

- Here too, the government seemed to lack a majority to pass the bills in the Upper House.
- And instead of a division vote, a voice vote was deemed to be adequate by the Deputy Speaker of the House.
- In both cases, the disturbance caused by the Opposition was used as a pretext to resort to a voice vote.
- The government has repeatedly invoked multiple consultations around these laws.
- However, the fact that the pieces of legislation were passed without an actual legislative majority voting has not been given due attention.

6.8 Delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir

- The Union government has invited political leaders from Jammu and Kashmir for a meeting with the Prime Minister in Delhi. This may be related to the delimitation process that needs to be held in J&K.
- **Delimitation** is the act of redrawing boundaries of an Assembly or Lok Sabha seat to represent changes in population over time.
- This exercise is carried out by a Delimitation Commission, whose orders has the force of law and cannot be questioned before any court.
- The objective is to redraw boundaries (based on the data of the last Census) in a way so that the population of all seats be the same throughout the State.
- Aside from changing the limits of a constituency, the process may result in change in the number of seats in a state.
- **Frequency** - Delimitation exercises in J&K in the past have been slightly different from those in the rest of the country because of the region's special status - which was scrapped by the Centre in 2019.
- Until then, delimitation of Lok Sabha seats in J&K was governed by the Constitution of India, but the delimitation of the state's Assembly seats was governed by
 1. Jammu and Kashmir Constitution and
 2. Jammu and Kashmir Representation of the People Act, 1957.
- Assembly seats in J&K were delimited in 1963, 1973 and 1995.
- **Now** - In March 2020, the government set up the Delimitation Commission, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, which was tasked with winding up delimitation in J&K in a year.
- Apart from Desai, Election Commissioner and J&K State Election Commissioner are the ex-officio members of the delimitation panel. That apart, there are five associate members.
- After the abrogation of J&K's special status in 2019, delimitation of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats in the newly-created Union Territory would be as per the provisions of the Indian Constitution.
- As per the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, the number of Assembly seats in J&K would increase from 107 to 114, which is expected to benefit the Jammu region.

6.9 Electoral Bonds Scheme

Recently Supreme Court refused to stay the sale of electoral bonds ahead of Assembly elections.

- The Government of India notified the Electoral Bond Scheme in 2018.
- It is a promissory note which can be bought by any Indian citizen or company incorporated in India
- It can be donated to any eligible political party.
- SBI has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches across the country.
- **Donor** - Any individual, groups of individuals, NGOs, religious and other trusts can buy Electoral Bonds through cheque/digital payment, either singly or jointly with other individuals by approaching the banks.
- The bonds are sold in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore. There is no limit on the number of bonds an individual or company can purchase.