

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2009

Elections to the 15th Lok Sabha are to be held on the 30th April in Mumbai.

These are **national** elections.

While there will be regional, state-level and local issues that are important, we need to keep in mind that these elections are to choose the government at the Centre. Even though your selected candidate will represent your constituency in the Parliament, he will primarily address issues of national interest.

Since the party in majority will form the government, it is imperative that we choose a candidate whose party ideology matches ours and whose party has performed responsibly in the past.

So here's where Gyaan Connect comes to your rescue!

Having gone through some really informative websites and some boastful ones, GC has compiled some valuable and unbiased information to help you become an informed voter.

So go ahead, read on. Make the right decision and make your vote count.

COMPARISON OF THE 2 MAJOR PARTIES CONTESTING ELECTIONS

IDEOLOGY

BJP:

- Hindutva - a concern for the voice of the majority in India – the Hindus
- Supporting nationalistic sentiments
- Guided by Good Governance, Development and Security

CONGRESS:

- Secularism, nationalism, social justice, and economic growth for all, especially for the Aam Aadmi.
- Well being of the weaker sections / minorities of the society

RECESSION/GLOBAL CRISIS:

BJP:

- Low tax, Low interest regime in order to increase the purchasing power of people
- Arrest the loss of jobs by heavy investment in public sector
- Support to Hindustan Diamond Corporation to revive the economic slump in diamond industry
- Reduce interest rates for housing loans to boost the real estate market
- Easing credit availabilities
- Promoting SMEs and Retail Sector, boost to tourism sector
- Impose restrictions on foreign companies that do not hire Indian nationals with valid work visas

CONGRESS:

- Indian economy has shown considerable resilience under the most adverse international circumstances.
- Economic Growth – Average rate of economic growth in BJP's India Shining period – 5.8% vs. Congress' 8.5% during 2005-09.
- Focus – To stimulate demand in the domestic economy, to ensure more purchasing power in the hands of the people and more liquidity in the hands of companies.
 - Three stimulus packages announced
 - Interest Rates reduced
 - Credit rates to industry encouraged
 - Further public investment in agriculture and infrastructure
- Balance in public and private sector, rejects blind privatisation

TAX:

BJP:

- Increase income tax bracket to Rs. 3,00,000 and a further exemption of Rs. 50,000 for women and senior citizens.
- Exempt cooperative banks from income tax
- Income of senior citizens by way of pension be declared tax free
- All personnel of the Army, Air Force, Navy, as also paramilitary forces will be exempt from paying taxes on their salaries and perquisites
- Income tax benefits will be offered at 60 years instead of the present 65 years
- Interest on bank deposits of all other than corporates & business income will be tax free.
- Goods and Services tax will be implemented at 12-14% and will abolish Central Sales Tax(CST) and Fringe Benefit Tax(FBT)
- ESOPS and Minimum Alternative Tax(MAT) will be rationalised
- Illegally stashed black money in Swiss bank accounts will be brought back and used for infrastructure development, housing, health and social welfare.
- All Dharmik activities will be considered charity and will get tax incentives

CONGRESS

- Will implement Goods and Services Tax which will abolish all central and state level indirect taxes such as VAT, Excise Duty, Entertainment Tax, etc.

EMPOWERMENT OF WEAKER SECTIONS / MINORITIES & RESERVATIONS

BJP

- Boost opportunities for Entrepreneurship and Commerce among Dalits, OBCs and other weaker sections
- Education and job quotas for the Economically weaker sections not affecting the present quotas for OBCs/SC/ST
- Atrocities against the weaker sections will be firmly dealt with
- In contrast to the UPA years, when an additional 55 million people were pushed below the poverty line, BJP will bring families above the poverty line through aggressive policies and targeted development programmes
- Special provisions will be made for SC/ST/OBC and other underprivileged sections of the youth for skill development with focus on web-based training.
- Special focus to bring SC/STs/OBCs and women in the IT ambit development
- Financially empower women from Below poverty line/SC/ST

- National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment to enhance the income of all categories of working women. Remove gender discrimination in wages
- Remove all gender disparities in property rights, marital rights and cohabitation rights
- Promoting self employment and entrepreneurship for women
- Focus on empowerment of the low income groups in the Muslim community, especially women, by means of capital assistance and cash incentives, based on performance and attendance.
- Computer centres to be set up in rural and low income areas, Emphasis on crafts and small scale industries
- Special programme to be launched for the security of women and increase in the number of working women's hostels
- Propose a Uniform Civil Code

CONGRESS

- Education at all stages — primary, secondary and university — will be free in all respects for boys and girls belonging to dalit and adivasi communities.
- Coaching fees for all entrance exams for at least one lakh SC/ST students every year will be paid by the Central Government, along with an increase in National Scholarships
- Over 53,000 vacancies in government have been filled by SC/ST
- Reservations for SC/ST in private sector
- The Rajinder Sachar Committee was set up to look into the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community.
- Introduced reservation for women in Panchayats and Nagarpalikas and proposed 33% reservation in the Lok Sabha.
- Proposes to reserve one-third of all central government jobs for women.
- Reservation for the economically weaker sections of all communities in addition to existing reservations for SC/STs and OBCs

SECURITY

BJP

- Acquisition of military hardware will be expedited in a transparent time bound manner
- The pending issues of pay and privileges will be revisited and resolved to the satisfaction of the defence forces. A separate PAY COMMISSION for them will be soon set up
- Incentive based steps will be taken to make joining the defence forces an exciting proposition for the youth. This will include competitive pay and privileges, and pension benefits
- Take stern steps against militants
- Enhance naval security and Detect & detain illegal immigrants.
- Introduce a National Identity Card for citizens.

- Take Indian defence into a Super Computer era and increase scientific research & development in security
- Use diplomacy to isolate and stop cross-border militant attacks and support for separatist groups and Wage war against Maoist groups throughout the country.

CONGRESS

- Plan to provide every Indian with a unique identity card by 2011.
- Make defence forces technology-enabled and equip them with modern weapons, aircraft, ships and delivery systems to repel any threat from land, sea or air.
- Better provisions and professionalized training to police forces
- Comprehensive social security to those at special risk including
 - Single-woman headed households
 - Disabled and the elderly
 - Urban homeless
 - Released bonded workers
 - Members of primitive tribal groups and 'most backward' Dalit communities
 - Members of designated "most backward" Dalit communities

EDUCATION

BJP

- Central allocation to education raised to 6-9%
- Content and process of education will be modified and the outreach of Information Technology to be extended to every child
- Reforms in all levels of education, primary, secondary and higher education to make the education system stronger and up-to-date
- A National Student Bank will be set up to meet the banking requirements including study loans of students for students at 4% interest rate.
- Study loans will be made cheaper and more accessible by fixing student loan interest at 4%
- National Knowledge Incubation programme will be launched for the meritorious students from all strata of the society and atleast 1% of the best brains will be deployed for mentoring at the incubation centre
- Committed to massive expansion of modern education among Muslims, particularly for the girl child.
- Ragging to be made a criminal offence with strict punishment, wherein school/college/university authorities will be held culpable failing to adhere to the law.
- New National Commission on Education

CONGRESS

- Students admitted to any recognized course in any recognized college/university will be provided, on a need basis, either a scholarship or an educational loan without collateral repayable over a very long period.
- Education at all stages — primary, secondary and university — will be free in all respects for boys and girls belonging to Dalit and Adivasi communities.
- Reforms favouring education of girl child
- A massive expansion in higher education has been undertaken in the past two years—8 new IITs, 7 new IIMs, 5 new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, 30 new Central Universities, 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology and 374 new colleges in educationally-deprived districts
- Training programmes for teachers will be initiated and focus on improving physical environment in schools

YOUTH

BJP

- Propose to review, revive and relaunch the National Service Scheme(NSS) and National Cadet Corps(NCC) as effective vehicles to involve the youth in nation building and reinforcing their national spirit.
- Framing policies keeping in mind the concerns of Young India
- Encourage participation of the youth in decision making process and decision making bodies

CONGRESS

- SMEs and first generation entrepreneurs will be given access to collateral free credit, liberation from the multiplicity of laws and forms, and freedom from the clutches of inspectors
- The Indian National Congress will design and launch a voluntary national youth corps which would enable young men and women in the age group of 18-23 to serve up to two years in constructive nation-building activities for which they will be suitably compensated.
- Will also make a beginning to induct youth into organs of government
- Indian Youth Congress (IYC) and the National Students Union of India (NSUI)
- The Indian National Congress has always been the party that has reposed its confidence in youth. It was Rajiv Gandhi who gave all 18 year-olds the right to vote and it was he who declared Swami Vivekananda's birthday on January 12th as National Youth Day. The IT revolution that has spread in our country has opened up whole new avenues for our youth.

TERRORISM

BJP

Will implement the following things within 100 days of coming into power:

- Improve upon POTA to ensure it is more effective as an instrument of deterrence and as a tool to prosecute offenders without innocent people being harassed.
- Modernize Intelligence Agencies so that they are better equipped to use technology and cope with rapidly changing trends of terrorism
- National Security Council to be made accountable for real time intelligence dissemination
- A Digital Security Agency will be set up to enhance cyber security
- Reforms to be made to modernize police forces
- Launch a massive programme to detect, detain and deport illegal immigrants. Border management will be reviewed.
- National Maritime Authority to be set up to coordinate social security
- Special courts to be set up for speedy prosecution of those involved in acts of terrorism
- Better inter-state coordination and real time intelligence sharing to face the threats posed by Maoists.

CONGRESS

- Zero tolerance towards terrorism.
- What India needs is an intelligent and wise foreign policy, unlike the BJP's muscular foreign policy. India requires a foreign policy that is rooted in our traditions, gives us strength through our unity and common purpose, and radiates confidence.
- After the November 2008 attacks on Mumbai, the Congress-led UPA government mounted a forceful diplomatic campaign. It was this campaign that led to Pakistan admitting, for the first time, that Pakistani citizens were responsible for the attacks.

ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THEIR REGIME

BJP

- 3 new states- Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand- Formed in 2000
- POTA evoked to fight terrorism
- Centre gave Rs.1000 crore each year to states for police modernization.
- Sanctions after Pokharan lifted.
- Over 10 lakh new employment opportunities generated for the youth.
- IT-enabled sector growth. Today over 2.2 lakh job opportunities are created in ITES.
- Information Technology Act 2000 provides a legal framework for e-commerce and prevention of cyber crimes.
- In 50 years only 2.3 crore telephone connections sanctioned. In the last 5 years, over 4.74 crore connections provided.
- Mobile phones grew from 12 lakh in 1999 to 2.2 crore in 2004. Became affordable
- 85% coverage of rural India through Village Public Telephones.
- STD rates down from Rs. 24 per minute to Rs. 5 per minute
- Internet Telephony permitted.
- Successful implementation of disinvestment policy
- Electricity Act 2003
- Lower inflation rate during their tenure.

CONGRESS

- National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme - a great relief to common people
- Right To information Act
- Loan Waiver for Rs 60,000 Crores for Farmers
- Chandrayan-India Joined Elite Club
- Railway in Huge profit
- Anti Ballistic Missile Sys developed
- Brahmos Missile-the fastest in world
- Agricultural Growth Improved
- Defense Strategies Re-aligned with US
- Emerged as the 2nd fastest growing Economy
- More IITs
- Infrastructure growth prioritized
- Kashmir, no more inefficiencies as in Kargil, No more Coffin Biz, BJP's attempt to isolate Kashmir foiled
- Metro rails
- Pay Increment for central government employees

MAJOR UNFAVORABLE EVENTS DURING THEIR REGIME

BJP

1999

- Hijack of Indian Airlines Flight IC 814, which forced the Indian govt to release three terrorists.
- Reports of intelligence failures leading to the Kargil incursions going undetected
- Allegations that the Defence Minister George Fernandes took bribes over the purchase of coffins for soldiers who died in the battle.

2001

- On 13 December 2001, five gunmen infiltrated the Parliament House and attacked the parliament
- The Tehelka scandal exposed the BJP party chief taking unaccounted contributions in return for promised favours
- CBI chargesheeted senior BJP leaders for inciting the demolition of the Babri mosque
- 1 October 2001 - militants carried out attack, using car bomb and four suicide bombers, in Srinagar killing 38

2002

- Communal clashes happened in Gujarat under BJP rule, after an attack by a Muslim mob on a train comprising mostly of Hindu pilgrims. The state government of Gujarat (BJP led by Modi) has been accused of helping the Hindu mobs, a charge that it denies. The National Human Rights Commission criticized the government, pointing to "a comprehensive failure on the part of the State Government of Gujarat to control persistent violations of rights"
- 22 January 2002 – Attack on American Cultural Centre in Kolkata killing 25
- 10 September 2002 – Rafiganj train disaster planned by the Maoist group killing 130+
- 25 September 2002 – attack on Akshardham temple carried by 2 terrorists killing 29 devotees 1 police officer and 1 NSG commando.
- 6 December 2002 - Bomb goes off in a bus in Ghatkopar killing 2

2003

- 27 January 2003 - Bomb goes off on a bicycle in Vile Parle killing 1
- 14 March 2003 - Bomb goes off in a train in Mulund killing 10
- 28 July 2003 - Bomb goes off in a bus in Ghatkopar killing 4
- 25 August 2003 - Two Bombs go off in cars near the Gateway of India and Zaveri Bazaar killing 50

2004

- Controversy over the India Shining ads concerning the use of taxpayer's money by States or Central Governments for political gain of the ruling party. The BJP government spent approximately Rs. 500 crores for the advertisements campaign during 2004 Parliament elections.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN VIOLENCE

The rise of anti-Christian violence has been directly linked to the ascendancy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Human Rights Watch pins the responsibility for much of the violence on the Sangh Parivar; an umbrella group for the three principal Hindu Nationalist organizations, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

BARAK MISSILE SCANDAL

The Barak Missile Scandal is a case of defence corruption relating to the purchase of Barak Missile Systems by India from Israel. The case is currently under investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation, and several people including the Samata Party ex-treasurer R.K. Jain have been arrested. Others named in the First Information Report include politicians George Fernandes and Jaya Jaitley, and arms dealer and ex-naval officer Suresh Nanda, who is the son of retired chief of naval staff S.M. Nanda.

HAWALA SCANDAL

The Hawala scandal or hawala scam was an Indian political scandal involving payments allegedly received by politicians through hawala brokers, the Jain brothers. It was a US\$18 million bribery scandal that implicated some of the country's leading politicians. Those accused included Mr. L. K. Advani, Mr. Madhav Rao Scindia, Mr. Arjun Singh, and others.

GUJRAT FAKE ENCOUNTER CONTROVERSY

The 2007 Gujarat Fake Encounter Controversy started when the police of Gujarat state in India admitted on March 23 2007 to the killing of an alleged extortionist "Sohrabuddin Sheikh" in a staged gun battle on November 26, 2005. The police at that time had claimed that the man, belonged to the Pakistan linked terrorist group Lashkar-e-Toiba and was planning to assassinate Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi to avenge the death of Muslims killed in the 2002 Gujarat violence. The government also admitted that Sohrabuddin's innocent wife Kausarbi had been killed by the police and her body burnt in an attempt to remove the traces of the crime. It has been alleged by the Union Textile Minister Shankersinh Vaghela that Sohrabuddin and several other persons were killed in a similar fashion at the behest of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

CONGRESS

- 1984: Anti Sikh riots.
- 2005: Anti-Muslim riots of Mau, Uttar Pradesh.
- 2006: Hindu-Muslim Aligarh riots
- **Bofors Scandal**
- **Telgi Scam**

- **Cash-For-Vote Scandal**

Notes-for-vote or cash-for-votes scandal is an alleged scandal in which the United Progressive Alliance, the majority-holding parliamentary-party alliance of India, openly bribed Indian MPs in cash or currency-notes to the tune of multi-millions to survive its very first confidence vote on 22 July 2008 in the Lok Sabha after the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led Left Front withdrew support from the government over India approaching the IAEA for Indo-US nuclear deal.

TERROR STRIKES IN INDIA IN INC RULE

DATE	PLACE	INCIDENT	DEATHS	INJURED
Oct 29, '05	Delhi	Bombings	62	210
July 28, '05	Juanpur, UP	Train Blasts	13	50
Mar 7, '06	Varanasi	Bombing	28	101
Jul 11, '06	Mumbai	Train Bombings	209	714
Feb 18, '07	Panipat	Samjauta Express Bombings	68	50
May 18, '07	Hyderabad	Mecca Bombings	16	100
Aug 25, '07	Hyderabad	Bomb blast	42	54
Nov 23, '07	UP	6 Blasts in 3 places	18	81
May 13, '08	Jaipur	9 blasts in a span of 15 minutes	63	216
Jul 25, '08	Bangalore	9 Bombs explode	2	20
Jul 26, '08	Ahmedabad	21 bomb blasts in 70 minutes	56	200
Sept 13, '08	Delhi	5 bomb blasts in few minutes	30	130
Sept 27, '08	Delhi	One blast	2	20
Sept 29, '08	Gujarat & Maharashtra	Blast in Modasa and Malegaon	7	80
Oct 1, '08	Agartala, Tripura	Bomb Blast	4	100
Oct 21, '08	Imphal	Bike bomb	17	40
Oct 30, '08	Assam	18 bomb blast	81	470
Nov 26, '08	Mumbai	Bombing, Shooting and hostage crisis	179	308
Jan 01, '09	Guwahati	Low intensity blast	6	67

COMPARISON OF PRIME MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES

	Congress Candidate Dr. Manmohan Singh	BJP Candidate Mr. L.K.Advani
	77 years old	82 years old
	Education	
1.	PhD. in Economics from the University of Oxford Nuffield College	Graduated from Government Law College, Mumbai University
2.	Doctor of Civil Law	
	Previous government positions/posts	
1.	Prime Minister of India: 2004-09	Union Information and Broadcast Minister in 1977-79
2.	Worked Ministry of foreign trade and Finance Ministry of India: 1970s	Became the President of BJP:1986
3.	Governor of Reserve Bank of India: 1982-85	Home Minister during Vajpayee's PM tenure- 1988
4.	Deputy chairman of planning commission: 1985-87	Deputy prime Minister: 2002-04
5..	Finance Minister of India: 1991-96	Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha: 2004-09
6.	Leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha: 1998-04	
7.	Worked for Institutions like the IMF and the UN	
	Noteworthy Achievements	
1.	Successfully salvaged the Indo-U.S. Nuclear Deal, a strategically important deal, at the risk of losing the PM post.	Joined RSS at the age of 14
2.	Played a very important role in the Liberalization process of India.	Founded the BJP along with Mr. Vajpayee
3.	Introduced several reforms to change the economy from socialist to capitalist economy	Advocated Hindutva and was responsible for making the BJP presence felt in an increasing number of states.
4.	Has taught at university of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University	Known to have helped fuel BJP's rise by instigating a Hindu campaign for a Hindu temple in Ayodhya
		Infamous for:
		It is believed that a criminal case from 1947 is still pending in Pakistan against Mr. Advani for allegedly conspiring to assassinate Pakistan's first Governor-General Mohammad Ali Jinnah and other leaders

Individual Qualities		
	DR. MANMOHAN SINGH	MR. L.K.ADVANI
1.	A renowned Economist	Individual of great intellectual ability
2.	A visionary	A good speaker
3.	A skilled administrator	Experienced and mature
4.	Reputed to be a man of Integrity and Honesty	A perseverant and hard working leader
5.	Quiet, self-effacing man	
What Opposition says about them		
1.	Weak and meek PM	'Person of the Past'- Rahul Gandhi
2.	Puppet in hands of Sonia Gandhi	'Advani talks rubbish'- Manmohan Singh
3.	'Except for Sonia Gandhi's family, no one is rooting for him'- Narendra Modi	'Some people within the country are more dangerous than terrorists'- Sonia Gandhi referring to the Opposition
4.	India's first elected PM bereft of power	

ENDING NOTE

For all those who have been on a long vacation, here's the time to get back into action. It's time we wake up and do our duties. It's time we remember the promises we made post 26/11. It's time to stop complaining and start making the right decisions. That's right, it's time we go out and VOTE.

What you just read covers the important details of the 2 major parties. However, the key is to make an informed decision. So whichever is the party you wish to vote for, make it a point to read their manifesto and review their past performance before you vote. Make the right choice, make your voice heard.

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