

Constitution System in Russia

In April 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law that made changes to the Constitution of the Russian Federation. This move has implications for not only Russia, but also for the wider Eurasian region as also its relations with various countries of the world.

In this article, you can read all about the constitutional amendments that were made, the fundamentals of the government system in Russia and also a comparison of the constitutional systems in Russia and India. This is an important segment of the [UPSC exam](#) IR segment.

Russian Constitutional Amendments Latest News

In March 2020, the Russian Parliament passed an amendment to the Constitution that made some major changes to the Russian Constitution that seems to tighten Putin's hold over the government in Russia.

A popular referendum was also conducted to gain approval and legitimacy to the amendment. The referendum voted hugely in favour of the more than 206 amendments. In April 2021, Putin signed this into law.

What are the amendments?

- The amendments increase presidential and parliamentary powers.
- Importantly, it allowed Putin to run for election for two more terms, that is, if elected, he can be the President of Russia until 1936.
 - Putin became the country's President for the first time in 1999 (till 2008).
 - Since then, he has been at the helm of affairs in the government either as President or Prime Minister, mostly as President.
 - In theory, a person cannot run for President more than twice according to the Russian Constitution, but the amendments, although do not change this condition, reset Putin's terms in such a manner that he is now allowed to run, enabling him to stay in power till 2036 if elected.
 - If not for the amendments, he would have had to step down in 2024.
 - The tenure for president in Russia is six years.
- The amendments also bar any person who has ever held foreign citizenship or residency from running for the office of the President.
- The changes emphasise the primacy of the Russian Constitution over international laws and treaties.
- The amendments also outlaw same-sex marriage and espouse "belief in God" as a core value.

Interesting Fact: If Putin does stay in power for a couple of terms more, he would be the longest-serving Russian leader since Peter the Great (emperor of Russia from 1682 to 1725).

Constitution of Russia

The Constitution of the Russian Federation is the highest regulatory legal act of the Russian Federation.

- It establishes the fundamental elements of the constitutional system of the Russian Federation, the state system, the formation of representative, executive, judicial bodies and the system of local self-government, human and civil rights and freedoms in the federation.
- The current Constitution of Russia was adopted by country-wide voting in December 1993 after the [collapse of the Soviet Union](#).
- According to the Constitution, Russia is a democratic, federal, rule of law state, with the republican form of government.

Political System in Russia

- Russia is a multiparty democracy with executive power wielded by the government headed by the Prime Minister.
- But the President is the head of the state and also the most powerful position.
- The President is elected by the people directly. However, the Prime Minister is not elected directly by the people, he is appointed by the President.
- There is also a parliament that passes laws. It is composed of a lower house (State Duma) and an upper house (Federation Council).

Comparison of Indian and Russian Political System

In this section, we shall compare the political systems of India and Russia.

India	Russia
Constitution adopted in 1950.	Constitution adopted in 1993.
Government type: Parliamentary Form	Government Type: Semi-presidential Form
Prime Minister is more powerful than the President.	President is more powerful than the Prime Minister.
President's tenure: 5 years	President's tenure: 6 years
There is no limit on the number of terms a president can have.	The President cannot have more than two consecutive terms in a row.
Lower House: Lok Sabha	Lower House: State Duma
Upper House: Rajya Sabha	Upper House: Federation Council
Lok Sabha members are elected by the First Past the Post System.	Duma members are elected by the Proportional Representation System.
Lok Sabha can pass a no-confidence motion and the same cannot be rejected by the President.	The Duma can pass a no-confidence motion but it can be rejected by the President.
Has a single integrated judiciary.	Does not have a single integrated judiciary.