

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

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ECINET PLATFORM



The Election Commission of India (ECI) has urged voters to make informed choices by using the “Know Your Candidates” (KYC) module available on its ECINet platform.

- It is a **single-point digital platform** developed by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**.
- It is a **new user-friendly digital interface** for the electors and other stakeholders such as the election officials, political parties, and civil society.

Features of ECINet Platform:

- It will integrate and **reorient over 40 of ECI’s existing mobile and web applications.**
- It has subsumed apps like the Voter Helpline App, Voter Turnout App, cVIGIL, Suvidha 2.0, ESMS, Saksham, and KYC App.
- It offers a range of services to voters, **including registration, electoral roll search,** application tracking, and grievance redressal.
- Additional features include **downloading digital voter ID cards (e-EPIC),** connecting with election officials, and booking calls with Booth Level Officers (BLOs).
- The platform also **includes tools such as cVIGIL for reporting election code violations and Saksham for facilitating accessible services for persons with disabilities.**
- It has been **developed in full compliance with** the Constitution of India, the Representation of the People Acts, 1950 and 1951, Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 and the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS LAW: A DECADE OF STRUGGLE AND REFORM

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 marks a shift in the trajectory of transgender rights in India.

Core Conflict: Self-Identification vs Medical Certification

- The Supreme Court recognised transgender persons as the “third gender” and affirmed the right to self-identification.
- Gender identity was held to be part of personal liberty (Article 21) and freedom of expression (Article 19).
- Courts consistently upheld that gender identity is based on an individual’s internal experience, not biological tests.
- Self-determination was treated as central to dignity, privacy, and identity.
- **Expansion of Rights by Courts**
 - High Courts protected:
 - Self-identification without medical proof in official documents
 - Employment rights, rejecting forced medical examinations
 - Access to institutions (e.g., NCC inclusion)
 - Political rights, including contesting elections
 - Marriage and relationships, recognising trans persons’ rights
 - Courts repeatedly ruled that no authority can question self-identified gender.
 - Courts across India reaffirmed that **gender choice lies solely with the individual**, and state or institutional interference is impermissible.
- **Shift in 2026 Amendment Act**
 - It introduces:
 - Medical board certification for gender identity
 - Mandatory approval by district authorities
 - Removal of categories like trans-man, trans-woman, genderqueer
 - Surgery requirement for legal gender change

- The amendment marks a shift from **self-identification to medical certification**, contrasting with the long-standing judicial emphasis on autonomy.

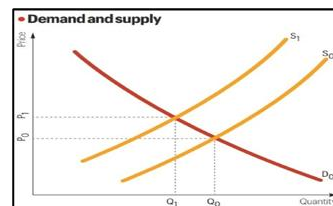
Legislative Reluctance and ‘Omissive Discrimination’

- **Delay and Disagreement in Lawmaking**
 - After the NALSA judgment, a Private Member’s Bill (2015) was passed in Rajya Sabha. The government introduced revised versions in 2016 and 2018, which faced criticism from the transgender community.
- **Concerns with the 2019 Act**
 - The Transgender Persons Act, 2019 removed screening committees but still:
 - Required proof of surgery for gender change
- **Implementation Failures**
 - The law’s implementation was weak, leading to repeated judicial interventions.
 - The Court noted that the law had become a “dead letter” due to government apathy.
 - It directed the government to:
 - Form an advisory committee
 - Implement the law effectively
- **2026 Amendment and Lack of Consultation**
 - The 2026 Amendment Act reintroduced:
 - Medical certification
 - Removal of self-identification
 - This was done without consulting the advisory committee.
- **Judicial Response to the Amendment**
 - The Rajasthan High Court highlighted that the amendment:
 - Departs from constitutional principles
 - Makes gender identity subject to State approval

The Court warned that **legal recognition of gender identity** risks becoming a **State-controlled entitlement**, undermining earlier constitutional guarantees of autonomy.

IRAN WAR AND THE LOOMING PROSPECT OF STAGFLATION

- Stagflation refers to a situation where **high inflation and low or negative economic growth occur together**, described as “the worst of both worlds”.
- A combination of "stagnation" and "inflation," famously coined in the 1960s to describe a period of rising prices alongside a sluggish economy.
- **Basic Demand–Supply Framework**
 - Prices and output are determined by the interaction of demand and supply curves.
 - The equilibrium point is where quantity demanded equals quantity supplied (P_0 , Q_0).
 - Normally, changes in supply occur due to price changes, leading to movement along the same supply curve. In contrast, a supply shock shifts the entire supply curve.
 - Stagflation arises from **negative supply shocks**, which reduce production.
 - Causes include wars, pandemics, natural disasters, and disruptions in trade or shipping routes. These factors increase input costs and reduce supply.
- **Impact on Economy**
 - The supply curve shifts left (from S_0 to S_1).
 - This leads to:
 - Higher prices (P_1)
 - Lower output (Q_1)



Is Stagflation a Real Risk Today

- The possibility of stagflation depends on the **magnitude and duration** of the supply shock.
- The ongoing US-Israel vs Iran conflict has created a severe shock.
- Unlike 2022 (mainly a price shock), the current crisis is both a price and supply shock, making it more serious.
- The issue is not just high prices but also availability of energy (oil, gas, LPG).

- Shortages can lead to sudden stoppage of industrial activity and long-term economic disruptions.
- **Increased Economic Vulnerability**
 - Compared to the 1970s, India is now more dependent on energy and petrochemical products.
 - Fertilisers, LPG, synthetic fibres, and plastics are widely used, increasing vulnerability to energy disruptions.
 - Energy disruptions affect multiple industries through supply chains.
 - These create complex, non-linear economic impacts, where small disruptions can lead to large economic consequences.

Dealing with Stagflation: Limits and Challenges

- **Role of Supply Shock Duration**
 - The impact of stagflation depends on how long the supply shock lasts.
 - If disruptions end quickly, the supply curve can return to normal, avoiding prolonged stagflation.
- **Limits of Conventional Policy Tools**
 - Fiscal and monetary policies can address either:
 - Low growth (through spending and lower interest rates), or
 - Inflation (through tighter money and higher rates).
- **Policy Trade-offs in Stagflation**
 - Raising interest rates to control inflation can **worsen growth and unemployment**.
 - Stimulating demand through spending or lower rates can **increase inflation further** when supply is constrained.
- **Way to Address Stagflation**
 - The solution lies in restoring disrupted supply chains.
 - However, achieving this is difficult and complex.

PRIME MINISTER TENURE DEBATE IN INDIA

- India's Constitution does not prescribe any term limit for the office of the Prime Minister.
- The Prime Minister continues in office as long as they enjoy the confidence of the Lok Sabha. This principle is rooted in the parliamentary system adopted from the British model.
- The framers of the Constitution believed that democratic accountability through Parliament would act as an effective check on executive power.

Constituent Assembly's Rationale

- The reasoning behind the absence of term limits was clearly articulated during the Constituent Assembly debates.
- **Dr B.R. Ambedkar** emphasised the concept of “**daily accountability**” through parliamentary mechanisms such as question hour, no-confidence motions, and adjournment motions. He argued that these mechanisms were more effective than periodic elections in ensuring executive responsibility.
- Thus, the Constitution relied on continuous legislative oversight rather than fixed tenure restrictions.

Impact of Anti-Defection Law

- The introduction of the **Tenth Schedule** through the **52nd Constitutional Amendment** in 1985 significantly altered the balance between the legislature and executive.
- The anti-defection law mandates the disqualification of legislators who vote against the party whip.
- This has weakened the effectiveness of no-confidence motions, as ruling party members are unlikely to vote against their own government.
- As a result, the primary mechanism envisioned by the framers to check executive power has been diluted.

Weakening of Parliamentary Accountability

- In addition to the anti-defection law, the absence of strong intra-party democracy further reduces accountability.
- Unlike in the United Kingdom, where party members can challenge leadership, Indian political parties lack structured mechanisms for internal leadership change.
- This creates a situation where both legislative and intra-party checks on executive authority are weakened.

The Presidential Convention Paradox

- Interestingly, India has developed an informal convention limiting the President to two terms, despite the Constitution not mandating such a restriction.
- No President has served more than two terms, even though the office is largely ceremonial.
- In contrast, the Prime Minister, who exercises real executive power, faces no such formal or informal limitation.
- This creates an institutional asymmetry in the constitutional framework.

Debate on Democratic Legitimacy

- One argument against imposing term limits is that repeated electoral victories reflect the will of the people.
- However, prolonged incumbency may provide structural advantages such as control over institutions, influence over policy, and shaping of the political narrative.
- This raises concerns about whether electoral processes alone can ensure adequate checks on executive power.

Possible Reforms

- Experts suggest that there are two potential reform pathways.
 - First, restoring parliamentary accountability by exempting confidence motions from the anti-defection law.
 - Second, introducing a constitutional amendment to limit consecutive terms for Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers, while allowing a return after a gap.
- These reforms aim to balance democratic choice with institutional safeguards.



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NATIONAL MARITIME DAY



- It is celebrated every year on **April 5**.
- **History:** National Maritime Day commemorates the **maiden voyage of S.S. Loyalty**, which sailed from **Mumbai to London on April 5, 1919**.
- This was a groundbreaking event as it represented India's independence in maritime affairs, challenging the British shipping monopoly.
- **Theme of National Maritime Day 2026:** "Maritime India – Empowering Progress"
- The theme of 2026 aims at fostering a self-reliant, technologically advanced, and eco-friendly maritime sector by 2047.
- **Key Focus Areas for National Maritime Day 2026**
 - **Port-Led Development:** Expansion of port infrastructure, including the strengthening of the Sagarmala initiative to enhance India's port capacity.
 - **Sustainability:** Promoting eco-friendly practices in shipping, and focusing on reducing the carbon footprint of the maritime industry.
 - **Honouring Seafarers:** Acknowledging the vital role maritime professionals play in driving India's economy.
 - **Technological Advancement:** Enhancing digital infrastructure to reduce port turnaround times and improve operational efficiency.

MUDUMALAI TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is located in the Nilgiris District of **Tamil Nadu**.
- It is at the **tri-junction of three states**, viz, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.
- It is part of the **Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve**, the first biosphere reserve in India.
- It has a common boundary with **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary** (Kerala) on the west, **Bandipur Tiger Reserve** (Karnataka) on the north.

- **Vegetation:** A variety of habitats ranging from **tropical evergreen forest**, moist deciduous forest, moist teak forest, dry teak forest, secondary grasslands, and swamps are found here.
- **River:** The **Moyar River** runs through the reserve.
- **Flora:** It has tall grasses, **commonly referred to as “Elephant Grass”**, bamboo of the giant variety, and valuable timber species like Teak, Rosewood, etc.

It has wild relatives of cultivated plants, viz. wild rice, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, etc.

- **Fauna:** It includes elephant, gaur, sambar, four-horned antelope, spotted deer, barking deer, blackbuck, wild pig, mouse deer, and predators like tigers, leopards, and wild dogs.

OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA



- It is the most common **sleep-related breathing disorder**.
- Those people with OSA repeatedly stop and start breathing while they sleep.
- These breath **pauses are known as apneas**.
- It is characterized by **recurrent upper airway obstruction** during sleep and is associated with reduced quality of sleep and life and increased cardiovascular risk.
- There are several types of sleep apnea. OSA occurs when the **throat muscles relax** and block the airway.
- Anyone at any age can have OSA. But it's **most common in middle-aged and older adults**.
- This condition has significant implications for cardiovascular health, mental well-being, and quality of life.
- **Treatment for OSA**
 - Making lifestyle changes like sleeping position adjustments (not sleeping on your back) or maintaining a weight that's healthy for you.
 - Using a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine
 - Wearing oral appliances (mouthpieces)