first Census taken after 2051 are published

INCREASING THE maximum number of Assembly seats in a state to 650 from 500

INCLUDING THE Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in the definition of "state" for the purpose of elections to the post of President

FREEZING ALLOTMENT of seats

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8368104529)

Seventh Nilgiri-class stealth frigate handed over to Navy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



A view of the 3rd Project 17A frigate, *Vindhyagiri*, as GRSE hands it over to the Indian Navy in Kolkata on Friday. ANI

The Indian Navy on Friday received *Vindhyagiri*, the seventh and final ship of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) stealth frigates, from Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) in Kolkata, marking the completion of the Project 17A ship delivery programme and a significant milestone in India's indigenous warship construction capabilities.

With *Vindhyagiri*'s delivery on Friday, all seven ships under the programme have been handed over to the Navy within 23 months of the delivery of the first ship, *INS Nilgiri*, on December 20, 2024, the Defence Ministry said.

Combat capabilities

Designed by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau and overseen by the Warship Overseeing Team in Kolkata, the Project 17A frigates represent a generational leap in indigenous warship design, stealth, survivability and combat capabilities.

The multi-mission platforms are equipped with an advanced suite of weapons and sensors, enhancing their capabilities across anti-surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare domains. They also feature Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion systems, comprising a diesel engine and a gas turbine, along with an Integrated Platform Management System. With an indigenous content of 75%, the Project 17A programme involved more than 200 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). It generated employment for approximately 4,000 personnel directly and over 10,000 indirectly.

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8668104529)

RBI Governor pegs AI's potential value to MSMEs at $685 billion

Gowri Lakshmi
MUMBAI

Artificial intelligence (AI) adoption could unlock economic value of $490-685 billion for India's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), but with only around 15% of the country's small businesses currently using the technology, the sector risks missing out on substantial productivity gains, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Friday.

Speaking at the SME Finance and Investment Summit in Mumbai, Mr. Malhotra urged MSMEs to accelerate the adoption of AI, technology and innovation to improve competitiveness and bridge the productivity gap with larger enterprises.



Sanjay Malhotra

AI could help smaller businesses compete with larger players in terms of speed, quality and personalisation, he said, noting that India's adoption rate lagged behind countries such as China, the U.S. and Germany. "This is entirely doable," the Governor said, encouraging enterprises to begin with practical applications such as digital accounting, inventory management, quality control and customer engagement before expanding their use of AI.

"Being small should not mean thinking small," he said, urging enterprises to scale up through partnerships and shared facilities.

SHAURYA ASSOCIATES (8368104519)

India-US trade deal close to culmination, says Goyal

Ravi Dutta Mishra
New Delhi, November 27

A DAY after the US released its new tariff architecture following the conclusion of two Section 301 tariff investigations into India and 15 other countries, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said that the pathway to a US trade deal was now taking "some shape" and was "close to culmination".

Speaking at the Debt Capital Market Summit, Goyal said that India's exports in October touched an all-time high of $90 billion, with total exports reaching $90 billion in a single month, even as many of India's substantive free trade agreements (FTAs) have yet to come into effect.

"The EU FTA will hopefully be executed and signed later this year and come into effect in March next year. The US trade deal is close to culmination. The process and pathway, which was always something that held back the finalising of the deal, is now taking some shape," he said.

This comes as the US seems to have agreed to a key Indian demand of securing a comparative advantage over its rivals. Under the new tariff architecture, India has received a marginally better tariff rate offer of 17% post-US deal, compared with the 18-20% rates offered to other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

To be sure, the US also has fresh leverage over India after US President Donald Trump signed into law the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 earlier this year, giving him the authority to impose tariffs of up to 100% on countries, including India and China, that continue to buy Russian oil and gas. The use of the Act had been paused for 60 days ahead of the mid-term elections on November 3.



Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal addressing the India Debt Capital Market Summit 2026. ANI

The Ministry of External Affairs had said that India remains committed to ensuring the nation's energy security "through diversified sourcing and based on evolving market dynamics". It has also said that the proposed legislation's implications for the India-US relationship, as well as the global energy market, have been flagged in discussions with US representatives.

While India stands to gain a tariff advantage over its ASEAN peers, New Delhi will have to accept steep demands under the trade deal. Exporters said the government will now have to decide what kind of concessions it is willing to offer in exchange for an 8-percentage-point tariff advantage. The no-deal tariff rate for India is set at 25%.

According to the joint statement released by the two countries in February, India agreed to "eliminate or reduce" tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products. However, India did not formally sign the trade deal.

"India agrees to address long-standing barriers to the trade in US medical devices; eliminate restrictive import licensing procedures that delay market access for, or impose quantitative restrictions on, US Information and Communication Technology (ICT) goods; and determine, with a view towards a positive outcome, within six months of entry into force of the Agreement whether US-developed or international standards, including testing requirements, are acceptable for US exports entering the Indian market in identified sectors," the joint statement stated.

It also said India intends to purchase $500 billion worth of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal over the next five years.

"India and the United States will significantly increase trade in technology products, including Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) and other goods used in data centres, and expand joint technology cooperation," the statement said.

SHAURYA ASSR-TRG (9568104520)

End 'military aggression' in Europe, Trump urges Putin

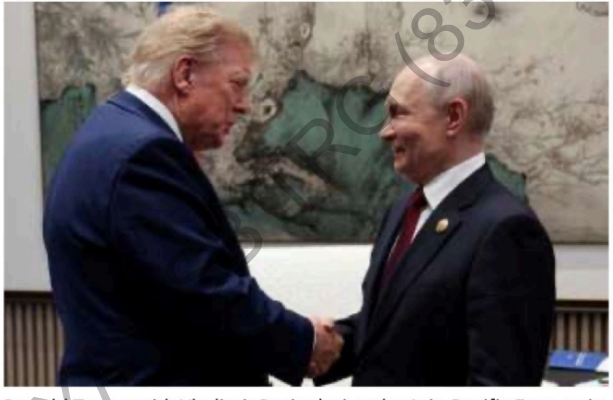
U.S. President says he had made the request to his Russian counterpart when they met in China; European nations are increasingly worried about the possibility of war spreading beyond Ukraine

Agence France-Presse
WEST PALM BEACH

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday he had asked Vladimir Putin to "pull back all military aggression" against Europe, in a new shift in tone towards the Russian leader he called his friend just last week.

Mr. Trump said he had made the request to Mr. Putin when they met in China last week, adding that he thought it would help lead to a deal to end Moscow's grinding war in Ukraine.

Mr. Trump's comments come a day after he hosted NATO chief Mark Rutte in Florida, after which the two leaders issued a joint statement calling upon Russia not to expand the Ukraine war.



Donald Trump with Vladimir Putin during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' Summit in Shenzhen last week. REUTERS

"During my conversations in China with President Vladimir Putin, of Russia, I spent a lot of time talking about the fact that I would like to see President Putin pull back all Military aggression against territories throughout Europe," Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social network.

Mr. Trump said he had done so "in the hopes that a Deal can be made between Russia and Ukraine, and made quickly."

"I really believe this is a strong possibility," he added.

The statement did not specify which territories Mr. Trump meant – and did not specifically include Ukraine, which Russia invaded in February 2022, kicking off the largest war in Europe since the Second World War.

European nations have been increasingly concerned by what they regard as Russian provocations.

Hackers breach USAF's cloud computing platform

Reuters
WASHINGTON

Hackers have breached the U.S. Air Force's flagship cloud computing platform, three people familiar with the matter told Reuters, in a development that could jeopardize a vast swathe of sensitive tactical, personnel and logistics data.

The intrusion at Cloud One was discovered within the past month or so during work to upgrade the system, two of the people said, adding that the discovery has led to disruption across the platform. Reuters could not establish the identity of the hackers, the full scope of the intrusion or whether any data had been stolen.

In a statement to Reuters, the Air Force said it "does not comment on the security posture, vulnerabilities or operational status of specific networks and systems."



Integrated platform: Initiated in 2017, Cloud One was meant to serve as a one-stop shop for the Air Force's IT needs. REUTERS

Initiated in 2017, Cloud One was meant to serve as a one-stop shop for the Air Force's IT needs, combining the resources of four operators – Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle and Alphabet – to power scores of applications including ones that manage personnel data and pay or logistics and maintenance.

Among them are the Air Force's Cloud-Based Command and Control, which collates air defence radar and other data feeds from across North America, and the Theater Integrated Combat Munitions System, which tracks bombs and missiles across over 200 U.S. Air Force locations.

SHAURYA SSB TBG (8553104529)

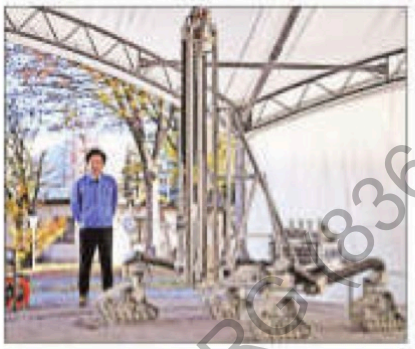
Japan space agency showcases Chandrayaan-5 rover prototype

Anjali Marar
Bengaluru, November 27

THE JAPAN Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) showcased a prototype of the rover model of the Chandrayaan-5 mission. This will be JAXA's first lunar mission in partnership with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Under the collaboration, the JAXA is building the rover, which would carry seven scientific instruments, cumulatively weighing about 350 kg. The prototype was showcased at a media briefing at the Chofu Aerospace Centre in Tokyo on Wednesday.

The lander module is being developed by the ISRO under the pact. Along with unveiling the rover prototype, the JAXA team demonstrated the rover's movement on an uneven terrain (resembling the lunar surface) using belt-like crawler tracks. The rover is a four-legged crawler. The actual rover model is in its advanced stage of testing, the JAXA said.



Chandrayaan-5 rover movement demonstration in Tokyo. JAXA

The rover will explore areas near the landing site and measure characteristic features like temperature, and look for geological clues at select areas. The two space agencies will prepare a planned path which the rover will follow for carrying out measurements, operations and recharging of its batteries.

Two kinds of observations are proposed: fine observations, including collection of regolith samples from the surface up to a depth of about 1.5 metres; coarse observation, which will involve information regarding determining the drilling locations in the areas of exploration.

Also known as the LUPEX (Lunar Polar Exploration) mission, the ISRO-JAXA joint mission is expected for a 2028 lift-off on a H3 rocket from Tanegashima space center, Japan's primary space port. The Chandrayaan-5 aims to study water and water-ice both on the lunar surface and the subsurface.

Chandrayaan-5 spacecraft would weigh about 6.5 tonnes and the mission is planned for 3.5 months (its operational life can be extended to a maximum of one year post-landing).

SHAURYA ASSETS 8368104529