

ELECTION COMMISSION VS POLITICAL PRESSURE: THE REALITY & CHALLENGES



Context:

- After former CM of a state raised concerns about the Election Commission's independence, suggesting a connection between CEC Rajiv Kumar's post-retirement ambitions and his decisions, the poll panel defended its integrity against these allegations.



1. Enlist various constitutional provisions related to election in India?

- **Part XV (Article 324-329)** of the Indian Constitution deals with elections and establishes a commission for these matters.

Constitutional Articles	Description
Article 324	• Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission .
Article 325	• No person to be ineligible for inclusion in , or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll-on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex .
Article 326	• Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be based on adult suffrage .
Article 327	• Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures .
Article 328	• Power of Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature .
Article 329	• Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters .

2. How has the Electoral System of India evolved?

General Elections post Independence	• After India attained Independence in August 1947 , there was a need to hold General Elections to elect a truly representative Government on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Article 324, which provides for the setting up of the Election Commission as an independent constitutional authority, was therefore brought into force from November 26th, 1949, whereas most of the other provisions were made effective from January 26th, 1950 (when the Constitution of India became effective).
Formation of Election Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Election Commission was formally constituted on January 25th, 1950, a day before India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic.● The First Chief Election Commissioner, Shri Sukumar Sen, was appointed on March 21st, 1950.
Composition of Election Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Commission functioned as a single member body from 1950 to October 16th, 1989 but was converted into a three member body on October 16th, 1989 to January 1st, 1990.● In the year 1990, January 1st, it was reverted to the system of single member body.● However, since October 1st, 1993, the Commission has been functioning as a three member body.● The Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners are given the same salary and allowances as of a Judge of the Supreme Court.● All the three Commissioners have equal powers in decision making and in case of any difference of opinion on any issue, the decision is taken by the majority.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The term of the office of CEC and ECs is six years or till the age of 65, whichever is earlier.
First delimitation order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For the purpose of first General Elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas, the first delimitation order was issued by the President, in consultation with the Election Commission and with the approval of Parliament on August 13th, 1951.
Representation of the People Act, 1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide a legal framework for the conduct of elections, Parliament passed the first Act on May 12th, 1950 (Representation of the People Act, 1950) providing mainly for the preparation of electoral rolls and second Act on July 17th, 1951 (Representation of the People Act, 1951) laying down the procedure for the conduct of elections to both Houses of Parliament and Vidhan Sabhas for each State.
Specifications of First Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Electoral Rolls for constituencies were published in all States by November 15th, 1951. ● The total number of voters (excluding J&K) was 17,32,13,635 as against the total population of India (excluding J&K), 35,66,91,760 according to the 1951 census. ● The first General Elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas were held between October, 1951 and March, 1952. ● The first Lok Sabha consisting of 497 members was constituted on April 2nd, 1952. ● The first Rajya Sabha consisting of 216 members was constituted on April 3rd, 1952.

Recognition of Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● After the constitution of the two Houses of Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies, the first Presidential election was held in May, 1952 and the first duly elected President assumed the charge of office on May 13th, 1952.● At the time of the first General Election in 1951-52, the Commission had recognized 14 political parties as multi-state parties and 39 parties as the state parties.● Presently, there are seven recognized National Party and 40 State Party.
Adoption of 'Balloting System'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● For the first and second General Elections in 1951-52, and 1957, the Election Commission adopted the 'Balloting System' of voting.● Under this system, every candidate was allotted a separate ballot box at each polling station in a screened compartment and the voter was required only to drop his ballot paper, the centrally pre-printed ballot papers into the ballot box of the candidate of his choice.
'Marking system' of voting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● From the 3rd General Elections in 1962 onwards, the Commission switched over to the 'marking system' of voting.● Under this system, a common ballot paper containing the names and election symbols of all contesting candidates is printed on which the voter has to put a mark with an arrow cross mark rubber stamp on or near the symbol of the candidate of his choice.

Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were used for the first time in part of Parur Assembly Constituency in Kerala in 1982, on experimental basis. Later, the extensive use of EVMs started in 1998. ● The EVMs were used at all polling stations in the country in the 14th General Elections to the Lok Sabha in 2004 for the first time. ● Since then all elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies have been held using EVMs.
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3. What is the Election Commission of India (ECI)?

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is an **autonomous and permanent constitutional body** responsible for organising free and fair elections in the Union and States of India.
- The **Constitution** grants the **ECI with the power of direction, superintendence, and control of elections to Parliament, state legislatures, the office of president of India and the office of vice-president of India.**
- The **ECI** does not deal with the elections to the urban bodies **such as Municipalities and Panchayats in the states** and hence, a separate State Election Commission.
- **Article 324 of The Constitution of India** mentions the provisions to safeguard and ensure the independent and impartial functioning of the Election Commission.
- The chief election commissioner is provided with security of tenure.
- He **cannot be removed** from his office **except in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.**
- In other words, he can be **removed by the President** on the basis of a resolution passed to that effect by both the Houses of Parliament with a **special majority, either on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.**

- Any other **election commissioner** or a **regional commissioner** cannot be removed from office except on the recommendation of the **chief election commissioner**.

4. What is the composition of the Election Commission of India?

- **Article 324 of the Constitution** has made the following provisions about the composition of the Election Commission of India.
- ECI shall consist of the **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** and **such number of other Election Commissioners (ECs)** as the President may from time to time fix.
- The **appointment of CEC and other ECs** shall be made by the **President**.
- When any other **Election Commissioner** is so appointed, the **Chief Election Commissioner** shall act as the **Chairman of the ECI**.
- The **President** may also appoint after consultation with the **ECI such Regional Commissioners (RCs)** as he may consider necessary to assist the ECI.
- The **conditions of service and tenure of office of the Election Commissioners and the Regional Commissioners** shall be determined by the **President** (subject to any related law made by the Parliament).
- According to the **Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991**, the **Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners** hold office for a term of **6 years** or until they attain the **age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier.

5. Discuss various functions of the Election Commission of India?





Administrative Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To demarcate electoral constituencies in the country on the basis of the Delimitation Commission Act of Parliament.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To prepare and periodically update electoral rolls and to register all eligible voters. ● To notify the dates and schedules of elections and to scrutinise nomination papers. ● To grant recognition to political parties and allot election symbols to them. ● To cancel polls in the event of rigging, booth capturing, violence and other irregularities. ● To supervise the machinery of elections throughout the country to ensure free and fair elections. ● To register political parties for the purpose of elections and grant them the status of national or state parties on the basis of their poll performance ● ECI appoints the following seats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chief Electoral Officer ○ District Election Officer ○ Returning Officer ○ Electoral Registration Officer ● It regulates the campaign expenditure per candidate of all political parties without any discrimination.
Quasi-Judicial Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It acts as a court for settling disputes related to granting of recognition to political parties and allotment of election symbols to them. ● To appoint officers for inquiring into disputes relating to electoral arrangements. ● It defines a model code of conduct for all political parties and candidates and ensures they adhere to it during election season.
Advisory Powers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It advises the president on matters relating to the disqualifications of the members of Parliament.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It advises the governor on matters relating to the disqualifications of the members of state legislature. ● It advises the president whether elections can be held in a state under the president's rule in order to extend the period of emergency after one year.
Judicial Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The election commission cannot review any result on its own without a proper election petition filed before the High court or Supreme Court.

6. What is the opposition and political analysts view wrt political pressure on ECI?

Political party	Allegations
Indian National Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and Congress Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh said that the Election Commission of India was “scared” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and was working “under pressure from them”. ● Mr. Singh also questioned the credibility of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) and the voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines. ● Mr. Singh also said that the ECI serves notices to Opposition leaders whenever they say something, but it is never served to Mr. Modi no matter what he says.
Aam Aadmi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Senior AAP leader and Delhi Chief Minister

<p>Party(AAP)</p>	<p>Atishi alleged that the Election Commission and Delhi Police are shielding the BJP workers who are indulging in "hooliganism".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As per the Delhi Chief Minister BJP is openly engaging in hooliganism. ● She alleged that instead of taking action against them, Delhi Police is protecting them, while the Election Commission is filing cases against those who are raising complaints. ● AAP's accusations gained traction after the EC filed a case against Atishi on February 4 for violating the Model Code of Conduct. ● Atishi Marlena also raised concerns with the EC about alleged electoral roll fraud in New Delhi's Assembly constituency, claiming the BJP was behind large-scale manipulations. ● Atishi Marlena criticised the Election Commission for issuing the notice through media channels before formally serving it to her, calling the move suspicious and politically motivated. <div data-bbox="548 1224 1409 1854">  <p>Atishi  @AtishiAAP</p> <p>Follow x1 ...</p> <p>चुनाव आयोग भी राज़ब है!</p> <p>रमेश बिधूड़ी जी के परिवार के सदस्य खुले-आम आचार संहिता का उल्लंघन कर रहे हैं। उन पर कोई एक्शन नहीं।</p> <p>मैंने शिकायत कर के पुलिस और @ECISVEEP को बुलाया, और इन्होंने मेरे ऊपर केस दर्ज कर दिया!</p> <p>राजीव कुमार जी: आप चुनावी प्रक्रिया कि कितनी धजियां उड़ायेंगे</p> <p>Translate post</p> <p> DCP South East Delhi  @DCPSEastDelhi · Feb 4</p> <p>Replying to @AtishiAAP</p> <p>@ceodelhioffice @ECISVEEP, @CPDelhi</p> <p>On 4/2/25 at 12:30 am, AAP candidate from Kalkaji (AC-51) with 50-70 people & 10 vehicles was found at Fateh Singh Marg. Police instructed them to vacat...</p> <p>Show more</p> </div>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AAP leaders also voiced concerns over the commission's decision to ban certain campaign materials, including AAP's campaign song, which the BJP claimed violated election guidelines.
All India Trinamool Congress(TMC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lawmaker Saket Gokhale from the All India Trinamool Congress said on social media platform X, on May 4 that the commission was “supervising and encouraging the complete destruction of a fair electoral process built over decades”. ● Lawmaker and senior opposition leader Derek O'Brien said the role of the commission was “extremely compromised”. 
Samajwadi Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday levelled serious accusations against the BJP, alleging electoral misconduct and also declaring the Election Commission "dead".

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The former UP chief minister stated that police officials were illegally checking voters' ID at polling centres, which he viewed as voter intimidation.
Arati Jerath (journalist and political analyst)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arati Jerath, a journalist and political analyst, said there was a trend of diminishing public trust in the election commission, referring to a pre-poll survey this year by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies that indicated a significant drop in confidence in the commission between the 2019 and 2024 elections. ● Jerath criticised the commission's failure to address divisive speeches and delays in releasing voting data. ● Media headlines about inflammatory speeches and unresponsiveness have also undermined the commission's credibility in a way that foreign observers would not alleviate
EVM Hacking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leaders of the Indian National Congress, in Haryana elections (October 2024), met the Election Commission and registered a strong complaint, alleging that Electronic Voting Machines have been hacked. ● Party spokesman Pawan Khara said the hacking took place across 20 seats, for seven of which they have submitted documentary evidence.

7. How did the Election Commission respond to allegations?



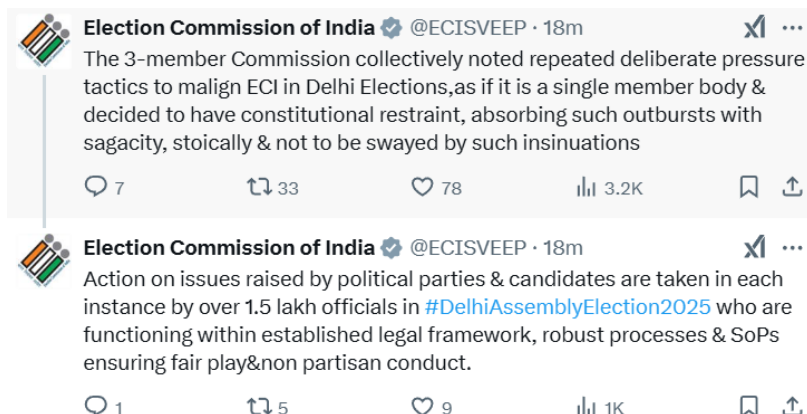
Denial of accusations

- The **Election Commission of India (EC)** has **denied accusations of bias** and partiality raised by the **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)** ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections.



Collective Decision making

- ECI officials have responded, saying that decisions were made collectively by **all three members**, not just **Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar**.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commission claimed, “The 3-member commission collectively noted repeated deliberate pressure tactics to malign ECI in Delhi Elections, as if it is a single-member body and decided to have constitutional restraint, absorbing such outbursts with sagacity, stoically & not to be swayed by such insinuations.”
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8. Can EVMs be hacked?

The EVM's cannot be hacked due to the reasons given below:

M1 (model one) of EVM machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1 (model one) of EVM machines were manufactured till 2006 and had all necessary technical features making M1 non-hackable contrary to claims made by some activists.
M2 model of EVMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Committee in 2006, M2 model of EVMs produced after 2006 and upto 2012 incorporated with dynamic coding of key codes thereby enabling transfer of the key – press message from Ballot Unit (BUs) to Control Unit (CUs), in an encrypted form as an additional security feature.
Tamper detection and self-diagnostics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new model M3 EVMs also have tamper detection and self-diagnostics as added features. Since, software is based on OTP the program cannot be altered, rewritten or Re-read. Thus, making EVM tamper proof. • If anyone make, attempt, the machine will become inoperative.
Real time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It also contains Real time settings of each key

settings	press so that sequencing of key presses including so called malicious sequenced key presses can be detected and wrapped.
ECI- EVMs are not computer controlled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ECI- EVMs are not computer controlled, are stand alone machines and not connected to the internet and /or any other network at any point of time. ● Hence, there is no chance of hacking by remote devices.
ECI-EVMs do not have any frequency receiver or decoder for data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ECI-EVMs do not have any frequency receiver or decoder for data for wireless or any external hardware port for connection to any other non-EVM accessory or device. ● Hence no tampering is possible either through hardware port or through Wireless, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth device because CU accepts only encrypted and dynamically coded data from BU. ● No other kind of data can be accepted by CU.
Very stringent security protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is very stringent security protocol at manufacturer level regarding security of software. ● The manufacturers are in no position to know several years ahead which candidate will be contesting from a particular constituency and what will be the sequence of the candidates on the BU. ● Also, each ECI-EVM has a serial number and the Election Commission by use of EVM –tracking software can find out from its database which machine is located where. ● So, any manipulation at the manufacturing stage is ruled out.

<p>Most sophisticated technological features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ECI-EVMs use some of the most sophisticated technological features like one time programmable (OTP) microcontrollers, dynamic coding of key codes, date and time stamping of each and every key press, advanced encryption technology and EVM-tracking software to handle EVM logistics, among others to make the machine 100% tamper proof.
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9. Is there any case of EVM hacking?

- **ECI threw an open hacking challenge in June 2017** for whoever claimed that the EVMs could be tampered with.
- This **challenge came amidst various claims by cyber experts** that they could be hacked and pre-programmed.
- Among the most prominent cases was the **cyber expert Syed Shuja who claimed via a Skype Interview** from London that he was **among the developers of the machine and could hack EVM**. However, **his claims were proven invalid** when he could not hack the machine.


10. What are a few earlier judgments of the Supreme Court on EVM?



- **The Supreme Court** dismissed the petition alleging irregularities in the function of EVMs, citing, **‘Can't go by assumptions’**.


- In a **2013 Subramanian Swamy V/s ECI** case, the **Supreme Court** emphasized the necessity of **implementing VVPAT** in elections conducted through **EVMs**.
- In a **Chandrababu Naidu Case (2019)** the court ordered the **EC** to count **VVPATS** in five polling stations instead.

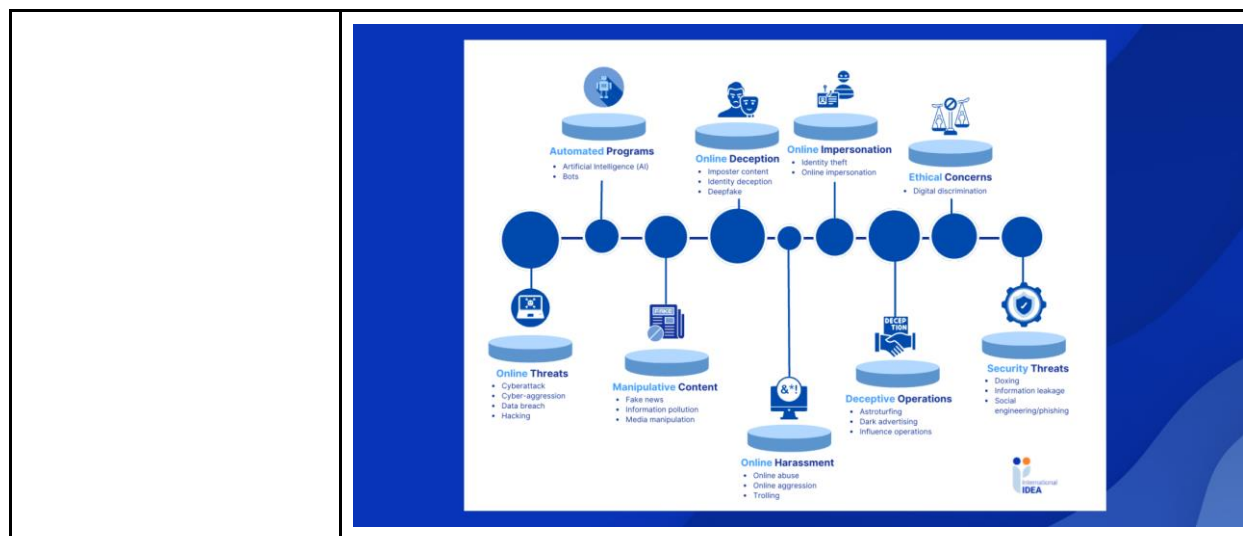
11. Enlist various challenges wrt Election Commission of India?

Challenges	Analysis
Political Interference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ECI faces pressure from political parties and powerful interest groups, which seek to influence electoral outcomes through unfair means. • The resignation of Election Commissioner Arun Goel on the threshold of the Lok Sabha elections 2024, ostensibly on account of differences with the Chief Election Commissioner has renewed questions about the independence of the constitutional body with whom vests the superintendence, direction and control of elections.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Commissioner Arun Goel, who was appointed only in November 2022 and was to have a tenure that would last until December 2027, resigned abruptly and his resignation was promptly accepted by the President of India Droupadi Murmu.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speculation is rife that political interference in the election process was the cause of the differences between the two. • Similar questions were raised at the time of the resignation of Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa back in 2020. • Lavasa, who was seen as being an upright man, too resigned in circumstances that raised more questions than they answered.
Limited Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ECI's power to enforce its decisions and punish offenders is limited. • This hinders its ability to effectively implement regulations and ensure compliance with electoral laws.
Electoral Fraud and Malpractice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ECI grapples with the perennial challenge of combating electoral fraud and malpractice, such as voter intimidation, use of money and muscle powers, etc. • According to the report of the Electoral Commission of India on the 2014 national elections , over seventy-five thousand FIR's were lodged with the police in connection with different kinds of poll-related violations; over three billion rupees in cash, six and a half million litres of alcohol, and almost five hundred thousand kilos of drugs were seized • Vernacular and national media outlets reported on a wide variety of fraudulent electoral practices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Mumbai for example, two hundred thousand names mysteriously disappeared from the polling lists.																																
Electoral Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instances of electoral violence, voter intimidation, and communal polarization persist in certain regions, undermining the foundational principles of democracy and social cohesion. <p><i>Political Violence and Associated Reported Fatalities, Panchayat Elections in West Bengal, India (1 Apr - 19 May 2018)</i></p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Phase</th><th>Date</th><th>Number of Events</th><th>Reported Fatalities</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td rowspan="2">Phase 1</td><td>Apr 6</td><td>~17</td><td>~1</td></tr><tr><td>Apr 11</td><td>~4</td><td>~1</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Phase 2</td><td>Apr 21</td><td>~19</td><td>~2</td></tr><tr><td>Apr 26</td><td>~4</td><td>~1</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Phase 3</td><td>May 1</td><td>~4</td><td>~1</td></tr><tr><td>May 6</td><td>~1</td><td>~1</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Phase 4</td><td>May 11</td><td>~3</td><td>~1</td></tr><tr><td>May 16</td><td>~60</td><td>~20</td></tr></tbody></table>	Phase	Date	Number of Events	Reported Fatalities	Phase 1	Apr 6	~17	~1	Apr 11	~4	~1	Phase 2	Apr 21	~19	~2	Apr 26	~4	~1	Phase 3	May 1	~4	~1	May 6	~1	~1	Phase 4	May 11	~3	~1	May 16	~60	~20
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<p>Deepfake Deception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rise of AI-generated deepfakes poses a significant threat to the authenticity of electoral discourse, enabling malicious actors to manipulate public opinion and disseminate false narratives.  <p>Deepfakes and Their Impact Globally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politics Disinformation, Election Manipulation Reputation Defamation, Character Assassination Cybercrime Financial Fraud, Identity Theft Social Fabric Communal Unrest, Incitement of Violence Mental Health Emotional Distress, Trauma
<p>Electoral Disinformation and Manipulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proliferation of digital misinformation and manipulation, fueled by artificial intelligence and social media, undermines the integrity of electoral discourse and fosters polarization, challenging the legitimacy of electoral outcomes.



12. What are the Supreme Court's Directions to Promote Independence of ECI?

- In **Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India Case (2023)**, the Supreme Court gave the following directions to ensure the **independence and neutrality of the Election Commission**.

Appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

- **Appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the other Election Commissioners (ECs)** shall be made on the recommendations of a **three member committee** consisting of the following:
 - **The Prime Minister,**
 - **The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and**
 - **The Chief Justice of India.**
- However, the government had introduced **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023** to replace the existing Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election

	<p>Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provisions of the act are: • The CEC and ECs will be appointed by the President upon the recommendation of a Selection Committee. • The Selection Committee will consist of the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of Opposition/leader of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha. • Recommendations of the Selection Committee will be valid even when there is a vacancy in this Committee. • A Search Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary will propose a panel of names to the Selection Committee.
Grounds for removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grounds for removal of the other Election Commissioners should be the same as that of the Chief Election Commissioner i.e., on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court subject to the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.

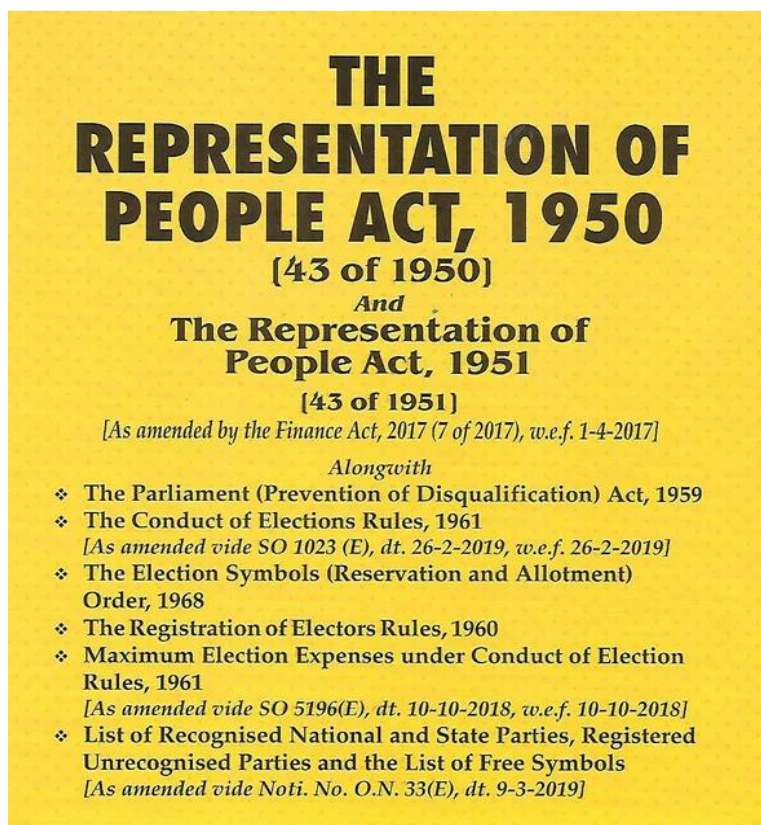
13. Comment on the status of Independence of Election Commission of India (ECI)?

ECI as Independent Body:

- **Article 324** of the **Constitution** has made the following provisions to **safeguard and ensure the independent and impartial functioning** of the Election Commission.

Security of tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECI cannot be removed from his office except in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.
Service conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service conditions of the chief election commissioner cannot be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.
Other election commissioner or a regional commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other election commissioner or a regional commissioner cannot be removed from office except on the recommendation of the chief election commissioner.
Complete Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Election Commission has complete authority on how, where, and when to conduct an election without any interference from the executive, whether it is general election or by-election.
Flaws In Ensuring Independence Of ECI	
Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution has not prescribed any qualifications (legal, educational, administrative or judicial) of the members of the Election Commission.
Term of office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution has not specified the term of the members of the Election Commission.
Retired Election Commissioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution has not debarred the retiring election commissioners from any further appointment by the government.

14. What is the Representation of Peoples Act 1950?



- To provide a legal framework for elections, **Parliament passed the Representation of the People Act, 1950.**
- The **RPA, 1950**, lays down procedures for the **delimitation of constituencies, seat allocation in legislative bodies, electoral roll preparation, voter qualifications**, and more.

Provisions	Analysis
Delimiting Constituencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The President holds the power to amend constituency delimitation orders, but only after consulting the ECI. • Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have reserved seats in the Lok Sabha, and the ECI determines which constituencies are to be reserved for Scheduled Tribes in certain states.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delimitation Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to Article 82 of the Constitution, Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after each census. Subsequently, the Central Government forms a Delimitation Commission, responsible for demarcating parliamentary constituency boundaries. ▪ The present delimitation is based on the 2001 census data, with the Constitution amended in 2002 to delay further delimitation until after the first census following 2026.
Allocation of Seats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every state strives to receive proportional representation in the Lok Sabha based on census figures.
Electoral Rolls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1950 Act allows the registration of residents within a constituency, including certain categories such as armed forces members and government employees posted abroad. • A proposal to make provisions gender-neutral is under consideration, replacing "wife" with "spouse."
Electoral Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Electoral Officer (CEO): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each state has a CEO nominated or designated by the ECI in consultation with the state government to oversee election activities. ▪ The District Election Officer (DEO) is similarly appointed, working under the CEO's supervision.

- **Electoral Registration Officer (ERO):**
 - The **ERO** is responsible for preparing electoral rolls for each constituency, with an appeal process now involving the District Magistrate.



- **Returning Officer (RO):**
- The **RO** manages constituency elections and declares elected candidates.
- The **ECI**, in consultation with the **state government**, appoints the **RO**.
- The **Central government**, in consultation with the **ECI**, has the authority to establish rules under the act, while **civil courts are prohibited from challenging the legality of ERO** actions regarding electoral roll revisions.

Schedules in RPA, 1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allocation of seats in the House of the People. • Second Schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Total number of seats in Legislative Assemblies • Third Schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allocation of seats in Legislative Councils. • Fourth Schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local authorities for Legislative Council elections.
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15. What is the Representation of Peoples Act 1951?

- The **Representation of the People Act 1951 (RPA)** is a crucial legislative framework that guides **India's electoral process**, ensuring transparency, fairness, and efficiency in the democratic system.
- It was introduced in Parliament by **law minister Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**.
- The Act was enacted by the provisional parliament under **Article 327 of Indian Constitution**, before the first general election.
- It defines **rules for conducting elections, candidate eligibility, registration of political parties, and disqualification criteria**, promoting a balanced and ethical electoral environment.

Provisions of RPA, 1951	Description
RPA act provides for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct of elections of the Houses of Parliament and to the House or Houses of the Legislature of each State. • Details about the structure of administrative machinery for the conduct of elections.

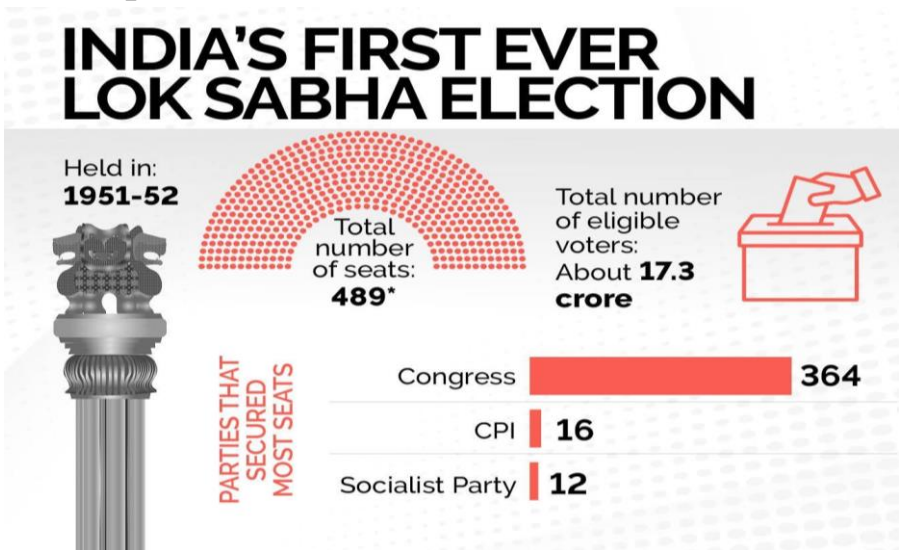
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications and disqualifications for membership of those houses. • Corrupt practices and other offences at or in connection with such elections and the decision of doubts and disputes arising out of or in connection with such elections.
Qualification for membership of the Lok Sabha	<p>A person shall not be qualified to be chosen to fill a seat in the House of the People, unless—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) in the case of a seat reserved for the Scheduled Castes in any State, he is a member of any of the Scheduled Castes, whether of that State or of any other State, and is an elector for any Parliamentary constituency; (b) in the case of a seat reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in any State (other than those in the autonomous districts of Assam), he is a member of any of the Scheduled Tribes, whether of the State or of any other State (excluding the tribal areas of Assam), and is an elector for any Parliamentary constituency; (c) in the case of a seat reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam, he is a member of any of those Scheduled Tribes and is an elector for the Parliamentary constituency.
Qualification for membership of the Council of States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person shall not be qualified to be chosen as a representative of any State or Union territory in the Council of States unless he is an elector for a Parliamentary constituency.



Disqualifications	<p>Found guilty of election offences/corrupt practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conviction for any offence resulting in imprisonment for 2 or more years. • Conviction for promoting enmity between different groups. • Failed to lodge an account of his election expenses within time. • Having interest in government contracts, works or services. • If dismissed from government service for corruption or dis-loyalty to the state. • If punished for practising and preaching social crimes like sati, untouchability, etc.
Election offence covered under RPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any form of gratification for electors for voting or refraining from voting, and to the candidates for withdrawing or not withdrawing nomination is considered as a corrupt practice. • It includes any direct or indirect interference with the free exercise of any electoral right by the candidate or his election agent. • Promoting enmity between classes in connection with election. • Penalty for filing false affidavits, etc. • Prohibition of public meetings during a period of forty-eight hours ending with hour fixed for conclusion of poll. • Restriction on publication and dissemination of results of exit polls, etc.



Election expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the section 77 of RPA, 1951, every candidate contesting in election to the House of the People or to the Legislative Assembly of a State, shall, either by himself or by his election agent, keep a separate and correct account of all expenditure in connection with the election incurred or authorized by him or by his election agent.
Provisions Related to Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every association or body in order to become a political party must be registered with the ECI whose decision regarding registration will be final. Registered political parties, in course of time, can get recognition as ‘State Party’ or ‘National Party’. Change in name and address of a registered political party must be communicated to the ECI. The ECI cannot derecognise a party.
Section 126 of the RPA, 1951	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48 hours before the polling ends or concludes, displaying any election matter by television or similar apparatus in a constituency is prohibited. Section 126 is not applicable to the print media, news portals and social media Section 126A prohibits the conduct of exit polls and dissemination of its results during the period mentioned.

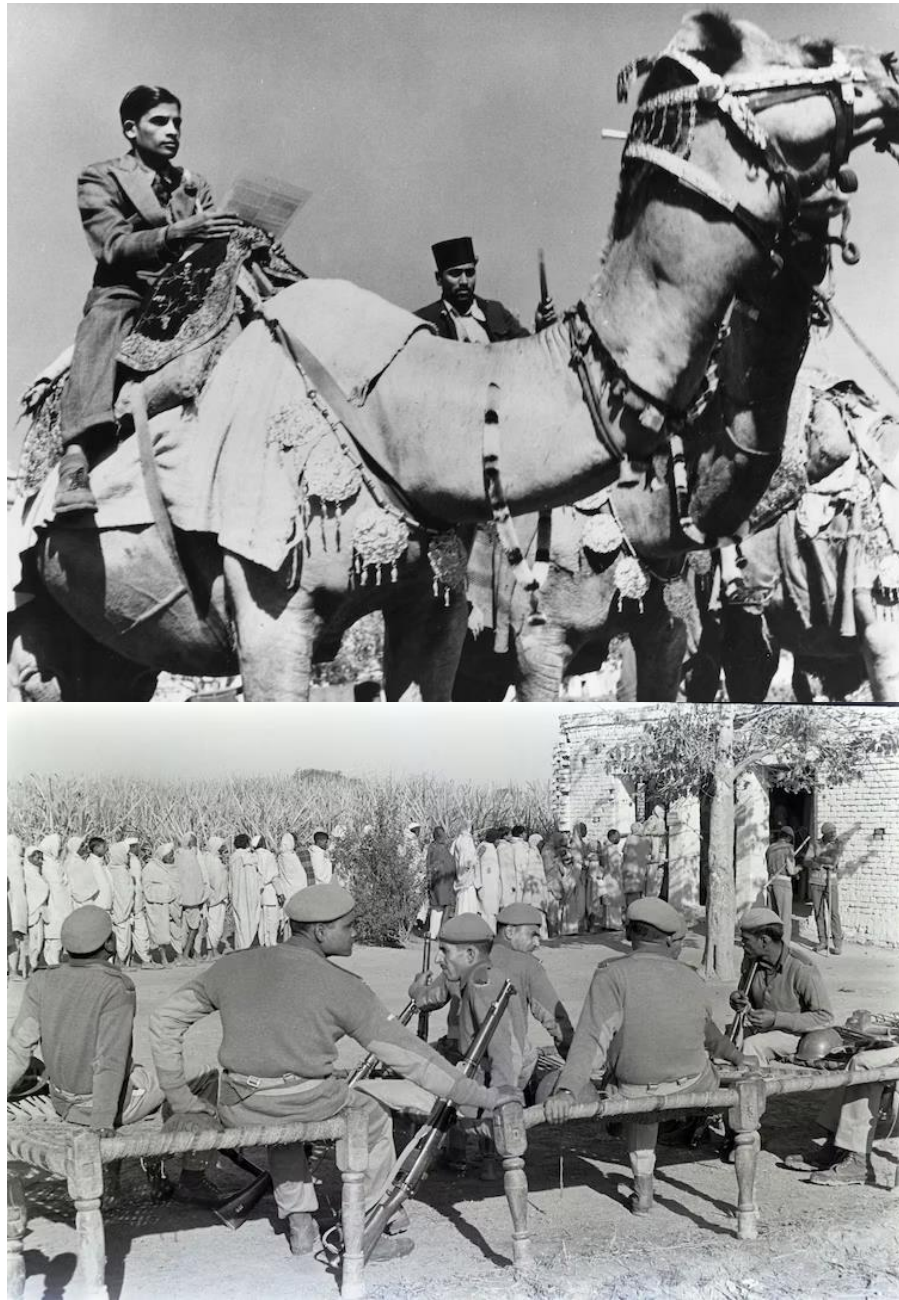
Voluntary Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voluntary contributions by any person or company within India (other than a government company) can be accepted by the registered political party.• A company can donate any amount of money to any political party.• There is no obligation of the company to report such donations in its profit and loss account.• It is mandatory for the political parties to submit to the ECI a list of donations they received above Rs. 2,000.• Political parties cannot receive more than Rs 2000 as cash donations.• Now, political parties are eligible to accept contributions from foreign companies defined under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.
Declaration of Assets and Liabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals contesting elections have to file an affidavit, declaring their criminal records, assets & liabilities and educational qualification.• After getting elected, MPs are required to file a declaration of assets and liabilities with the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the Chairman of Rajya Sabha.• These declarations have to be made by MPs within 90 days of taking their seats in Parliament.

16. Enlist some fascinating facts regarding Elections in India?

Facts	About
The first election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India's first Lok Sabha elections were held from October 25, 1951, to February 21, 1952. There were 489 seats in the Lok Sabha, allotted across 401 constituencies in 25 states. For the 489 Lok Sabha seats, 1,949 candidates competed with each other.  <p>INDIA'S FIRST EVER LOK SABHA ELECTION</p> <p>Held in: 1951-52</p> <p>Total number of seats: 489*</p> <p>Total number of eligible voters: About 17.3 crore</p> <p>CONGRESS 364</p> <p>CPI 16</p> <p>Socialist Party 12</p> <p>PARTIES THAT SECURED MOST SEATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the polling station, each candidate was given a ballot box of a distinct colour on which they were to write their name and a symbol.
Voting age and equality of all citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right from the very first election, India granted universal adult suffrage to all its citizens over the age of 21 years, which was further lowered to 18 years in 1989. To contextualise, in a developed nation like the United States of America, African Americans had to wait for almost 100 years and women (in some states of USA) almost 150 years after independence to get the right to vote.

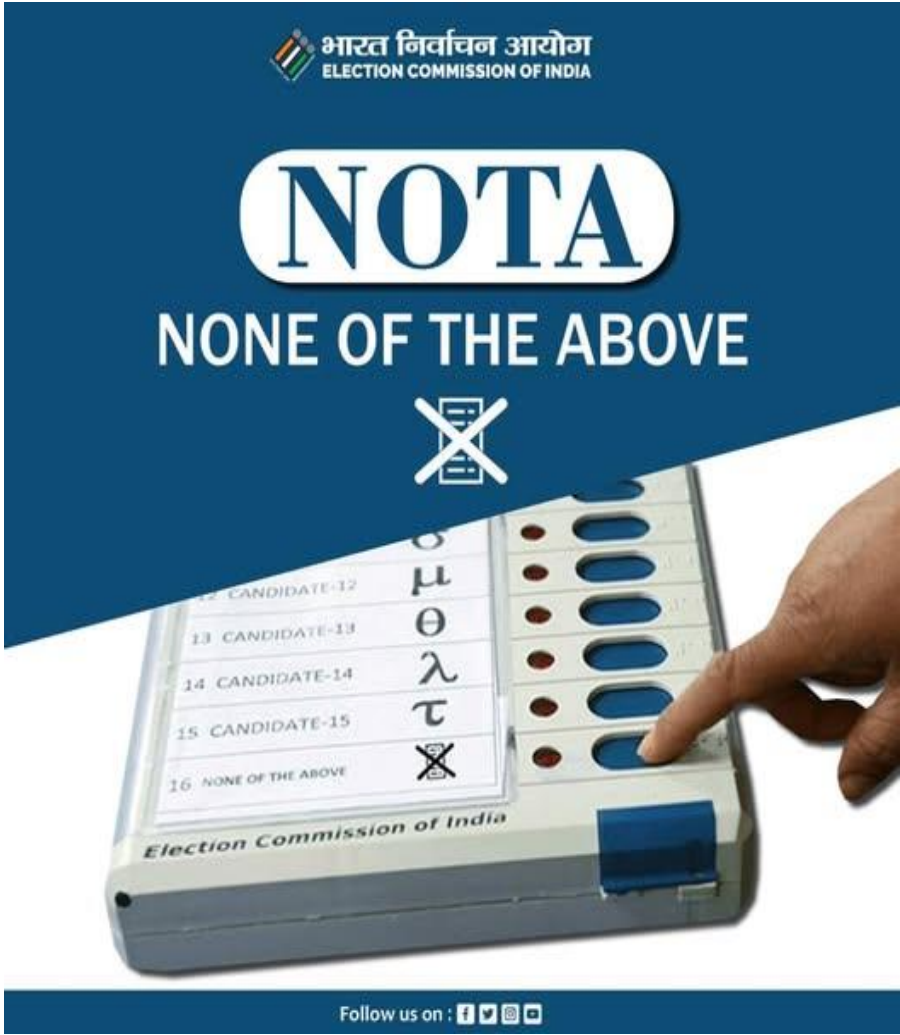
<p>The first Election Commissioner Of India</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sukumar Sen was the First Election Commissioner of India.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He played a crucial role in overseeing the electoral process and ensuring fair elections. • Symbols were designed and allotted to political parties to make things easier for those who could not read or write, enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of the voting process.
<p>The Top-Secret Indelible ink</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking about innovative solutions, the photosensitive indelible ink was developed to mark the fingers of those who cast their vote, to prevent electoral fraud like double voting. • In total, 3,89,816 bottles of indelible ink were supplied in the first elections to the states for Rs. 2,27,460. 

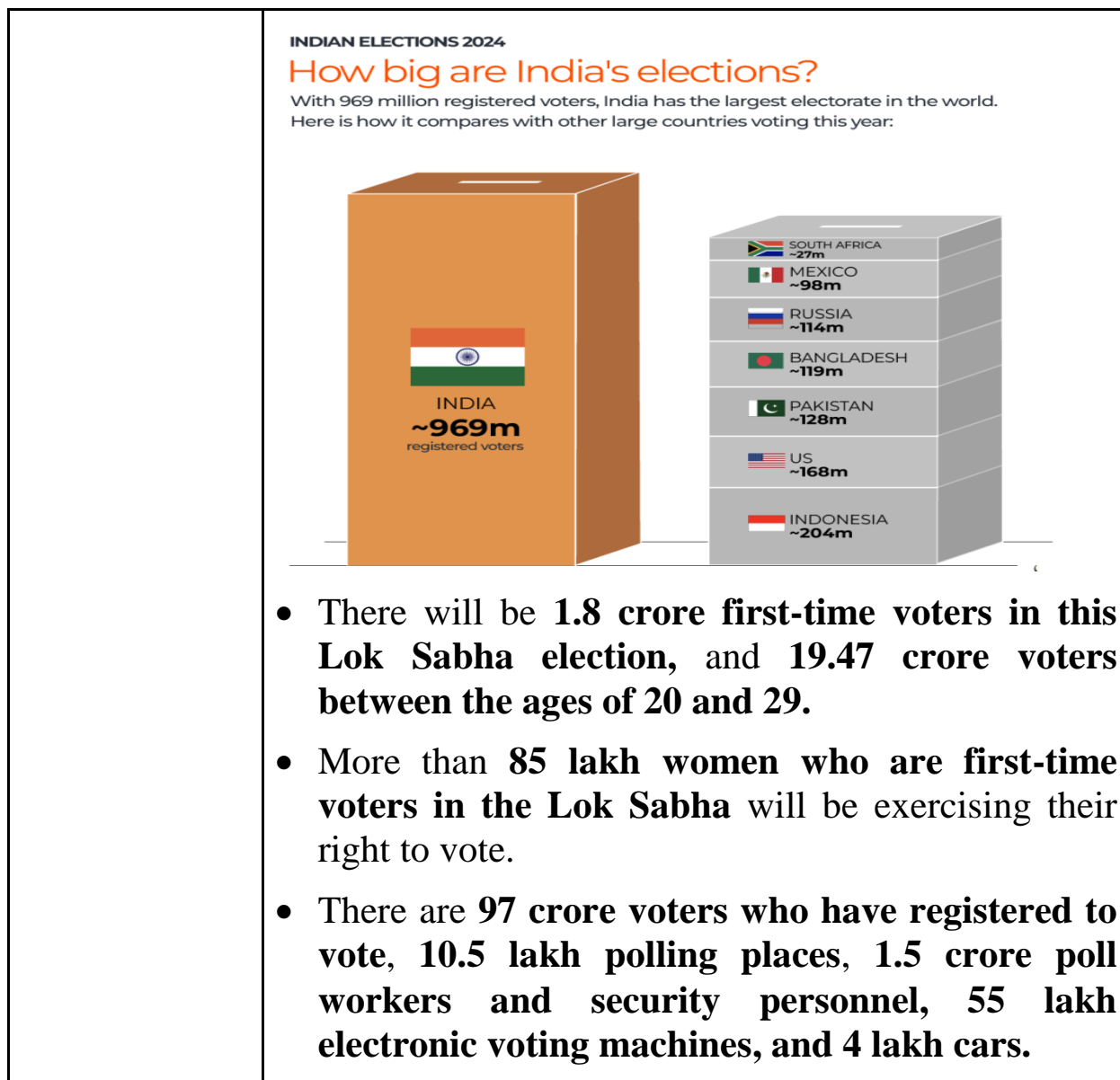
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To this day, the special formula to create this ink has not been made public. • Mysore Paints & Varnish Ltd. has been licensed to manufacture the ink and has been in the business since 1962. 
<p>The first ever ballot box</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A factory in Vikhroli, a suburb of Bombay, built the first-ever ballot box.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These ballot boxes were crucial in enabling fair and secure elections by providing a means for voters to cast their votes confidentially. • These ballot boxes were transported to the remotest parts of the country by various means, including trains, cars, camels and even elephants.



**NOTA votes
and its design**

- During an election, voters can officially register a vote of rejection for all contenders by selecting the **NOTA**, or None of the Above, option if they do not wish to vote for any candidate in their constituency.

	 <p> भारत निर्वाचन आयोग ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA </p> <p>NOTA</p> <p>NONE OF THE ABOVE</p> <p> 12 CANDIDATE-12 13 CANDIDATE-13 14 CANDIDATE-14 15 CANDIDATE-15 16 NONE OF THE ABOVE </p> <p>Follow us on : f t i y</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2013, the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in five states Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Madhya Pradesh introduced the NOTA option for the first time during assembly elections. • The National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, created the emblem for it.
<p>2024 elections: A festival of democracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to official ECI data, there will be 96.8 crore voters overall in the Lok Sabha elections of 2024.



17. What is EVM?

- EVM stands for **Electronic Voting Machine**.
- It is a device used to **electronically record and count votes cast in elections**.
- ECI – EVM consists of **Ballot Unit (BU)**, **Control Unit (CU)** and the later added **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)**.
- **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)** consisting of **Ballot Unit (BU) & Control Unit (CU)** were used for the first time in the by-elections to **Parur Assembly Constituency of Kerala in 1982**.

- **EVMs/VVPATs are not imported** but indigenously designed and manufactured by **two Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) namely Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, under the Ministry of Defence and **Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL)**, under the Department of Atomic Energy under the guidance of the **Technical Experts Committee (TEC) constituted by the Election Commission of India.**

EVM (Electronic Voting Machine) uses electronic means for casting and counting votes.

HOW DO EVMs WORK?

It has two units:

the control unit and the balloting unit, joined together by a cable.

STEP 1:

Polling officer verifies voter's identity with the help of the Control Unit.

STEP 2:

(S)he will press the Ballot Button enabling the voter to cast their vote.

STEP 3:

Voter can see a list of candidates names and symbols with a blue button next to it.

STEP 4:

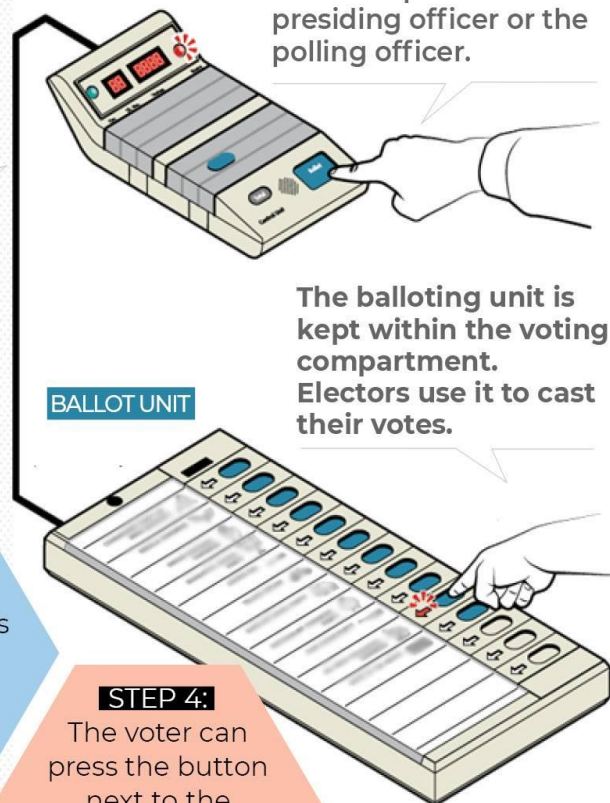
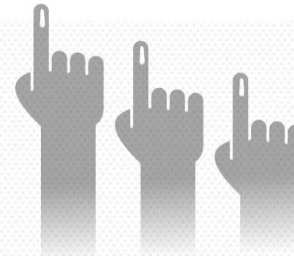
The voter can press the button next to the candidate's name they wish to vote for.

CONTROL UNIT

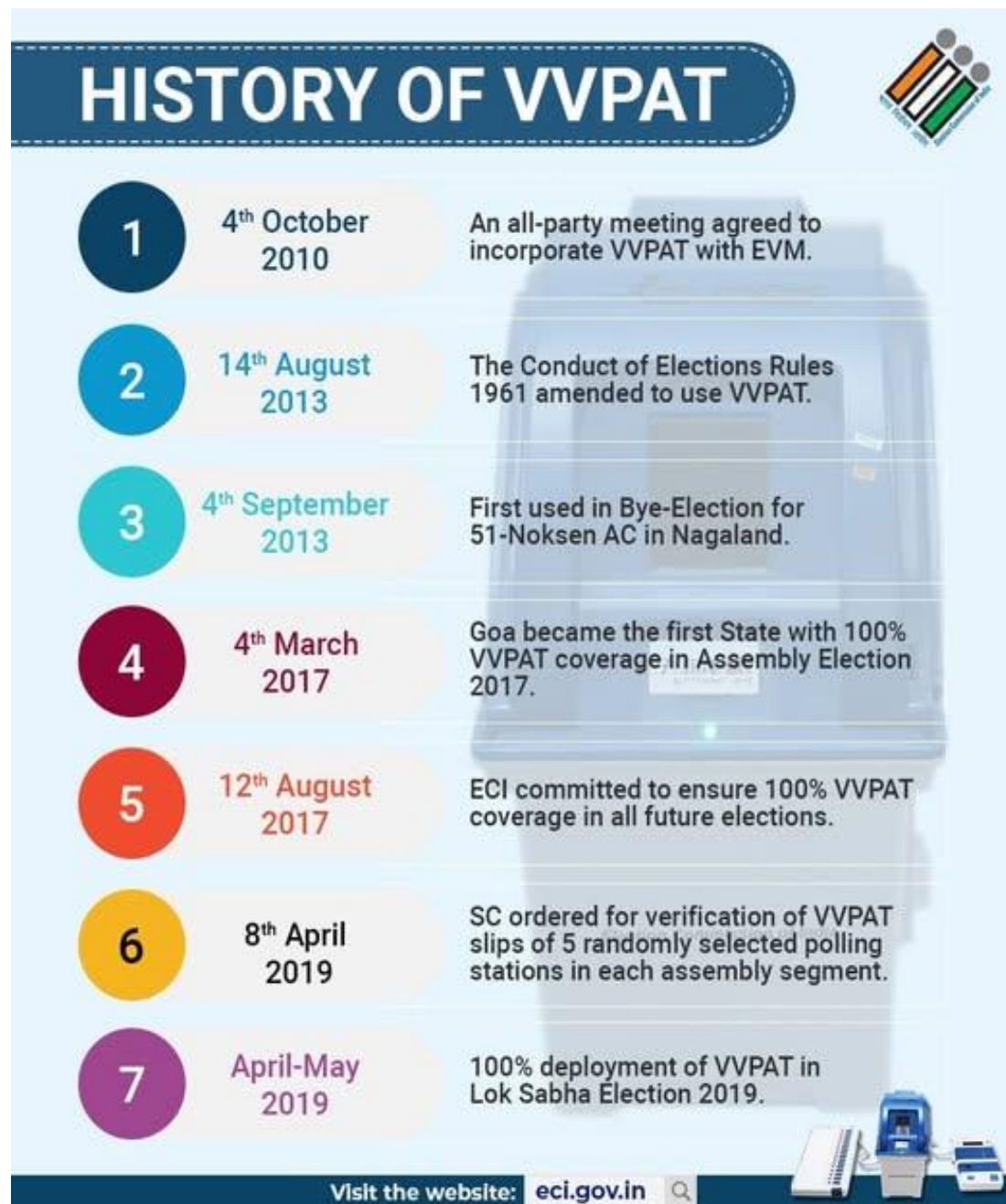
The control unit of the EVM is kept with the presiding officer or the polling officer.

BALLOT UNIT

The balloting unit is kept within the voting compartment. Electors use it to cast their votes.



18. What is VVPAT?



HISTORY OF VVPAT

- 1** 4th October 2010: An all-party meeting agreed to incorporate VVPAT with EVM.
- 2** 14th August 2013: The Conduct of Elections Rules 1961 amended to use VVPAT.
- 3** 4th September 2013: First used in Bye-Election for 51-Noksen AC in Nagaland.
- 4** 4th March 2017: Goa became the first State with 100% VVPAT coverage in Assembly Election 2017.
- 5** 12th August 2017: ECI committed to ensure 100% VVPAT coverage in all future elections.
- 6** 8th April 2019: SC ordered for verification of VVPAT slips of 5 randomly selected polling stations in each assembly segment.
- 7** April-May 2019: 100% deployment of VVPAT in Lok Sabha Election 2019.

Visit the website: eci.gov.in

- **Voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT)** or verifiable paper record (VPR) is a method of **providing feedback to voters** using a **ballotless voting system**.
- Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail with EVM was used for the first time in the **by-election to Noksen Assembly Constituency of Nagaland in 2013**.

- A VVPAT is intended as an **independent verification system for voting machines** designed to **allow voters to verify that their vote** was cast correctly, to **detect possible election fraud** or malfunction, and to provide a **means to audit the stored electronic results**.

Q WHAT IS VVPAT?



A. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) helps voters to physically confirm the choice they have made. It consists of:

- A printer that gives a record of voters' selection
- A display unit that shows any error

Q WHAT THE VVPAT SLIP CONTAINS?

A.

- A candidate serial number

- Name of the candidate

- Corresponding symbol.

VVPAT paper roll is designed for printing

1,500 ballot slips for each election

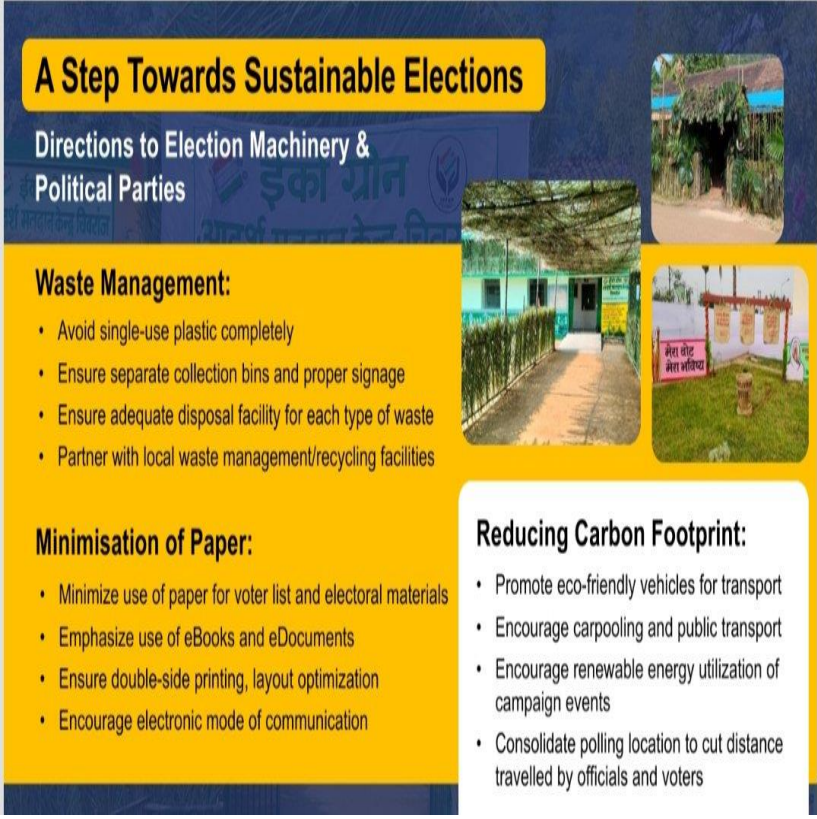
Q HOW IT WORKS?





A. The printed VVPAT slip is displayed for 7 seconds before it is automatically cut and delivered to a sealed ballot compartment




19. Enlist various initiatives taken by the Election Commission of India to reform the electoral process in the country?




<p>Eco-friendly elections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission has been asking all the political parties and instructed to take adequate steps and measures to not use single-use plastic as campaign materials (posters, banners etc.,) during the elections in the interest of human health and environment.  <p>A Step Towards Sustainable Elections</p> <p>Directions to Election Machinery & Political Parties</p> <p>Waste Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid single-use plastic completely • Ensure separate collection bins and proper signage • Ensure adequate disposal facility for each type of waste • Partner with local waste management/recycling facilities <p>Minimisation of Paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize use of paper for voter list and electoral materials • Emphasize use of eBooks and eDocuments • Ensure double-side printing, layout optimization • Encourage electronic mode of communication <p>Reducing Carbon Footprint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote eco-friendly vehicles for transport • Encourage carpooling and public transport • Encourage renewable energy utilization of campaign events • Consolidate polling location to cut distance travelled by officials and voters
<p>Optional facility of online data entry of personal details by candidates in Nomination Form and Affidavit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In order to move forward in the way of digital India and to minimize scope of mistakes in nomination form and the affidavit (Form-26), the Commission has provided an optional facility to the candidates for online data entry of personal details in nomination form.


	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This facility is available for the candidates through the Election Commission's Suvidha portal (https://suvidha.eci.gov.in).
<p>Optional Postal Ballot facility for Absentee voters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule 27A of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 has been amended vide Notifications dated 22.10.2019 and 19.06.2020. • By the said two amendments “Absentee voters” have an option entitled to vote by postal ballot. 

SAFE VOTING WITH POSTAL BALLOT



How to avail optional postal ballot VOTING:

-  Fill Form 12D and apply to Returning Officer within 5 days of notification
-  PwD voters to submit copy of benchmark disability certificate
-  BLO will collect Form 12D from elector's house
-  Candidates will also be provided list of such electors, If they wish to depute their representatives to watch the process.



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India

- **“Absentee Voter”** has been defined in clause (aa) of **Rule-27A of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961**, and includes persons who are employed in **essential services**, **senior citizens**, **persons with disability** and **COVID 19 suspect or affected persons**.
- The category of essential service is notified by the **Election Commission** under **Section 60(C) of the RP Act, 1951** in consultation with the Central Government.

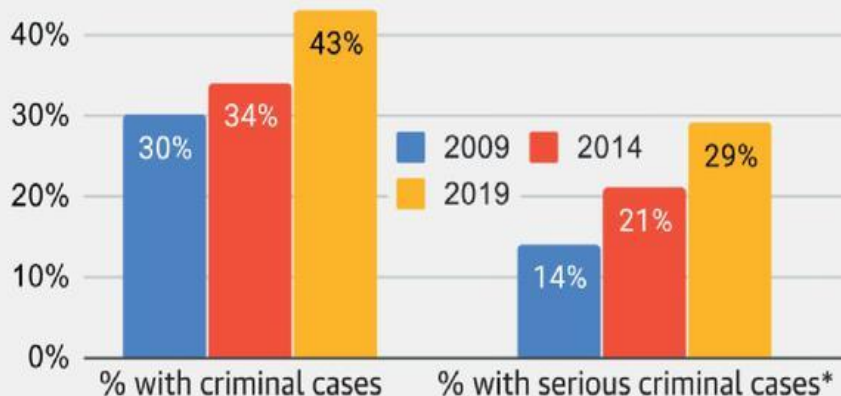
Requirement of publishing details of candidates with pending criminal cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In pursuance of the directions given by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in its Order dated 13.02.2020 the Commission, after due consideration has directed that all political parties, that set up candidates with criminal antecedents, either pending cases or cases of past conviction shall scrupulously follow each of the directions given by Hon'ble Supreme Court in its judgment in all future elections to the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures.
Free time on DD & AIR to political parties to propagate the policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commission notified a Scheme for use of Govt. owned Electronic media by Political parties, on 16th January 1998 which also holds a statutory basis under Section 39A of the R.P. Act, 1951 which provides free time on DD & AIR. ● The Commission has amended the existing scheme by introducing a provision to issue digital time vouchers through an Information Technology (IT) platform.

20. Mention about the challenges associated with elections in India?

Challenges	Analysis
Criminalization of politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In India, the Criminalization of politics has become a growing concern, with a significant number of elected officials facing criminal charges. ● The 2024 Lok Sabha elections saw 46% of elected members with criminal cases.

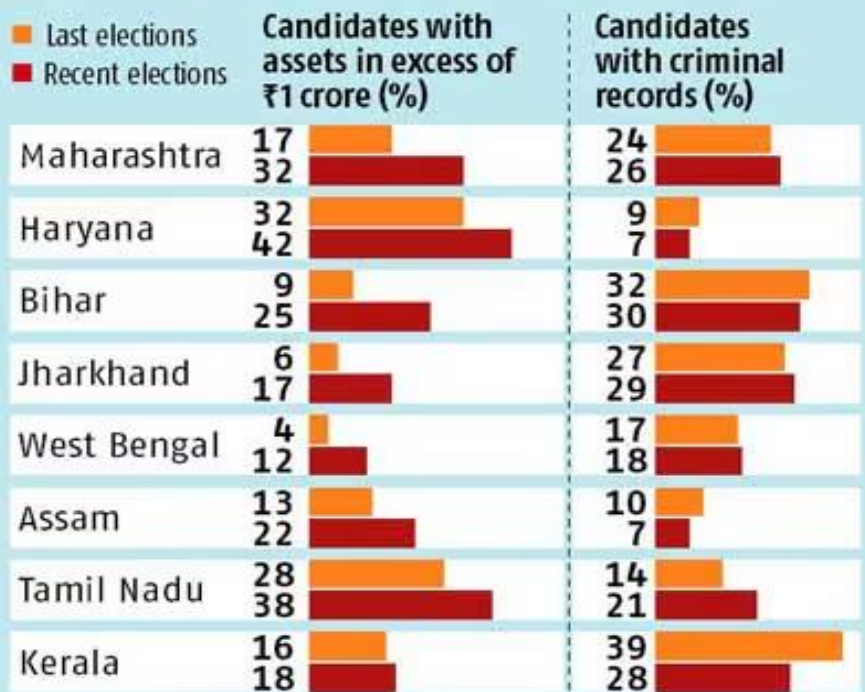
Under the scanner

Close to **43% winners** of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls have criminal cases against them, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms



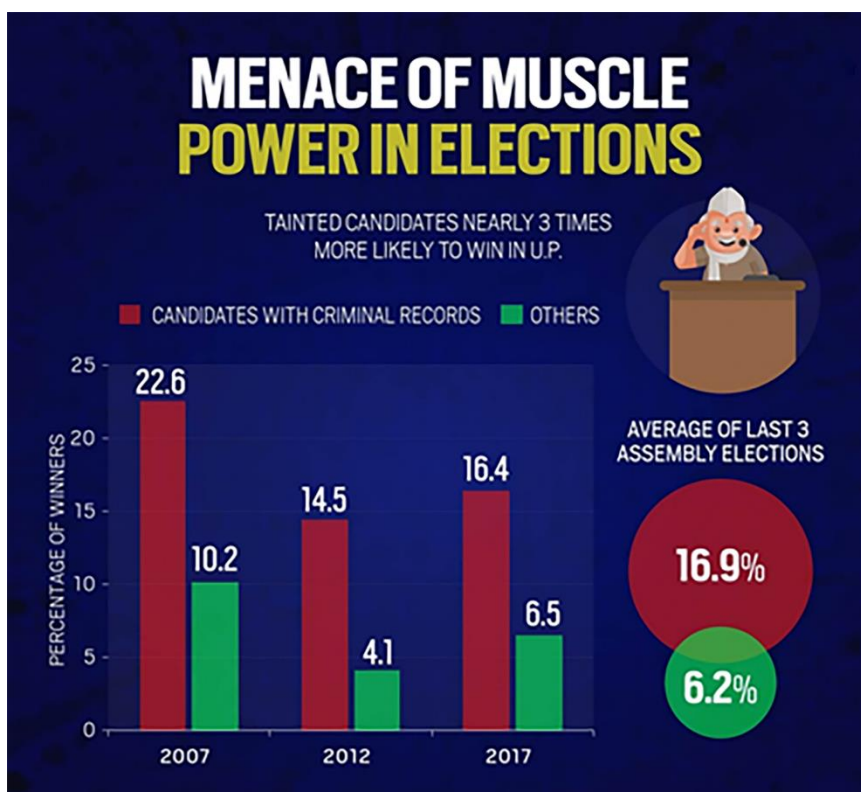
* rape, murder, kidnapping, crimes against women, etc

MORE MONEY = MORE VOTES?

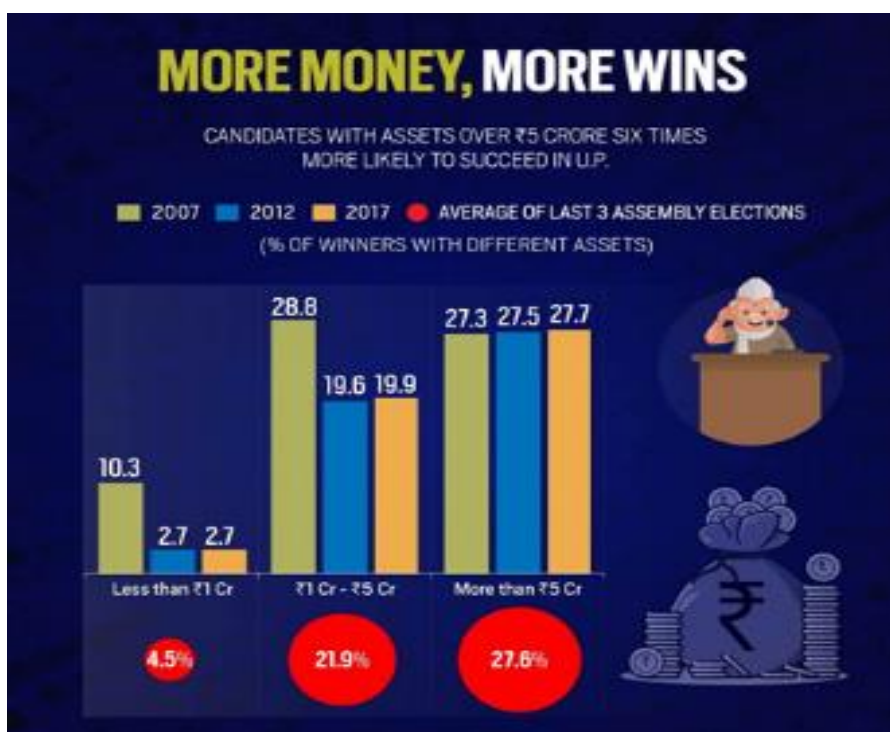


Money and Muscle power in election

- **Political parties and candidates** use the money generated by **criminal activities to influence voters**, secure their support, and win elections.

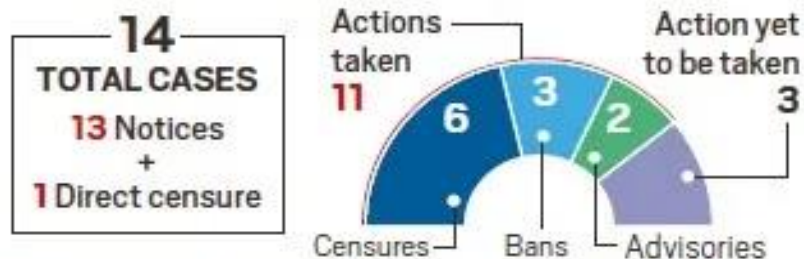


- **Money and muscle power** are still influencing election outcomes.



Electoral Violence and Polarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instances of electoral violence, voter intimidation, and communal polarization persist in certain regions, undermining the foundational principles of democracy and social cohesion.
Misuse of caste and religion for electoral gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of religion, caste, community, tribe, and any other form of group identity for electoral gain or for gathering political support should not be allowed.
Political Influence and Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Election Commission's ability to maintain its independence and resist undue political influence is critical. • Instances of allegations regarding the impartiality of the Commission can undermine public trust in the electoral process.
Violation of Model Code of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instances of political parties and candidates violating the model code of conduct have been on the rise.

MODEL CODE VIOLATIONS



CASES TAKEN UP BY DIRECTLY BY THE EC

Date of notice	Leader/party	Date of EC action	Action
Mar 27	Dilip Ghosh (BJP)	April 1	Censure
Mar 27	Supriya Shrinete (INC)	April 1	Censure
Apr 3	N Chandrababu Naidu (TDP)	May 6	Censure
Apr 5	Atishi (AAP)*	—	—
Apr 7	Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy (YSRCP)	May 6	Censure
Apr 9	Randeep Singh Surjewala (INC)	April 16	48 hour ban
No notice	Konda Surekha (INC)	April 26	Censure
Apr 16	K Chandrashekar Rao (BRS)	May 1	48 hour ban
Apr 25	Mallikarjun Kharge (INC)	May 22	Directions
Apr 25	J P Nadda (BJP)	May 22	Directions
May 10	Humayun Kabir (TMC)	May 18	Censure
May 17	Abhijit Gangopadhyay (BJP)	May 21	24 hour ban
May 18	Sukanta Majumdar (BJP)*	—	—
May 18	Sukanta Majumdar (BJP)*	—	—

EC took action in 14 MCC cases this time, leading to campaign bans on 3 leaders, censures for 6

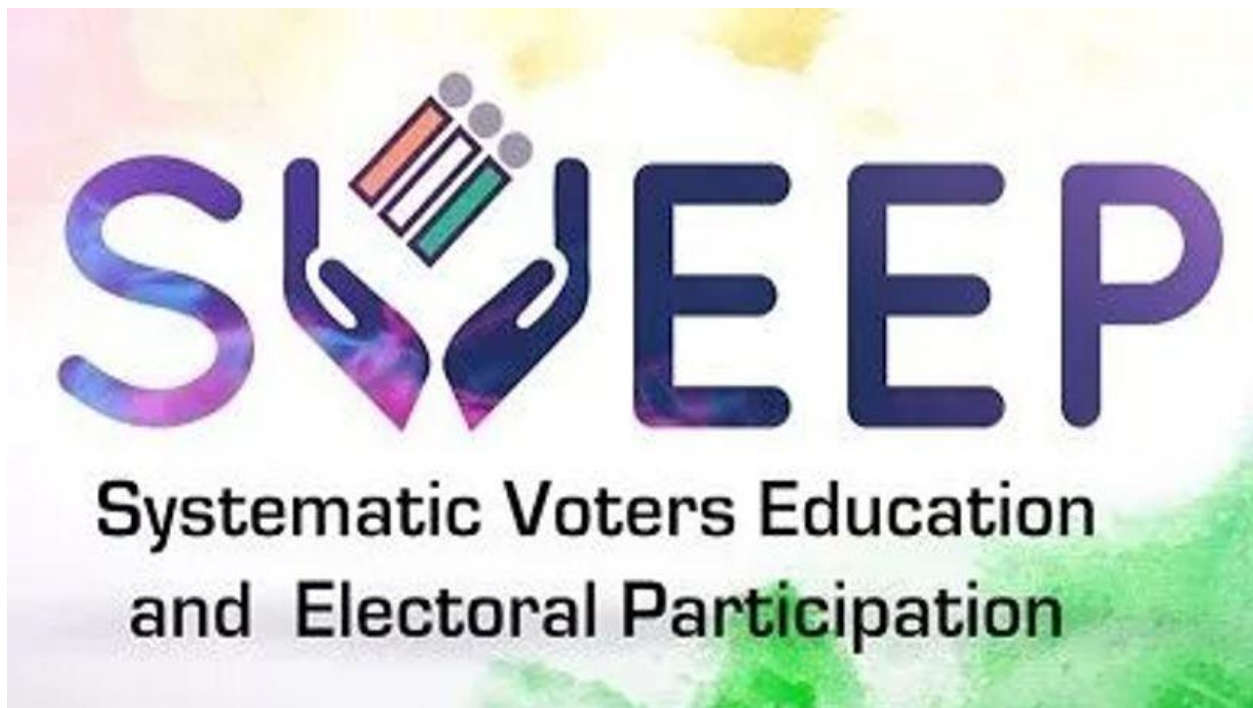
Five notices were sent to BJP leaders, 4 to Congress from start of the 2024 elections till now

*No action yet

- The **Election Commission** faces the **challenge of effectively enforcing ethical standards**, ensuring a level playing field, and swiftly addressing violations.

21. What is the SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) initiative of ECI?

- **SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation)** is a flagship programme of the **Election Commission of India** to promote voter education and participation in elections.
- To capture **all the events and activity on a digital platform** the Election Commission of India has developed a web-based solution that **provides information and resources on voter education** and participation in elections in India.
- The **portal was launched in 2009** and is available in English, and Hindi.


















- In ECI there is a separate division that looks after it i.e., **SVEEP division that organizes multi-intervention programmes** that reaches out through different modes and media to educate citizens, electors, and voters about the electoral process in order to increase their awareness and promote their informed participation.
- The **ECI SVEEP portal includes all the publications, e-books and awareness material** to educate the citizens.

- The portal provides a variety of information and resources, including:
 - **Voter registration information**
 - **Voter education materials**
 - **Voter outreach programs**
 - **Voter information and resources for marginalized groups**
 - **All information available in hindi and english both.**

22. Enlist a few committees who suggested electoral reforms?

Committees	Suggestion
Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It recommended limits on election expenses, voter IDs, and transparent political funding. • The committee suggested that the funds could be used to provide equal opportunities to all political parties and candidates, reduce the influence of money power in elections, and promote clean and honest election campaigns.
Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocated for state funding of elections. • The Committee recommended two limitations to state funding. • <i>Firstly</i>, that state funds should be given only to national and state parties allotted a symbol and not to independent candidates. • <i>Secondly</i>, that in the short-term state funding should only be given in kind, in the form of certain facilities to the recognised political parties and their candidates.

Vohra Committee (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The N.N. Vohra Committee which submitted its report in October 1993 studied the problem of criminalization of politics and the nexus among criminals, politicians, and bureaucrats in India.• The committee had concluded that agencies, including the CBI, IB, RAW, had unanimously expressed their opinion that the criminal network was virtually running a parallel government.					
Law Commission of India, in its 244th report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Law Commission of India, in its 244th report, said that instead of politicians having suspected links to criminal networks, as was the case earlier, it was persons with extensive criminal backgrounds who began entering politics. <div><p>CMs WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF DECLARED CRIMINAL CASES</p><table><tr><td><p>Telangana K Chandrashekar Rao TRS Total Cases: 64/ Serious IPC Counts: 37</p></td><td><p>Tamil Nadu MK Stalin DMK 47/10</p></td></tr><tr><td><p>Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy YSRCP 38/35</p></td><td><p>Maharashtra Eknath Shinde SHS 18/1</p></td><td><p>Delhi Arvind Kejriwal AAP 13/3</p></td></tr></table></div>	 <p>Telangana K Chandrashekar Rao TRS Total Cases: 64/ Serious IPC Counts: 37</p>	 <p>Tamil Nadu MK Stalin DMK 47/10</p>	 <p>Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy YSRCP 38/35</p>	 <p>Maharashtra Eknath Shinde SHS 18/1</p>	 <p>Delhi Arvind Kejriwal AAP 13/3</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law Commission said that in the 10 years since 2004, 18% of the candidates contesting either national or State elections had criminal cases against them.
Ram Nath Kovind Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee suggested 15 amendments including insertion of a new Article 82A and Amendment of Article 327. • It was supported by the Election Commission in 1983 itself.
TS Krishnamoorthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Chief Election Commissioner of India (CEC) TS Krishnamoorthy has suggested a “National Election Fund” as an alternative.

23. Enlist some examples and case studies of election funding models from around the world?

Countries	Election Funding Process
United States of America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the United States, electoral funding is largely driven by private donations from individuals, corporations, and interest groups. • Political Action Committees (PACs) and Super PACs can raise unlimited funds to support political candidates or causes, though with certain restrictions and disclosure requirements. • The Citizens United Supreme Court decision in 2010 allowed corporations and unions to spend unlimited amounts on independent political expenditures, further shaping electoral funding dynamics.

United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the UK, political parties rely on a combination of public funding and private donations. ● Political parties receive public funding based on their electoral performance, known as "Short Money" for opposition parties and "Cranborne Money" for House of Lords opposition parties. ● Additionally, parties raise funds through individual donations, membership fees, and fundraising events, subject to certain regulations and transparency requirements.
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With the formation of the French Republic, the electoral funding architecture had a distinctly laissez-faire approach. ● Business houses are prohibited from donations including corporations and other legal entities. ● Due to introduction of state funding, subsidies, strict disclosure legislations, robust reporting of the donations to political parties by the media and the ban on corporate donations, they are perceived to be more honest and disciplined by the general public.

24. What are some essential prerequisites for free and fair elections?

Prerequisites	Analysis
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The conduct of elections must be 100 percent accurate in enfranchising those who are constitutionally eligible and it must be 100 percent accurate in preventing those who are not eligible from exercising their franchise.

Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All citizens should have full information about each step in the voting process. ● They should be able to exercise their vote without any confusion or paucity of information. ● “Where should I go, what ID must I carry, who will authorise me, what is my right?” ● The answers to these questions must be universally known.
Non-partisan environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The election process and the media ecosystem should be neutral such that neither is anybody’s content suppressed nor is anybody able to get away with untruths.
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The process should be transparent enough that multiple people can validate that it took place according to the rules and also validate that nothing untoward or illegal took place (such as bogus votes being cast, etc.).
Equality of Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The system should not discriminate between candidates based on the size of their party or whether they run as an independent. ● There should be no bar for any average citizen to fight an election.

- The most desirable outcome would involve **absolute integrity of polling, uncompromised security of devices, reliability of the counting and polling processes, and devices that deliver a result consistent with the intent expressed by the voters.**
- Such an outcome would inspire confidence that everyone has had a **fair and equal opportunity to be a voter, that the party holding executive power has not had undue influence on or gains from the process, and that the system has delivered a result that truly reflects the will of the voters.**

25. What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

- **For Prelims:** One Nation, One Election, India's electoral landscape, Representation of the People Act 1951,, Law Commission of India, Model Code of Conduct, Election Commission, Electronic Voting Machines, 15th Finance Commission.
- **For Mains:** Historical Evolution of ONOE in India, Key Benefits and Challenges Related to One Nation One Election, Election funding, Electoral reforms.

SOME PREVIOUS YEARS PRELIMS QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following statements: (2023)

1. If the election of the President of India is declared void by the Supreme Court of India, all acts done by him/her in the performance of duties of his/her office of President before the date of decision become invalid.
2. Elections for the post of the President of India can be postponed on the ground that some Legislative Assemblies have been dissolved and elections are yet to take place.
3. When a Bill is presented to the President of India, the Constitution prescribes time limits within which he/she has to declare his/her assent.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: D

Q2. Consider the following statements in respect of election to the President of India. (2023)

1. The members nominated to either House of the Parliament or the Legislative Assemblies of States are also eligible to be included in the Electoral College.
2. Higher the number of elective Assembly seats, higher is the value of vote of each MLA of that State.
3. The value of vote of each MLA of Madhya Pradesh is greater than that of Kerala.
4. The value of vote of each MLA of Puducherry is higher than that of Arunachal Pradesh because the ratio of total population to total number of elective seats in Puducherry is greater as compared to Arunachal Pradesh.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Answer: A

SOME PREVIOUS YEARS MAINS QUESTIONS.

- Q1. Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees with particular reference to “one nation-one election principle. **(2024)**
- Q2. Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of the Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? **(2022)**
- Q3. Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. **(2022)**

SOME QUESTIONS FROM THIS YEAR AND PREVIOUS YEARS INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS.

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- What two changes you would like to bring in the present electoral system.

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- What Electoral reforms would you suggest in the current election mechanism?

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- If you are asked to choose between One Nation One Election and Waqf Bill , which one will you choose and why ?

Board Lt gen Raj shukla sir:

- One nation one election - Do you support or oppose?

Board Suman Sharma:

- You are an electronics engineer.
- Tell me whether EVM can be hacked?
- Should state sponsored elections be promoted?
- What should be done regarding criminalization of politics?

Some Questions for QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following features:

1. Qualifications and disqualifications of voters
2. Allocation of seats to Lok sabha
3. Delimitation of constituencies
4. Manner of filling the seats
5. Preparation of electoral rolls

How many of the above features are part of the Representation of People's Act, 1950?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All five

Answer: D

SOME QUESTIONS FOR POLL

Q1. Do you think India is ready for One Nation One Election?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

Q2. Should India allow state funding of elections?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

