

Govt mulls 3 bills to implement 'one nation, one election' plan

NEW DELHI, Sept 29 (PTI)

THE Government is likely to bring three bills, including two to amend the Constitution, to put in place its plan to hold simultaneous elections.

One of the proposed Constitution amendment bills, that deals with aligning the local bodies elections to that of the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, will require an endorsement from at least 50 per cent of the States.

Moving ahead with its 'one nation, one election' plan, the Government earlier this month accepted the recommendations of the high-level committee for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner after a countrywide consensus-



Former President Ram Nath Kovind presents the 'One Nation, One Election' proposal to President Droupadi Murmu along with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. (ANI/File Photo)

building exercise.

The proposed first constitutional amendment bill

would deal with making provisions for holding Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly



One of the proposed Constitution amendment bills, that deals with aligning the local bodies elections to that of the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, will require an endorsement from at least 50 per cent of the States.

elections together.

Citing recommendations of the high-level committee, sources said the proposed bill would seek to amend Article 82A by adding sub-clause (1) relating to the 'appointed date'. It will also seek to insert sub-clause (2) to Article 82A relating to the end of terms of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies together.

It also proposes to amend Article 83(2) and insert new sub-clauses (3) and (4) relating to the duration and dissolution of the Lok Sabha. It also has provisions related to the

dissolution of the Legislative Assemblies and amending Article 327 to insert the term "simultaneous elections".

This bill will not require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the States, the recommendation said.

The proposed second Constitutional amendment bill will require ratification by at least 50 per cent of the State Assemblies as it will deal with matters relating to State affairs.

It will seek to amend constitutional provisions relating to the preparation of electoral rolls by the Election

Commission (EC) in consultation with State Election Commissions (SECs) for elections to local bodies.

Constitutionally, the EC and SECs are separate bodies. The EC holds elections to the post of the President, the Vice President, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Assemblies and State Legislative Councils while the SECs are mandated to conduct polls to local bodies such as municipalities and panchayats.

The proposed second Constitution amendment bill (Contd on page 5)

One terrorist killed in J&K's Kathua

JAMMU, Sept 29 (PTI)

A TERRORIST was killed in an ongoing operation in a remote village in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district on Sunday, taking the death toll in the incident to two, officials said.

The body of the terrorist was recovered from the scene of the encounter at Kog-Mandli in Billawar tehsil this afternoon, the officials said. A massive search operation is underway in the village for the second day. Additional Director General of Police, Jammu zone, Anand Jain said the search operation was launched in the village on Saturday following information about the presence of three to four foreign terrorists.

A policeman was killed and two officers injured Saturday evening when terrorists opened fire on a joint security search party in the village.

Talking to reporters near the



scene of the encounter, Jain said an information was received about the presence of terrorists in the area and subsequently an operation was launched, leading to an exchange of fire.

Head constable Bashir Ahmad laid down his life and two officers -- a DSP and an Assistant Sub-Inspector -- were injured in the encounter, he

said, adding both the officers are stable. The whole area is under tight security cordon and an operation is underway to neutralise the three to four foreign terrorists hiding in the area, he said.

He said the presence of terrorists was reported in a house and subsequently an operation was launched which is underway.

CPA meet adopts resolution to merge DoNER and NEC

AIZAWL, Sept 29 (PTI)

THE annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India region zone-III has adopted a resolution to merge the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) with the North Eastern Council (NEC) for better strategic planning and coordination of various projects in the region, officials said on Saturday.

The two-day conference began in Aizawl on September 27. After thorough deliberation during a plenary discussion on Saturday, the conference has unanimously adopted the resolution to merge the

DoNER Ministry with the NEC, officials said.

Those who took part in the conference felt the necessity of a separate Departmental Related Standing Committee (DRSC) in Parliament exclusively for the Ministry of DoNER to oversee the functioning of the Ministry and NEC, which will strengthen the legislative oversight on their functioning and effective implementation of schemes and policies.

This will ensure greater accountability and strengthen the oversight of the Ministry of DoNER and its implementing agencies to the people through the Parliament, the conference said.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh, Nagaland assembly speaker and chairman of CPA India region zone-III Sharingain Longkumar and Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma were among the important dignitaries, who attended the event.

During the two-day event, delegates discussed important issues and topics, including the inclusion of the Northeast region in the India-ASEAN vision for trade and cooperation and Merging the Ministry of DoNER with NEC for better strategic planning and coordination of various projects in the region.

Campaigning concludes for final phase of J&K polls

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, Sept 29 (PTI)

THE intense campaigning for the third and final phase of polling in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election concluded on Sunday evening, with major political parties, particularly the BJP, Congress, NC and PDP, engaging in fierce exchanges over critical issues, including Pakistan, Article 370, terrorism and reservation.

Voting for this crucial phase, covering 40 Assembly segments across seven districts -- Jammu, Udhampur, Samba and Kathua in the Jammu region and Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara in north Kashmir -- is scheduled for October 1.

The electoral fate of 415 candidates, including former Deputy Chief Ministers Tara Chand (Congress) and

Muzaffar Beig, are at stake in this phase. The voter turnout was robust in the earlier phases, with 61.38 per cent participation recorded in the first phase on September 18 and 57.31 per cent in the second phase on September 26.

This is the first Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in August 2019, with the results set to be announced on October 8.

PM Narendra Modi spearheaded the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) campaign, emphasising the party's initiatives over the last 10 years to address what he described as "decades of injustice and historic discrimination". His remarks at a rally at the M A M Stadium were aimed at galvanising support

for the BJP in the party's traditional stronghold, asserting that the Union Territory status for Jammu and Kashmir is merely "temporary" and promising restoration of statehood.

The BJP achieved its best poll performance in J&K in the 2014 Assembly election, winning 18 seats from the four Jammu districts and securing a total of 25 seats. Historically, the BJP has never won any Assembly seat in the Kashmir Valley.

Senior BJP leaders, including Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and party president J P Nadda, have actively campaigned, accusing the Congress, NC and PDP of pursuing a "Pakistani agenda" and fostering terrorism -- a claim vehemently denied by these parties.

NEPAL FLOODS, LANDSLIDES

death toll 170, 64 missing

■ **By Shirish B. Pradhan**

KATHMANDU, Sept 29 (ITI)

THE death toll from rain-triggered floodings and landslides across Nepal climbed to 170 on Sunday, police said.

Large swathes of eastern and central Nepal have been inundated since Friday, with flash floods reported in parts of the country. According to the Armed Police Force sources, 64 people are missing in floods, landslides and inundation, while 61 people have been injured. The Kathmandu Valley reported the highest number of deaths.

At least 322 houses and 16 bridges were damaged. The security personnel have rescued nearly 3,626 people, the Armed Police Force sources said. The sources added that

rescue operations were still underway. Eyewitnesses said they had never seen such a devastating flood and inundation in the Kathmandu Valley in 40-45 years. The death toll has reached 170, the Armed Police Force said in a statement.

At least 19 people were killed on Saturday when a bus was buried in a landslide in Dhading district bordering Kathmandu. Five people died when a house collapsed under a landslide in the city of Bhaktapur. Six football players were also killed in a landslide at a training centre operated by the All Nepal Football Association in Makwanpur. Others have been swept up in the floodwaters. Despite the forecast for rain to continue until Tuesday, there were signs of some easing on Sunday.

Ahead of NSA visit, France submits final price offer for 26 Rafale Marine jet deal

NEW DELHI, Sept 29 (ANI)

FRANCE has submitted the final price offer to India for the 26 Rafale Marine Jet deal just ahead of the scheduled visit of Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval to the country.

Defence sources told ANI that the best and final price offer has been submitted to the Indian authorities by the French side for the project and a significant price reduction has been given after tough negotiations in the proposed contract.

India and France are negotiating the deal for buying 26 Rafale Marine jets

which are going to be deployed on the INS Vikrant aircraft carrier and different bases. The two sides had also held negotiations last week when a French team was in the national capital for finalizing the discussions with India.

The deal is scheduled to be taken up for discussion during the India-France Strategic Dialogue where the Indian NSA is scheduled to meet his French counterparts from tomorrow in

Paris.

The deal is important for the Indian Navy as it is looking at strengthening its maritime strike capability.

India has also approved deviations in the letter of request, which is the tender document equivalent in government to government deals, like the integration of the indigenous Uttam radar in the jets for the Indian Navy.

Sources said that the integration would have taken a longer time of around eight years along with a high price to be paid to the French side for doing so.

India had also asked France for integration of indigenous weapons on the plane. This includes the Astra beyond visual range missiles along with the Rudram anti-radiation missiles. The sources added that the price for the deal has been based on the agreements over rate of inflation to be taken into account and would be using the previous deal for 36 Rafale fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force as the basis.



India would have given larger bailout package to Pak had it maintained friendly ties: Rajnath

SRINAGAR, Sept 29 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said India would have given a larger bailout package to Pakistan than sought by Islamabad from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had the neighbouring nation maintained friendly relations with New Delhi.

Addressing an election rally in Gurez Assembly segment of Bandipora district, Singh referred to the Prime Minister's development package for Jammu and Kashmir announced in 2014-15 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Modi ji in 2014-15 announced a special package for development of Jammu and Kashmir which has now reached Rs 90,000 crore. The

amount is much bigger than what Pakistan was seeking from the IMF (as bailout package)," the senior BJP leader said. Singh referred to former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's famous statement that "we can change friends but we cannot change the neighbours".

"I said, my Pakistani friends, why have strained relations, we are neighbours. If we had good relations, we would have given more money than the IMF," he added.

Singh said the Centre gives money to Jammu and Kashmir for development while Pakistan has been misusing financial aid for a long time.

"It seeks money from other countries to run a terrorism factory on its soil," he added.



The Defence Minister said Kashmir will again become a paradise on earth when Vajpayee's dream of restoring "Insaniyat, Jamhooriyat and Kashmiriyat" in the Valley is achieved. Singh said Pakistan, which has used terrorism as a tool against India, has been isolated at the international forums with some of its trusted allies also stepping back. "Whenever we have investigated terrorism, we have found Pakistani involvement. Our successive Governments have tried to make Pakistan understand that they should stop terror camps but to no avail. Pakistan is frustrated after revocation of Article 370 and is making attempts to revive terror. They do not want democracy to take roots here. (But

India is strong enough that it can take on Pakistan on its soil. If anyone in Pakistan carries out an attack on India, we can crossover and respond," he added. Singh said Pakistan has been isolated now.

"Even Turkey, which used to support Pakistan, has not made mention of Kashmir at the UNGA," he added. The BJP leader said since his party's government came to power at the Centre, peace has returned to J&K. "The business of terrorism is not going to last very long now," he added. Reiterating the promises made in the BJP's election manifesto, Singh said, "As the defence minister, I assure you that if (BJP candidate) Faqeer Mohammad Khan wins, more people from Gurez will be recruited in the Indian Army."