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Back them or face women's verdict: Modi to Oppn

earlier, the delimitation of the seats, and the ratio that has been in place since then, will remain unchanged, and the ratio will remain the same," he added.

Earlier, the Bills were introduced after a fiery 40-minute debate following which the opposition pressed for the division of votes to introduce the Constitutional (131st Amendment) Bill.

The Bill was later introduced with 251 members supporting it and 185 members voting against the introduction.

The special session of the Parliament's Budget session began Thursday, and is due to run from April 16 to April 18.

Without women farmers, humanity will starve: LG

women farmers in agriculture and allied sectors, the efforts of women agri-entrepreneurs, and emphasised developing agriculture sector under their leadership.

He said the UN General Assembly had fittingly declared 2026 the International Year of Women Farmers, which was a long-awaited dream.

"I view International Women Farmers Year 2026 as a historic opportunity, proclaiming women as creators, not mere laborers, in agriculture's growth. Prioritise women farmers in every scheme. I trust 2026 will sincerely recognise women's roles in agriculture and allied sectors, fulfilling their aspirations," he added.

The LG called upon technology innovators to prioritise technical tools for women farmers.

He stressed that the agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, and dairy departments must allocate resources to women farmers, while financial institutions design loan products enabling landless women farmers to access credit in their names.

"We must reinvigorate society with the resolve for women-led development in Jammu Kashmir, enabling women's power to transform it. Significant strides in women empowerment since 2020 has set a national example and our women farmers empowerment project exemplifies the success," he said.

He exhorted the stakeholders to grant women farmers and entrepreneurs recognition, resources, and agency to work on their terms.

"Empowered women farmers are bearers of climate resilience, building robust agri-ecosystems with quality seeds, digital tools, and market linkages from cooperatives," he said.

"Through Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), J&K advances holistic, tech-driven, farmer-centric transformation for higher production, incomes, and sustainable agriculture. It has registered 14,782 women farmers. PM Modi launched JKCIP on June 20, 2024, targeting climate-smart, market-oriented production, agri-economy ecosystems, sectoral development & aid for vulnerable groups, women, and youth, registering 5,248 women farmers. PM Kisan Samman Nidhi has over 90,000 women beneficiaries. Over 8,000 women farmers are registered in natural farming and central schemes, 4,472 in horticulture, 128 in sericulture, over 144,000 in SKUAST schemes, 27,500 in dairy and more than 16,000 in sheep farming & fisheries. Across agriculture and allied sectors, nearly 3,11,000 women are registered," he added.

"I recognise millions more unregistered women farmers; I urge them to join central schemes. I take pride in Jammu Kashmir's self-help groups, women-led FPOs, and skill programs in mushrooms, horticulture, beekeeping, food processing, and dairy, empowering rural women as farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. When women control production resources, inputs, and services in agriculture and allied sectors, they ensure food security," he said.

The LG urged IFFCO to establish farmers' training centre, multi-facility farmers service centre, sheep production unit in J&K and provision of mobile soil testing machine to support local farmers.

He also announced that the Mass Movement for 'Drug Free Jammu & Kashmir' for the Kashmir division would be launched from Srinagar on May 3, 2026. He called upon the women, youth and all sections of society to actively participate in this movement to eradicate the drug menace from the Union Territory.

On the occasion, he felicitated the women agri-entrepreneurs. He also visited the stalls put up by IFFCO and various agri-entrepreneurs.

Among those present on the occasion included agriculture production, rural development and panchayati raj & cooperative minister Javid Ahmad Dar, IFFCO chairman Dileep Singhani, IFFCO managing director K J Patel, IFFCO marketing director Yogender Kumar, agriculture director (Kashmir) Sartaj Ahmad Shah, women farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, members of women self-help groups and women delegates.

SC dismisses PIL for compulsory voting

with his grievances.

The court noted that requests for penal action against those who do not vote, as well as proposals to make voting mandatory, could not be adjudicated by the judiciary. The petitioner had also sought directions to the Election Commission to restrict government benefits for citizens who willfully abstain from voting.

During the hearing, the Chief Justice said democracy is strengthened through awareness rather than coercion.

"In a country which is governed by the rule of law and believes in democracy, and where we have shown for 75 years how we trust and believe in it, everyone is expected to go (and vote). If they don't go, they don't go. What is needed is awareness, but we cannot compel," the CJ said.

Responding to the suggestion that non-voters be denied government benefits, the Chief Justice questioned the logic of punitive measures for abstaining from voting.

"Should we direct their arrest? If a citizen doesn't go for voting, what can we do?" the CJ asked.

The bench also referred to practical difficulties in enforcing mandatory voting, noting that election day responsibilities prevent many citizens from voting.

"If we accept this, then my brother Justice Bagchi would have to go to West Bengal to vote even though it is a work-

ing day," the CJ said.

"Judicial work is also important," Justice Bagchi added.

The court further highlighted concerns for economically weaker sections.

"If a person who is poor says, 'I need to earn my wages, how do I vote?' what should we say to them?" the bench asked, the report added.

The petitioner suggested that the Election Commission be directed to form a committee to recommend restrictions on those who do not vote.

"We are afraid these issues lie in the policy domain," the CJ said.

GST Tribunal appeal deadline extended

after April 1, 2026, a standard time limit of three months has been fixed from the date of receiving the order to file an appeal.

6 held with 13 kg charas

charas-like substance, officials said. In another instance, the spokesperson said that during naka checking at Shikras, Srigufwara police arrested Adil Ahmad Mochi, a resident of Badroo, and recovered approximately two kgs of charas-like substance from his possession.

Similarly, at Pethnoo crossing, Srigufwara, police apprehended Aqib Ramzan Rather, resident of Chatrasoo, and recovered approximately two kgs of similar narcotic substance.

In another operation, a police party intercepted a passenger auto at Iqbal Market near Mill Mod, officials said.

The driver and a passenger identified as Javeed Ahmad Dandroo, resident of Pandithpora Anchidoora, and Majid Akram Malik, resident of New Qazibagh Anantnag, were arrested.

Approximately 12 grams of heroin was recovered from their possession, officials said.

In a separate action, a police party apprehended Sabzar Ahmad Rather, resident of Waghama Rather Mohalla, at KV Pora, Marhama, while he was moving towards NH-44. During checking, approximately 7.854 kg of charas-like substance was recovered from the bag in his possession, the officials added.

Police had registered cases against these peddlers under relevant sections of law, officials said.

RS reconstitutes panel of vice-chairpersons

Chairman and Deputy Chairman are absent. While in the chair, they exercise the same powers as the Chairperson in conducting proceedings - maintaining order, regulating debate, and ensuring the smooth functioning of the House during sittings.

Unlike the Deputy Chairman, who holds a standing constitutional office, members of the vice-chairperson panel do not occupy a permanent position and preside on a rotational basis as required.

LeT co-founder injured in attack

of the private TV channel 24NewsHD TV, owned by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The channel's religious programme host Justice (retd) Nazir Ahmed Ghazi and Hamza were in the vehicle.

"Two unidentified armed men riding a motorcycle opened fire on the white car in which Ghazi and Hamza were travelling at Peco Road in Lahore near the TV channel's office. In the attack, Hamza suffered bullet injuries while Ghazi remained unhurt," police said.

Hamza has been shifted to a hospital, where he is being treated, they said. Police said they have launched a probe into the incident with the help of CCTV footage to trace the attackers.

"TV host Nazir Ghazi unhurt, Maulana Amir Hamza injured in Lahore gun attack. Unidentified gunmen opened fire on vehicle of 24NewsHD TV channel's religious programme host Ghazi in Lahore, leaving Maulana Amir Hamza injured," the TV channel said in a statement on X.

It said Ghazi hosts the programme 'Noor-e-Sehar' on 24NewsHD. "Ghazi had just finished recording his show at the City News office, Lahore and was on his way home at the time of the incident," it said.

It said Ghazi remained unhurt in the attack, while Tehreek-e-Hurmat-e-Rasool Pakistan (THRP) Chairman Maulana Hamza, who was travelling with him after appearing on the programme, sustained a bullet injury to his arm.

Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML), a political front of Hafiz Saeed's banned Jamat-ud-Dawah (JuD), has strongly condemned the attack on Hamza and demanded that those involved in the incident be arrested immediately.

The party also called on the government to ensure effective security for "religious scholars".

In a joint statement, the PMML leaders, including Hafiz Talha Saeed, said that the broad daylight firing incident in Lahore is a question mark on the Punjab government's security system and reflects negligence and failure on the part of the authorities.

The leaders urged the government to ensure the immediate arrest of the attackers and to provide adequate protection to religious scholars. Hamza has been designated as a terrorist by the US.

In the past, he served as the head of LeT's "special campaigns" department. In 2018, Hamza formed a fundraising group for the LeT following a ban on the JuD and Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation by the Pakistani government.

Quota on basis of religion unconstitutional: Amit Shah

would be carried out along with the population enumeration.

"Right now, the counting of households is underway and the households do not have any caste. If the Samajwadi Party had its way, they would determine the caste of households as well," he said.

Shah also said "if the Samajwadi Party gives all its tickets to Muslim women, where do we have any objection, we have no objections at all".

He said that during the population enumeration, the census authorities would keep a provision for caste enumeration, "which I personally want too".

"I want to make it clear that this census will be conducted along with caste enumeration," the home minister said.

The houselisting under the census 2027 started on April 1. The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on April 30 last year decided to include caste enumeration in the upcoming census. Caste was excluded from all census operations conducted since Independence.

The Lok Sabha on Thursday took up the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the Delimitation Bill, 2026, for debate and passage.

As per the proposal, the strength of the Lok Sabha will be increased to 815, of which 272 seats will be reserved for women - a total of 33 per cent.

NDA short of numbers to get quota law passed

two-thirds majority, unless it secures backing from other parties or ensures some members abstain.

The NDA currently has the backing of 293 Lok Sabha members, accounting for 54 per cent of the House, while the opposition holds 233 MPs.

While 7 MPs are independents, seven belong to parties like the YSRCP, AIMIM and Shiromani Akali Dal, which have yet to openly support the bills.

The rules require 360 MPs to support the bills, including the Constitution amendment bill, which comes to two-thirds of those present and voting.

For the bills to get approval from the Lok Sabha, at least two main opposition parties from amongst the Samajwadi Party (37 MPs), Trinamool Congress (28 MPs) or DMK (22 MPs) would have to abstain.

The Congress has 98 MPs in the Lok Sabha.

On the other hand, the BJP has 240 MPs, TDP 16 and JDU 12 in the Lok Sabha from the NDA.

In case the bills do not get Lok Sabha nod, they will not be taken up in the Rajya Sabha.

In the Rajya Sabha, the NDA has 141 members in their favour, which is 58 per cent of the upper house, and the opposition has 83 MPs in support.

Parties such as the BRS, YSRCP, BJD, and BSP and independents have 20 MPs in the upper house and their votes may help swing the decision.

For the Constitution amendment bill to get through in the upper house, the ruling alliance needs the support of 163 MPs to be present and voting, which is two-thirds majority of the house.

While the BJP has 107 MPs in the Rajya Sabha, the Congress has 28, TMC 13, AAP 10 and DMK 8.

Sources said several BJP MPs have admitted privately that they do not have the numbers to get the key bills passed.

Amending the Constitution requires a special majority in both houses of Parliament: a majority of the total membership (more than 50 per cent) and a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

So, if all 540 members, that are there in the House currently, are present during voting, the two-thirds majority mark would be 360.

Seeking the support of all parties in getting the bills passed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a fervent appeal in the Lok Sabha, saying that he will get all the credit in case the opposition oppose the bills but is ready to give a "blank cheque" to all in case everyone supports the legislation.

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill to tweak the women's quota law was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday after a division of votes.

Two ordinary bills -- the Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill to implement the proposed amended women's quota law in Union territories of Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir -- were also introduced.

The bills were introduced in the Lok Sabha after a fiery 40-minute debate, following which the opposition pressed for the division of votes to introduce the Constitutional (131st Amendment) Bill.

The bill was later introduced with 251 members supporting it and 185 members voting against the introduction.

LS strength to rise to 815, 272 of these for women: Meghwal

the women's quota," he said.

Meghwal also said that there will be reservation for women belonging to SC and ST categories within the women's quota in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

The minister said if the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhniyam, 2023, continues in its present form, reservation of constituencies for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies would not be possible in 2029 as it would be based on the census data which would be made available after 2026. Hence, the Constitution amendment bill was brought.

"The main objective of the bill is to give women their due rights," he said.

Meghwal said the world over, the right of equal franchise for equal voting rights for women was introduced much later as compared to India.

Women in the United States were given voting rights 144 years after men and the women in the United Kingdom were given voting rights with certain conditions in 1918 and fully only 10 years later in 1928, he said.

"In India, women got the right to vote along with men since the first election," he said.

Meghwal appealed to all parties and members to support the bill wholeheartedly and pass it in the House.

The Lok Sabha on Thursday took up the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the Delimitation Bill, 2026, for debate and passage.

The Bills were introduced after a fiery 40-minute debate, following which the opposition pressed for a division of votes to introduce the Constitutional (131st Amendment) Bill.

The Bill was later introduced with 251 members supporting it and 185 members voting against the introduction.

According to the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, Lok Sabha seats will be increased to "operationalise" the Women's Reservation Law before the 2029 parliamen-

tary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census.

Seats will also be increased in state and Union territory assemblies to accommodate 33 per cent reservation for women.

The seats reserved for women in the Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies "shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a state or Union territory", the draft bill circulated among Lok Sabha members said.

Several opposition parties on Wednesday decided to unilaterally vote against the delimitation provisions in the Constitution amendment bill in Parliament, while asserting that they are not against reservation for women in legislative bodies.

True intent of Bills brought by govt mischievous: Cong

to implement the women's quota law by 2029, and increase the strength of the House to up to 850.

According to a bulletin issued on Wednesday, 'The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026', 'The Delimitation Bill, 2026' and 'The Union Territories Laws (Amendment Bill), 2026' will be introduced and debated for passage in the Lower House.

While Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal will introduce the first two bills, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will introduce the third one.

According to the draft Constitution amendment bill, Lok Sabha seats will be increased to a maximum of 850 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census.

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Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the opposition parties are opposed to the manner in which the bill is being brought and alleged that it is politically motivated.

The leaders of several INDIA bloc constituents, besides the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), met at Kharge's residence here on Wednesday to evolve a joint strategy in Parliament during its three-day special sitting starting Thursday.

In a post on X, Ramesh said on Wednesday night, "The Opposition will do whatever it takes to defeat the Constitution Amendment Bill especially. The country should prepare itself for a political earthquake."

The special three-day sitting of Parliament will be held Thursday, during which amendments to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhniyam, commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act, mandating 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, will be brought for implementation in 2029.

The total strength of the ruling NDA in the Lok Sabha stands at 292, while the major opposition parties have 233 MPs. For the Constitution amendment bill to be through, it requires a two-thirds majority of those present in the House at the time of voting.

India, Austria condemn Pahalagam attack, Red Fort terror incident

year and the terror incident near Red Fort in November 2025. They also called for decisive and concerted international efforts to combat terrorism in a comprehensive and sustained manner."

The Ambassador said that the leaders underscored the need for cooperation to counter violent radicalisation and extremism, and specifically the financing of terrorism, including by promoting internationally agreed anti-money laundering standards, as well as to prevent exploitation of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes and to tackle terrorist recruitment.

He said, "The leaders also reaffirmed a strong commitment to continue taking active measures to disrupt the terror financing linkages and channels, including at the United Nations and the Financial Action Task Force."

His remarks come as India and Austria on Thursday concluded 15 outcomes as part of the four-day official visit of Federal Chancellor Christian Stocker to the country, covering key areas including defence, technology, trade, innovation and skills development, with a focus on establishing a Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism between the two nations.

The outcomes were finalised following wide-ranging discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chancellor Stocker in New Delhi, marking the first visit by an Austrian Chancellor to India in four decades.

Among the major agreements signed was the Agreement on Audiovisual Co-production, which will promote collaboration between the film industries of both countries, facilitating joint productions and cultural exchange.

To boost business ties, both countries announced a Fast Track Mechanism for Indian and Austrian companies, aimed at addressing investor concerns and improving ease of doing business.

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To boost business ties, both countries announced a Fast Track Mechanism for Indian and Austrian companies, aimed at addressing investor concerns and improving ease of doing business.

The visit comes at a significant time, following the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, which both sides noted would create new opportunities for trade, manufacturing, investment and job creation.

With the conclusion of these 15 outcomes, India and Austria have set the stage for a more innovation-driven and future-ready partnership.

College student killed in road accident

JAMMU, APR 16: A student of Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, died in a road accident near Udhampur while travelling with fellow students to Patnitop on a picnic. The dead was identified as Anjali Choudhary, a fourth-semester student of the college. Officials said the exact circumstances of the incident were being ascertained. Police had registered a case in this connection.

Signature Global ties up with Tonino Lamborghini for branded housing project in Gurugram

NEW DELHI, APR 16: Realty firm Signature Global on Thursday said it has tied up with Italian lifestyle brand Tonino Lamborghini to develop a luxury housing project in Gurugram.

In a regulatory filing, the company said the upcoming branded housing project, named as "Tonino Lamborghini Residences Gurugram", will be spread across 12.40 acres

comprising 812 luxury flats.

The partnership marks Tonino Lamborghini's entry into India's residential real estate market, the filing said.

Signature Global did not disclose the investment amount for developing this upcoming project at Sector 71, Gurugram.

Signature Global has entered into a "licence agreement" with the Italian brand.

On the commercial terms with Tonino Lamborghini, Signature Global said this will include a flat fee, which will be paid in instalments and an additional fee in case the topline exceeds a specified threshold.

Pradeep Aggarwal, Chairman of Signature Global Ltd., said, "Our vision has always been to redefine the standards of urban living in India by bringing world-class innovation to

our home soil. By partnering with a global icon like Tonino Lamborghini, we are not just building apartments; we are creating a lifestyle statement that resonates with the ambitions of the modern Indian achiever."

Tonino Lamborghini, Founder and President of Tonino Lamborghini S.p.a., said the company, with this project, has entered the Indian branded real estate market.