

Parliament of India

The **Parliament of India** (*IAST: *Bhāratīya Sansad**) is the supreme [legislative body](#) of the [Republic of India](#). It is a [bicameral legislature](#) composed of the [Rajya Sabha](#) (Council of States) and the [Lok Sabha](#) (House of the People). The [President of India](#), in their role as head of the legislature, has full powers to summon and prorogue either house of Parliament or to dissolve the Lok Sabha, but they can exercise these powers only upon the advice of the [Prime Minister](#) and their [Union Council of Ministers](#).

Those elected or nominated (by the president) to either house of Parliament are referred to as [members of Parliament](#) (MPs). The [members of parliament of the Lok Sabha](#) are [directly elected](#) by the Indian public voting in [single-member districts](#) and the [members of parliament of the Rajya Sabha](#) are elected by the [members](#) of all [state legislative assemblies](#) by [proportional representation](#). The Parliament has a sanctioned strength of 550 in the Lok Sabha and 250 in the Rajya Sabha including 12 nominees from the expertise of different fields of literature, art, science, and social service.^[1] The Parliament meets at [Sansad Bhavan](#) in [New Delhi](#). The Parliament of India represents the largest democratic electorate in the world (the second is the [European Parliament](#)), with an electorate of 912 million eligible voters in 2019. On May 28, 2023, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, unveiled and inaugurated the New Parliament House, located adjacent to the previous one.

History^[edit]

Main articles: [Imperial Legislative Council](#) and [Constituent Assembly of India](#)

During [British rule](#), the legislative branch of India was the [Imperial Legislative Council](#), which was created in 1861 via the [Indian Councils Act of 1861](#)^{[8][9]} and disbanded in 1947, when India gained independence. Following independence, the [Constituent Assembly of India](#) was elected to write the [Constitution of India](#).^[10] In 1950 after the constitution came into force, the Constituent Assembly of India was disbanded,^[11] and succeeded by the Parliament of India, which is active to this day.

Parliament House^[edit]

Main article: [Parliament House, New Delhi](#)

Old premises (Samvidhan Sadan)^[edit]

The [old Parliament House](#) (*Samvidhan Sadan*) is located in [New Delhi](#). It was designed by [Edwin Lutyens](#) and [Herbert Baker](#), who were made responsible for the planning and construction of New Delhi by the British government, as the home of the [Central Legislative Assembly](#), the [Council of State](#), and the [Chamber of Princes](#). The construction of the building took six years, and the opening ceremony was performed on 18 January 1927 by the [viceroy and governor-general of India](#), [Lord Irwin](#). The construction cost for the building was ₹8.3 million (US\$100,000).^[12]

The building is 21 metres (70 ft) tall, 170 metres (560 ft) in diameter and covers an area of 2.29 hectares (5.66 acres). The Central Hall consists of the chambers of the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha, and the Library hall. Surrounding these three chambers is the four-storeyed circular structure providing accommodations for members and houses [parliamentary committees](#), offices and the [Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs](#).^[12] The center and the focus of the building is the Central Hall. It consists of chambers of the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha, and the Library Hall, and between them lie garden courts. Surrounding these three chambers is the four-storeyed circular structure providing accommodations for ministers, chairmen, parliamentary committees, party offices, important offices of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariat, and also the offices of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. The Central Hall is circular in shape and the dome is 30 metres (98 ft) in diameter.

It is a place of historical importance. The [Indian Constitution](#) was framed in the Central Hall. The Central Hall was originally used in the library of the erstwhile Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of States. In 1946, it was converted and refurbished into the Constituent Assembly Hall. [election](#).^[13]

New premises (Sansad Bhavan)[\[edit\]](#)

[A new parliament building](#) was inaugurated on May 28, 2023.^[14] The old building, an 85-year-old structure suffers from inadequacy of space to house members and their staff and is thought to suffer from structural issues. The building also needs to be protected because of its heritage tag.^{[15][16]}

The new building, with a built-up area of approximately 65,000 sq m and a distinctive triangular shape, optimally utilizes space. It houses an expanded Lok Sabha hall, accommodating up to 888 seats, and a larger Rajya Sabha hall, accommodating up to 384 seats, with the Lok Sabha capable of accommodating up to 1,272 seats for joint sessions of Parliament. The Lok Sabha hall draws inspiration from India's national bird, incorporating a peacock theme, while the Rajya Sabha hall is designed with a lotus theme, reflecting India's national flower. Additionally, a state-of-the-art Constitutional Hall symbolically and physically places Indian citizens at the heart of democracy.

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) laid the foundations for the new Parliament building on 10 December 2020.^{[17][18]} With an estimated cost of ₹9.71 billion, the new building was inaugurated in 2023.^{[17][18]}

The first session in the New Parliament took place on 19 September 2023.^[19]

Composition[\[edit\]](#)

The Indian Parliament consists of two houses, namely, the [Lok Sabha](#) and the [Rajya Sabha](#), with the [president of India](#) acting as their head.

President of India[\[edit\]](#)

The president of India, the [head of state](#), is a component of Parliament. Under [Article 60](#) and [Article 111](#) of the constitution, the president's responsibility is to ensure that laws passed by the Parliament are in accordance with the constitutional mandate and that the stipulated procedure is followed before indicating approval to the bills. The president of India is elected by the [elected members of the Parliament of India](#) and the [state legislatures](#) and serves for a term of five years.^[20]

Lok Sabha[\[edit\]](#)



Lok Sabha Chamber

The [Lok Sabha](#) (House of the People) or the [lower house](#) has 543 [members](#). Members are directly elected by citizens of India on the basis of [universal adult franchise](#) representing [parliamentary constituencies](#) across the country. Between 1952 and

2020, [two additional members](#) of the [Anglo-Indian](#) community were also nominated by the president of India on the advice of the [Indian government](#), which was abolished in January 2020 by the 104th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2019.^[21]

Every citizen of India who is over 18 years of age, irrespective of gender, caste, religion, or race and is otherwise not disqualified, is eligible to vote for members of the Lok Sabha. The constitution provides that the maximum strength of the Lower House be 550 members. It has a term of five years. To be eligible for membership in the Lok Sabha, a person must be a citizen of India and must be 25 years of age or older, mentally sound, should not be bankrupt, and should not be criminally convicted. The total elective membership is distributed among the states in such a way that the ratio between the number of seats allotted to each state and the population of the state is, so far as practicable, the same for all states.^[22] Out of 543 seats of [Lok Sabha](#), 84 seats are reserved for [Scheduled castes](#) and 47 seats are reserved for [Scheduled tribe](#).^[23]

Rajya Sabha^[edit]



Rajya Sabha Chamber

The [Rajya Sabha](#) (Council of States) or the [Upper House](#) is a permanent body not subject to dissolution. One-third of the members retire every second year and are replaced by newly elected members. Each member is elected for a term of six years.^[24] Its members are indirectly elected by members of legislative bodies of the states. The Rajya Sabha can have a maximum of 250 members. It currently has a sanctioned strength of 250 members, of which 238 are elected from [states, and union territories](#) and 12 are [nominated](#) by the president. The number of members from a state depends on its population. The minimum age for a person to become a [member of the Rajya Sabha](#) is 30 years.^[25] There are no caste based reservations in Rajya Sabha.^[23]

Powers^[edit]

As the primary institution responsible for lawmaking, the Indian Parliament possesses a wide array of powers that form the backbone of the country's democratic governance.

- **Legislative Powers:**

1. **Enacting Laws:** The Parliament is vested with the authority to make laws on subjects enumerated in the Union List and Concurrent List under the Constitution of India. Bills can be introduced in either house, and upon approval, they become laws after receiving the President's assent
2. **Amending the Constitution:** The Parliament can amend the Constitution with the support of a special majority, allowing for modifications to accommodate changing societal needs and aspirations.
3. **Residuary Powers:** The Parliament holds exclusive authority over matters not covered by the Union or State Lists, known as residuary powers.^[26]

- **Financial Powers:**
 1. **Formulation and Approval of the Union Budget:** The Parliament plays a vital role in the development and endorsement of the Union Budget. It carefully examines the government's proposals for revenue generation and expenditure, provides suggestions for modifications if necessary, and ultimately grants or withholds financial allocations accordingly.
 2. **Taxation:** Parliament has the power to levy and collect taxes, including income tax, customs and excise duties, and goods and services tax (GST).
 3. **Control over Public Expenditure:** The Parliament scrutinizes government expenditure through debates and discussions on budgetary allocations, ensuring accountability and transparency.^[27]
- **Executive Powers:**
 1. **Council of Ministers:** The Parliament exercises executive powers indirectly through its control over the Council of Ministers. The government is collectively responsible to the Parliament, and its policies and actions are subject to parliamentary scrutiny.
 2. **Vote of No Confidence:** The Parliament can remove the government from power through a vote of no confidence. If the government fails to enjoy the majority's support (in Lok Sabha), it must resign.
 3. **Questions and Motions:** Members of Parliament have the right to raise questions, seek clarifications, and move motions regarding the functioning of the government and its policies.^[28]
- **Oversight Powers:**
 1. **Question Hour:** Members of Parliament can ask questions of ministers during the Question Hour, seeking clarifications on matters of public interest.
 2. **Committees:** The Parliament appoints various committees, such as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the Estimates Committee, and the Committee on Public Undertakings, to oversee and examine government policies, programs, and their implementation.
 3. **Impeachment Power:** The Parliament has the authority to initiate impeachment proceedings against the President, Vice President, and Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts for the violation of the Constitution.^[26]

Sessions[\[edit\]](#)

The period during which the House meets to conduct its business is called a session. The constitution empowers the president to summon each house at such intervals that there should not be more than a six-month gap between the two sessions. Hence the Parliament must meet at least twice a year. In India, the Parliament conducts three sessions each year.^[29]

- **Budget session:** The Budget Session is arguably the most crucial session of the Indian Parliament. It typically commences in February and concludes in May. The primary objective of this session is to discuss, debate, and pass the annual Union Budget, which outlines the government's fiscal policies and priorities for the upcoming financial year. Members of Parliament scrutinize the budget proposals, propose amendments, and engage in comprehensive discussions to ensure transparency and accountability in the allocation of funds.^[30]
- **Monsoon session:** The Monsoon Session of Parliament usually takes place between July and August. It derives its name from the occurrence of the monsoon season during this time. This session primarily focuses on enacting legislation, as it provides an opportunity for Members of Parliament to introduce bills, engage in extensive debates, and collectively decide on their passage. Apart from legislative functions, this session also involves discussions on various issues of national importance, enabling the government to address concerns raised by the opposition and seek their support.^[30]
- **Winter session:** The Winter Session, held between November and December, serves as the last parliamentary session of the calendar year. Its main purpose is to ensure a comprehensive review of the government's policies and initiatives, allowing Members of

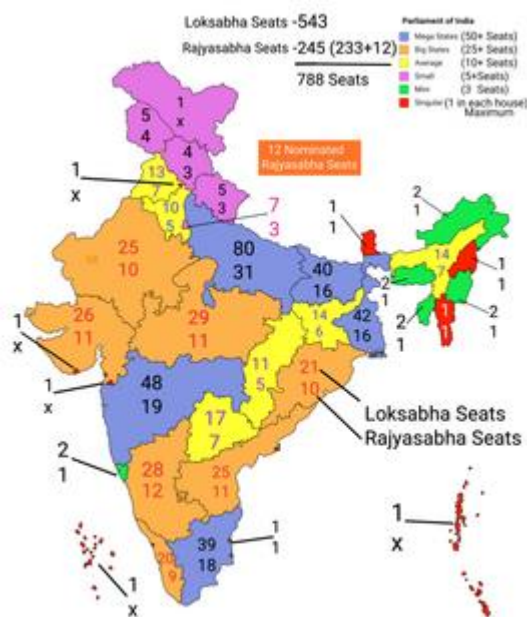
Parliament to critically analyze their effectiveness. This session witnesses the introduction of bills, discussions on pending legislation, and the examination of the government's performance through questions, motions, and debates. The Winter Session is vital for fostering accountability and transparency in governance.^[30]

- **Special Sessions:** In addition to the regular sessions, the Indian Parliament also holds special sessions to address urgent matters or crises that require immediate attention. These sessions are convened outside the usual schedule and are dedicated to discussing specific issues of national importance. Special sessions provide a platform for focused deliberations, enabling swift decision-making and action in response to emergencies or critical circumstances.^[30]

Functions^[edit]

Legislative functions^[edit]

See also: [Lawmaking procedure in India](#)



State-wise distribution of seats in each house of

Parliament

Legislative proposals are brought before either house of the Parliament in the form of a bill. A bill is the draft of a legislative proposal, which, when passed by both houses of Parliament and assented to by the president, becomes an [act of Parliament](#). [Money bills](#) must originate in the Lok Sabha. The [Council of States](#) can only make recommendations over the bills to the House, within a period of fourteen days.^[31]

Parliamentary committees^[edit]

Main article: [List of Indian parliamentary committees](#)

Parliamentary committees are formed to deliberate specific matters at length. The public is directly or indirectly associated and studies are conducted to help committees arrive at the conclusions. Parliamentary committees are of two kinds: standing committees and ad hoc committees.^{[32][33][34]}

Standing committees are permanent committees constituted from time to time in pursuance of the provisions of an act of Parliament or rules of procedure and conduct of business in Parliament. The work of these committees is of a continuing nature. Ad hoc committees are appointed for a specific purpose and they cease to exist when they finish the task assigned to them and submit a report.

Privileges[\[edit\]](#)

Parliamentary privileges play a crucial role in safeguarding the functioning of the Indian Parliament and upholding its authority as the primary legislative body in the country. These privileges grant certain rights and immunize Members of Parliament, enabling them to perform their duties effectively, express their views freely, and ensure democratic accountability.^[35]

- *Freedom of Speech:* One of the most fundamental parliamentary privileges is the freedom of speech and expression granted to Members of Parliament. This privilege allows legislators to articulate their opinions and viewpoints without fear of legal consequences or outside interference. By protecting freedom of speech, parliamentary privileges ensure that parliamentarians can openly debate, discuss, and criticize government policies and actions, thus contributing to robust decision-making and democratic governance.^[36]
- *Immunity from Legal Action:* Parliamentary privileges grant lawmakers immunity from civil and criminal proceedings for any statements made or actions performed within the Parliament or its committees. This immunity allows Members of Parliament to express their opinions and engage in debates without the fear of legal repercussions. By safeguarding parliamentarians from external legal actions, these privileges facilitate open and uninhibited discussions, fostering an environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas.^[36]
- *Access to Information:* Parliamentary privileges also encompass the right to access information necessary for effective legislation and oversight. Members of Parliament have the authority to seek information from government officials, ministries, and public authorities to gather facts, scrutinize policies, and hold the government accountable. This privilege enables parliamentarians to obtain critical data, documents, and reports to make informed decisions and represent the interests of their constituents effectively.^[36]
- *Control over Internal Affairs:* Parliamentary privileges grant the legislature the power to regulate its internal affairs, proceedings, and discipline. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha exercise these privileges to maintain decorum, ensure orderly debates, and enforce rules of procedure. This control over internal affairs allows the Indian Parliament to function independently, protect its integrity, and maintain its authority as a legislative body.^[36]
- *Protection from Arrest:* Parliamentary privileges provide Members of Parliament with protection from arrest in civil cases during the session of Parliament, allowing them to discharge their legislative responsibilities without hindrance. This privilege ensures that lawmakers can attend parliamentary sessions, participate in debates, and fulfill their duties without the threat of detention or interference.^[36]

Code of Conduct[\[edit\]](#)

To uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct, the Indian Parliament focuses on some of the key behavioral aspects for parliamentarians.

- To maintain transparency:
 1. Parliamentarians should disclose their financial interests, including assets, investments, and sources of income, to ensure transparency and prevent conflicts of interest.
 2. Detailed records of parliamentary proceedings, including debates, voting records, and committee activities, should be made readily available to the public for scrutiny and accountability.^[37]
- Conflict of Interest:
 1. Parliamentarians should avoid conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from discussions or decisions that may directly or indirectly benefit them, their family members, or their associates.
 2. A clear definition of conflicts of interest and guidelines for disclosure and recusal are outlined to maintain the integrity of the legislative process.^[37]

- Respectful Discourse:
 1. Parliamentarians should engage in respectful and constructive debates, adhering to decorum and avoiding personal attacks or derogatory language.
 2. Speeches and interactions should be focused on the issues at hand, fostering a culture of healthy deliberation and informed decision-making.^[38]
- Attendance and Participation:
 1. Parliamentarians should demonstrate a high level of commitment to their duties by attending sessions regularly and actively participating in debates, voting, and committee work.
 2. Guidelines are established to ensure that absenteeism is minimal, and absence without valid reasons is addressed appropriately.
- Use of Parliamentary Privileges:
 1. Parliamentarians should exercise their parliamentary privileges responsibly, recognizing that they are not immune to legal and ethical obligations outside the Parliament.
 2. Misuse of privileges, such as obstructing justice or engaging in corrupt practices, are strictly prohibited and subjected to legal consequences.^[38]
- Accountability:
 1. Parliamentarians are accountable to the public they represent, regularly communicating with constituents, listening to their concerns, and addressing their grievances.
 2. A mechanism for public redressal and feedback are established to hold parliamentarians accountable for their actions and decisions.^[37]
- Prohibition of Corruption:
 1. Parliamentarians should be bound by stringent anti-corruption measures, including the declaration of assets, income, and liabilities, and strict adherence to existing anti-corruption laws.
 2. Strong penalties and disciplinary action should be imposed for any proven instances of corruption or unethical behavior, reinforcing a culture of integrity and zero tolerance for malpractice.^[37]

In 2022, the Lok Sabha secretariat released a booklet listing out unparliamentary words and expressions before the start of the Monsoon session on 18 July 2022. The banned words if used during debates or otherwise in both the houses would be expunged from the records of the parliament.^[39]

Incidents^[edit]

[The Emergency](#) was one of the significant incidents in the history of the Indian Parliament by then-Prime Minister [Indira Gandhi](#) in 1975. The emergency lasted for 21 months and saw a suspension of civil liberties, censorship of the press, and imprisonment of political opponents.^[40]

On 13 December 2001, Indian Parliament was attacked by an [Islamic terrorist](#) group. The perpetrators were [Lashkar-e-Taiba](#) (Let) and [Jaish-e-Mohammed](#) (JeM) terrorists. The attack led to the deaths of five terrorists, six [Delhi Police](#) personnel, two [Parliament Security Services](#) personnel, and a gardener, which totaled 14 fatalities. The incident led to increased tensions between [India](#) and [Pakistan](#), resulting in the [India–Pakistan standoff](#).^[41]