1971 Indian general election

General elections were held in India between 1 and 10 March 1971 to elect members of the fifth Lok Sabha. They were the fifth general elections since independence in 1947. The 27 Indian states and union territories were represented by 518 constituencies, each with a single seat.[2] Under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, the Indian National Congress (R) led a campaign which focused on reducing poverty and won a landslide victory, overcoming a split in the party and regaining many of the seats lost in the previous election.[3]

Background

Congress party split

During her previous term, there had been internal divisions in the Indian National Congress between Indira Gandhi and the party establishment, especially Morarji Desai. In 1969, she was expelled from the party, causing a split. Most of the Congress MPs and grassroots support joined Gandhi's Indian National Congress (Requisitionists) faction, which was recognised by the Election Commission as being the successor to the previous party. 31 MPs who opposed Gandhi formed Indian National Congress (Organisation) party.

Minority government

The Second Indira Gandhi government, formed in November 1969 and dissolved in March 1971, was the first minority government in independent India. After the split, the INC(R) held 221 seats in the 523-seat parliament, 41 seats short of a majority. However, Gandhi and her cabinet remained in power by relying on outside support from left-wing parties like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (26 seats), the Communist Party of India and it's recently formed breakaway faction, the CPI(Marxist) (who together had 42 seats), giving the government a total of 289 seats, a comfortable majority and far more than the minimum of 262 seats required for a majority. Knowing that her minority government would eventually fall, on 27 December 1970, President V.V. Giri dissolved the Lok Sabha at the recommendation of Gandhi.
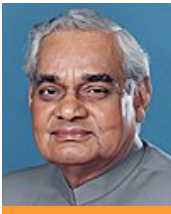
Opposition alliance
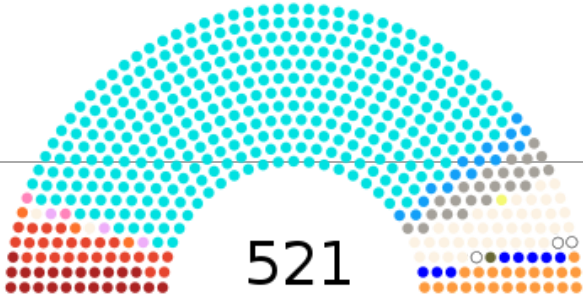
INC(O) formed a pre-poll alliance with Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP), Praja Socialist Party (PSP), the Swatantra Party and Bharatiya Jana Sangh BJS and several other regional parties opposed to the INC(R). They agreed to field one candidate against the INC(R) candidate in every constituency in order to defeat Gandhi's party.

Results

Despite the split, the ruling faction gained votes and seats to win a strong majority, while the Grand Alliance was badly trounced and lost more than half of their seats.

1971 Indian general election

1–10 March 1971[1]

518 of the 521 seats in the Lok Sabha
260 seats needed for a majority

Registered	274,189,132
Turnout	55.27% (▼ 5.77pp)

	Indira Gandhi	Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Leader	Indira Gandhi	Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Party	INC(R)	ABJS
Last election	40.78%, 283 seats	9.31%, 35 seats
Seats won	**352**	22
Seat change	▲ 69	▼ 13
Popular vote	**64,033,274**	10,777,119
Percentage	**43.68%**	7.35%
Swing	▲ 2.90pp	▼ 1.96 pp

	Puchalapalli Sundarayya	K. Kamaraj
Leader	Puchalapalli Sundarayya	K. Kamaraj
Party	CPI(M)	INC(O)
Last election	4.28%, 12 seats	–
Seats won	25	16
Seat change	▲ 6	*New*
Popular vote	7,510,089	15,285,851
Percentage	5.12%	10.43%
Swing	▲ 0.84pp	*New*

521

Party	Votes	%	Seats	+/−
Indian National Congress (R)	64,033,274	43.68	352	+69
Indian National Congress (Organisation)	15,285,851	10.43	16	New
Bharatiya Jana Sangh	10,777,119	7.35	22	−13
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	7,510,089	5.12	25	+6
Communist Party of India	6,933,627	4.73	23	0
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	5,622,758	3.84	23	−2
Swatantra Party	4,497,988	3.07	8	−36
Samyukta Socialist Party	3,555,639	2.43	3	−20
Bharatiya Kranti Dal	3,189,821	2.18	1	New
Telangana Praja Samithi	1,873,589	1.28	10	New
Praja Socialist Party	1,526,076	1.04	2	−11
Shiromani Akali Dal	1,279,873	0.87	1	New
Utkal Congress	1,053,176	0.72	1	New
All India Forward Bloc	962,971	0.66	2	0
Peasants and Workers Party of India	741,535	0.51	0	−2
Revolutionary Socialist Party	724,001	0.49	3	New
Republican Party of India (Khobragade)	542,662	0.37	0	New
Kerala Congress	542,431	0.37	3	+3
Bangla Congress	518,781	0.35	1	−4
Indian Union Muslim League	416,545	0.28	2	0
Vishal Haryana Party	352,514	0.24	1	New
All India Jharkhand Party	272,563	0.19	1	New
Shiv Sena	227,468	0.16	0	New
Shoshit Dal Bihar	193,389	0.13	0	New
Socialist Unity Centre of India	157,703	0.11	0	New
Republican Party of India	153,794	0.10	1	0
Janta Party	139,091	0.09	0	New
All Party Hill Leaders Conference	90,772	0.06	1	0
United Front of Nagaland	89,514	0.06	1	New
Hindu Mahasabha	73,191	0.05	0	New
Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League	72,131	0.05	0	New
Bihar Prant Hul Jharkhand	66,669	0.05	0	New

Results by constituency
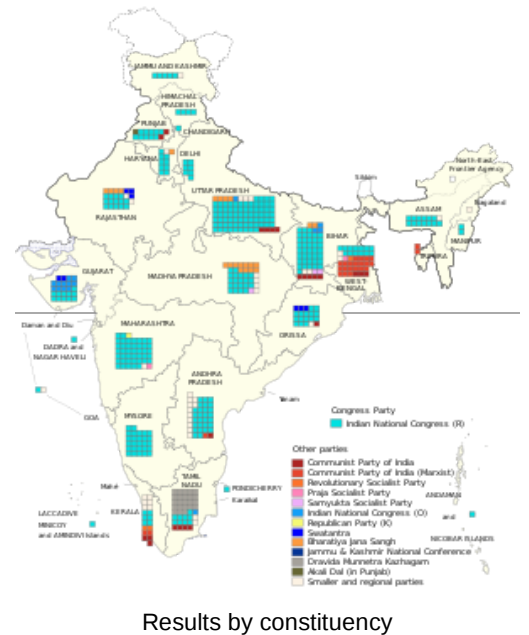
Prime Minister before election	**Prime Minister after election**
Indira Gandhi INC(R)	Indira Gandhi INC(R)

	Hindustani Shoshit Dal	65,925	0.04	0	New
	Revolutionary Communist Party of India	65,622	0.04	0	New
	Lok Sewak Sangh	62,527	0.04	0	New
	Jana Congress	60,103	0.04	0	0
	Nagaland Nationalist Organisation	58,511	0.04	0	−1
	United Goans – Seqveria Group	58,401	0.04	1	0
	Socialist Party	55,064	0.04	0	New
	Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party	54,597	0.04	0	New
	Proutist Bloc of India	43,849	0.03	0	New
	Telangana Congress	43,548	0.03	0	New
	Minorities Labour Party	41,198	0.03	0	New
	Indian Socialist Party	38,713	0.03	0	New
	Muslim Majlis Uttar Pradesh	36,526	0.02	0	New
	Lok Raj Party Himachal Pradesh	34,070	0.02	0	New
	Uttar Pradesh Kisan Mazdoor Party	31,729	0.02	0	New
	Manipur Peoples Party	31,029	0.02	0	New
	Akhil Bharatiya Ram Rajya Parishad	24,093	0.02	0	New
	Republican Party of India (Ambedkarite)	22,428	0.02	0	New
	Backward Classes Mahasabha	6,929	0.00	0	New
	Revolutionary Socialist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist)	6,198	0.00	0	New
	Chota Nagpur Bhumi Rakshak Party	4,982	0.00	0	New
	Independents	12,279,629	8.38	14	−21
Appointed members[a]				3	0
Total		**146,602,276**	**100.00**	**521**	**−2**
Valid votes		146,602,276	96.74		
Invalid/blank votes		4,934,526	3.26		
Total votes		**151,536,802**	**100.00**		
Registered voters/turnout		274,189,132	55.27		
Source: ECI (https://eci.gov.in/files/file/4115-general-election-1971-vol-i-ii/?do=download&r=9746&confirm=1&t=1&csrfKey=6df04992cf2c2fe96a9487465b425663)					

Results by state

State	Total seats	Seats won													
		INC (R)	CPM	CPI	DMK	BJS	INC (O)	TPS	SWA	SSP	PSP	BKD	Others	Ind.	App.
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	1													
Andhra Pradesh	41	28	1	1				10						1	
Assam	14	13											1		
Bihar	53	39		5		2	3			2			1	1	
Chandigarh	1	1													
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	1	1													
Delhi	7	7													
Goa, Daman and Diu	2	1											1		
Gujarat	24	11					11		2						
Haryana	9	7				1							1		
Himachal Pradesh	4	4													
Jammu and Kashmir	6	5												1	
Kerala	19	6	2	3									7	1	
Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands	1	1													
Madhya Pradesh	37	21				11				1				4	
Maharashtra	45	42									1		2		
Manipur	2	2													
Mysore	27	27													
Nagaland	1												1		
North-East Frontier Agency	1														1
Orissa	20	15		1					3				1		
Punjab	13	10		2									1		
Pondicherry	1	1													
Rajasthan	23	14				4			3					2	
Tamil Nadu	39	9		4	23		1						1	1	
Tripura	2		2												

State															
Uttar Pradesh	**85**	73		4		4	1					1		2	
West Bengal	**40**	13	20	3							1		2	1	
Anglo-Indians	**2**														2
Total	**521**	352	25	23	23	22	16	10	8	3	2	1	19	14	3

Source: ECI (https://web.archive.org/web/20140718175452/http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/LS_1971/Vol_I_LS71.pdf)

State wise Detailed

State (# of seats)	Party	Seats Contested	Seats won	% of votes
Andhra Pradesh(41)	Indian National Congress (R)	37	28	55.73
	Telangana Praja Samithi	14	10	14.33
	Communist Party Of India	11	1	5.94
	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	5	1	2.82
	Independent	93	1	8.21
	Indian National Congress (Organisation)	12	0	5.55
Assam(14)	**Indian National Congress (R)**	**13**	**13**	**56.98**
	All Party Hill Leaders Conference	1	1	3.0
	Communist Party Of India	5	0	5.65
	Praja Socialist Party	5	0	4.56
	Independent	31	0	17.92
Bihar(53)	**Indian National Congress (R)**	**47**	**39**	**40.06**
	Communist Party of India	17	5	9.85
	Indian National Congress (Organisation)	24	3	11.51
	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	28	2	12.1
	Samyukta Socialist Party	28	2	9.47
	Independent	183	1	9.11
Gujarat(24)	**Indian National Congress (R)**	**23**	**11**	**44.85**
	Indian National Congress (Organisation)	19	11	39.70
	Swatantra Party	4	2	5.46
Haryana(9)	**Indian National Congress (R)**	**9**	**7**	**52.56**
	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	3	1	11.19
	Vishal Haryana Party	3	1	9.16
	Indian National Congress (Organisation)	4	0	11.34
Jammu & Kashmir(6)	**Indian National Congress (R)**	**6**	**5**	**54.06**
	Independent	20	1	32.17
	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	3	0	12.23
Kerala(19)	**Indian National Congress (R)**	**7**	**6**	**19.75**
	Communist Party of India	3	3	9.09

	Kerala Congress	3	3	8.31
	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	11	2	26.21
	Revolutionary Socialist Party	2	2	6.43
	Muslim League	2	2	5.62
	Independent	27	1	17.97
Madhya Pradesh(37)	Indian National Congress (R)	**36**	**21**	**45.60**
	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	28	11	33.56
	Independent	73	4	13.93
	Samyukta Socialist Party	5	1	1.57
Maharashtra(45)	Indian National Congress (R)	**44**	**42**	**63.18**
	All India Forward Bloc	3	1	2.47
	Praja Socialist Party	8	1	1.68
	Republican Party Of India	1	1	1.11
	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	13	0	5.23
	Peasants And Workers Party Of India	12	0	5.33
Mysore(27)	Indian National Congress (R)	**27**	**27**	**70.87**
	Indian National Congress (Organisation)	17	0	16.36
Orissa(20)	Indian National Congress (R)	**19**	**15**	**38.46**
	Swatantra Party	13	3	15.91
	Utkal Congress	20	1	23.6
	Communist Party of India	3	1	4.31
Punjab(13)	Indian National Congress (R)	**11**	**10**	**45.96**
	Communist Party of India	2	2	6.22
	Shiromani Akali Dal	12	1	30.85
Rajasthan(23)	Indian National Congress (R)	**23**	**14**	**50.35**
	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	7	4	12.38
	Swatantra Party	8	3	14.64
	Independent	71	2	12.34
Tamil Nadu(39)	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	**24**	**23**	**35.25**
	Indian National Congress (R)	9	9	12.51
	Communist Party of India	4	4	5.43
	Indian National Congress (Organisation)	29	1	30.43
	Independent	27	1	3.24
	All India Forward Bloc	1	1	1.31
Uttar Pradesh(85)	Indian National Congress (R)	**78**	**73**	**48.54**
	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	37	4	12.23
	Communist Party of India	9	4	3.7
	Independent	231	2	8.4
	Bharatiya Kranti Dal	67	1	12.70
	Indian National Congress (Organisation)	44	1	8.6
	Samyukta Socialist Party	25	0	4.1
West Bengal(40)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	**38**	**20**	**34.29**
	Indian National Congress (R)	31	13	28.2

	Communist Party Of India	15	3	10.54
	Independent	28	1	5.79
	Bangla Congress	14	1	3.97
	Revolutionary Socialist Party	5	1	2.04
	Praja Socialist Party	3	1	1.29
	All India Forward Bloc	10	0	2.7
Source:ECI (https://web.archive.org/web/20140718175452/http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/LS_1971/Vol_I_LS71.pdf)				

Aftermath

On 12 June 1975, the Allahabad High Court invalidated the result in Gandhi's constituency on the grounds of electoral malpractices. Instead of resigning, Indira Gandhi called a state of emergency, suspending democracy and outlawed political opposition. After democracy was restored in 1977, the opposition Congress faction formed a coalition of parties called the Janata Party, which inflicted the Congress' first electoral defeat.

See also

- List of members of the 5th Lok Sabha
- Election Commission of India
- 1969 Indian presidential election

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