1.   What is meant by simultaneous elections?

Simultaneous Elections (popularly known as One Nation, One Election) means holding elections to the House of the People, all the State Legislative Assemblies, and local bodies i.e., Municipalities and Panchayats, together.

2.   Were simultaneous elections held in India earlier?

Conscious efforts were made by the Central Government, the State Governments and Political Parties on persuasion of the Election Commission of India to prematurely dissolve State Legislative Assemblies in seven states of Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Mysore, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, so that Simultaneous Elections could be held in 1957.

Simultaneous elections were, by and large, in vogue till the fourth general elections of 1967. With the disruption of the cycle of simultaneous elections, thereafter, the country now faces five to six elections in a year. If Municipalities and Panchayat elections are also included, the number of elections will increase manifold. (*Refer Table 1*)

Table 1- Dissolution of State Legislative Assemblies in 1957

Name of the Legislative Assembly	Date of normal expiry of term	Date on which dissolved
Bihar	12-05-1957	02-04-1957
Bombay	03-05-1957	04-04-1957
Madras	03-05-1957	31-03-1957
Mysore	18-06-1957	01-04-1957
Punjab	03-05-1957	31-03-1957
Uttar Pradesh	19-05-1957	13-03-1957
West Bengal	18-06-1957	05-04-1957

Source: Report on General Election in India,1957 (Election Commission of India)

3.   Need for Simultaneous Elections?

Simultaneous Elections have been drawing the attention of political parties and their leaders, policymakers, academicians, industry leaders, businesses, citizens and others, for the reasons elucidated below:

i.   Frequent elections burden the government exchequer with additional expenditure. If the expenditure incurred by political parties is also added, these figures will be even higher.

ii.   Asynchronous elections cause uncertainty and instability, thwarting supply chains, business investments and economic growth.

iii.   Disruption of government machinery due to asynchronous elections causes hardship to citizens.

iv.   Frequent use of government officials and security forces adversely affect discharge of their duties.

v.   Frequent imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) causes policy paralysis and slows down the pace of the developmental programmes.

vi.   Staggered elections induce 'voters' fatigue' and present a significant challenge in ensuring their participation.

4.   Who chaired the High Level Committee and who were the members?

The HLC comprises the following persons, namely:

1.	Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Former President of India	Chairman
2.	Shri Amit Shah, Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Government of India	Member
3.	Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Former Leader of Opposition, Rajya Sabha	Member
4.	Shri N.K. Singh, Former Chairman, 15th Finance Commission	Member
5.	Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap, Former Secretary General, Lok Sabha	Member
6.	Shri Harish Salve, Senior Advocate	Member
7.	Shri Sanjay Kothari, Former Chief Vigilance Commissioner	Member
8	Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India	Special Invitee
9	Dr. Niten Chandra, Secretary to the Government of India	Secretary, HLC

5.   How many meetings did the High Level Committee hold?

The High Level Committee held a total of 65 meetings as on March 10, 2024. The meetings were held at Jodhpur Officer's Hostel, New Delhi-110003.

6.   **When was the last meeting before the submission of the HLC Report?**

The last High Level Committee meeting was held on March 10, 2023.

7.   **What were the recommendations of the Committee?**

i.   The Committee recommends amendments to the Constitution to enable simultaneous elections in two steps:

a.   As the first step, simultaneous elections will be held for the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies. For this, no ratification by the States will be required for the Constitutional Amendment.

b.   In the second step, elections to the Municipalities and the Panchayats will be synchronised with the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies in such a way that Municipalities and Panchayat elections are held within hundred days of holding elections to the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies. This will require ratification by not less than one-half of the States.

ii.   For the purpose of preparation of single electoral roll and electoral photo identity cards (EPIC) for use in elections to all the three tiers of Government, amendments in the Constitution of India are recommended to enable Election Commission of India to prepare a single electoral roll and EPIC in consultation with the State Election Commissions. These amendments will require ratification by not less than one-half of the States.

iii.   In the event of a hung House, no-confidence motion, or any such event, fresh elections should be held to constitute the new House of the People or State Legislative Assembly for the unexpired term of the House of the People.

iv.   The Committee recommends that for meeting logistical requirements, the Election Commission of India will plan and estimate in advance in consultation with the State Election Commissions, and take steps for the deployment of manpower, polling personnel, security forces, EVMs/VVPATs, etc., so that free and fair simultaneous elections are held in all the three tiers of the Government.

8. **How many reports/studies were referred to prepare the HLC Report on Simultaneous Elections in India, 2024?**

   a. Indian Franchise Committee Report, 1932

   b. General Election, 1957 Report

   c. General Election, 1962 Report

   d. Election Commission of India First Annual Report, 1983

   e. 170th Report of Law Commission of India, 1999

   f. Report of National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC), 2002

   g. 255th Law Commission Report, 2015

   h. 79th Report of Parliamentary Standing Committee, 2015

   i. Working Paper of NITI Aayog, 2017

   j. Law Commission of India Draft Report, 2018

   k. Atlas by Election Commission of India, 2019

9. **How many interactions were made with the political parties, including experts and other stakeholders?**

   The Committee worked for 191 days, held 65 meetings, and consulted the following stakeholders.

S. NO	STAKEHOLDERS' CATEGORY	NUMBERS
1.	Citizens (Website/E-mail/Post)	21,558
2.	Former Chief Justices of India	4
3.	Former Supreme Court Judge	1
4.	Former Chief Justices of High Courts	12
5.	Former Chief Election Commissioners	4
6.	State Election Commissioners	8
7.	Bar Council of India	1

8.	Business Organisations	3
9.	Political Parties	47
10.	Economists	14
11.	Law Commission of India	2

10.   What were the mechanisms adopted for receiving feedback from citizens of India?

A public notice was published on 05.01.2024 in 105 newspapers in 16 languages in all the States and Union territories. The notice invited responses from the general public, which were received through various channels including emails, postal services, and websites. These responses were then analysed internally.

11.   What is the total number of feedback received via email, postal, and website?

A total of 21,558 responses were received from all over India. Of these, 80 per cent of the respondents supported the idea of simultaneous elections. Additionally, forty-seven political parties submitted their views and suggestions on the matter; 32 of these parties supported simultaneous elections, while 15 opposed them.

12.   What is the extent of the HLC Report on Simultaneous Elections in terms of volume?

The report contains 11 chapters and includes Annexures spread over 21 volumes, totalling 18,626 pages.

13.   What international best practices were considered for benchmarking purposes, especially in comparison to developed nations?

The Committee conducted extensive research and analysed all the intricate legal, economic and political issues connected with simultaneous elections. It also

examined international best practices for their possible adoption. The Committee studied the system of simultaneous elections in countries like South Africa, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Indonesia and Philippines. The Committee held that considering the uniqueness of its polity, it would be best to develop an appropriate model for India.

14. **How local body elections will be synchronised with the House of the People and State Legislative Assembly elections?**

Elections to the Municipalities and the Panchayats will be synchronised with the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies in such a way that Municipalities and Panchayat elections are held within hundred days of holding elections to the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies. This will require ratification by not less than one-half of the States.

15. **Is ratification necessary for synchronising Local Body Elections, considering it involves State subjects?**

Since local body elections touch upon the State subjects (Entry 5) of schedule VII, Part IX, and Part IX A of the Constitution of India, ratification by the States will be required under Article 368 (2) of the Constitution of India.

16. **What are the advantages of simultaneous elections?**

a) Simultaneous elections ensure ease and convenience to voters, avoids voters' fatigue and facilitate greater voter turnout.

b) Synchronising elections would result in higher economic growth and stability as it would enable businesses to take decisions without fear of adverse policy changes.

c) Conducting elections to all three tiers of the Government together would avoid disruption of supply chains and production cycles due to migrant workers seeking leave of absence to cast their vote.

d) Simultaneous elections enhance focus on governance and prevent policy paralysis.

e) Frequent elections create an atmosphere of uncertainty and impact policy decisions. Holding simultaneous elections would bring enhanced certainty in policy making.

f) Simultaneous elections would reduce financial burden on the government exchequer by avoiding duplication of expenditure on intermittent elections.

g) Adoption of simultaneous elections would result in optimised use of scarce resources and result in increased capital investment and asset creation.

h) Synchronising electoral calendars would mean availability of more time for governance and ensure unhindered delivery of public services to citizens.

i) Simultaneous elections would reduce the number of election related offences and disputes and reduce the burden on courts.

j) Simultaneous elections would result in the avoidance of duplication of efforts and saving of time and energy of government officials, political workers and security forces.

k) Holding of elections once every five years would result in mitigation of social disharmony and conflict, which is often observed during elections.

17. What possible solutions are proposed in scenario of simultaneous elections emerging out of a Hung House, adoption of no-confidence motion, or defection or any such other event?

The Committee recommends that in the event of a hung House, no-confidence motion, or any such event, fresh elections may be held to constitute the new House.

Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People, the tenure of the House of the People will be only for the unexpired term of the immediately preceding full term of the House of the People and the expiration of this period shall operate as a dissolution of the House.

Where fresh elections are held for the State Legislative Assemblies, then such new Legislative Assembly unless sooner dissolved, shall continue upto the end of the full term of the House of the People.

18. **What will be the role of State Election Commission in implementation of simultaneous elections?**

Single electoral roll may be made by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in consultation with the State Election Commissions (SECs). For the purpose of conducting local body elections all necessary logistical arrangements may be made by the ECI and the SECs.

19. **How can one access the Report?**

One can access the Report through two convenient methods:

1. By visiting the website onoe.gov.in/HLC-Report.

2. By scanning the QR Code: Use the camera on your smartphone or a dedicated QR code scanning application to scan the code, which will redirect you to the Report. One can easily access the Report by scanning the QR code given below