

Pranab backs simultaneous polls

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President Pranab Mukherjee on Wednesday again came out in support of simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.

“There are talks of simultaneous elections in the political circles. It could be possible if the political parties seriously arrive at a consensus. It may be possible because it can remove a lot of inconvenience in terms of management,” Mukherjee said at the 7th National Voters’ Day celebrations here.

He added that the Election Commission should take the initiative. Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi said, however, that such an election would require constitutional amendments and political consensus.

Addressing a seminar on “Strategies for Empowering Young and Future Voters” organised by the Election Commission of India on the eve of 7th National Voters’ Day on Tuesday, Zaidi said, “The commission, with certain additional resources, can undertake the exercise of simultaneous elections in future.”

But, he said, there are two pre-conditions. “One, there should be an amendment in the Constitution through a process of political consensus and we will need some additional resources in terms of electronic voting machines, etc.” Mukherjee’s reiteration of support comes even as Modi is slated to call an all-party meeting on the subject. A few months ago, the law ministry had asked the Election Commission to submit its views on the report of a parliamentary standing committee which had supported the idea of holding simultaneous polls.