

Routine Gridlocks & Parliament's Institutional Health

Why is it in News?

The Winter Session has started amid worries about a potential Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and continuing disruptions inside Parliament.

Editorials caution that frequent deadlocks, deteriorating debate standards, and fewer working days are weakening Parliament's institutional integrity.

The Monsoon Session recorded alarmingly low productivity: Lok Sabha at 29% and Rajya Sabha at 34%, with Question Hour severely hampered.

Former Lok Sabha Secretary-General P.D.T. Achary states that the erosion of deliberative functioning is undermining Parliament's constitutional mandate.

Relevance

GS 2 – Polity & Governance

Falling parliamentary productivity; weakening deliberative systems.

Articles 107–111 (on lawmaking) and Article 118 (rules of procedure).

Reduced executive accountability: diluted Question Hour, limited scrutiny.

Declining performance of Parliamentary Committees → weak oversight.

Federal tensions and political polarisation shaping House operations.

GS 2 – Parliament & Democratic Institutions

Institutional weakening: reduced sittings, frequent disruptions, majoritarian trends.

Anti-defection law curbing independence of debates.

Issues with floor leadership, coordination gaps, and poor legislative planning.

Basics: Role & Purpose of Parliament

Core functions: legislation, checking the executive, financial control, and structured deliberation.

Articles 107–111 define legislative procedure; Article 118 outlines procedural rules.

Mechanisms like Question Hour, Zero Hour, and Committees uphold accountability.

Parliamentary norms require reasoned debate, consensus-building, and rigorous scrutiny of government actions.

ESTD 2022

Declining Productivity

Monsoon Session 2024 saw Lok Sabha functioning at 29% and Rajya Sabha at 34%, with Question Hour barely functioning.

This is a steep fall from past standards: between the 1950s and 70s, Sessions averaged over 120 sittings; today, it has dropped to roughly 60–70 days annually.

The 17th Lok Sabha (2019–24) registered the lowest averages in decades; Rajya Sabha was marginally better but still on a downward trend.

Routine Disruptions Becoming the Norm

Disruptions have become standard, with both government and opposition using them strategically.

Debate time loss is severe: eight Bills were cleared with almost no deliberation, some under ten minutes.

“Operation Sindoor” data shows over 50% of Lok Sabha time lost to disorderly conduct.

Breakdown in Floor Coordination

The collapse of engagement between the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition is driving dysfunction.

Minimal pre-legislative consultations lead to hurried lawmaking.

All-party meetings lack meaningful dialogue and have become token exercises.

Declining Scrutiny of Bills

Only 13–15% of Bills were referred to Standing Committees recently—compared to over 60% a decade ago.

Legislation is increasingly passed without clause-wise discussion.

Examples: The Online Gaming Bill and the Merchant Shipping Bill went through with under ten minutes of debate.

Majoritarianism vs Parliamentary Ethos

Large majority governments increasingly treat Parliament as a ratifying body rather than a deliberative institution.

Opposition protests prompt the government to sidestep debate using guillotines, voice votes, and short-notice procedures.

Question Hour Dilution

The most important accountability mechanism is being suspended frequently, sharply reducing oversight.

In the Monsoon Session, Question Hour utilization was just 23% in Lok Sabha and 36% in Rajya Sabha.

Institutional Consequences

Decay of parliamentary standards is expanding executive dominance.

Bills cleared without scrutiny face higher risks of constitutional challenges and policy inconsistency.

Public faith weakens as Parliament starts resembling an “acclamation chamber” rather than a deliberative forum.

Structural Reasons Behind Gridlocks

Intensified political polarisation and lack of consensus-building culture.
Anti-defection law curtails internal party debate; MPs lack independent voice.
Televised proceedings create incentives for disruptions.
Weak legislative planning: last-minute Bill circulation, inadequate preparation time.

Need for Institutional Reforms

Fix mandatory minimum sittings (UK model: 120 days).
Revamp the Business Advisory Committee and guarantee inter-party coordination.
Make committee referral compulsory for all non-emergency legislation.
Redesign anti-defection law to permit intra-party dissent.
Introduce fixed-time debates like the UK's Westminster Hall format.

Comparative Perspective

Arend Lijphart highlights that consensus democracies depend on negotiation—India is drifting away from this.
Mansbridge stresses transparency and debate for deliberative democracy—both diminishing in the current system.
Garrett & Tsebelis argue that powerful executives lacking veto players weaken scrutiny—India reflects this pattern.

Conclusion

Parliamentary disruptions signal a deeper institutional deterioration, not isolated political conflicts.
Reduced deliberation, fewer sittings, and minimal scrutiny threaten executive accountability and constitutional equilibrium.
Revitalising Parliament requires systemic reforms supported by genuine political willingness to revive dialogue, debate, and democratic culture.

How Antibiotic Misuse Is Fuelling a Crisis in ICUs Across India

Why is it in News?

Fresh evidence from ICMR and major hospitals reveals a steep rise in antimicrobial resistance (AMR) within Indian ICUs.
Almost 2.6 lakh deaths in 2021 in India were linked to AMR.
Hospitals continue heavy antibiotic overuse, often without microbiological confirmation.
ICUs increasingly report patients unresponsive even to last-line antibiotics.

Relevance

GS 2 – Health

AMR as a major public health emergency; hospital management and regulatory issues.
ICMR's roles in surveillance and stewardship.
Deficiencies in diagnostics, hygiene, infrastructure, and infection control.

GS 3 – Science & Technology

Microbiology basics: AMR, superbugs, ICU pathogens like Klebsiella and Acinetobacter. Importance of diagnostics, labs, and rapid testing.

GS 3 – Disaster Management / Public Health Emergency

AMR functioning as a slow-acting disaster; 2.6 lakh deaths reflect severe public health stress.

ICU vulnerabilities, healthcare-associated infections, and systemic risks.

What is Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)?

Microbes evolve to survive exposure to drugs designed to kill them.

AMR emerges due to misuse/overuse of antibiotics in humans, animals, and the environment.

This leads to superbugs that resist common drugs → longer illness, deaths, and higher medical costs.

WHO lists AMR among the ten biggest threats to global health.

Scale of Crisis in ICUs

ICUs are encountering multi-drug and pan-drug resistant bacteria.

Patients deteriorate because powerful antibiotics like carbapenems and colistin fail.

Infections caused by Klebsiella, Acinetobacter, and Pseudomonas—key ICU pathogens—are rising.

Clinicians frequently use multiple antibiotic combinations, often without culture evidence.

Why Antibiotic Misuse Is Rising

Empirical prescribing: antibiotics given without culture reports due to urgency.

Lack of diagnostic capacity and poor infection control in many hospitals.

Patients insist on antibiotics even for viral infections.

Defensive medical practices to avoid complications or litigation.

Only 20–30% of hospitals run active antimicrobial stewardship committees.

ICMR Key Findings

Resistance seen even to reserve antibiotics (carbapenems, colistin).

Hospitals increasingly using “watch group” antibiotics prone to resistance.

Only 6% of prescriptions were based on definitive diagnosis; 94% were empirical.

Reflects significant diagnostic weakness in Indian healthcare.

ICU-Specific Challenges

Ventilators, central lines, and catheters increase infection risks.

Overcrowded ICUs accelerate transmission of resistant microbes.

Frequent antibiotic exposure enables microbes to mutate quickly.
Resistant bacteria persist on surfaces, equipment, and clothing.

Consequences of AMR Rise

Higher mortality—India among the worst affected globally.
Escalated treatment expenses: longer stays and costly reserve drugs.
Greater rates of hospital-acquired infections (HAIs).
Reduced effectiveness of surgeries, transplant care, chemotherapy.

Structural Issues Driving AMR

Poor infection control: sanitation gaps, congestion, limited infection control staff.
Easy over-the-counter access to antibiotics.
Weak monitoring of antibiotic use in livestock.
Low compliance with hand hygiene among healthcare staff.
Chronic underfunding in public hospitals limits diagnostic capabilities.

What ICMR Recommends

Strengthen infection control to reduce precautionary antibiotic use.
Mandate antibiotic stewardship programmes in hospitals.
Make prescribing protocol-driven with daily review.
Build comprehensive AMR surveillance systems across states.

Diagnosis vs Infection Control: Core Challenge

Doctors often misinterpret colonisation as infection, leading to unnecessary antibiotics.
Without cultures, symptoms can be misleading.
True solution is strong infection control, not escalating antibiotic use.

Comparative Perspective

Stuart Levy: AMR grows wherever drug pressure is high—ICUs exemplify this.
O'Neill Report (2016): AMR could cause 10 million annual deaths by 2050—India is a hotspot.
Paul Farmer: Inequality worsens infectious disease crises—visible in India's public hospitals.

Conclusion

Indian ICUs face a severe health emergency driven by antibiotic misuse and fragile diagnostic systems.
Over-prescription, inadequate infection control, and rising drug-resistant bacteria reinforce each other in a destructive loop.

Strengthening diagnostics, stewardship, and infection control is crucial to stop AMR from becoming India's next large-scale health catastrophe.

Beyond the Headline Number: Rupee's Fall Is 'Real' This Time

Why is it in News?

The rupee dropped past ₹89 per dollar, closing at ₹89.46—its weakest point so far. Unlike earlier episodes, the rupee also declined against the euro, pound, yen, and yuan—not just the US dollar. Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) indicates “real depreciation” due to inflation gaps and global currency patterns. IMF has reclassified India's exchange rate regime from “floating” to “stabilised arrangement”, implying greater RBI intervention.

Relevance

GS 3 – Economy

Key exchange rate concepts: NER, NEER, REER; inflation's impact; competitiveness. India's external vulnerabilities: trade deficit, capital flows, global currency trends. IMF classification implications for currency management. RBI intervention, reserves, and the stabilised regime.

GS 3 – Growth & Inflation

High domestic inflation → real depreciation.
Effect on imports, debt servicing, and consumer inflation.

Key Terms

1. Nominal Exchange Rate (NER)

Market-determined exchange value of the rupee relative to foreign currencies.

2. Effective Exchange Rates (EERs)

NEER: weighted average of rupee against a basket of 40 currencies.
REER: NEER adjusted for inflation differences → indicates real competitiveness.

3. Appreciation vs Depreciation

NEER rising → nominal strengthening.
REER rising → rupee overvalued; REER falling → rupee undervalued/competitive.

What's Different This Time?

Rupee's depreciation is broad-based:
USD: 86.84 → 89.46
Euro: 105.74 → 118.27
Pound: 108.61 → 118.17

Yen: 0.56 → 0.57

Shows INR weakening globally, not just against the US dollar.

Effective Exchange Rates Explain the Real Situation

NEER

NEER has been declining since 2023, more sharply after 2024.

Indicates nominal rupee weakening against the global currency basket.

REER

REER has slipped below 2018–19 levels →

Rupee is undervalued in real terms.

Real depreciation is greater than nominal depreciation due to high domestic inflation.

Why REER Matters More

REER displays inflation-adjusted competitiveness.

Even mild nominal depreciation becomes significant in real terms when domestic inflation is high.

India's CPI (~5.4% since May 2025) exceeds inflation levels in major partner economies → widening REER gap.

Inflation as Driver of Real Depreciation

India's inflation remains above its trading partners' rates.

Higher domestic prices require the rupee to fall to maintain competitiveness.

Current depreciation exceeds inflation-based expectations → points to structural weakness.

RBI's Exchange Rate Management

IMF's reclassification suggests India now maintains a "stabilised arrangement".

Indicates active RBI involvement to contain volatility.

Large reserve deployment to prevent sharp depreciation.

But the rupee's decline now exceeds the RBI's capacity to hold levels.

Long-term stability around ₹82–83 (2022–24) has now given way to persistent downward pressure.

Structural Causes Behind Rupee Weakness

Growing trade deficit due to oil, electronic goods, and gold imports.

Weak foreign portfolio flows; withdrawals from equity and debt markets.

Sluggish export performance, especially in merchandise.

Strong US dollar amid high US interest rates till 2024.

Yuan depreciation dragging Asian currencies.

Geopolitical stress and flight to safe assets.

Rupee's Fall Since May 2025

Among the steepest declines in Asian currencies.
NEER and REER both decreasing—a rare convergence indicating deeper weakness.
Shows simultaneous nominal and real depreciation, unlike earlier periods when RBI absorbed shocks.

Key Insight from Chart Trends

Since June 2022:
NEER decline is moderate.
REER drop is steep, especially after May 2025.
This pattern (nominal fall + high inflation) → an undervalued rupee.

Implications

Exports: may gain short-term advantage but structural issues restrict benefits.
Imports: fuel, electronics, and fertilisers become more expensive → inflationary pressure.
Corporate borrowing: dollar-denominated loans get costlier.
Public finances: higher subsidy burden for fuel and fertilisers.
Households: imported goods and foreign travel become costlier.

Outlook

IMF expects the rupee to move toward greater flexibility.
If Fed rate cuts are delayed, USD strength may continue, sustaining pressure.
RBI will likely smooth volatility but avoid defending fixed levels.
Long-term rupee stability hinges on structural reforms—exports, manufacturing, and energy security.

Conclusion

The rupee's decline is widespread and adjusted for inflation, reflecting genuine loss of value rather than dollar strength alone.
Declining NEER and REER together signal structural fragility driven by inflation, trade imbalance, and weak capital inflows.
Unless fundamental issues are addressed, the rupee's downward trend will persist regardless of RBI interventions.

Ditwah: How Are Tropical Cyclones Named?

Why is it in News?

Cyclone Ditwah, located off the Tamil Nadu coast, is weakening into a deep depression. This has renewed interest in the naming process for cyclones in the Indian Ocean region.

Relevance

GS 1 – Geography

Tropical cyclone formation, global basins, and regional naming protocols.
North Indian Ocean system: Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

GS 3 – Disaster Management

IMD as the RSMC responsible for naming, alerts, and advisories.
Importance of naming for effective communication and disaster readiness.
WMO/ESCAP panel procedures; member-country name submissions; naming criteria.

What Are Tropical Cyclone Names?

Selected by Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres (RSMCs) and Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres.
For North Indian Ocean storms, naming is overseen by the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones.

Who Decides the Names?

The WMO/ESCAP Panel formed in 2000.
Original members: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand.
Later expanded to include countries like UAE, Yemen, Qatar, Iran, etc.
Each nation submits multiple suggested names.

How the Naming System Works

Names are used sequentially and rotated based on country contributions.
Member states submit long lists sufficient for years of usage.
All names must adhere to panel rules.

Cyclone Naming Criteria

Names must be short, simple, culturally grounded, and easy to pronounce.
Must not offend any country.
Cannot reference religion, political entities, or sensitive themes.

Example: Cyclone Ditwah

“Ditwah” was proposed by Yemen.
Meets guidelines—regionally relevant, brief, culturally appropriate, and neutral.

Why Naming Is Important

Ensures clarity in:

Forecasting

Public alerts

Preparedness

Avoids confusion during multiple simultaneous storms.

Enhances community-level awareness.

Indian Ocean vs Other Basins

Unlike Atlantic/Pacific basins where lists are reused every few years,

Indian Ocean names are single-use—never repeated.

India's Role

IMD in New Delhi acts as the RSMC for the region.

Responsible for forecasts, applying approved names, and maintaining cyclone records.

Conclusion

Tropical cyclone names in the Indian Ocean follow WMO/ESCAP rules using lists submitted by regional nations.

Names must be simple, culturally meaningful, and non-repetitive.

Cyclone Dityah, proposed by Yemen, fits within this established global naming framework.

Polluter Pays: Developing Nations Call for 'Meat Tax' on High-Income Countries

Why is it in News?

At COP30, 28 low-income African and Pacific nations issued the Belém Declaration demanding a greenhouse gas (GHG) pricing system—or “meat tax”—on industrial livestock in wealthy countries.

They argue that excessive meat consumption in developed nations disproportionately contributes to GHG emissions, especially methane.

They seek 20% of resulting revenue for the Loss and Damage Fund.

Relevance

GS 3 – Environment & Climate Change

Polluter-pays principle applied to agriculture and livestock.

Methane and nitrous oxide emissions; agriculture's ~33% share in global GHGs.

Financing for Loss & Damage; COP negotiation politics.

Sustainable diets and ecological footprints.

GS 2 – International Relations

Climate justice and differentiated responsibilities.

COP processes, South–South solidarity, and global food transition debates.

What Is the 'Meat Tax' Proposal?

A GHG-pricing system targeting industrial livestock in wealthy economies.
Applies polluter-pays logic: high emitters must compensate vulnerable nations.
Aims to reduce overconsumption emissions and finance climate adaptation.

Why Agriculture Is Being Examined

Food systems contribute one-third of global emissions.
Livestock accounts for most agricultural emissions—dominated by methane.
Emission footprints:
Beef → 70 kg CO₂ e/kg
Pork → 12 kg
Chicken → 9.9 kg
Legumes → 2 kg
Nuts → 0.4 kg

What the Belém Declaration Demands

High-income nations and major economies (OECD, EU, China) should:
Introduce GHG pricing on industrial livestock.
Allocate ≥20% revenue to the Loss and Damage Fund.
Extend polluter-pays principles to food systems.
Include dietary transition discussions in future COP agendas.

Who Signed the Declaration?

28 African and Pacific nations (Nigeria, Uganda, Fiji, Vanuatu, PNG, Kiribati, Liberia, etc.).
Represent 14 million highly vulnerable people.
Backed by 80+ international organisations.

Rationale Behind the Proposal

a) Disproportionate Emissions

High-income populations consume 4–5 times recommended meat levels (EAT-Lancet).
OECD average: 71.4 kg/person/year
China: 62 kg
Developing countries: 26.6 kg
Industrial livestock systems create far greater emissions per animal.

b) Climate Inequity

Developing nations face criticism for methane despite low-input, subsistence-based livestock.
Industrial Western systems involve high feed input, energy, manure methane, and nitrous oxide.

c) Rapidly Growing Global Demand

FAO projects global livestock numbers rising 50% by 2050, incompatible with Net Zero goals.

Why Target High-Income Countries?

Meat consumption far exceeds sustainable levels.

Industrial livestock drives:

Deforestation

Large land use

High methane production

Water and energy overuse

A meat tax would:

Lower production incentives

Encourage plant-based diets

Reduce land use

Enable rewilding and carbon capture

How the Revenue Will Be Used

At least 20% to the Loss & Damage Fund:

Compensation for climate impacts—storms, floods, droughts.

Critical for SIDS.

Remaining revenue could support:

Mitigation

Dietary transition

Sustainable agriculture

Key Arguments from Developing Nations

Overconsumption in rich nations is a major driver of emissions.

Food-related emissions mirror fossil-fuel-based inequalities.

Industrial livestock must be included in emission accountability.

Counterarguments & Challenges

Meat industry disputes emission estimates.

Concerns over:

Food prices

Affordability

Dietary autonomy

Requires robust MRV systems and political backing in OECD nations.

Conclusion

The Belém Declaration represents the first united push to price emissions from industrial livestock in wealthy nations using the polluter-pays principle.

Scientific evidence shows livestock systems—especially industrial ones—significantly contribute to global emissions, with rich nations responsible for disproportionate consumption.

A meat tax could help reduce emissions, correct inequities, finance climate-vulnerable nations, and support global dietary transition.

02nd December 2025: Daily MCQs

Q1. With reference to the functioning of the Indian Parliament, consider the following statements:

1. Article 118 of the Constitution empowers each House of Parliament to make rules for regulating its procedure.
2. Question Hour is a constitutional provision explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of India.
3. Parliamentary Standing Committees are constituted under Article 107 of the Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are **correct**?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a) 1 only

Explanation (brief): Article 118 deals with rules of procedure (Statement 1 correct).

Question Hour and Committees are based on rules/conventions, not directly on Articles 107 or any other constitutional article (2 and 3 incorrect).

Q2. In the context of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Indian ICUs, which of the following is/are major institutional factors contributing to the crisis?

1. High dependence on empirical antibiotic prescribing.
2. Low coverage of antimicrobial stewardship programmes in hospitals.
3. Confusion between colonization and infection in clinical decision-making.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: All three are highlighted as key reasons: empirical use, weak stewardship, and misdiagnosing colonization as infection.

Q3. With reference to exchange rate indicators used in India, consider the following pairs:

1. Nominal Effective Exchange Rate (NEER) – Weighted average of rupee against a basket of currencies without adjusting for inflation.
2. Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) – NEER adjusted for inflation differentials between India and its trading partners.
3. Appreciation of REER – Indicates that the rupee has become more undervalued in real terms.

How many of the above pairs/statements are **correct**?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: b) Only two

Explanation: 1 and 2 are correct. If REER appreciates, the rupee tends to be **overvalued**, not more undervalued, so 3 is incorrect.

Q4. Regarding the naming of tropical cyclones over the North Indian Ocean, consider the following statements:

1. The Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) in New Delhi, operated by the IMD, is responsible for assigning names to cyclones in this region.
2. Names of cyclones in the North Indian Ocean can be reused after a gap of ten years.
3. Names proposed by member countries must be non-offensive and should not be related to political leaders, parties, or religious beliefs.

Which of the statements given above is/are **correct**?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: IMD–RSMC does naming and names must follow strict non-offensive rules (1 and 3 correct). In this basin, names are **not reused** (2 incorrect).

Q5. At COP30, the idea of a “meat tax” proposed by a group of developing countries primarily seeks to:

1. Apply the polluter pays principle to the industrial livestock sector in high-income countries.
2. Generate revenue for the Loss and Damage Fund to support climate-vulnerable nations.

3. Penalise all forms of livestock rearing in developing countries.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: The proposal targets industrial livestock in rich countries and aims to fund Loss & Damage; it does **not** seek to penalise all livestock systems in developing countries.

Mains: Routine disruptions, shrinking sittings and declining committee scrutiny indicate a deeper institutional crisis within the Indian Parliament. Analyse how these trends are eroding executive accountability and suggest structural reforms to restore deliberative democracy.
10 Marks.

