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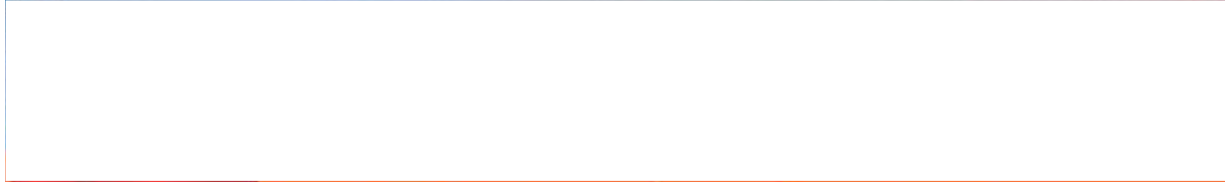
Tuesday, Dec 17, 2024

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# One nation, one poll Bills introduced in Lok Sabha, will go to House panel

Ahead of the introduction of the 'One Nation, One Election' Bill, the Supreme Court said it was unconstitutional, while the SP-led opposition parties could lead to dictatorship.

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As INDIA bloc debates leadership question, why Mamata could be an option

Written by [Divya A](#), [Liz Mathew](#)

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7 min read





New Delhi: Minister of State Arjun Ram Meghwal speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024. (PTI Photo)

**THE GOVERNMENT** introduced two Bills in the Lok Sabha Tuesday as part of its plans for simultaneous elections across the country, countering the Opposition's charge of the move being "anti-constitutional" and "undermining federal structure". The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill and Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill were approved by the Cabinet last week.

However, while most of the Opposition parties, including the Congress, Trinamool Congress, [Shiv Sena](#) (UBT), [Samajwadi Party](#), Revolutionary Socialist Party, IUML and AIMIM, "vehemently" opposed the introduction of the Bills, the DMK and NCP (SP) reflected confusion in the Opposition ranks as they sought that the legislation be sent to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for further discussion.

After the Opposition sought a division of votes to be introduced, voting was held, with 263 MPs in f

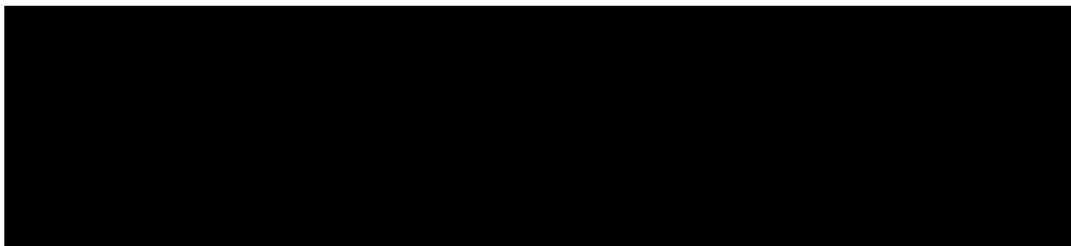
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The Congress flagged this margin to say the government did not have a two-third majority in the House, which is required to pass a constitutional amendment Bill. “Two-thirds majority (i.e., 307) was needed out of the total 461 votes... But the government secured only (263), while the Opposition got 198. The ‘One Nation, One Election’ proposal failed to gain two-thirds support,” Congress MP Manickam Tagore said on X.

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However, only a simple majority is required to introduce any Bill, and the government had this by a big margin. Still, [BJP](#) sources said, explanation has been sought from 20 party MPs who were not present in the Lok Sabha Tuesday. Three

[Najaratni](#) visit, and two others who were accompanying him, Union Law Minister

Minister C R Patil and Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Bhagirath Chaudhary.

This was the first time the automatic vote recording machine was put to use in the new Lok Sabha chamber. While 369 members cast their votes through the vote recording machine, the remaining 92 votes were cast through slips, with 43 in favour and 49 against, according to sources.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal tabled the Bills in the House, after which Congress MP Manish Tiwari spoke first from the Opposition side, slamming the legislation as an assault on the [basic structure](#) of the Constitution. “India is a Union of States, so you cannot arbitrarily cut short the tenure of state Assemblies (to align them with general elections). The fundamental principles of federalism envisage that the Centre and the states are equal partners in the Indian constitutional scheme. How can you make the tenure of state Assemblies subject to the tenure of the national Parliament? Under what provision of the Constitution do you get that leverage?” Tiwari said.

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“Just two days after the special debate on the Con (the Treasury Benches) want to harm the basic structure of the Constitution,” said the Samajwadi Party’s [Dharmendra](#) Yadav.

Trinamool Congress member [Kalyan Banerjee](#) said that by linking the tenure of state Assemblies to that of the Lok Sabha, the Bills undermined the mandate of the

Parliament. The Bills take away the autonomy of the state Assembly. It is not an election reform but just the fulfilment of one gentleman's desire and dream," Banerjee said.

Meghwal contested the Opposition's claim that the Bills attacked the [basic structure doctrine](#), and called the legislation a "long-pending electoral reform". "Laws can be brought in for electoral reforms... This Bill is aligned with the process of easing the electoral process, which will be synchronised. There will be no damage to the Constitution via this Bill. There will be no tampering with the basic structure of the Constitution," the Law Minister said, adding that a resolution would be moved to refer the Bills to a Joint Committee of Parliament.

In the absence of PM Modi, Union Home Minister [Amit Shah](#) led the Treasury Benches, intervening at least three times. Among the points he underlined was that some Opposition leaders had also said that the Bill be sent to a JPC. Shah said the PM too favoured referring the Bills to a joint committee for wider deliberations at every level.

"Detailed discussions can take place in the JPC. The report of the JPC will be approved by the Cabinet. Then again, there will be a discussion on this (the Bills) in the House," the Home Minister said, urging Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju to announce the government's decision to the House.

In another intervention, Shah supported TDP MP and Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhar when he was interrupted by the Opposition, which claimed that only objections to the Bill can be raised at the introduction stage. Shah contested this, saying the MPs could speak in support of the

Rijiju said the Speaker had given a ruling to allow speak on the introduction of the Bills. "You alone every political party has a representation here," he said.

BJP allies Telugu Desam Party and Shiv Sena extended "unwavering support" to the Bills.

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Before the proceedings started, the Congress had already announced that it would object to the amendment Bill, calling it unconstitutional. Party leader Jairam Ramesh said, “The Bill is only the first milestone, the real objective is to bring a new Constitution.”

AIMIM chief [Asaduddin Owaisi](#) called the Bills a threat to democracy and against the federal structure of India, and said they would “indirectly introduce presidential democracy”. “(It) undermines the Constitution’s basic structure by centralising power and weakening regional parties, which are vital for representing diverse voices and ensuring balanced governance in a federal democracy,” he said, adding that the Bills were only aimed at “massaging the ego of the Supreme Leader”.

DMK member T R Baalu said, “The electors have the right to elect the government for five years and this right cannot be curtailed with simultaneous elections.”

Along with NCP (SP) MP [Supriya Sule](#), Baalu said that if the Bills could not be withdrawn, they could be sent to a parliamentary committee.

In September 2023, a high-level committee chaired by N. Chandrababu Naidu, with N. Chandrababu Naidu as chair and N. Chandrababu Naidu as member, was set up to suggest ways and amendments to enable the implementation of the Kovind panel, 32 supported the idea and 15 opposed it.

As per the draft, the President would have to notify an “appointed date” on the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a general election, and any Legislative Assembly

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