

THE HINDU

India has become election-only democracy: Guha

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU: "The idea that a large and complex country like India could go straight into elections seemed an amazing idea to policymakers and the public. Yet the first elections were successful, and continue to be free and fair today," said historian Ramachandra Guha on Sunday.

He was speaking here at a panel discussion on 'Indian Democracy: Looking forward, looking back', organised by the Jain University and Lokniti Centre of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, on the occasion of the 10th year of the summer school.

Speaking about how the first elections were met with incredulity, Mr. Guha said that the quality of discourse and debate in India between elections had reduced from the initial post-Independence days.

"India has become an election-only democracy," he said, pointing to the fall in standards in police and judiciary.

Ashutosh Varshney, another panellist, too raised the question whether or not In-

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dia had a democracy between elections. Suhas Palshikar tried to look at the question of where democracy went from the present situation.

"The whole concept of nation is undergoing a change in the last 20 years," he said. Around 200 students and staff of Jain University and students of the summer school were present.