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**EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

# One Nation, One Election — Remedy Worse Than the Disease

THE HINDU

9 March 2026

**SUBJECTS COVERED****POLITY****GS PAPERS****GS2****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

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# One Nation, One Election — Remedy Worse Than the Disease

 The Hindu

9 March 2026

GS2

 The Hindu

MAINS RELEVANCE:

GS Paper 2



## INTERVIEW ANGLE

*"The Constitution places accountability of the executive to the legislature above administrative convenience — do you think One Nation One Election fundamentally alters this principle?"*

## WHY IN NEWS

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice began public consultations on the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, which proposes simultaneous Lok Sabha and state assembly elections. *The Hindu* on March 9, 2026 argues that the proposal's constitutional risks and democratic costs outweigh its administrative benefits.

## THE EDITORIAL'S ARGUMENT

*The Hindu* makes three core arguments against One Nation One Election (ONOE):

- 1. The constitutional architecture does not permit it.** Articles 75 and 164 make the Council of Ministers collectively responsible to the respective legislatures — this means an executive can fall at any time. Fixing election cycles artificially subordinates executive accountability to administrative convenience, reversing the constitutional priority.
- 2. International experience is cautionary, not encouraging.** Indonesia's 2019 simultaneous elections killed nearly 900 poll workers from overwork. The Indonesian Constitutional Court subsequently mandated separate elections from 2029 onward — making India's move to adopt a model that others are abandoning deeply questionable.
- 3. The cost savings argument is overstated.** Total election expenditure (~₹4,500 crore per Lok Sabha cycle) is only 0.03% of GDP. The "cost" of democracy is not a financial problem; it is the price of accountability.

## CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### What ONOE Proposes

The 129th Constitutional Amendment Bill proposes:

Synchronisation of all Lok Sabha and state assembly elections

A “fixed tenure” of 5 years even for assemblies formed mid-cycle (serving only the unexpired term)

Article 82A as the new provision enabling presidential notification of the “Appointed Date”

If a hung house emerges and no government is formed, fresh elections limited to the remainder of the original 5-year cycle

### Constitutional Provisions at Stake

Article	Current Provision	ONOE Impact
<b>Art. 75(3)</b>	Council of Ministers responsible to Lok Sabha	Accountability becomes theoretical if elections are locked
<b>Art. 164(2)</b>	State Ministers responsible to state legislature	Same risk at state level
<b>Art. 83</b>	Duration of Houses (5 years or dissolution)	ONOE removes dissolution as meaningful accountability tool
<b>Art. 172</b>	State Legislature term	Fixed regardless of political reality
<b>Art. 82A</b> (new)	Enabling provision for ONOE	Lacks clear criteria; discretionary abuse possible

### The “Unexpired Term” Problem

If a state assembly is elected mid-cycle (say, 2 years into the 5-year Lok Sabha cycle), it will serve only 3 years – not a full 5-year term. The editorial argues this:

Devalues the voter’s franchise (electing a government that will be dissolved prematurely)

Discourages long-term policymaking by state governments

Creates a constitutional oddity where mandates have different effective durations

## ARGUMENTS FOR ONOE (THAT THE EDITORIAL ADDRESSES)

Proponents argue ONOE will:

Reduce election expenditure (₹4,500 crore per LS cycle)

Limit security force deployment

Allow governance continuity (Model Code of Conduct freezes policy announcement periods)

Improve voter turnout through concentrated electoral engagement

The editorial counters each: costs are minimal relative to GDP; security deployment is manageable; Model Code operates for weeks, not years; and simultaneous elections can actually suppress regional issues under national waves.

## UPSC CRITICAL ANALYSIS

**First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) risk:** India's FPTP system means simultaneous elections could create "wave" outcomes sweeping both Lok Sabha and assemblies — potentially weakening regional parties and the federal balance that 20+ years of coalition politics has built.

**High Law Commission involvement:** The Law Commission's 2018 report (170th Report) had examined ONOE but noted constitutional amendments required were extensive. The Ram Nath Kovind Committee (2023) recommended a phased approach.

**Federal implications:** State elections serve as "referendums" on local governance; merging them with national elections nationalises local issues and systematically advantages nationally-dominant parties.

**GS-4 angle:** Is administrative efficiency a sufficient justification for altering the constitutional architecture? The editorial answers: No — the Constitution's design deliberately creates "inefficiencies" (like frequent elections) as accountability mechanisms.

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Art. 82A (new), Art. 75(3), 83, 164, 172; 129th Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2024; Law Commission 2018 Report; Ram Nath Kovind Committee (2023); Indonesia 2019 simultaneous elections.

### MAINS GS-2:

Constitutional design — accountability vs. efficiency; federal implications of ONOE; electoral reforms.

### ESSAY/GS-4:

"Efficiency is not always virtue in democratic governance."

★ **FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA**

**ONE NATION ONE ELECTION — CORE DATA:**

Bill: **Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024**

Key committee: **Ram Nath Kovind Committee (2023)** — recommended phased ONOE

New article proposed: **Art. 82A** (enables “Appointed Date” for synchronisation)

Law Commission report: **170th Report (2018)** — first systematic examination

Election cost benchmark: **~₹4,500 crore** per Lok Sabha cycle = **0.03% of GDP**

**CONSTITUTIONAL ARTICLES IN PLAY:**

Art. 75(3) — CoM responsible to Lok Sabha

Art. 164(2) — State CoM responsible to state legislature

Art. 83 — Duration of Houses of Parliament

Art. 172 — Duration of state legislatures

**INDONESIA PARALLEL:**

2019: First simultaneous elections; ~900 poll workers died from overwork

2024: Constitutional Court mandated return to separate elections from 2029

**OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:**

Model Code of Conduct (MCC): Activated at election announcement; freezes new policy announcements

First-Past-The-Post (FPTP): India’s current system; no runoff; highest vote-getter wins

Proportional representation (PR): Alternative system used in many countries; not proposed for India

Countries with fixed election cycles: USA (fixed 4-year presidential cycle), Germany, Canada — but all have parliamentary accountability provisions

Source: The Hindu, Vajiram & Ravi

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