# Election Commission of India (ECI)

***Prelims:*** *Current events of national importance | Polity & Governance*

## Why in News?

*Recently, SC Judge emphasized that the independence of the Election Commission of India is central to ensuring neutrality in elections, warning that dependence on contestants undermines credibility.*

- The Election Commission of India is an ***autonomous constitutional authority*** responsible for administering ***Union and State election processes*** in India.
- **Role -** The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.
- **Established in** – The Election Commission was established in accordance with the Constitution on **25th January 1950.**
- **Structure -** It is a ***3-member body*** made up of one Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and 2 Election Commissioners (ECs).
- **Appointment of Commissioners**
  - The **President** appoints Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.
  - **Tenure -** They have tenure of 6 years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
  - **Equivalent status -** They enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to ***Judges of the Supreme Court of India.***
  - **Removal -** The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office in like manner and on like grounds as a ***judge of the Supreme Court.***
- **Constitutional Basis**

| Part XV of the Constitution (Articles 324–329) deals with elections | |
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| **Article 324** | Superintendence, direction, and control of elections vested in ECI. |

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| **Article 325** | No exclusion from electoral rolls based on religion, race, caste, sex. |
| **Article 326** | Adult suffrage as the basis of elections. |
| **Article 327** | Parliament empowered to legislate on elections. |
| **Article 328** | State legislatures may legislate on elections. |
| **Article 329** | Courts barred from interfering in electoral matters. |

- **Functions**
- **Administrative –** Allots election symbols and grants recognition to National and State political parties.
- **Quasi-Judicial –** Settles disputes regarding the recognition of parties and allotment of symbols.
- **Advisory –** Advises the President (for MPs) and Governors (for MLAs) on the disqualification of members (except under the Anti-Defection Law).
- **Regulatory –** Enforces the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and monitors candidate election expenditure.

*Panchayats and Municipalities are handled by State Election Commissions (Art 243K/243ZA).*

- **Safeguards for Independence – Removal (CEC) –** Can only be removed from office in a manner like a Supreme Court Judge (proven misbehaviour or incapacity via Parliament).
- **Removal (ECs) –** Cannot be removed except on the specific recommendation of the CEC.
- **Conditions of Service –** The conditions of service of the CEC cannot be varied to their disadvantage after appointment.

| **Technology Integration** | |
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| **EVMs & VVPATs** | Tamper-proof voting, verifiable paper trail. |
| **cVIGIL App** | Citizen’s report MCC violations. |
| **ERONet & NVSP** | Online voter registration. |
| **Suvidha & Samadhan** | Candidate permissions, grievance redressal. |
| **Garuda App** | Digital verification by Booth Level Officers. |

**References**


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