

Roadmap for One Nation, One Election in India

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Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha, state Assemblies, and local government bodies, as recommended by the High Level Committee on One Nation, One Election, led by former President Ram Nath Kovind.

As per the govt, implementation will occur in two phases: first, aligning Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, and second, holding local body elections within 100 days of the first phase.

History of Elections in India

- **Era of simultaneous elections**
 - The first general elections of free India held simultaneously to the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies of the States in 1951.

- The **next three cycles of elections** also witnessed concurrent Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections barring a few stray cases like:
 - Kerala where a mid-term election was held in 1960 on the pre-mature dissolution of the Assembly, and
 - in Nagaland and Pondicherry where the Assembly was created only after the 1962 general elections.
- The last occasion when we had **near-simultaneous elections was in 1967**.
- **Beginning of the end of simultaneous elections**
 - The fourth Lok Sabha constituted in 1967 was dissolved prematurely in 1971. This was the beginning of the end of simultaneous elections.
 - Extension of the term of Lok Sabha during the National Emergency declared in 1975 and the dissolution of Assemblies of some States after the 1977 Lok Sabha election further disturbed the cycle of concurrent elections.
- **Current status**
 - After the two pre-mature dissolutions of the Lok Sabha in 1998 and 1999, only four State Assemblies have been going to polls along with the Lok Sabha elections in the last two decades.
 - We now have **at least two rounds of Assembly general elections every year**.

Roadmap for Simultaneous Polls

HOW THE NUMBERS STACK UP IN PARLIAMENT

WHAT PARTIES TOLD PANEL

32 OF THE 47 parties that gave their opinion to the Kovind panel supported the idea; 15 opposed it. NDA ally TDP didn't give its opinion, but told *The Indian Express* that it backed One Nation, One Election in principle. The BSP was initially against it, but now has come out in support.

ALL 32 PARTIES were either BJP allies, or friendly towards the party then. Now, the BJD has turned against the BJP. Of the 15 parties against the move, five are in power in states, including Congress.



Kovind presents report to President Murmu in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah. *File*

PARLIAMENT PICTURE NOW

PARTIES THAT BACKED the idea of simultaneous elections before the Kovind panel have 271 members in Lok Sabha now. This number includes the 240 MPs from the BJP.

THE NDA, including TDP and others who neither supported nor opposed simultaneous polls before the Kovind panel, has 293 MPs in Lok Sabha.

NUMBERS GAME IN LOK SABHA

A TWO-THIRDS majority of members present and voting is needed for the required constitutional amendment to go through — in the full House of

543, that works out to 362 MPs.

NDA HAS 293 MPs — so there is a possibility of passage of the amendment only if 439 MPs vote on the Bill, and the remaining 104 abstain. Alternatively, the government will have to convince non-NDA parties to back it.

ARITHMETIC IN RAJYA SABHA

NDA HAS 121 MPS, including the six nominated members. The opposition INDIA bloc has 85 MPs.

IF ALL 250 members are present, a simple majority would be 125 and two-thirds would be 164 MPs. Currently, there are 234 MPs in RS.

• Steps needed after the approval from the Union Cabinet

- The One Nation, One Election project requires two Constitutional Amendment Bills to be passed by Parliament, needing broad agreement across various parties.
- To build consensus, the government may refer the bills to a parliamentary committee, which includes opposition members.
- Additionally, to include local bodies in simultaneous elections, at least half of the states must ratify the Constitutional amendment.
 - Although the BJP currently governs in over a dozen states, upcoming Assembly elections in Haryana, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand could impact this distribution.

• Changes needed in the Constitution

- The transition to a simultaneous election system requires two Constitutional Amendment Bills.
- **First Amendment Bill:** This bill needs a 'special majority' in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, which involves:

- At least half of the total membership of both houses must vote in favor.
 - Two-thirds of members present and voting must approve the amendment.
 - **Second Amendment Bill:** This bill aims to align local body elections with the simultaneous elections. It must satisfy the same conditions as the first bill, plus:
 - Ratification by at least half of the state legislatures is required.
 - This is because local government is under the State List, giving states the authority to pass laws related to it.
 - **What will happen if these Bills are passed by Parliament?**
 - According to the Kovind Committee's roadmap:
 - **Implementation**
 - The President will issue a notification during the first Lok Sabha sitting after a general election, activating Article 82A from the first Constitution Amendment Bill, which marks the "appointed date."
 - Article 82A — a new article that will be introduced through the first Bill to facilitate the transition to simultaneous elections.
 - **State Assemblies**
 - Any state Assemblies elected after this "appointed date" will be dissolved when the Lok Sabha's term ends.
 - Some state Assemblies will dissolve before their five-year term ends to align with the Lok Sabha elections.
 - **Mid-Term Elections**
 - If a state Assembly or Lok Sabha is dissolved early, a mid-term election will occur.
 - The newly elected body will serve only until the next scheduled simultaneous elections. This interim period is called the "unexpired term."
 - **Election Commission Role**
 - If the **ECI** determines that a state Assembly election cannot be held simultaneously, it can recommend a delay.
 - However, future elections will still be conducted simultaneously.
 - **Single Electoral Roll**
 - The ECI will create a unified electoral roll for all elections, including Lok Sabha, state Assemblies, municipalities, and panchayats, in collaboration with State Election Commissions.
 - This amendment also needs ratification by at least half of the states.
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Q.1. What is One Nation One Election?

One Nation One Election refers to a proposal to conduct simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies, thereby reducing the frequency of electoral cycles in India

Q.2. What are the challenges in implementing simultaneous elections?

Implementing simultaneous elections requires constitutional amendments, broad political consensus, and ratification by at least half the states, along with changes to election laws and logistics.

Source: [As Cabinet gives nods to simultaneous elections, what next? | Indian Express](#)

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