

Joint Parliamentary committee (JPC) for 'One Nation One Election'

Key Points:

- ❖ Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal will move a motion in Parliament on Thursday (December 19) for the Bills on the 'One Nation, One Election' proposal to be referred to a joint committee for further examination.
- ❖ The JPC to examine the Bills will have 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 members from the Rajya Sabha, including Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Manish Tewari, BJP's Bansuri Swaraj and Anurag Singh Thakur, and NCP's Supriya Sule.
- ❖ Meghwal is also set to propose that the committee submit its report on the Bills on the first day of the last week of the next session. What exactly are JPCs supposed to do and how are they constituted?

What is a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)?

- ❖ A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is set up by the Parliament for a special purpose, like the detailed scrutiny of a subject or Bill.
- ❖ As the name suggests, it has members from both the Houses and from the ruling parties and the opposition. It is dissolved after its term ends or its task has been completed. Some examples of joint committees include one on the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024, set up in August this year, and on The Personal Data Protection Bill of 2019.
- ❖ Others are mandated to investigate alleged irregularities, such as of a financial nature. For instance, Congress members demanded earlier this year that a JPC investigate Hindenburg Research's allegations against Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch.

How is a JPC set up?

- ❖ A JPC is set up after one House of Parliament has passed a motion and the other has agreed to it. Members of the JPC are decided by the Parliament. The number of members can vary.

What can a JPC do?

- ❖ According to an article on PRS Legislative Research, the mandate of a JPC depends on the motion constituting it. For example, "The terms of reference for the JPC on the stock market scam asked the committee to look into financial irregularities, to fix responsibility on persons and institutions for the scam, to identify regulatory loopholes and also to make suitable recommendations," the PRS article said.
- ❖ To fulfil its mandate in investigating an issue, a JPC can scrutinise documents and summon people for questioning. It then submits a report and makes recommendations to the government. The proceedings and findings of the committee are confidential, except in matters of public interest.
- ❖ The government can decide to withhold a document if it is considered prejudicial to the safety or interest of the State. The Speaker has the final word in case of a dispute over calling for evidence.

How powerful is a JPC?

- ❖ While the recommendations of a JPC have persuasive value, they are not binding on the government. The government can choose to launch further investigations based on what the JPC has said, but it can't be forced to do so.
- ❖ "The government is required to report on the follow-up action taken on the basis of the recommendations of the JPC and other committees. The committees then submit 'Action Taken Reports' in Parliament on the basis of the government's reply," the PRS article says.

What JPCs have been set up so far?

- ❖ A few JPCs have earlier been set-up, having investigative powers:
- ❖ to examine matters relating to Allocation and Pricing of Telecom Licenses and Spectrum
- ❖ on Pesticide Residues in and Safety Standard for Soft Drinks, Fruit Juice and other Beverages
- ❖ on Stock Market Scam and Matters Relating thereto
- ❖ to enquire into irregularities in Securities and Banking Transactions
- ❖ to enquire into Bofors Contract
- ❖ to examine the Constitutional and Legal Positions relating to the Office of Profit."

'ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION' JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (JPC) MEMBERS	
1. P.P. Chaudhary (BJP)	12. Manish Tewari (Congress)
2. C.M. Ramesh (BJP)	13. Sukhdeo Bhagat (Congress)
3. Bansuri Swaraj (BJP)	14. Dharmendra Yadav (SP)
4. Parshottambhai Rupala (BJP)	15. Kalyan Banerjee (TMC)
5. Anurag Singh Thakur (BJP)	16. T.M. Selvaganapathi (DMK)
6. Vishnu Dayal Ram (BJP)	17. G.M. Harish Balayogi (TDP)
7. Bhartruhari Mahtab (BJP)	18. Supriya Sule (NCP)
8. Sambit Patra (BJP)	19. Shrikant Eknath Shinde (Shiv Sena)
9. Anil Baluni (BJP)	20. Chandan Chauhan (RLD)
10. Vishnu Datt Sharma (BJP)	21. Balashowry Vallabhaneni (Janasena)
11. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra (Congress)	

Ravichandran Ashwin retire from International Cricket

Key Points:

- ❖ One of the all-time greats of India, Ravichandran Ashwin, announced his retirement from all forms of international cricket on 18 December 2024. The unexpected retirement announcement came after the third test of the 2024-25 Border Gavaskar Trophy in Brisbane ended in a draw. However, Ashwin said that he would play club cricket. He will be available to play in the 2025 Indian Premier League (IPL) for Chennai Super King and for the Dindigul Dragons team in the Tamil Nadu Premier League.



- ❖ Of the three Tests played so far in the current Border Gavaskar Trophy, Ashwin played in the Adelaide Test, which India lost. He was not picked for the first Test of the Border Gavaskar Trophy played at Perth, which India won, and the third Test at Brisbane. Two matches of the Trophy are to be played in Melbourne and Sydney, which traditionally favours spin bowlers.

About Ravichandran Ashwin's Cricket Debut

- ❖ Ashwin started his first-class career for Tamil Nadu in a Ranji Trophy Match against Haryana in Chennai in December 2006.
- ❖ His first match for India was a One Day Internationals(ODI) against Sri Lanka at Harare (Zimbabwe) in June 2010.
- ❖ His first Test match for India was against Sri Lanka in Delhi in June 2011.
- ❖ He was an off-spinner with a good lower-order batsman.

One of the Greatest Match-Winner of India

- ❖ Ravichandran Ashwin was one of the greatest Indian cricket players who left an indelible mark on the game. He was more effective in Test matches, where he was one of India's greatest match-winners.
- ❖ In the 106 Test matches Ashwin played for India, India won 61 Test matches. Only Sachin Tendulkar (72) and Virat Kohli (62) have featured in more test victories for India.
- ❖ Ashwin has never missed a Test match played in India since his debut in 2011. Of the 65 Test matches he played in India, India has won 47 Tests. Only great Sachin Tendulkar has featured in 52 home Test wins.

- ❖ Ashwin took 537 Test wickets in his career, and 374 wickets came in victories. He is the only Indian bowler to claim over 300 wickets in Test wins.
- ❖ Ashwin took 383 wickets in 65 home Tests, the most by any Indian bowler. ▪ His 29 five-wickets in a Test inning at home are second only to Sri Lanka's Muthiah Muralidaran's 45 in the world.

Ashwin's Record in International Cricket

- ❖ Ravichandran Ashwin finished his career with 537 wickets in 106 Test matches.
- ❖ He is India's second-highest wicket-taker in Test matches after Anil Kumble's 619 wickets.
- ❖ He is the third-highest wicket-taking spin bowler in the world after Sri Lanka's Muthiah Muralidaran's 800 wickets and Anil Kumble.
- ❖ He claimed five or more wickets in a Test inning on 37 occasions. The world record is held by Muthiah Muralidaran, who did it 67 times.
- ❖ He shares the record with Muralidharan for 11 Man of the Series awards in the Test series.
- ❖ He has claimed ten or more wickets in a Test match eight times, the highest among Indian bowlers, alongside Kumble.
- ❖ Ashwin took 765 wickets across all three formats (Test, ODIs, T20s) for India after Anil Kumble's 953.
- ❖ He was also a capable lower-order batsman and scored six Test centuries.

First Ever Tagging of Gangetic Dolphin in Assam Under Project Dolphin

Key Points:

- ❖ In a landmark effort in wildlife conservation, a male Gangetic Dolphin has been satellite tagged at Kulsi, a tributary of the Brahmaputra river in Assam. It was for the first time in India and the world that the Gangetic River Dolphin was tagged.

- ❖ The tagging of India's national aquatic animal, the Gangetic River Dolphin, is part of Project Dolphin of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to track the movement pattern of the highly endangered species.
- ❖ The data collected from the tagged dolphin will help conservationists better understand the species' movement range and habitat, which will help them devise a more robust conservation plan.



Tagging of the Dolphin

- ❖ The tagging of the dolphin was an initiative of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- ❖ It was implemented by the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, in collaboration with the Assam Forest Department and Aaranyak, a prominent biodiversity conservation group in Assam.
- ❖ The funding for the initiative came from the National CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority).

Aim of the Tagging

- ❖ Tagging of wildlife animals is one of the most preferred tools amongst wildlife scientists and conservationists to understand the movement and habitat of wildlife animals.
- ❖ The Gangetic River Dolphin surfaces only for 5.30 seconds at a time. This makes it very difficult for conservationists to study their ecological needs scientifically.
- ❖ To fill this knowledge gap, satellite-based tagging of the Dolphin has been done.

- ❖ Scientists will now be able to gather real-time data on Dolphins' preferred migratory routes, habitats, distribution range and potential threats they face along their routes.
- ❖ This will help conservationists devise a better conservation plan for the Dolphins.
- ❖ Gangetic River Dolphins are indicators of a healthy river ecosystem and are considered crucial for the Gangetic ecosystem. Hence, their conservation is of paramount importance.

About Gangetic Dolphins

- ❖ The Gangetic River Dolphin (scientific name *Platanista gangetica*) is also known as the blind dolphin, Ganges susu or Hihu's. According to the Wildlife Institute of India, there are around 4000 River Dolphins in India, of which around 2000 are found in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The River Dolphin is not a fish but a mammal. They are found in certain stretches of India's Ganga-Brahmaputra-Barak river system, Nepal's Karnali, Sapta Koshi, and Narayani rivers, and Bangladesh's Meghna, Karnaphuli, and Sangu rivers.
- ❖ The Gangetic River Dolphins are mainly found in the mainstream of the Ganga River and its tributaries, Ghaghra, Kosi, Gandak, Chambal, Rupnarayan, and Yamuna.

Special Representatives of China & India meet after 5 years In China

Key Points:

- ❖ The 23rd meeting of the Special Representative of India and China was held in Beijing, China, on 18 December 2024. The last 22nd meeting of the Special Representatives of India and China was held in New Delhi on 21 December 2019.
- ❖ Thus, a meeting was held after five years between the two countries' Special

Representatives. The Indian side was led by National Security Advisor Ajit Kumar Doval, and Wang Yi, Foreign Minister of China, led the Chinese delegation.



Breakthrough In Kazan and Resumption of Meeting

- ❖ The dialogue between India and China was disrupted due to a border conflict between the two countries' armies in Galwan Valley, Ladakh, in June 2020. It led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese soldiers.
- ❖ After the bloody clash, all bilateral talks between the sides were halted.
- ❖ In October 2024, an agreement was reached between the military commanders of the two countries, which led to the withdrawal of Chinese troops from forward lines in the Ladakh region and the resumption of border patrolling by the two countries' troops.
- ❖ Later, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit meeting in Kazan, Russia, in October 2024.
- ❖ Both the leaders decided to resume high-level dialogue between the two countries to explore a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question.

India-China Border Dispute

- ❖ India shares a 3488 km border with China. The Union Territory of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh share boundaries with China.

- ❖ India and China have a border dispute in the western section of the border in Ladakh and the eastern sector along Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ In 1962, there was a war between the two countries over the border dispute.
- ❖ To resolve the border dispute, an agreement was reached between the two countries in 2003 during Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to China in 2003.
- ❖ A Special Representative mechanism was established between the two countries in 2003 on the India-China Boundary Question.
- ❖ The Indian side is always led by the National Security Advisor at the Special Representative mechanism meeting.

Result of the 23rd Meeting of the Special Representative

- ❖ During the meeting in Beijing, India and China agreed on the following points.
- ❖ Implementation of the disengagement agreement of October 2024 and the need to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas.
- ❖ Agreed to delink border issues from normal development of bilateral ties between India and China.
- ❖ Strengthen cross-border exchanges and cooperation, resumption of Indian pilgrims' travel to Tibet, cross-border river cooperation, and Nathula (Sikkim) border trade.
- ❖ Strengthen the Special Representatives' meeting mechanism between the two sides to resolve border issues.
- ❖ India will host the next meeting on a mutually convenient date.

Most Test Wicket for India in Overseas :Bumrah Breaks Kapil Record

- ❖ Indian men's cricket team vice-captain and fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah set a new record by taking the wicket of Australian

batsman Marnus Labuschagne at Brisbane in the second innings of the third Test match of the Border Gavaskar Trophy on 18 December 2024.

- ❖ This was Bumrah's 52nd Test wicket in Australia, and he broke the record of Kapil Dev's 51 wickets in Australia. In the Brisbane Test, Bumrah finished the match with a figure of 9-94. In the first inning, he took 6-76, and his figure was 3-18 in the second inning. Australia declared its second innings at 89-7, and the match ended in a draw.



Third fastest bowler to 50 wickets in Australia

- ❖ At the end of the Brisbane test, Jasprit Bumrah has taken 53 wickets in Australia in 10 Test matches at an average of 17.15. No visiting bowler has more wickets at a better average in Australia in the history of Test cricket.
- ❖ Jasprit Bumrah is also the third-fastest bowler to take 50 wickets in Australia.
- ❖ Brett Lee of Australia holds the record for taking 50 wickets in 2061 balls (11 Test matches), and Richard Hadlee of New Zealand took 2117 balls in 9 Test matches to take 50 wickets in Australia.
- ❖ Bumrah bowled 2141 deliveries in 10 Test matches to take 50 wickets in Australia.

Most wickets by Indians in a Single Overseas Nation

- ❖ Before Bumrah's feat in Brisbane, Kapil Dev and Ishant Sharma held the record for most wickets outside India in a single country.

- ❖ Kapil Dev had taken 51 wickets in Australia in 11 Test matches, and Ishant Sharma 51 wickets in England in 15 Test matches.
- ❖ Jasprit Bumrah, Kapil Dev and Ishant Sharma are the only three bowlers who have taken 50 or more wickets outside India in a single country.
- ❖ Anil Kumble has taken 49 wickets in Australia in 10 Test matches.

Mamata Banerjee Launches Banglar Bari Housing Initiative

Key Points:

- ❖ West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has launched the "Banglar Bari" housing scheme, a state-funded initiative designed to provide affordable housing to the people of West Bengal. The scheme is a response to the BJP-led Central government's alleged negligence in distributing funds to the state.
- ❖ West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has launched the "Banglar Bari" housing scheme, a state-funded initiative aimed at providing affordable housing to the people of West Bengal.
- ❖ This move comes as a response to the alleged negligence by the BJP-led Central government regarding the distribution of funds under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY). The launch, which took place at the state secretariat Nabanna, involved the handing over of the first installment of Rs 60,000 to 42 beneficiaries across 21 districts.



Good Governance Week to Begin on December 19, 2024

Key Points:

- ❖ Good Governance Week 2024 will be held from December 19 to December 24, 2024.

A key part of this national initiative is the Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore campaign, which will take place across over 700 districts, states, and union territories in India. The campaign focuses on addressing public grievances. Good Governance Week 2024 is scheduled to take place from December 19 to December 24, 2024.



Bhutan Confers Royal Honour on Indian Educationist Arun Kapur

Key Points:

- ❖ Indian educationist Arun Kapur has been conferred the rare 'Dasho' title and Red Scarf by Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel at the 117th National Day celebrations. This honor, typically given to senior Bhutanese officials acknowledges Kapur's significant contributions to education in India, Bhutan.
- ❖ Indian educationist Arun Kapur, known for his contributions to education in India, Bhutan, and Oman, has been honoured by Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel. At the 117th Bhutanese National Day celebrations, held at the Changlimithang stadium in Thimphu, Kapur was conferred the prestigious Red Scarf and the title 'Dasho', a rare honour usually given to senior Bhutanese officials.
- ❖ This marks another milestone in his long-standing association with Bhutan's educational development.



Madhya Pradesh Welcomes 10th International Forest Fair

Key Points:

- ❖ The 10th International Forest Fair in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, began on December 17, 2024, and will run until December 23. The fair aims to promote sustainable forest practices, empower local communities, and encourage collaboration among stakeholders in the forestry sector.
- ❖ The 10th International Forest Fair, held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, commenced on December 17, 2024, and will run until December 23.
- ❖ This fair focuses on promoting sustainable forest practices, empowering local communities, and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders in the forestry sector. The event provides a platform for government officials, traders, producers, scientists, and policymakers to engage in meaningful discussions and knowledge exchange.

Scientists develop 'kisan kavach' to shield farmers from pesticide sprays

Key Points:

- ❖ Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh has unveiled Kisan Kavach, Bharat's first-of-its-kind anti-pesticide bodysuit. Designed to protect farmers from the harmful effects of pesticide exposure, this innovation marks a transformative step in ensuring farmer safety.



- ❖ Developed by BRIC-inStem, Bangalore, in collaboration with Sepio Health Pvt. Ltd., the bodysuit offers protection against pesticide-induced toxicity, which often leads to severe health complications, including breathing disorders, vision loss, and, in extreme cases, death.
- ❖ The washable and reusable suit, priced at ₹4,000, can last up to a year and employs advanced fabric technology to deactivate harmful pesticides upon contact, ensuring farmer safety like never before.

Singer and musician, Pandit Sanjay Marathe passes away

Key Points:

- ❖ Noted classical singer and harmonium artist Pandit Sanjay Ram Marathe died at 68. Pandit Sanjay Marathe was the eldest son of the legendary musician Pandit Ram Marathe. He received prestigious awards and honours for harmonium playing and singing.
- ❖ He actively participated in various programs organised on the occasion of his father's birth centenary this year. With the help of his younger brother Mukund Marathe, Pandit Sanjay Marathe revived and staged the famous Marathi musical drama 'Sangit Mandarmala'.

