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# Election is for differing versions of democracy

Opposition nominee for RS Deputy Chairman writes to MPs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Opposition candidate for Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and RJD MP Manoj K. Jha in a letter to all non-BJP lawmakers of the Upper House, while appealing for their support, said the contest is not about numbers but about two different versions of parliamentary democracy. Mr. Jha filed his nomination on Friday.

He noted in his letter that it is the collective will of the Opposition that this election should not be seen as a contest for power to legislate at the level of the Union government, nor should it be seen as a contest between two individuals.

"In view of the great parliamentary tradition, this election is about two different versions of our parliamentary democracy - one which sees it as a number game and the other which places importance on critique, discussion and consensus building in the inter-



**I am requesting your support to make a statement in favour of an accountable system of governance**

MANOJ K. JHA  
RJD leader

est of our country and its people," Mr. Jha wrote.

## Numbers favour BJP

The election is heavily tilted in favour of the ruling coalition, led by the BJP, who have again fielded JD(U) MP and former Deputy Chairman Harivansh. Mr. Harivansh was RS Deputy Chair-

man till his previous term ended in April. He has since been re-elected to the Upper House. Mr. Harivansh defeated Congress leader B.K. Hariprasad and won by 125 votes to 105 votes in elections held in August 2018.

This time around, the ruling coalition is in a better position, with BJP leaders claiming the support of 140 members.

There are also differences within the Opposition, with the DMK withdrawing its candidate at the last minute.

Mr. Jha also sought to make this a battle for rights of States. "I am requesting your support not simply to win an election but to make a strong statement in favour of an accountable system of governance. A system in which regional parties that have formed State governments do not have to depend on quid pro quo with the party in power at the Centre just to maintain a non-adversarial, federal State-Union relationship."