

One Nation One Election

Kovind Panel Recommendations

Why In News

- **Former President Ram Nath Kovind**-led panel submitted an extensive report on 'One Nation One Election' to President Droupadi Murmu.
- The high-level committee recommended that the central government must develop a legally tenable mechanism to restore the cycle of simultaneous elections.



About Committee

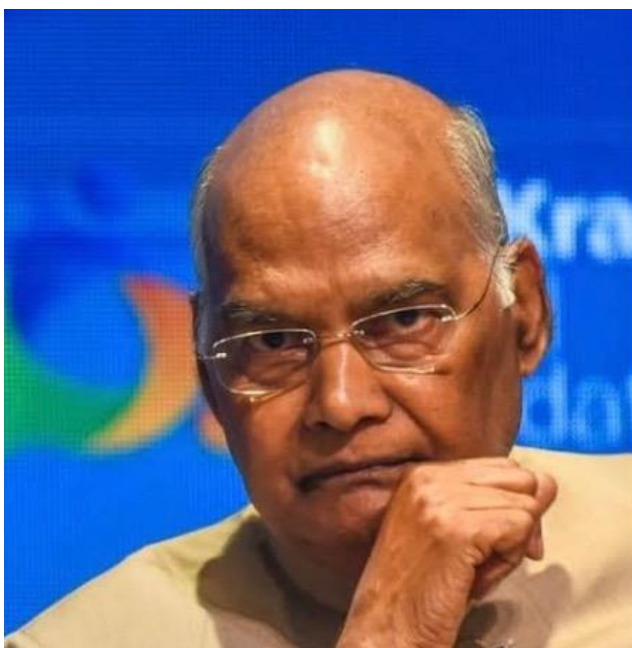
- **HLC, popularly known as the Kovind panel** after its chairman, former President Ram Nath Kovind, was constituted in September 2023, to go into the issue.
- **The panel had as its members** Home Minister Amit Shah, former Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Lok Sabha Secretary General Subhash C Kashyap, former chairman of the 15th Finance Commission N K Singh, Senior Advocate Harish Salve, and former Chief Vigilance Commissioner Sanjay Kothari. Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal was a Special Invitee to the Committee.

- **The report comprises 18,626 pages**, and is the outcome of extensive consultations with stakeholders, experts and research work of 191 days, since its inception on September 2, 2023.



What Is Meant By Simultaneous Elections

- **Simultaneous elections**, popularly referred to as “**One Nation, One Election**”, means holding elections to Lok Sabha, all state Legislative Assemblies, and urban and rural local bodies (municipalities and panchayats) at the same time.
- Currently, **all these elections are held independently** of one another, following timelines dictated by the terms of every individual elected body.



- Following efforts made by the central government, state governments, and political parties along with the Election Commission of India, simultaneous elections were held in the seven states of Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Mysore, **Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal in 1957.**
- Simultaneous elections were by and large in vogue until the **fourth general elections of 1967.**

Committee Recommendations

- The high level committee has recommended a **two-step approach** for holding simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies.
- It recommended that in the **first step**, simultaneous elections can be held for **Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.**
- This can be followed in the **second step** by holding elections in Municipalities and Panchayats within **100 days.**
- The **Committee recommends** that in the event of a hung House, a no-confidence motion constitutes the new House, fresh elections may be held for the **remainder of the five-year term.**



- Where fresh elections are held for the State Legislative Assemblies, then such new Legislative Assembly unless it is dissolved sooner, shall continue up to the end of the term of the Lok Sabha, the committee report stated.
- **A Constitution Amendment Bill** will have to be introduced in the Parliament amending **Article 83** (Duration of Houses of Parliament) and **Article 172** (Duration of State Legislatures). This Constitutional Amendment will not need ratification by the States, the report said.



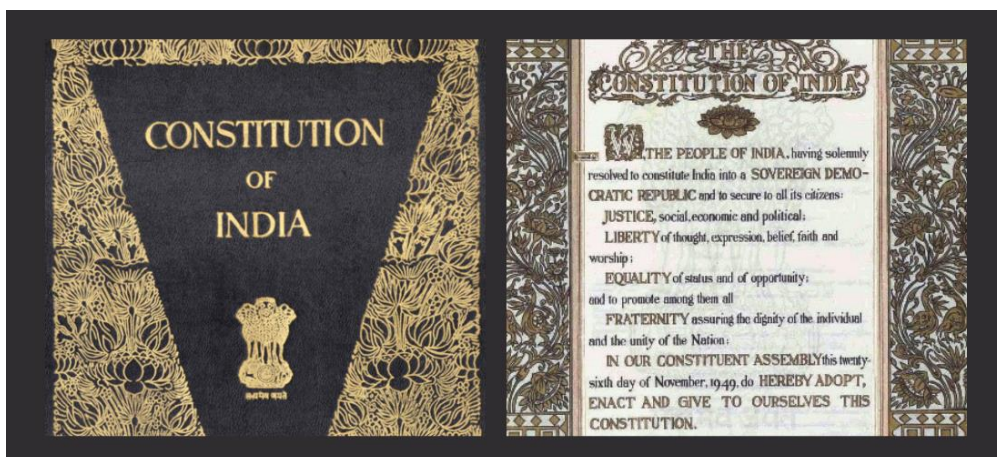
- To **synchronise Lok Sabha and assembly elections**, the president shall notify the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a general election as the "appointed date".
- The **tenure of all state assemblies** formed via polls after the "appointed date" and before the expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha, will be only for the period ending up to the subsequent parliamentary polls.
- After this **one-time transitory measure**, all Lok Sabha and assembly polls will be held simultaneously.
- A **single electoral roll and Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC)** shall be prepared by the Election Commission of India in consultation with the State Election Commission and the same will substitute any other electoral roll prepared by ECI.



- For making logistical arrangements for the conduct of simultaneous elections, the ECI may draw up a plan and estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment, such as **EVMs and VVPATs**, deployment of polling personnel and security forces and make other necessary arrangements.



- In tune with its mandate to explore the **mechanism for simultaneous elections**, and keeping in view the existing framework of the Constitution, the Committee has crafted its recommendations in such a way that they are in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution of India and would require bare minimum amendments to the Constitution.
- Upon **all-inclusive deliberations**, the Committee concluded that its recommendations will significantly enhance the **transparency, inclusivity**, ease and confidence of the voters.



- Overwhelming support for holding **simultaneous elections** will spur the development process and social cohesion, deepen the foundations of our democratic rubric, and realise the aspirations of India, that is Bharat, the committee said.

