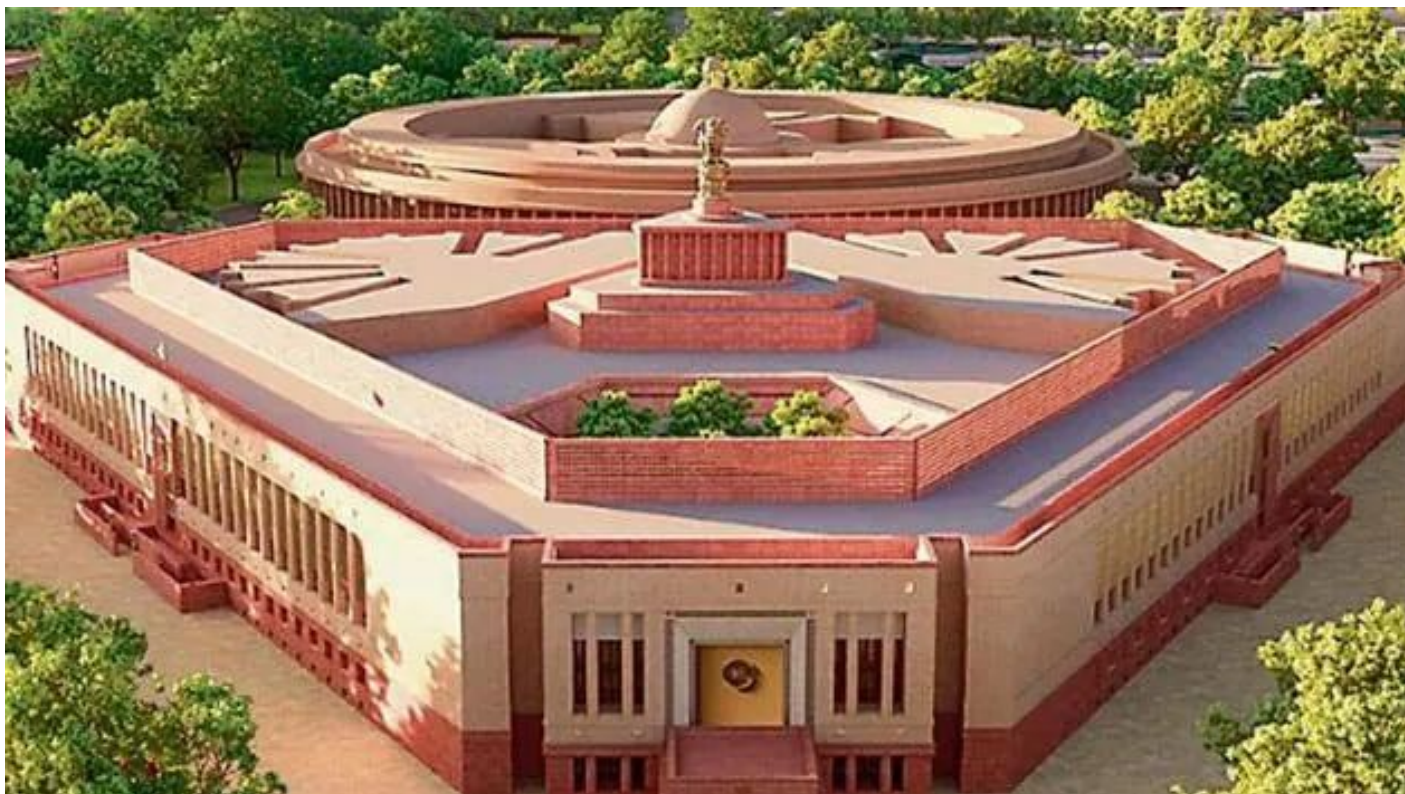


Parliamentary Sessions | How, When & Who Convenes These Sessions

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What's in today's article?

- **Why in News?**
- **How and When Parliament is Convened?**
- **How many Parliamentary Sessions are held every year?**
- **Constitutional Provisions w.r.t. Parliamentary Sessions**
- **How often do Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha meet?**
- **What is a Special Session of Parliament?**

Why in News?

- On August 31, Pralhad Joshi, the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, announced that a “special session” of Parliament would be held from September 18 to 22.

How and When Parliament is Convened?

- The power to convene a session of Parliament rests with the government.
- The decision is taken by the **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs**, which currently comprises nine ministers, including those for Defence, Home, Finance, and Law.
- The decision of the Committee is formalised by the President, in whose name MPs are summoned to meet for a session.

How many Parliamentary Sessions are held every year?

- India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar.
- **By convention, Parliament meets for three sessions in a year.**
- The longest, the **Budget Session**, starts towards the end of January, and concludes by the end of April or first week of May.
 - The session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals.
- The second session is the three-week **Monsoon Session**, which usually begins in July and finishes in August.
- The parliamentary year ends with a three week-long **Winter Session**, which is held from November to December.
- A general scheme of sittings was recommended in 1955 by the General Purpose Committee of Lok Sabha.
 - It was accepted by the government of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, but was not implemented.

Constitutional Provisions w.r.t. Parliamentary Sessions:

- The summoning of Parliament is specified in **Article 85** of the Constitution.
 - Like many other articles, it is based on a provision of the **Government of India Act, 1935**.
 - This provision specified that the central legislature had to be summoned to meet at least once a year, and that not more than 12 months could elapse between two sessions.
- Dr B R Ambedkar stated that the purpose of this provision was to summon the legislature only to collect revenue, and that the once-a-year meeting was designed to avoid scrutiny of the government by the legislature.

How often do Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha meet?

- Before independence, the central assembly met for a little more than 60 days a year.
- This number increased to 120 days a year in the first 20 years after Independence. Since then, the sitting days of the national legislature have declined.
- Between 2002 and 2021, Lok Sabha averaged 67 working days.
- **Reason -**

- One institutional reason given for this is the reduction in the workload of Parliament by its **Standing Committees**, which, since the 1990s, have anchored debates outside the House.
- However, several Committees have recommended that Parliament should meet for at least 120 days in a year.

What is a Special Session of Parliament?

- The **Constitution does not use the term “special session”**.
- The term sometimes refers to sessions the government has convened for specific occasions, like commemorating parliamentary or national milestones.
- For the two Houses to be in session, the presiding officers should chair their proceedings.
- The presiding officers can also direct that the proceedings of their respective Houses would be limited and procedural devices like question hour would not be available to MPs during the session.
- However, **Article 352** (Proclamation of Emergency) of the Constitution does refer to a “special sitting of the House”.
- **44th Constitutional Amendment Act -**
 - Parliament added the part relating to the special sitting through the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1978.
 - Its purpose was to **add safeguards to the power of proclaiming Emergency in the country**.
 - It specifies that if a Proclamation of Emergency is issued and Parliament is not in session, then one-tenth of Lok Sabha MPs can ask the President to convene a special meeting to disapprove the Emergency.

Q1) When can a joint session of Parliament be called?

In India, if an ordinary bill has been rejected by any house of the parliament and if more than six months have elapsed, the President may summon a joint session for the purpose of passing the bill. The bill is passed by a simple majority of a joint sitting.

Q2) What are the parts of Parliament of India?

Indian Parliament consists of – President of India, Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha

Source: [Special session of Parliament: How it will work | PRS](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/parliamentary-sessions/>

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