

IMPACT OF WAR

Amidst the war in Gulf and its devastating impact on the world, India and the US are about to finalise their bilateral trade. The protracted negotiations had been going on and a sort of interim deal was finalized in February. However, for probably the final version of the deal, an Indian delegation led by the chief negotiator Darpan Jain is leaving for Washington. The negotiations for a final agreement had been going on in the virtual mode since both the countries are keen for it. May be one of the reasons for President Donald Trump to call Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also the proposed trade deal. He wanted to soften the blow he tried to give to the Indian economy through his unilateral tariff hike and later scaling down the same. The US seems quite vulnerable at this moment, because of its total isolation with the European allies refusing to toe the US line in the ongoing tensions in the Gulf. India has been a consistent player for espousing peace and diplomacy over wars and the US recognizes this. In the end, the US is looking at India with significant respect and admiration.

TAWI BEAUTIFICATION

The Tawi River Front development is perhaps the most significant work for the city in the recent years. Tawi is no ordinary River; it lends its name to the city. The River had faced neglect from both the authorities and the citizens alike. The River, as it flowed through the city, looked remote and alienated. Claiming it meant claiming Jammu's identity and a owing up the lifeline of the city of temples. The River Front development on its one bank, would mean that no garbage would be dumped in it. It means that tourists and locals would visit the river front to enjoy famous cool evenings and mornings of Jammu. The project should inspire more citizen-led reclamation of the natural bodies and heritage in Jammu.

Delimitation: A constitutional necessity

Tuhin A Sinha

The debate sparked by Sonia Gandhi's recent article on women's reservation reflects a familiar pattern in Indian policymaking — where long-overdue structural reforms are questioned less on substance and more on process. A closer reading of the criticism directed at the Modi government suggests that much of it rests on mischaracterisation rather than fact.

Delimitation as 'the real issue': A flawed premise

The attempt to frame delimitation as the "real issue", distinct from women's reservation, is fundamentally misplaced. Delimitation is not a political choice but a constitutional necessity, intended to ensure that representation reflects current demographic realities. Periodic recalibration of constituencies is intrinsic to democratic fairness. To argue that linking women's reservation with this process creates uncertainty is to overlook this constitutional logic. On the contrary, integrating women's reservation with delimitation ensures structural coherence. Implementing reservation on an outdated constituency framework would risk distortion and imbalance. Aligning the two processes strengthens institutional credibility and ensures that representation is both fair and contemporary.

The charge of "politicisation" is equally unconvincing. The Indian National Congress itself presided over years of indecision on women's reservation and failed to bring any clarity to delimitation-related questions. To now describe a structured approach as "uncertain" appears less like concern and more like retrospective justification.

At its core, delimitation is about fairness. Integrating women's reservation into this exercise is not distortion — it is alignment with its purpose. Since delimitation is historically tied to census cycles to ensure accuracy, embedding reservation within this framework ensures that the reform is meaningful and durable rather than symbolic. What is being portrayed as a tactic is, in reality, a constitutionally sound and ad-



ministratively efficient approach.

Decisiveness versus delay

The allegation that the government is acting in haste does not withstand scrutiny. Women's reservation is not a sudden policy initiative; it is a reform that has remained pending for decades. Successive governments debated it but failed to implement it. What is being witnessed now is not speed, but the translation of long-standing intent into action. To label this as haste is to invert reality. Decisive governance may appear abrupt to those accustomed to prevarication, but that does not make it procedurally flawed.

While consultation remains important, over-consultation cannot become a pretext for paralysis. Democracies require a balance between discussion and decision. Endless consensus-building, without closure, undermines public trust in governance. At some point, leadership must move from dialogue to delivery—and that is precisely what is happening. The broader approach reflects a governance model anchored in clarity and momentum. A country of India's scale cannot afford to indefinitely delay transformative reforms in pursuit of perfect agreement. Progress inevitably demands a degree of decisiveness.

Census delays: Context matters

Concerns around the delayed Census must be understood in context. The disrupt-

ion caused by the pandemic affected large-scale administrative exercises worldwide. India's delay is part of a broader global pattern, not an isolated lapse. Crucially, the commitment to conduct the Census remains firm. The process has been deferred, not abandoned. When dealing with a foundational exercise that informs policy, representation, and resource allocation, accuracy must take precedence over speed.

A hurried Census—especially one involving complex data considerations—would risk compromising its credibility. Reliable data is essential for legitimate outcomes. Ensuring that integrity is maintained is not administrative hesitation; it is responsible governance.

Federal balance concerns: Premature anxieties

The argument that delimitation could shift the balance of power among states is, at this stage, purely speculative. It projects hypothetical outcomes onto a process that is governed by constitutional principles and institutional safeguards. Delimitation is not an arbitrary exercise; it is designed to ensure equitable representation based on current realities. Suggesting that it will inherently disadvantage certain states risks undermining trust in the very mechanisms that sustain democratic balance. Reforms of this nature cannot be indefinitely stalled due to hypothetical fears. While concerns

can be discussed, they cannot become a veto against progress. The focus must remain on ensuring fair representation, not on conjectural political outcomes.

It is also evident that such arguments shift attention away from the core reform—women's representation—and towards peripheral uncertainties. This risks creating confusion and diluting the significance of a long-pending change.

The role of Parliament

Calls for greater deliberation would carry more weight if avenues for debate were unavailable. In reality, the government has convened a special session of Parliament, providing the highest democratic platform for discussion and scrutiny.

If the opposition is serious about engaging, Parliament is the appropriate forum. Raising objections outside while hesitating within raises questions about intent. Deliberation is essential, but so is decision-making. For decades, women's reservation remained stuck in discussion without implementation. What is unfolding now is a necessary shift—from prolonged debate to concrete action.

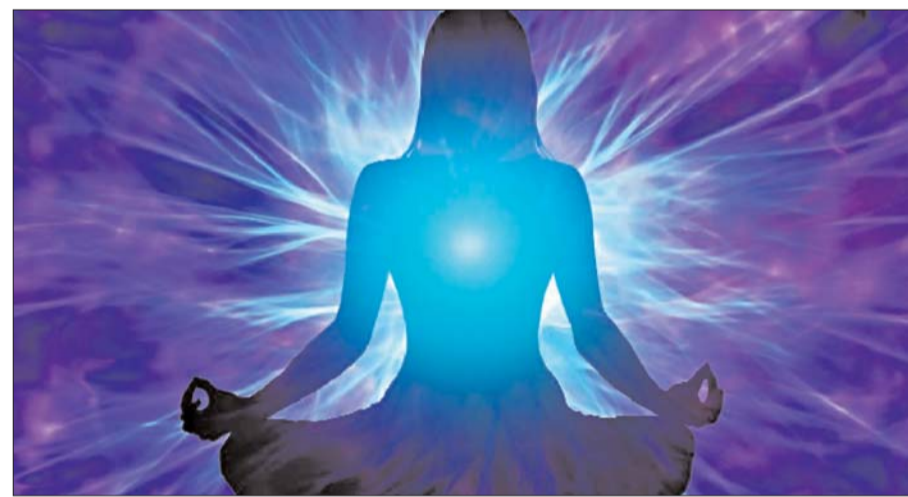
A democracy cannot function on perpetual indecision. It must balance consultation with closure. To resist decisions in the name of endless debate risks ensuring that no reform is ever realised. The present debate is not merely about procedural disagreement; it is about whether India is prepared to act on long-articulated commitments. Linking women's reservation with delimitation is not political manoeuvring but institutional alignment. Moving forward now is not haste, but overdue resolve. The criticism, therefore, appears less about safeguarding process and more about resisting momentum. But reforms of this scale cannot remain indefinitely deferred. They require clarity of intent and courage of execution. The Women's Reservation Bill and delimitation mark another manifestation of PM Modi's political willpower and decisive leadership—which were conspicuously absent in the UPA era. (The writer is a national spokesperson of the BJP and an acclaimed author; views are personal)

A DEVOTEE'S PERSPECTIVE ON DEATH

Ajit Kumar Bishnoi

Let us first understand what death actually is. Death is when a soul leaves its material body. Lord Krishna describes death in the Bhagavad Gita as a change of body in its eternal journey (2.13). Just as childhood, youth, and old age are changes in the body of a soul, death is a similar change. Devotees of God accept this as a positive change because they attain promotion. Such promotion is of three kinds. The first is taking birth in a family that is pure and prosperous (6.41). The next level is being born in a family of wise yogis (6.42). Such a birth is very rare in this world. The highest level is being liberated from the repeated cycle of birth and death in a material body (18.62).

Devotees do not fear death as non-devotees do, who consider it annihilation. Considering oneself as a material body due to gross ignorance of reality is the reason for such fear. Devotees also realise that they have reached a good, better, or best position, as indicated earlier. The topmost devotees, like Swami Vivekananda, knew that they had reached the highest position



in their life and were enjoying it.

As one must leave the material body, this being the law of nature, they know that what is born must also die. If anything, they wish to leave their material body when they are at the peak of their life. They cannot imagine fearing and dying helplessly. If anything, they make the requisite preparations for leaving the body. They sense that when the life force reduces appreciably, God is indicating that it is time to leave the body, and they depart in full God

consciousness.

They have also realised two more facts. The closure of life is essential; the material body cannot continue indefinitely. It deteriorates, making even the maintenance of the body very difficult. Personally speaking, I am forced to do many exercises to keep my different body organs and faculties healthy. The 'jara' (miseries of old age) are hard to bear, especially because they come in the way of doing 'bhakti' (devotion to God). The other reason I have already

mentioned is that they are due for promotion. God is ready to take them from the present body and relocate them in a superior family or in a spiritual body, that is, by granting liberation (18.66). God ensures that such death occurs at the right time for all concerned. God is very merciful; He is aware of our love and concern for our near and dear ones.

Everything is planned perfectly for His devotees — where they are going and what duties they will be required to perform next. Like God Himself (3.22), His devotees are always gainfully engaged, even after attaining liberation. Narada Muni, frequently mentioned in our scriptures, is a classical example of a devotee undertaking service for the Lord. Such service is highly pleasing to God. What, then, is the conclusion? Fear of death can be reduced by these three steps. One, realise that I am a soul, not a material body, which must die; I will not. Two, I will attain a better birth because I am a good person. Third, one should take shelter of God and become a devotee.

The writer is a spiritual teacher and a popular columnist; views are personal

Delimitation debate or political double speak?

Karuna Gopal

Sonia Gandhi's recent article on delimitation is topical and worthy of reading, but those who have followed governance under the UPA and NDA closely would be tempted to call it a 'tissue of lies'-flawed in content yet presented convincingly.

The article clarifies that there is no disagreement on women's reservation, but the fact that it is linked to delimitation seems to have irked the author. It is common knowledge that delimitation is a constitutional necessity and is not something that any political party can play with; moreover, it was long overdue. With the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill, integrating both into the same exercise is the most logical step any government should take.

Madam Sonia Gandhi called the upcoming special session an act of 'bulldozing' by the Prime Minister and questioned the 'tearing hurry' for such a session. Clearly, she seems to have forgotten that the UPA not only delayed women's reservation by a few decades, but when it was finally

passed in 2023, Rahul Gandhi demanded implementation "today" within hours of the Bill's passage, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge, forcefully demanded that the reservation Bill be implemented from the 2024 elections itself—is that not tearing hurry?

For the common man, all this must be very confusing. Congress delayed for decades what women had been demanding for decades—it is common knowledge that the Reservation Bill was first introduced 30 years ago. They had 27 years to consult among themselves and with anyone they wanted. The Women's Reservation Bill first came in 1996. The UPA held power for a full decade, from 2004 to 2014.

The Rajya Sabha passed it in 2010. For four consecutive years—2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013—the Bill was never introduced in the Lok Sabha. Smt Sonia Gandhi was Chairperson of the UPA; she had the majority and the mandate, yet nothing happened. The "tearing hurry" on the special Parliament session that Smt Gandhi is complaining about now is exactly the ur-



gency Congress demanded back in 2023. So why mislead the country with a false narrative when the NDA is trying to do what the Constitution mandates, and that too in an efficient manner?

The fear expressed by the Congress leader in her article on delimitation is nothing but 'political polemics in plain sight'. PM Modi is action-oriented and does not believe in delay. As the delimitation exercise is linked to the cen-

sus cycle, which was delayed due to the COVID onslaught, PM Narendra Modi reassured the country that the census will indeed be conducted and that his government has not abandoned the process. As far as her fear of imbalance of power among states is concerned, PM Modi has already assured legal protection for states that have controlled their populations. Delimitation is a constitutional requirement and, having been delayed for five

decades, is crucial for fair and proportional representation. As far as the data is concerned, the government is using the 2011 Census data—the last completed and verified census—as the basis for delimitation. This ensures that states which have responsibly controlled their populations are not penalised, while others that failed to do so are not rewarded with disproportionate representation.

Madam Sonia Gandhi, in her piece, said that the Prime Minister is resisting a 'caste census' and quoted the examples of caste census exercises carried out by Bihar and Telangana. I wish to throw some light on the same. The Telangana 2025 caste survey was severely criticised for alleged manipulation and low accuracy. The survey reports a population increase of only around 2 lakh in 10 years, which contradicts official records of over 14 lakh births and 13 lakh marriages. Naturally, there were doubts about the data's credibility. The survey had the BC population share pegged at 51 per cent in 2014, but that dropped to 46 per cent in the 2024-25 survey, so allegations of deliberate undercounting

were not ruled out. Critics also claim nearly 16 lakh people were unaccounted for and that many households were not covered. So why bring that up as an example, Madam Sonia?

The NDA is not avoiding discussion; it is actively seeking it. The government has called for a special session of Parliament precisely to do that democratically—Congress should seize the opportunity to debate, deliberate, and decide on this issue. For decades, issues of women's reservation and delimitation have been stuck in endless debate without action. What the country needs is decisive action, especially after experiencing game-changing reforms like digital infrastructure and the geopolitical stature the country enjoys today.

The fundamental question is: what does Congress want? Do they want the NDA to follow in their footsteps and go for piecemeal reform? The NDA, which is committed to long-term solutions, will aim for concrete structural reforms addressing systemic issues. Congress will have to stop trying to put brakes on a system that is already running on high-octane fuel.