

3. Guillotine

Why in News?

- Recently, The ongoing stalemate in Parliament has led to speculation that the government may guillotine the demands for grants and pass the Finance Bill without any discussion.

Highlights

- The term guillotine originally referred to an apparatus designed for executions by beheading.
- It was introduced in France during the French Revolution to make capital punishment more reliable and less painful.
- In legislative parlance, guillotine means to bunch together and fast-track the passage of financial business. It is a fairly common procedural exercise in Lok Sabha during the Budget Session.
- Once the guillotine is applied, any remaining demands for grants are put to vote without further discussion.
- This ensures that the budget is passed within the allocated time, and the government can continue its work without any delay.
- This has led to confusion and questions about what exactly guillotine means in legislative parlance.
- After the Budget is presented, Parliament goes into recess for about three weeks, during which time the House Standing Committees examine demands for grants for various Ministries and prepare reports.
- After Parliament reassembles, the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) draws up a schedule for discussions on the Demands for Grants.
- Sometimes, given the limitation of time, the House cannot take up the expenditure demands of all Ministries; therefore, the BAC identifies some important Ministries for discussions; usually the Ministries of Home, Defence, External Affairs, Agriculture, Rural Development and Human Resource Development.
- Once the House is done with these debates, the Speaker applies the “guillotine”, and all outstanding demands for grants (discussed or not) and undiscussed clauses of a bill/resolution are put to vote at once in order to save time.