

Scotland's new gender recognition Bill

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In news— A day after Scotland passed its gender recognition law, the United Kingdom Prime Minister Rishi Sunak confirmed that his government might block the legislation.

What are the provisions of the bill ?

- The **law brings sweeping reforms to the system through which people obtain their gender recognition certificate (GRC)**.
- **Currently, they have to apply to a UK gender recognition panel** and must present two medical reports, including a psychiatric diagnosis of gender dysphoria and another listing any treatment or surgery they may have had to change their sexual characteristics.
- Applicants should also have been permanently living in their acquired gender for at least two years before applying for the GRC.
- Under the new gender recognition law, applications will be made to the Registrar General for Scotland instead of the UK panel.
- It also **removes the need for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria** and extends the application process to 16 and 17-year-olds for the first time.
- The new self-identification system **requires people to have lived in the acquired gender for at least three months before applying** and six months for those who are under 18.
- It also provides a three month reflection period to the applicant before a certificate is issued.

Major concerns-

- Opponents of the law claim that the reforms could undermine the rights that women secured after decades of

struggle.

- They also fear that abusive males could use the new system to threaten the security of women.
- The **primary criticism of the law is that women's rights can be at odds with trans rights** and that using such laws, abusive men will infiltrate women's spaces. On the surface, there is no evidence to back these claims.
- For instance, in countries where **gender self-identification has been legalised, including Norway, Malta and the Republic of Ireland**, no increase in attacks on women and girls in single-gender spaces has been reported since the law was introduced.

Note: As of November 2022, **gender self-identification, where no judge or medical expert are involved, is part of the law in 18 countries:** Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and Uruguay.