Elections are not a referendum

The reduction of Assembly elections to a referendum diminishes the political competence of voters to decide what sort of government they wish to be ruled by.

Koti in Punjab

The Koti eviction by the government has brought to the fore a number of issues, including the lack of land rights for the residents of this area. The government's actions have been widely criticized for their arbitrary nature.

Farewell with a message

The political landscape of Punjab is changing, with new leaders emerging in the wake of the Koti eviction.

Letters to the Editor

Readers have expressed their opinions on the Koti eviction and the lack of land rights for the residents of this area.

The Champaran example

Gandhi's nonviolent approach is a model that can be applied in similar situations today. It's important to maintain the spirit of peace and justice in our current political climate.

Missing the Asian tailwind?

India should seize the opportunity to improve relations with its neighbors and focus on economic growth. The recent developments in the region provide a chance to shape the future of the Asian Century.

Policy Watch

Fifty days later

Regardless of the outcome of the Assembly elections, it is crucial to focus on the needs of the people and the welfare of the citizens. The government should be held accountable for its actions and decisions.
Elections are not a referendum-
- Five States: Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Manipur, Goa and Uttarakhand- be read as a referendum on demonetisation.

Civic engagement
- Referendums are, of course, a ready and a convenient method of resolving incompatible opinions. Once citizens “speak” on an issue that has been “referred” to them, the debate is considered closed.
- The United Kingdom- referendum on whether citizens wish to leave or stay in the European Union
- Elections are, however, a moment, albeit(यद्यपि) a significant one, in an ongoing process of civic engagement-They represent a decisive moment - with structures, institutions, and holders of power.
- If the BJP does not win in politically States, the policy of demonetisation will hardly be rolled back-
- Central government will not even consider resignation.

Impact of demonetisation
- Reputed economists- impact of demonetisation will be known after one or, possibly, two years. What is the point of representing election results, as a referendum on policy decisions

Role of civil society- John Locke
- Civil society organisations inspire and sustain debates on the public good- media has a crucial role to play in the making of enlightened public opinion.
- There is nothing more destructive for democracy than uninformed and quick decisions on issue X or Y.
Social audits and report cards issued by civil society organisations, which keep watch on acts of government.

Citizens of a conflict-ridden Manipur will decide whether the existing government deserves another term or Irom Chanu Sharmila, should be given a chance -also known as the "Iron Lady"- is a civil rights activist, political activist, and poet from Manipur.

In Punjab
The once rich agrarian State is trapped between two non-performing parties interested more in the privileges and profits of office than in providing the preconditions of a good life.

In Uttarakhand
Witnessed little but environmental destruction, political instability and corruption.

In Goa
Cosmopolitanism - Elections provide a chance for voters to exert their autonomy from barren politics that promise nothing but hate. -Cosmopolitanism is the ideology that all human beings belong to a single community, based on a shared morality.

In UP
U.P. occupies the centre of political imaginations, but its citizens continue to be deprived of basic resources that make life worth living.
Elections are a mode of civic engagement, this proposition is of value.
John Locke in his 1690 *Second Treatise of Government* - Discusses men's move from a state of nature characterized by perfect freedom and governed by reason to a civil government in which the authority is vested in a legislative and executive power. They are governed by reason and seek the preservation of mankind.
India
States and Union Territories
- State Capital
- Union Territory Capital
The Champaran example

- Gandhi’s movement, a century ago, was a political campaign operating in a more hostile environment than today’s. Yet it brought lasting reform without alienating the opposition.
- Mahatma Gandhi’s Champaran movement-1917- hundred years ago- There is always space for constructive politics — one that doesn’t treat the opposition as the enemy, and one that tries to bring about change without damaging social harmony. Taking everyone along
- Our nationalist mythology has painted the Champaran movement as an outright revolt against an oppressive colonial government
- But in fact, there never was a Champaran movement as such- Gandhi did not organise protest marches, strikes, satyagraha or civil disobedience in Champaran.
- Rather than open rebellion against the government, he used- art of political persuasion to bring about lasting change that was acceptable to all sides.
- In Champaran, relations between the government, British planters and the peasants had been problematic for many decades
  1- due to the oppressive system of forced indigo production
  2- unfair rents.
- The peasants had tried everything from violent uprisings to government petitions, but had failed to change the fundamental situation
- In April 1917, Gandhi arrived at the scene not to lead an agitation but with the stated purpose-maintain respectful relations with the local officials and the planters
- He and his team were only studying the problems — documenting hundreds of testimonies from peasants about their condition- Gandhi kept compiling these and submitting them to the government as reports.
Victory without vindictiveness (प्रतिकारिता)

A commission was announced which included Gandhi as the representative of the peasants.

The appointment of the commission was only a half-victory- Gandhi knew that without the acquiescence (रज़ामंदी) of the planters, its recommendations would have little weight-used the commission as a platform for negotiations (South Africa)

He commission recommended abolishment of the forced indigo cultivation, a major victory for the peasants.

It was a momentous achievement- Gandhi to the helm of national politics.

However, it is crucial to remember that Gandhi realised it without a single protest march, a single anti-planter speech or even a newspaper editorial criticising the government.

Gandhi saw his work as his contribution to the imperial cause: “by resisting the age long tyranny (उत्पीड़न), I have shown the ultimate sovereignty of British justice”.
Farmers in Champaran had earlier revolted against the conditions of indigo cultivation in 1914 (at Pipra) and 1916 (Turkaulia). Then Pandit Raj Kumar Shukla and Ram Lal Sah persuaded Mahatma Gandhi to visit Champaran and the "Champaran Satyagraha" began. At around the same time the Indian National Congress in December 1916 passed at Lucknow a resolution requesting the Government to appoint a committee of both officials and non-officials to inquire into the agrarian trouble facing the district
Missing the Asian tailwind (wind blowing in the same direction as the path of a ship or aircraft.)

✓ India should review relations with neighbours, focus on the economy and join the OBOR to shape the ‘Asian Century’
✓ Tectonic shift in the global geopolitical economy, to which powers such as the U.S., China and Russia have responded.
✓ India is yet to formulate a worldview even as Asia, after a gap of 260 years, is again set to become the centre of the world
✓ Till 1757, India was the richest country with its wealth based on textile export: India clothed the world- made enabled the British to secure the “Diwani” of Bengal. (Q-King)
✓ Industrial Revolution (textile production)-brought about colonisation and impoverishment(दररद्रिा).
✓ In 1950, India was richer than China; now it is a fifth the size of the Chinese economy. China will soon surpass the U.S. as the largest economy, and a young and digital India can overtake China by 2050-How do we achieve our potential?
✓ Recognising global trends

1- “Look East Policy” enunciated in 1992 does not have much to show for it other than the sale of coastal patrol craft to Vietnam.
2- In the west, India’s investment of $500 million in the Chabahar port- is minuscule compared to China’s investment of $46 billion in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) ending in Gwadar, a port just 100 miles away.
3- Despite investments in Afghanistan, political discussions there exclude us.
4- In South Asia, only Bhutan can still be considered to be in our “sphere of influence
✓ India now finds itself- isolated in continental Asia- Russia and the Central Asian countries are linking their infrastructure to China’s One Belt, One Road (OBOR)
✓ NITI Aayog has yet to develop a strategy laying out how India can become a $10- trillion economy by 2032.
✓ Currently, there is no national perspective on the uncertainties, challenges and opportunities from global forces and technological innovation reshaping global politics, economy and society
It’s now about connectivity

✓ The post-1950 world order designed by the U.S. rested on a “tripod” of rules—global trade with dispute settlement, global security system resting on alliances, and deliberations in the United Nations based on a division between donors and recipients
✓ The re-emergence of China has limited the ability of the U.S. in setting the global agenda—South China Sea
✓ China is fast replacing global rules with connectivity, the OBOR, through infrastructure, new institutions (AIIB-Q-HQ) and integrated markets
✓ Primary concern of the U.S., Russia and China in South Asia is the threat to themselves from terrorist safe havens in Pakistan.
✓ U.S. Senate-Game—both designated India a “major defence partner” to facilitate defence sales and provided Pakistan with nearly $1 billion in military assistance conditional on action against the Haqqani network operating in Afghanistan while being silent on the safe havens for terrorists operating in India
✓ Mr. Trump’s policy shift considering a deal with China on trade as more important than security concerns
✓ We should become a partner in the OBOR adding a “Digital Sustainable Asia”
✓ Participation in the OBOR and treating the Line of Control as a “soft border
President's rule. In the Republic of India, the phrase "President's rule" refers to the imposition of Article 356 of the Constitution of India on a State whose constitutional machinery has failed. The proclamation is issued by the state's Governor after obtaining the consent of the President of India.

Shah 'Alam conveying the grant of the Diwani to Lord Clive. A member of the East India Company. The Treaty of Allahabad was signed on 12 August 1765, between the Mughal Emperor Shah ... Company Diwani rights, or the right to collect taxes on behalf of the Emperor from the eastern province of Bengal-Bihar-Orissa.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is an international financial institution that aims to support the building of infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region. The bank has 57 member states (all "Founding Members") and was proposed as an initiative by the government of China. The initiative gained support from 37 regional and 20 non-regional Prospective Founding Members (PFM), all of which have signed the Articles of Agreement that form the legal basis for the bank. The bank started operation after the agreement entered into force on 25 December 2015, after ratifications were received from 10 member states holding a total number of 50% of the initial subscriptions of the Authorized Capital Stock. Major economies that did not become PFM include the G7/G8 members' Japan and the United States, although Canada was accepted on 23 September 2016.

The United Nations has addressed the launch of AIIB as having potential for "scaling up financing for sustainable development" for the concern of global economic governance. The capital of the bank is $100 billion, equivalent to $2/3 of the capital of the Asian Development Bank and about half that of the World Bank.

The bank was proposed by China in 2013 and the initiative was launched at a ceremony in HQ-Beijing in October 2014.
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