

One Nation, One Election

Why In The News?

- Central Govt Announced A **5-Day Special Session Of The Parliament** Which Will Be Held From **September 18-22, 2023**. However, The Govt Has Kept The Agenda Of The Special Session Under The Carpet, Maintaining Secrecy Which Has **Triggered A Lot Of Speculations** On Why It Has Been Called.
- It Will Be The **First Such Special Session Under The Nine Years Of The PM Modi Led Government** Which Had Convened A Special Joint Sitting Of Lok Sabha And Rajya Sabha To Mark The Midnight GST Roll-Out On June 30, 2017.
- Speculations Are Doing The Rounds That The Modi Government May Introduce Some **Key Bills In The Special Session Of The Parliament**. Let's Take A Look At What Are Those Bills Which The Government May Introduce:
 - **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**
 - **One Nation One Election**
 - **Bill On Women's Reservation**
 - **Bill On The Pension Scheme**



Parliament Special Session: 'One Nation, One Election', UCC, women's quota may be introduced, claim reports

One Nation, One Election

- The Idea Of '**One Nation, One Election**' Refers To Holding Simultaneous Elections Across The Country. This Means That Elections For The **Lok Sabha And All State Assemblies** Across India Will Be Held Simultaneously With Voting Presumably Taking Place Around The Same Time.



Pros

- One Of The Major Reasons To Hold Simultaneous Elections Would Be To **Cut Down On The Costs** Involved In Separate Elections. As Per Reports, A Whopping **Rs 60,000 Crore** Was Spent On The 2019 Lok Sabha Elections. The Amount Includes What Was Spent By The Political Parties Fighting The Polls And The Spending By The ECI To Hold The Elections.
- Further, Supporters Of Simultaneous Polls Argue That It **Will Increase Efficiency In The Administrative Set Up** Throughout The Country, Since It Slows Down Considerably During Polling. Normal Administrative Duties Are Affected By Elections As **Officials Engage In Polling Duties**.
- It Will Also Help **Ensure Continuity In The Policies And Programs** Of The Central And State Governments. Currently, The **Model Code Of Conduct** Is Imposed Whenever Elections Are Set To Take Place, Putting A Ban On The Launch Of New Projects For Public Welfare For That Period.
- Further, The **Law Commission** Said Holding Simultaneous Elections Will **Boost Voter Turnout** As It Will Be More Convenient For Them To Cast Votes At Once.



Cons

- Holding Simultaneous Elections Would Require **Constitutional Amendments To Sync Up** The Terms Of The State Legislative Assemblies With That Of The Lok Sabha. Further, The **Representation Of The People Act** As Well As Other Parliamentary Procedures Will Also **Need To Be Amended**.
- The Major **Fear Of Regional Parties** Over Simultaneous Elections Is That They Would Not Be Able To **Raise Their Local Issues** Strongly As National Issues Take

Centre Stage. They Would Also Be **Unable To Compete With National Parties** In Terms Of Election Expenditure And Election Strategy.

- Further, A Study Conducted By The **IDFC Institute In 2015** Found That There Is A **77% Chance** That Voters Will Choose The **Same Winning Political Party** Or Alliance In The State Assembly And The Lok Sabha If Elections Are Held Simultaneously.
- However, If Elections Are Held Six Months Apart, **Only 61%** Of The Voters Would Choose The Same Party. There Are Also Fears Of Challenges Posed By Simultaneous Elections To The **Country's Federalism**.



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Evolution Of 'One Nation, One Election' Idea

- Simultaneous Elections For The State Assemblies And The Lok Sabha Were The Norm In India **Till 1967**. However, Things Changed When Some Legislative Assemblies Were Dissolved Prematurely In **1968 And 1969** And The Lok Sabha In **1970**.
- A Decade Later, The **Election Commission In 1983 Proposed To Bring Back Simultaneous Elections**. However, In Its Annual Report, The Commission Said The Then Government Decided Against It. The **1999 Law Commission Report** Also Pushed For Simultaneous Elections.
- The Recent Push Came From The Bharatiya Janata Party, Which Said In Its **Election Manifesto** For The **2014 Lok Sabha Election** That It Will Seek To Evolve A Method Of Holding The Elections Simultaneously To Ensure Stability For State Governments.
- The Idea Was Floated Once Again By **PM Modi In 2016**. The Following Year, The **NITI Aayog Prepared A Working Paper** On The Proposal For Simultaneous

Elections. In **2018**, **The Law Commission** Said At Least “Five Constitutional Recommendations” Would Be Required To Hold Simultaneous Elections.

- Merely A Month After He Assumed Office For The **Second Time In 2019**, PM Modi Met With The Heads Of Various Political Parties To Discuss Simultaneous Polls. **Several Opposition Parties Stayed Away.**
- In 2022, **CEC Sushil Chandra** Said The Election Commission Is Fully Prepared And Capable Of Conducting Simultaneous Elections. However, He Said That To Implement The Idea, There **Needs To Be A Change In The Constitution** And It **Should Be Decided In Parliament.**
- In **December 2022**, **The Law Commission** Sought The Opinion Of Stakeholders Including National Political Parties, The Election Commission Of India, Bureaucrats, Academicians And Experts On The Proposal To Hold Simultaneous Elections In The Country.



What Opposition Parties Said?

- Ever Since PM Modi Started Pushing For 'One Nation, One Election', Opposition Leaders Have Opposed The Idea, Calling It **Unconstitutional And Against The Principles Of Democracy.**
- Opposition Parties Alleged That The BJP Was Proposing Simultaneous Elections **To Replace The Parliamentary Form Of Government With A Presidential System.**