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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 08.04.2026

GS Paper II: Polity

1. Delimitation, Women's Reservation and Political Dynamics in India

a. Introduction

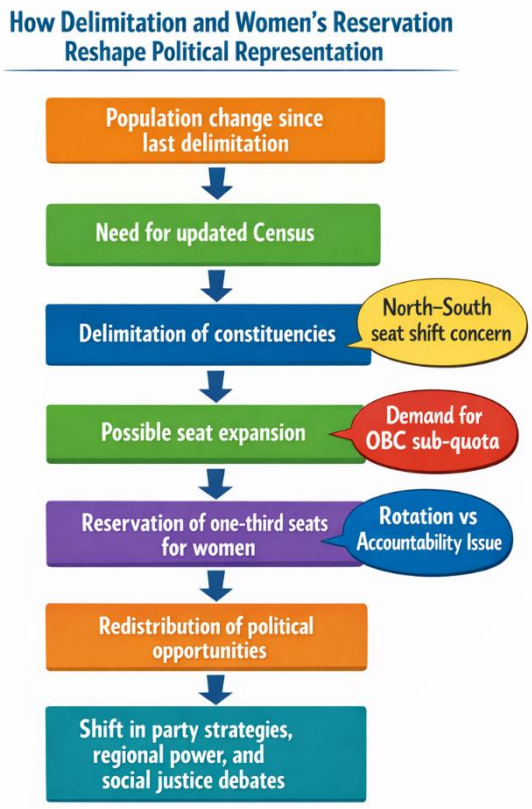
In contemporary Indian polity, the question of women's representation in legislatures has moved beyond a standalone reform. It is now deeply intertwined with the processes of delimitation and the broader restructuring of political representation. These developments together signal not merely an expansion of participation, but a potential reconfiguration of India's electoral map, federal balance, and social justice framework.

At its core, the issue is no longer confined to whether women should be represented, but how representation itself is to be redesigned in a changing demographic and political context.

b. Understanding the Core Concepts

Women's Reservation: Expanding Democratic Inclusion

- Women's reservation refers to reserving one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women.
- It aims to correct the persistent underrepresentation of women in political institutions.
- A more diverse legislature leads to more inclusive policymaking, especially in areas like health, education, and welfare.



Delimitation: Redrawing the Electoral Map

- Delimitation means redrawing constituency boundaries and reallocating seats based on population changes.
- It ensures that each representative corresponds to roughly equal population size.
- Without it, representation becomes unequal, with some areas overrepresented and others underrepresented.

Seat Expansion: Adapting to Demographic Growth

- Seat expansion refers to increasing the total number of MPs and MLAs.
- It is necessary because India's population has grown significantly since the last delimitation.
- More seats can improve representation and reduce pressure on individual constituencies.

c. Interlinkages: Why These Reforms Cannot Be Separated

Structural Dependence

- Women's reservation depends on total seats available.
- It also depends on how seats are distributed across States.
- Identification of reserved constituencies requires delimitation.

Role of Census Data

- Census provides the population basis for delimitation.
- Without updated data, representation may become inaccurate.
- Delay in Census affects all related reforms.

d. Major Debates and Issues

Speed versus Accuracy in Implementation

- Immediate implementation promotes gender justice without delay.
- However, lack of updated data may distort representation.
- This creates a dilemma between urgency and fairness.

The North–South Divide and Federal Concerns

- Northern States have higher population growth.
- Southern States have better population control and human development.
- Post-delimitation, northern States may gain more seats.
- This could shift political power and create federal tensions.

Use of Outdated versus Updated Data

- Old Census data may not reflect current realities like migration and urbanisation.
- This can lead to inaccurate constituency boundaries.
- Updated data is essential for fair representation.

Caste Dynamics and the Demand for Sub-Quotas

- Women are not a uniform group; caste differences matter.
- Demand for OBC sub-quotas highlights intersectionality — overlap of caste and gender inequalities.
- Without sub-quotas, benefits may go to relatively privileged sections.

Rotation of Reserved Constituencies

- Rotation ensures fairness across constituencies.
- However, frequent rotation may weaken accountability.
- Limited rotation may concentrate benefits in specific areas.
- A balanced approach is necessary.

e. Political Dynamics and Strategic Implications

Changing Electoral Strategies

- Political parties must field more women candidates.
- Candidate selection and campaigning strategies will evolve.

Voter Behaviour and Mobilisation

- Increased focus on women voters.

- Issues like welfare, safety, and social justice may gain prominence.

Impact on Power Equations

- Redistribution of seats across States can alter national politics.
- Regional parties may gain or lose influence depending on delimitation outcomes.

f. Significance of Women's Reservation

Deepening Democracy

- Enhances inclusivity and representation.
- Corrects historical exclusion of women.

Policy Impact

- Women legislators often prioritise welfare, health, and education.
- Leads to more balanced policymaking.

Global Experience

- Many countries with gender quotas have improved representation.
- Positive impact seen in human development indicators.

g. Challenges in Implementation

Institutional Challenges

- Lack of clarity on timelines.
- Coordination issues between Census, delimitation, and reservation processes.

Federal Concerns

- Unequal gains and losses among States.
- Fear of penalising population control success.

Social Complexity

- Demand for sub-quotas complicates design.
- Ensuring equitable distribution across groups is difficult.

Political Challenges

- Risk of symbolic representation without real empowerment.
- Need for capacity-building of women leaders.

h. Analytical Perspective: A Structural Transformation

Redefining Representation

- Determines who gets political voice.
- Expands participation across gender and regions.

Federal and Social Implications

- Alters balance of power between States.
- Brings intersection of gender, caste, and region into focus.

Beyond Policy Reform

- Represents a shift in democratic design.
- Integrates representation, federalism, and social justice.

i. Way Forward

Use of Updated Data

- Conduct timely Census.
- Ensure data-driven delimitation.

Federal Consensus

- Engage States in dialogue.
- Address concerns of regional imbalance.

Balanced Rotation Mechanism

- Ensure fairness across constituencies.
- Maintain accountability of representatives.

Inclusive Design

- Consider sub-quotas for marginalised groups.
- Ensure equitable benefits.

Transparency and Trust

- Clear communication of processes.
- Build public confidence in reforms.

Conclusion

Women's reservation is a crucial step towards achieving substantive democracy in India. However, when combined with delimitation and seat redistribution, it becomes part of a much larger transformation of the political system.

The real challenge lies in designing these reforms in a way that balances gender justice, federal equity, and democratic fairness. Only through a careful, inclusive, and transparent approach can India move towards a truly representative democracy.

GS Paper III: Environment

2. India's Climate Commitments under the Paris Agreement: Balancing Development and Sustainability

a. Introduction

Climate change is a global problem, but its causes and impacts are uneven across countries. India's response—through its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement—reflects an effort to balance environmental responsibility with developmental needs.

Unlike developed countries that industrialised earlier, India still needs to expand its economy, reduce poverty, and provide basic services to its population. Therefore, its climate strategy revolves around a key question: how to reduce emissions without slowing down growth and social progress.

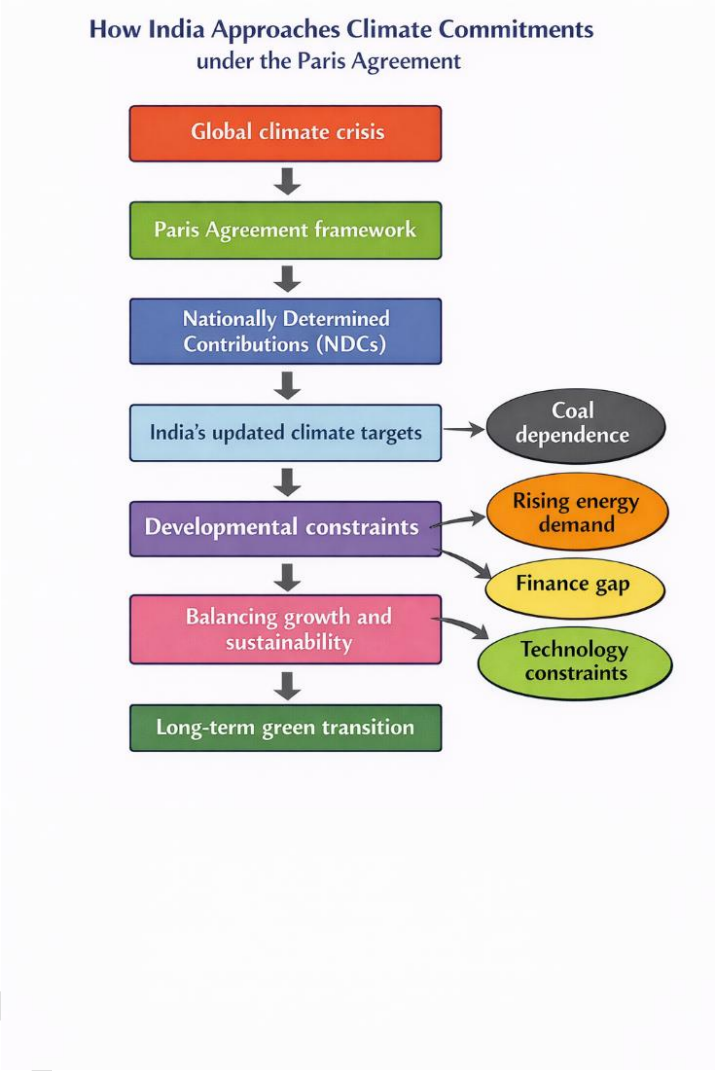
b. Understanding Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Concept and Purpose

- NDCs are climate action plans submitted by each country under the Paris Agreement.
- They include targets for reducing emissions, increasing renewable energy, and enhancing carbon sinks like forests.
- The framework is flexible—countries decide targets based on their own conditions.

Principle of Progressive Improvement

- Each country must update its NDCs over time.
- New targets should show higher ambition than earlier ones.
- This ensures gradual global progress without imposing uniform obligations.



c. India's Updated Climate Targets

Emissions Reduction

- India aims to reduce emissions intensity of GDP — emissions per unit of output.
- Target: nearly 45–50% reduction from 2005 levels.

Energy Transition

- A significant share of installed electricity capacity to come from non-fossil sources.
- Rapid expansion of solar, wind, and other renewable energy.

Carbon Sink Creation

- Increasing forest and tree cover.
- Enhancing natural systems that absorb carbon dioxide.

India's targets focus on gradual transformation, not sudden disruption—aligning with its development needs.

d. Nature of India's Climate Strategy

Clean Energy Expansion

- Large-scale push for solar and wind energy.
- Development of renewable energy infrastructure.

Technological Transition

- Promotion of electric mobility (EVs).

- Focus on green hydrogen as future fuel.
- Exploration of carbon capture technologies.

Energy Efficiency

- Improving efficiency in industries and households.
- Reducing emissions without reducing output.

Core Idea: Decoupling Growth from Emissions

- Economic growth should continue.
- Emissions per unit of growth should decline.

e. Developmental Constraints Shaping India's Policy

Rising Energy Demand

- Rapid urbanisation and industrialisation increase energy needs.
- India cannot reduce consumption like developed countries.

Dependence on Coal

- Coal remains the main energy source.
- Renewables are growing but not yet fully reliable.
- Intermittency i.e., energy not available continuously e.g., solar at night.

Infrastructure Challenges

- Need for battery storage systems.
- Requirement of modern electricity grids.
- High cost and technological complexity.

Financial Constraints

- Climate transition requires huge investment.
- Global climate finance commitments are insufficient.
- Developing countries bear higher burden.

Developmental Priorities

- Poverty reduction and job creation remain central.
- Climate action must not hinder economic growth.

f. Economic Costs and Trade-offs of Climate Action

High Transition Costs

- Maintaining both fossil fuels and renewables increases costs.
- Investments in storage and transmission are expensive.

Efficiency Challenges

- Renewable energy variability leads to inefficiencies.
- Additional systems are needed to manage fluctuations.

Opportunity Cost

- Funds used for climate action could be used in health, education, or infrastructure.
- Requires careful prioritisation of resources.

g. Global Debate and India's Position

Demand for Greater Action

- Some countries expect India to adopt stricter emission cuts.
- Seen as necessary for global temperature targets.

India's Argument: Climate Justice

- Low per capita emissions compared to developed nations.
- Limited historical contribution to global emissions.
- Large population still lacking basic development.

Principle of CBDR (Common but Differentiated Responsibilities)

- All countries share responsibility.
- But responsibilities differ based on capacity and history.

h. Analytical Perspective: The Triple Challenge

Three Simultaneous Goals

- Reduce emissions.
- Maintain economic growth.
- Eliminate poverty.

Policy Trade-offs

- These goals often conflict with each other.
- Policies must balance competing priorities.

Realistic and Flexible Approach

- India adopts gradual targets.
- Avoids extreme or disruptive transitions.

i. Significance of India's Commitments

Global Leadership

- Shows commitment to climate action.
- Enhances India's credibility internationally.

Renewable Energy Growth

- Rapid expansion of solar and wind sectors.
- Reduced dependence on fossil fuels over time.

Inclusive Development

- Balances environmental and developmental goals.

Limitations

- Targets are moderate compared to developed nations.
- Continued dependence on coal.
- Implementation challenges remain.

j. Way Forward

Climate Finance

- Developed countries must provide financial support.
- Reduces burden on developing economies.

Technological Innovation

- Invest in storage, green hydrogen, and clean tech.
- Improve reliability of renewable energy.

Green Industrial Policy

- Promote sustainable manufacturing.
- Align climate goals with economic growth.

Energy Efficiency

- Low-cost method to reduce emissions.
- Improves productivity without reducing output.

Integrated Long-Term Planning

- Climate goals must align with development strategies.
- Ensures policy coherence and effectiveness.

Conclusion

India's climate commitments represent a balanced and practical approach to a complex global challenge. Rather than choosing between development and sustainability, India seeks to combine both through gradual and flexible policies.

The success of this approach will depend not only on setting targets, but on effective implementation. A just, affordable, and sustainable transition will be crucial for ensuring that climate action benefits both present and future generations.

GS Paper III: Science and Technology

3. India's Three-Stage Nuclear Programme: A Conceptual Understanding

a. Introduction

India's nuclear energy programme is not just about producing electricity—it is a long-term strategy to achieve energy security using domestic resources. The key challenge India faces is this:

- It has limited uranium (commonly used nuclear fuel)
- But very large thorium reserves

To solve this, India designed a step-by-step (three-stage) programme that gradually converts available materials into usable nuclear fuel. In simple terms, it is a plan to turn a weakness (low uranium) into a strength (using thorium).

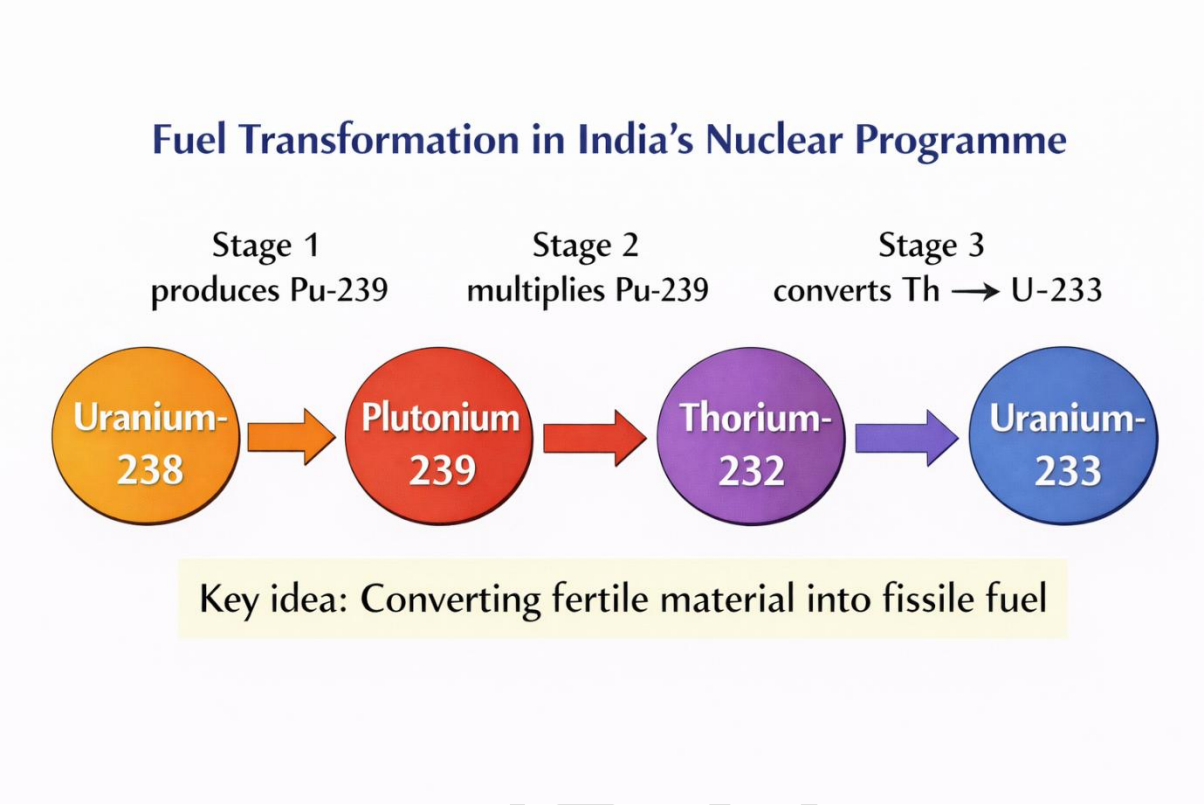
b. The Core Challenge

Resource Constraint

- Uranium can directly produce energy but is scarce in India.
- Thorium is abundant but cannot be directly used in reactors.

The Central Problem

- How to convert thorium into usable fuel?
- This requires advanced nuclear technology and multiple stages.



c. Foundational Concept: Fertile vs Fissile Materials

Fissile Materials (Direct Fuel)

- Can directly undergo nuclear fission (energy release).
- Examples: Uranium-235, Plutonium-239, Uranium-233.

Fertile Materials (Convertible Fuel)

- Cannot produce energy on their own.
- Can be converted into fissile material through nuclear reactions.
- Examples: Uranium-238, Thorium-232.

Simple Analogy

- Fissile material — ready-to-use fuel.
- Fertile material — raw material that needs processing.

d. The Three-Stage Structure

Sequential Design

- Each stage builds on the previous one.
- Output of one stage becomes input for the next.

Long-Term Vision

- Initial stages use uranium.
- Final stage shifts to thorium-based energy.

e. Stage One: Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)

Working Principle

- Use natural uranium as fuel.
- Generate electricity through nuclear fission.

Key Output

- Produce Plutonium-239 as a by-product.
- This plutonium becomes fuel for Stage Two.

Importance

- Provides immediate electricity.
- Lays the foundation for future stages.

f. Stage Two: Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs)

Core Idea

- Use plutonium from Stage One.
- Combine it with Uranium-238.

Breeder Mechanism

- Produce more fissile material than they consume.
- "Breeder" — reactor that multiplies fuel.

Role in Programme

- Increases available nuclear fuel.
- Reduces dependence on limited uranium.
- Prepares for thorium-based transition.

g. Stage Three: Thorium-Based Reactors

Core Process

- Thorium-232 is converted into Uranium-233.
- Uranium-233 acts as fissile fuel.

Long-Term Goal

- Use India's vast thorium reserves.
- Achieve energy independence.

Significance

- Sustainable energy supply for the future.
- Reduced dependence on imports.

h. Central Role of Fast Breeder Reactors

Bridge Between Stages

- Connect uranium-based and thorium-based systems.
- Enable fuel multiplication.

Strategic Importance

- Without FBRs, thorium utilisation is not possible.
- They are the technological backbone of the programme.

i. Closed Fuel Cycle: Maximising Efficiency

Concept

- Spent nuclear fuel is not discarded.
- It is reprocessed and reused.

Benefits

- Extracts unused uranium and plutonium.
- Reduces nuclear waste.
- Improves resource efficiency.

j. Understanding Criticality

Definition

- Criticality is self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction.
- Reactor continues producing energy steadily.

Importance

- Ensures stable power generation.
- Essential for safe and controlled operation.

k. Uniqueness of India's Approach

Global Comparison

- Most countries rely only on uranium.
- Few pursue thorium-based systems.

India's Strategy

- Long-term focus on thorium utilisation.
- Based on domestic resource advantage.

l. Advantages of the Programme

Energy Security

- Reduces dependence on imported fuel.
- Utilises domestic resources.

Sustainability

- Thorium ensures long-term fuel availability.
- Supports low-carbon energy generation.

Efficiency

- Breeder reactors maximise fuel use.
- Closed cycle reduces waste.

m. Challenges and Constraints

Technological Complexity

- Advanced reactor design required.
- Thorium technology still evolving.

High Costs

- Expensive infrastructure.
- High maintenance requirements.

Safety Concerns

- Public concerns due to past global nuclear accidents.
- Need for strict safety standards.

Long Gestation Period

- Each stage takes decades to develop.
- Progress is gradual.

n. Way Forward

Strengthening R&D

- Focus on thorium-based technologies.
- Improve reactor efficiency and safety.

Expanding Nuclear Capacity

- Increase number of reactors.
- Integrate with energy mix.

Building Public Trust

- Ensure transparency.
- Strengthen safety mechanisms.

Integrated Energy Strategy

- Combine nuclear with renewables.
- Ensure balanced and sustainable energy mix.

Conclusion

India's three-stage nuclear programme is a visionary strategy designed to overcome resource limitations and achieve long-term energy security. By gradually moving from uranium to thorium, it creates a sustainable and self-reliant energy pathway.

This programme reflects a deeper idea: using science and planning to convert constraints into opportunities. If successfully implemented, it can provide India with a stable, clean, and independent energy future for decades ahead.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density.
To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.