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Government of India

The **Government of India** (ISO: Bhārata Sarakāra, legally the **Union Government** or **Union of India**^[1] and colloquially known as the **Central Government**) is the central executive authority of the Republic of India, a federal republic located in South Asia, consisting of 28 states and eight union territories. The government is led by the prime minister (currently Narendra Modi since 26 May 2014) who exercises the most executive power and selects all the other ministers.^[2] The country has been governed by a NDA-led government (a coalition of the BJP and its allies) since 2014.^[3] The prime minister and their senior ministers belong to the Union Council of Ministers—its executive decision-making committee being the cabinet.^[4]

The government, seated in New Delhi, has three primary branches: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary, whose powers are vested in a bicameral Parliament,^[5] a prime minister,^[2] and the Supreme Court^[6] respectively, with a president as head of state.^[4]

The Council of Ministers are responsible to the House in which they sit, they make statements in that House and take questions from fellow members of that House. For most senior ministers this is usually the directly elected Lok Sabha rather than the (mostly) indirectly elected Rajya Sabha. As is the case in most parliamentary systems, the government is dependent on Parliament to legislate, and general elections are held every five years to elect a new Lok Sabha. The most recent election was in 2024.

Government of India

ISO: Bhāratiya Sarkāra

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



सत्यमेव जयते

State Emblem of India version used by the Government of India as of August 2024

Overview

Established	26 January 1950 (in its current form, see <u>Constitution</u>)
State	 Republic of India
Leader	<u>Prime Minister (Narendra Modi)</u>
Appointed by	<u>President (Droupadi Murmu)</u> on the <u>advice</u> of the prime minister
Main organ	<u>Council of Ministers</u>
Ministries	<u>54 ministries</u> and <u>93 subordinate departments</u>
Responsible to	<u>Parliament of India</u>
Annual budget	₹45.03 trillion
Headquarters	<u>Central Secretariat, New Delhi</u>

After an election, the president selects as prime minister the leader of the party or alliance most likely to command the confidence of the majority of the Lok Sabha. If the prime minister is not a member of either House upon appointment, then he/she is given six months to be elected to either House of Parliament.

History

British colonial rule: (1857–1947)

The first seeds of responsible government during British colonial rule in India were sown by the Indian Councils Act 1909, commonly known as the Morley-Minto reforms. The Act introduced elections to the Imperial Legislative Council (then the unicameral Legislature for British India). Before that, governance was carried by an all-European Legislative Council and Viceroy's Executive Council. As such, no Indians were represented in government before 1909.^[7]

India's current bicameral Parliament has its roots in the Government of India Act 1919, commonly known as the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, which introduced a greatly expanded Imperial Legislative Council. It comprised a lower house, the Central Legislative Assembly of 145 members (of which 104 were elected and 41 nominated) and an upper house, the Council of State of 60 members (of which 34 were elected and 26 nominated).^[8]

The next structural modification to the governance of British India, the Government of India Act 1935 (the longest Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom until surpassed by the Greater London Authority Act 1999) was aimed at devolution of powers by establishing provincial governments and the creation of civil service institutions. However, it was unpopular amongst Indians and is considered a failure as it did not give Indians self-rule and permanent dominion status (the form of government followed in Canada, Australia and New Zealand) as was previously promised.^[9]



Council House in New Delhi as seen from above in 1926, seat of the former Imperial Legislative Council, home to the Parliament of India until 2023

Dominion: (1947–1950)

Between midnight on 15 August 1947 and 26 January 1950, India was a self-governing dominion of the United Kingdom, a constitutional monarchy with a Prime Minister and a Governor-General as the viceregal representative of the British monarch. Its unicameral legislature, the Constituent Assembly, was tasked with drafting the country's constitution.^[10]

Republic: (1950–present)

The Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950, making India a republic with a president as head of state, replacing the British monarch and its viceregal representative, the Governor-General. It was based in large part on the Government of India Act 1935, which was itself

based on the uncodified constitution of the United Kingdom. It also drew notable inspirations from the constitutions of several other Commonwealth dominions and the French, Soviet, Japanese, German and American constitutions.^[11]

India today prides itself in being the world's largest democracy, and the 4th largest economy in the world. Even though much remains to be done, especially in regard to eradicating poverty and securing effective structures of governance, India's achievements since independence in sustaining freedom and democracy have been singular among the world's new nations.^[12]



Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the ultimate Governor-General of India declaring India a republic at Government House, 26 January 1950

Basic structure

The Government of India is modelled after the Westminster system.^[13] The Union government is mainly composed of the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary, and powers are vested by the constitution in the prime minister, parliament, and the supreme court, respectively. The president of India is the head of state and the commander-in-chief of the Indian Armed Forces, while the elected prime minister acts as the head of the executive and is responsible for running the Union government.^[14] The parliament is bicameral in nature, with the Lok Sabha being the lower house, and the Rajya Sabha the upper house. The judiciary systematically contains an apex supreme court, 25 high courts, and several district courts, all inferior to the supreme court.^[15]

The basic civil and criminal laws governing the citizens of India are set down in major parliamentary legislation, such as the civil procedure code, the penal code, and the criminal procedure code.^[16] Similar to the Union government, individual state governments each consist of executive, legislative and judiciary branches. The legal system as applicable to the Union and individual state governments is based on the English common and Statutory Law.^[17] The full name of the country is the *Republic of India*. India and Bharat are equally official short names for the Republic of India in the Constitution,^[18] and both names appears on legal banknotes, in treaties and in legal cases. The terms "Union government", "central government" and "*bhārat sarkār*" are often used officially and unofficially to refer to the government of India. The term *New Delhi* is commonly used as a metonym for the Union government,^[19] as the seat of the central government is in New Delhi.

Legislature

The powers of the legislature in India are exercised by the Parliament, a bicameral legislature consisting of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha. Of the two houses of parliament, the Rajya Sabha (or the 'Council of States') is considered to be the upper house and consists of members appointed by the president and elected by the state and territorial legislatures. The Lok Sabha (or the 'House of the People') is considered the lower house.^[20]



Parliament House, New Delhi

The parliament does not have complete control and sovereignty, as its laws are subject to judicial review by the Supreme Court.^[21] However, it does exercise some control over the executive. The members of the Council of Ministers, including the prime minister, are either chosen from parliament or elected there within six months of assuming office.^[22] The council as a whole is responsible to the Lok Sabha.^[23] The Lok Sabha is a temporary house and can be dissolved only when the party in power loses the support of the majority of the house. The Rajya Sabha is a permanent house and can never be dissolved. The members of the Rajya Sabha are elected for a six-year term.^[24]

Executive

The executive of government is the one that has sole authority and responsibility for the daily administration of the state bureaucracy. The division of power into separate branches of government is central to the republican idea of the separation of powers.^[25]

President

The executive power is vested mainly in the President of India, as per Article 53(1) of the constitution. The president has all constitutional powers and exercises them directly or through subordinate officers as per the aforesaid Article 53(1). The president is to act following aid and advice tendered by the Prime Minister, who leads the Council of Ministers as described in Article 74 of the Constitution.

The council of ministers remains in power during the 'pleasure' of the president. However, in practice, the council of ministers must retain the support of the Lok Sabha. If a president were to dismiss the council of ministers on his or her initiative, it might trigger a constitutional crisis. Thus, in practice, the Council of Ministers cannot be dismissed as long as it holds the support of a majority in the Lok Sabha.

The President is responsible for appointing many high officials in India. These high officials include the governors of the 28 states; the chief justice; other judges of the supreme court and high courts on the advice of other judges; the attorney general; the comptroller and auditor general; the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners; the chairman and members of the Union Public Service Commission; the officers of the All India Services (IAS, IFoS and IPS) and Central Civil Services in group 'A'; officers of the Indian Armed Forces; and the ambassadors and high commissioners to other countries on the recommendations of the Council of Ministers, among others.^{[26][27]}

The President, as the head of state, also receives the credentials of ambassadors from other countries, while the prime minister, as head of government, receives credentials of high commissioners from other members of the Commonwealth, in line with historical tradition.

The President is the de jure commander-in-chief of the Indian Armed Forces.^[28]

The President of India can grant a pardon to or reduce the sentence of a convicted person once, particularly in cases involving the punishment of death. The decisions involving pardoning and other rights by the president are independent of the opinion of the prime minister or the Lok Sabha majority. In most other cases, however, the president exercises his or her executive powers on the advice of the prime minister.^[29] Presently, the President of India is Droupadi Murmu.

Vice president

The vice president is the second-highest constitutional position in India after the president. The vice president represents the nation in the absence of the president and takes charge as acting president in the incident of resignation impeachment or removal of the president. The vice president also has the legislative function of acting as the chairman of the Rajya Sabha.^[30] The vice president is elected indirectly by members of an electoral college consisting of the members of both the houses of the parliament following the system of proportional representation employing the single transferable vote and the voting is by secret ballot conducted by the election commission.

Prime minister

The Prime Minister of India, as addressed in the Constitution of India, is the chief executive of the government and the leader of the majority party that holds a majority in the Lok Sabha. The prime minister leads the executive of the Government of India.

The prime minister is the senior member of the cabinet in the executive government in a parliamentary system. The prime minister selects and can dismiss other members of the cabinet; allocates posts to members within the Government; is the presiding member and chairman of the cabinet and is responsible for bringing a proposal of legislation. The resignation or death of the prime minister dissolves the cabinet.

The prime minister is appointed by the president to assist the latter in the administration of the affairs of the executive.

Cabinet, ministries and agencies

The Union Council of Ministers includes the prime minister, Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State (MoS).^[31] Each minister must be a member of one of the houses of the parliament. The cabinet is headed by the prime minister, and is advised by the cabinet secretary, who also acts as the head of the Indian Administrative Service and other civil services. Other members of the council are either union cabinet ministers, who are heads of various ministries; or ministers of state, who are junior members who report directly to one of the cabinet ministers, often overseeing a specific aspect of government; or ministers of state (independent charges), who do not report to a cabinet minister. As per article 88

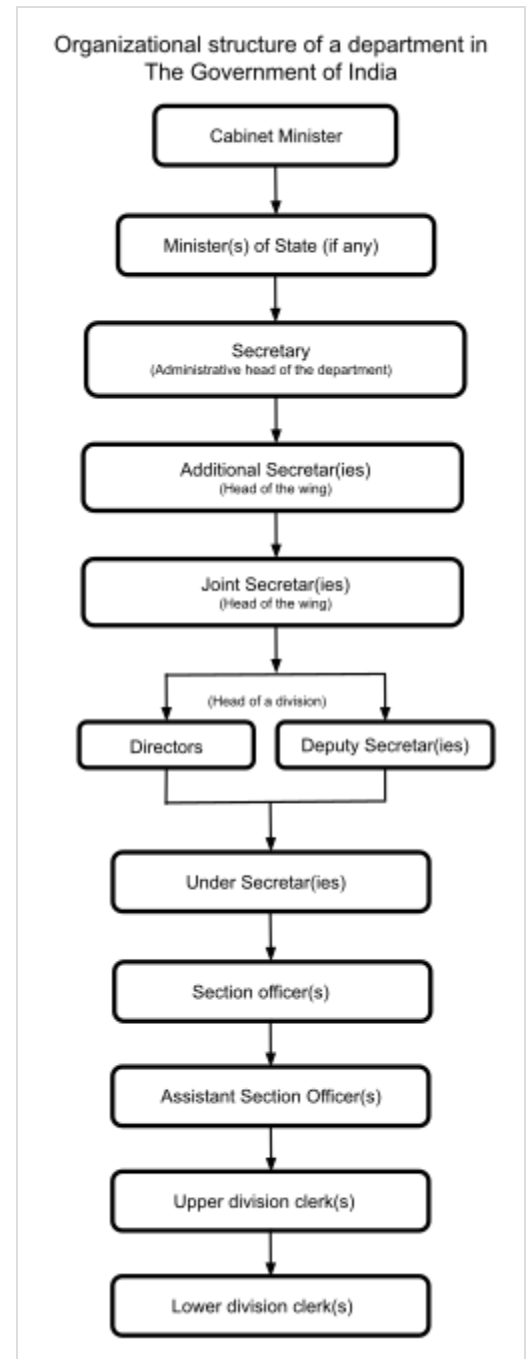


North and South Blocks of the Central Secretariat housing various ministries of the Government of India, with Rashtrapati Bhavan visible in the distance

of the constitution, every minister shall have the right to speak in, and to take part in the proceedings of, either house, any joint sitting of the houses, and any committee of parliament of which he may be named a member, but shall *not* be entitled to a vote in the house where he is not a member.

Secretaries

A secretary to the Government of India, a civil servant, generally an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer,^{[32][33][34][35]} is the administrative head of the ministry or department, and is the principal adviser to the minister on all matters of policy and administration within the ministry/department.^{[36][37]} Secretaries to the Government of India rank 23rd on Indian order of precedence.^{[38][39][40][41]} Secretaries at the higher level are assisted by one or many additional secretaries, who are further assisted by joint secretaries.^[37] At the middle they are assisted by directors/deputy secretaries and under secretaries.^[37] At the lower level, there are section officers, assistant section officers, upper division clerks, lower division clerks and other secretarial staff.^[37]



The organizational structure of a department of the Government of India.

Ministries and departments of the Government of India

#	Ministry	Department(s)
1	<u>Prime Minister's Office</u>	<u>Department of Atomic Energy</u>
		<u>Department of Space</u>
2	<u>Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare</u>	<u>Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare</u>
		<u>Department of Agricultural Research and Education</u>
3	<u>Ministry of Ayush</u>	
4	<u>Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers</u>	<u>Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals</u>
		<u>Department of Fertilizers</u>
		<u>Department of Pharmaceuticals</u>
5	<u>Ministry of Civil Aviation</u>	
6	<u>Ministry of Co-operation</u>	
7	<u>Ministry of Coal</u>	
8	<u>Ministry of Commerce and Industry</u>	<u>Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade</u>
		<u>Department of Commerce</u>
9	<u>Ministry of Communications</u>	<u>Department of Posts</u>
		<u>Department of Telecommunications</u>
10	<u>Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution</u>	<u>Department of Consumer Affairs</u>
		<u>Department of Food and Public Distribution</u>
11	<u>Ministry of Corporate Affairs</u>	
12	<u>Ministry of Culture</u>	
13	<u>Ministry of Defence</u>	<u>Department of Defence</u>
		<u>Department of Defence Production</u>
		<u>Department of Defence Research and Development</u>
		<u>Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare</u>
		<u>Department of Military Affairs</u>
14	<u>Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region</u>	
15	<u>Ministry of Earth Sciences</u>	
16	<u>Ministry of Education</u>	<u>Department of Higher Education</u>
		<u>Department of School Education and Literacy</u>
17	<u>Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology</u>	
18	<u>Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change</u>	
19	<u>Ministry of External Affairs</u>	
20	<u>Ministry of Finance</u>	<u>Department of Economic Affairs</u>
		<u>Department of Expenditure</u>
		<u>Department of Financial Services</u>

		Department of Investment and Public Asset Management
		Department of Public Enterprises
		Department of Revenue
21	<u>Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying</u>	Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries
22	<u>Ministry of Food Processing Industries</u>	
23	<u>Ministry of Health and Family Welfare</u>	Department of Family Welfare
		Department of Health
		Department of Health Research
24	<u>Ministry of Heavy Industries</u>	
25	<u>Ministry of Home Affairs</u>	Department of Border Management
		Department of Home
		Department of Internal Security
		Department of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Affairs
		Department of Official Language
		Department of States
26	<u>Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs</u>	Central Public Works Department
27	<u>Ministry of Information and Broadcasting</u>	
28	<u>Ministry of Jal Shakti</u>	
29	<u>Ministry of Labour and Employment</u>	
30	<u>Ministry of Law and Justice</u>	Department of Legal Affairs
		Department of Justice
		Legislative Department
31	<u>Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises</u>	
32	<u>Ministry of Mines</u>	
33	<u>Ministry of Minority Affairs</u>	
34	<u>Ministry of New and Renewable Energy</u>	
35	<u>Ministry of Panchayati Raj</u>	
36	<u>Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs</u>	
37	<u>Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions</u>	Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances
		Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare
		Department of Personnel and Training
38	<u>Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas</u>	
39	<u>Ministry of Planning</u>	
40	<u>Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways</u>	
41	<u>Ministry of Power</u>	

42	Ministry of Railways	
43	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways	
44	Ministry of Rural Development	Department of Land Resources
		Department of Rural Development
45	Ministry of Science and Technology	Department of Biotechnology
		Department of Scientific and Industrial Research
		Department of Science and Technology
46	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	
47	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
		Department of Social Justice and Empowerment
48	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation	
49	Ministry of Steel	
50	Ministry of Textiles	
51	Ministry of Tourism	
52	Ministry of Tribal Affairs	
53	Ministry of Women and Child Development	
54	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	Department of Youth Affairs
		Department of Sports

Civil services

The Civil Services of India are the civil services and the permanent bureaucracy of India. The executive decisions are implemented by the Indian civil servants.

In the parliamentary democracy of India, the ultimate responsibility for running the administration rests with the elected representatives of the people which are the ministers. These ministers are accountable to the legislatures which are also elected by the people based on universal adult suffrage. The ministers are indirectly responsible to the people themselves. But the handful of ministers is not expected to deal personally with the various problems of modern administration. Thus the ministers lay down the policy and it is for the civil servants to enforce it.



Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba, an Indian Administrative Service officer meets with trainee officers of the Indian Police Service; both arms of the All India Services

Cabinet secretary

The cabinet secretary (IAST: *Maṃtrimaṇḍala Saciva*) is the top-most executive official and senior-most civil servant of the Government of India. The cabinet secretary is the ex-officio head of the Civil Services Board, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the head of all

civil services under the rules of business of the government.

The cabinet secretary is generally the senior-most officer of the Indian Administrative Service. The cabinet secretary ranks 11th on the Indian order of precedence.^{[38][39][40][41]} The cabinet secretary is under the direct charge of the prime minister. Presently, the Cabinet Secretary of India is Rajiv Gauba, IAS.

Judiciary

India's independent union judicial system began under the British, and its concepts and procedures resemble those of Anglo-Saxon countries. The Supreme Court of India consists of the chief justice and 33 associate justices, all appointed by the president on the advice of the Chief Justice of India. The jury trials were abolished in India in the early 1960s, after the famous case *KM Nanavati v. the State of Maharashtra*, for reasons of being vulnerable to media and public pressure, as well as to being misled.

Unlike its United States counterpart, the Indian justice system consists of a unitary system at both state and union levels. The judiciary consists of the Supreme Court of India, high courts at the state level, and district courts and Sessions Courts at the district level.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of India is situated in New Delhi, the capital region of India.

The Supreme Court is the highest judicial forum and final court of appeal under the Constitution of India, the highest constitutional court, with the power of constitutional review. Consisting of the Chief Justice of India and 33 sanctioned other judges, it has extensive powers in the form of original, appellate and advisory jurisdictions.^[42]

As the final court of appeal of the country, it takes up appeals primarily against verdicts of the high courts of various states of the Union and other courts and tribunals. It safeguards fundamental rights of citizens and settles disputes between various governments in the country. As an advisory court, it hears matters which may specifically be referred to it under the constitution by the president. It also may take cognisance of matters on its own (or 'suo moto'), without anyone drawing its attention to them. The law declared by the supreme court becomes binding on all courts within India and also by the union and state governments.^[43] Per Article 142, it is the duty of the president to enforce the decrees of the supreme court.

In addition, Article 32 of the constitution gives an extensive original jurisdiction to the supreme court concerning enforcing fundamental rights. It is empowered to issue directions, orders or writs, including writs in the nature of *habeas corpus*, *mandamus*, *prohibition*, *quo warranto* and *certiorari* to enforce them. The supreme court has been conferred with power to direct the transfer of any civil or



Complex of the Supreme Court of India in New Delhi

criminal case from one state high court to another state high court, or from a Court subordinate to another state high court and the supreme court. Although the proceedings in the supreme court arise out of the judgment or orders made by the subordinate courts, of late the supreme court has started entertaining matters in which the interest of the public at large is involved. This may be done by any individual or group of persons either by filing a *writ petition* at the filing counter of the court or by addressing a letter to the Chief Justice of India, highlighting the question of public importance for redress. These are known as public interest litigations.^[44]

Elections and voting

India has a quasi-federal form of government, called "union" or "central" government,^[45] with elected officials at the union, state and local levels. At the national level, the head of government, the prime minister, is appointed by the president of India from the party or coalition that has the majority of seats in the Lok Sabha. The members of the Lok Sabha are directly elected for a term of five years by universal adult suffrage through a first-past-the-post voting system. Members of the Rajya Sabha, which represents the states, are elected by the members of State legislative assemblies by proportional representation, except for 12 members who are nominated by the president.

India is currently the largest democracy in the world, with around 900 million eligible voters, as of 2019.^[46]

State and local governments

In India, power is divided between the governments of the union and the states of India,^[47] the latter being ruled by the chiefs ministers.^[48] The state legislature is bicameral in five states and unicameral in the rest.^[49] The lower house is elected with a five-year term, while in the upper house one-third of the members in the house gets elected every two years with six-year terms.

Local governments function at the basic level. It is the third level of government apart from union and state governments. It consists of panchayats in rural areas and municipalities in urban areas. They are elected directly or indirectly by the people.

Finance

Taxation

India has a three-tier tax structure, wherein the constitution empowers the union government to levy income tax, tax on capital transactions (wealth tax, inheritance tax), sales tax, service tax, customs and excise duties and the state governments to levy sales tax on intrastate sale of goods, tax on entertainment and professions, excise duties on manufacture of alcohol, stamp duties on transfer of property and collect land revenue (levy on land owned). The local governments are empowered by the state government to levy property tax and charge users for public utilities like water supply, sewage

etc.^[50] More than half of the revenues of the union and state governments come from taxes, of which 3/4 come from direct taxes. More than a quarter of the union government's tax revenues are shared with the state governments.^[51]

The tax reforms, initiated in 1991, have sought to rationalise the tax structure and increase compliance by taking steps in the following directions:

- Reducing the rates of individual and corporate income taxes, excises, and customs and making it more progressive
- Reducing exemptions and concessions
- Simplification of laws and procedures
- Introduction of permanent account number (PAN) to track monetary transactions
- 21 of the 29 states introduced value added tax (VAT) on 1 April 2005 to replace the complex and multiple sales tax system^{[50][52]}

The non-tax revenues of the central government come from fiscal services, interest receipts, public sector dividends, etc., while the non-tax revenues of the States are grants from the central government, interest receipts, dividends and income from general, economic and social services.^[53]

Inter-state share in the union tax pool is decided by the recommendations of the Finance Commission to the president.

Total tax receipts of Centre and State amount to approximately 18% of national GDP. This compares to a figure of 37–45% in the OECD.

Union budget

The Finance minister of India usually presents the annual union budget in the parliament on the last working day of February. However, for the F.Y. 2017–18, this tradition had been changed. Now the budget will be presented on the 1st day of February. The budget has to be passed by the Lok Sabha before it can come into effect on 1 April, the start of India's fiscal year. The Union budget is preceded by an economic survey which outlines the broad direction of the budget and the economic performance of the country for the outgoing financial year^[54]

India's non-development revenue expenditure had increased nearly five-fold in 2003–04 since 1990–91 and more than tenfold from 1985 to 1986. Interest payments are the single largest item of expenditure and accounted for more than 40% of the total non-development expenditure in the



Reserve Bank of India's headquarters in Mumbai, India's financial capital

2003–04 budget. Defence expenditure increased fourfold during the same period and has been increasing to defend from a difficult neighbourhood and external terror threats. In 2020–21, India's defence budget stood at ₹4.71 trillion (equivalent to ₹5.5 trillion or US\$66 billion in 2023).

Issues

Corruption

In 2009, several ministers are accused of corruption and nearly a quarter of the 543 elected members of parliament had been charged with crimes, including murder.^[55] Many of the biggest scandals since 2010 have involved high-level government officials, including cabinet ministers and chief ministers, such as the 2010 Commonwealth Games scam (₹700 billion (equivalent to ₹1.6 trillion or US\$19 billion in 2023)), the Adarsh Housing Society scam, the Coal Mining Scam (₹1.86 trillion (equivalent to ₹4.2 trillion or US\$50 billion in 2023)), the mining scandal in Karnataka and the cash-for-votes scandal.

See also

- Foreign relations of India
- List of agencies of the government of India
- National Portal of India
- National Social-media Portal
- Union government ministries of India



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