

GS II

SYLLABUS: PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATURES—STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONING.

CHAIRMAN AND SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 12.

News: "Can the VicePresident be impeached?"

Context: In a move that is unprecedented in India's parliamentary history, 60 Members of the Rajya Sabha have expressed a loss of confidence in the Chairman, who is also the Vice-President of India.

- **The Chairman and Speaker must ensure the proceedings in Parliament go uninterrupted.** To achieve this, **they must earn the trust of MPs** by being neutral in practice and perception.
- The **Vice-President discharges the duties of both the Vice-President and Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha.**

Controversies with Office:

- **Perceived partisanship:** Speaker and Chairman often hail from political party in majority.
 - **Unlike Britain Parliament** speaker has no convention or compulsion to resign from the party membership.
- **Decision making powers:**
 - **Anti-defection cases:** Eg. Maharashtra Assembly 2019-20.
 - **Classification of bills as Money bill** e.g. Recent PMLA 2022 amendments done through money bill route, Aadhar as money bill in 2016.
- **Functioning related issues of house:**
 - **Admission of critical motions:** Eg. censure motion and no-confidence motion against the government.
 - **Allocation of time for discussion:** on important issues to the opposition members.
 - **Delay in key issues:** like recognition of Leader of Opposition after 2014 general elections.
 - **Hastily applying "guillotine" provisions** to cut short debates on contentious issues.

Removal of Presiding Officers of Parliament:

Chairman:

- **Grounds for Removal: not mentioned in the Constitution.**
- The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha can be removed from his office only if he is removed from the office of the Vice-President.
- **Art. 67(b):**
 - **At least a 14-day notice** has been given of the intention to move the resolution.
 - Vice President may be removed from his office by a resolution passed by an **Effective Majority (i.e. majority of total strength minus vacancies) of the Rajyasabha.**
 - After being passed in Rajyasabha, **Approval of Loksabha (simple majority)** is needed.
 - Vice President **cannot preside** as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, during discussions on removal.
 - The Vice-President **can hold office beyond his term of five years** until his successor assumes charge.
 - He/She is also **eligible for reelection** to that office for any number of terms.

Speaker:

- **Grounds for Removal: not mentioned in the Constitution.**
- **Art. 94 and 96:**
 - **At least a 14-day notice** has been given of the intention to move the resolution.
 - House can remove the Speaker through a resolution passed by an **effective majority Effective Majority (i.e. majority of total Strength minus vacancies) of the Loksabha.**

- Speaker **cannot preside** sitting of the house, **during discussions on removal.**
- **Whenever the Lok Sabha is dissolved, the Speaker does not vacate his office** and continues till the newly-elected Lok Sabha meets.
- **Rajyasabha has no role** in the removal of the Speaker of Lok Sabha.
- He/She is also **eligible for reelection** to that office for any number of terms.

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PYQs

GS II 2020: 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker'! Do you think this practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India?

TECHNOLOGY

PRE-CONTEXT

CYBERCRIMES

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 9.

News: "Caught in the vortex of Golden Triangle".

Cybercrime methods (most common):

- **Cyber Slavery:** Offenders target innocent individuals and lure them by giving **fake promises to offer them employment or alike** and force them into executing cyber fraud.
- **Social Engineering Attacks: Manipulating** people into revealing confidential information.
- **Ransomware Attacks: Malicious software** that locks data until a ransom is paid. 53% increase in the ransomware incidents in 2022—**CERT-In report.**
- **Phishing:** Tricking individuals into revealing sensitive information **via fake emails or messages.** 150 million phishing emails sent globally every day.
- **Identity Theft: stealing personal information** to impersonate someone for financial gain.
- **Cyberstalking and Harassment: Using the internet to stalk,** harass, or bully individuals.
- **Denial of Service: Blocking access to websites.**
- **Cyber Espionage:** using **stealthy IT malware to spy** on both corporate & military data.
- **Digital arrest scam:** fraudsters target individuals or businesses, posing as law enforcement or government officials, victims are **threatened with a digital arrest warrant.**

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ECONOMY

PRE-CONTEXT

MFN STATUS

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 10.

News: "MFN clause freeze won't hit investments in India: Switzerland."

About Most Favoured Nation:

- One of the **WTO Instruments** for **fair trade**.
- MFN status means **a country promises to treat another country as favourably as it treats its most favored trading partner**.
- This means extending any special privileges, like reduced tariffs or quotas, to all MFN countries.
- **Exemptions to MFN:**
 - **Regional group agreements** (FTA, PTA, GSP etc) are exempted.
 - Above can offer preferential treatment to each other, which may not be extended to non-member countries.

Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement:

- A **bilateral agreement between two countries** designed to **prevent individuals and businesses from being taxed twice** on the same income.
- Switzerland had **granted India MFN status under the DTAA**, which allowed Indian companies operating in Switzerland to benefit from reduced withholding tax rates on dividends, interest, and royalties.
- **Switzerland decided to withdraw the MFN status for India**, citing a lack of reciprocity and the Supreme Court ruling.

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LIVESTOCK

PRE-CONTEXT

H5N1 VIRUS

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 11.

News: "Bovine H5N1 displays pronounced neurotropism in many mammals."

H5N1 Virus:

- Highly **Pathogenic Avian Influenza** but can **occasionally infect humans** and other animals.
- Caused **widespread global outbreak**, carried by migratory birds.
- The outbreak is estimated to have **killed millions of birds** and the virus has infected over 200 mammalian species, including humans.
- **Neurotropism:** refers to the affinity or **tendency of certain pathogens, viruses, or biological agents to specifically target and affect the nervous system**, particularly neurons.

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BIO-TECH

PRE-CONTEXT

GENE THERAPY

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 12.

News: "How can gene therapy cure haemophilia A?"

Gene-Therapy:

- A technique that modifies person's gene to treat or cure disease. It **involves inserting, altering/silencing, or removing genes** within an **individual's cells**.
- **Types:**
 - **Somatic Gene Therapy:**
 - **Targets non-reproductive cells** (blood cells, skin cells etc); changes are not inherited.
 - Used to treat diseases in individuals.
 - **Germline Gene Therapy:**
 - **Targets reproductive cells** (Eggs, Sperm); changes are heritable.
 - Used to treat **inherited** diseases from family lines.
- **Delivery systems:**
 - **Modified viruses** are used to deliver genetic material.
 - **Non-Viral methods** like Nanoparticles, liposomes electroporation are used to deliver genetic material.
- **Applications:**
 - **Treating inherited Genetic disorders:** Eg. Hemophilia, Muscular dystrophy and certain immunodeficiencies.
 - **Cancer Treatment:** CAR-T therapy to target cancer cells.

Haemophilia:

- Haemophilia is a **rare, inherited bleeding disorder** characterized by the body's **inability to form blood clots** properly.
- **Types of Haemophilia:** A, B, C.
- The defective gene responsible for haemophilia is located on the **X chromosome**.
- Gene Therapy **introduces copies of a 'corrected' gene** are introduced into the cells of a patient to cure the disease.

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Thank you!