

PM pushes for simultaneous polls

Day One: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives to address the media in New Delhi on Monday. V. Sudershan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday urged NDA constituents to “at least start a debate” on the need for “one nation, one election” — his oft-emphasised idea of simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies.

Speaking to NDA floor leaders in Parliament, which included Shiv Sena MP Anandrao Adzul despite his party’s recent resolution to go it alone in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Mr. Modi raised the issue of simultaneous polls.

Impact on development

“Prime Minister Modi said that while laws were framed in Parliament, it was important to create an environment where the people were also aware and supportive of this idea, as it was aimed at relieving the governance machinery from constantly being in poll mode. That, he said, affected development works as frequent imposition of model codes of conduct for election-bound States could affect decisions and their implementation,” said an NDA floor leader who was present at the meeting.

Significantly, JD(U) leader and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday declared that the Assembly polls would be held in Bihar in 2020, the scheduled year for such polls.

The NDA passed a resolution hailing the Prime Minister for his speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos and the presence of heads of 10 ASEAN countries as chief guests at the Republic Day parade, sources said.

MPs’ attendance issue

The meeting was preceded by a meeting of the BJP Parliamentary Party executive in which Mr. Modi and party president Amit Shah stressed the need for maximum presence of party MPs in Parliament to support the government agenda during the budget session.

Absenteeism of a section of MPs during sessions has been a concern for the party leadership. In the previous session of Parliament, the OBC Bill granting Constitutional status to the Backward Classes Commission was held up because of the absence of many MPs from the Treasury benches.

A party leader said the Prime Minister credited women Cabinet Ministers — External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman — for the successful conclusion of his Davos trip and the 10-nation ASEAN summit in New Delhi.

Mr. Modi spoke about the need for lawmakers to attend meetings of parliamentary panels, and underlined the importance of the budget session, which started on Monday, and said key issues would be taken up.

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