



Model Indian National Congress Party Platform

Adapted from the 2019 Manifesto of the official Indian National Congress Party

Authored by /u/srajar4084 and /u/Superpacman04

Employment And Growth

Jobs

Unemployment is the gravest challenge to the country, and job creation should be the highest priority for the economy. Every section of society has been affected by growing unemployment and the destruction of existing jobs: youth, families, women, small business people, traders, farmers, daily-wage workers and agricultural labourers. Congress is dedicated to protecting existing jobs as well as creating new jobs for the unemployed.

1. Congress pledges to give the **highest priority** to protecting existing **jobs** and creating new jobs.
2. In order to underline the link between the growth of industry and the service sectors and the rapid creation of jobs, Congress will create a **new Ministry of Industry, Services and Employment**.
3. All of the **4 lakh vacancies** as on 1st April 2019 in the Central **Government**, Central Public Sector Enterprises, Judiciary and Parliament **will be filled** before the end of March 2020. As a condition for devolution of funds to the healthcare and education sectors and to Panchayats and Municipalities, Congress will request State Governments to fill all vacancies, estimated at 20 lakh, in the 2 sectors and the local bodies.

Industry

Congress initiated liberalisation in 1991 with a new Industrial Policy. Taking note of changes in both the global and the Indian economy, Congress promises another radical, forward-looking Industrial Policy. The BJP Government mouths empty slogans. Its record is dismal in terms of the growth rate of Industry sector GVA and gross capital formation in the Industry sector. Congress promises to reverse these disappointing trends.

1. Congress will work with State Governments to set up **New Industrial Towns** with the required infrastructure and turn them into manufacturing hubs for a variety of industrial products.
2. We will announce policies that will help India **retain its leading position** in the manufacture of engineering goods, petroleum products, gems & jewellery, drugs & pharmaceuticals, garments & textiles and chemicals.
3. We will announce policies that will help India **gain a leadership position** in steel, metals, cement, machinery, electronic goods, computer hardware, automobiles etc.

Infrastructure

A basic weakness of the Indian economy has been infrastructure. Flawed design, inefficient execution, insufficient capacity and poor maintenance of infrastructure have dragged India's growth rate down. Congress promises to address these deficiencies with a combination of planning, technology, quality and accountability. All available models and instrumentalities will be used to build infrastructure — public sector, private sector and public-private partnership. Roads, railways, and electricity are among the vital infrastructure. They are also crucial public goods.

1. Congress promises to **augment the total length of national highways** and increase the pace of construction. The focus will be on improved design and quality, maintenance and accountability.
2. Congress promises to massively **modernise all outdated railway infrastructure**. New projects will be implemented in accordance with the best international standards of design and quality.
3. Road construction and railways can be built using private capital and capacity. Congress will use sector-specific, tried and tested **PPP models** to increase the supply of these vital public goods.

Cities, Urbanisation & Urban Policy

India is fast urbanising. Nearly 34 percent of our population lives in towns and cities and the number is growing. As in the rest of the world, India's cities can become engines of growth. The Smart Cities Mission of the BJP government, which replaced the successful JNNURM, was a colossal failure and a waste of money with no visible results.

1. Congress promises to formulate a comprehensive policy on Urbanisation after wide consultation. We will address the issues concerning towns and cities including city governance, livelihoods, housing, habitat, pollution, climate change, urban transport and disaster management.
2. Congress will support State Governments to build new towns and cities as well as satellite towns.
3. Congress will introduce a new model of governance for towns and cities through a directly elected mayor with a fixed term of 5 years, an elected Council and a separate administrative structure for each urban body. The administration will be accountable to the Mayor and the Council and there will be a provision to recruit technical experts and build capacity as well as multi-disciplinary teams to do urban planning and implementing municipal works.

Rural Development

Congress promises to enhance infrastructure in rural areas and improve the quality of public goods such as roads, bridges, water supply, sanitation, electricity and schools.

1. In order to fill the gaps in sector-specific schemes as well correct any unintended bias, we will **empower Panchayats and Municipalities** to design and execute infrastructure projects. Congress promises to establish a non-lapsable **Rural Infrastructure Fund** that will provide loans and grants to specific infrastructure projects undertaken by Panchayats and Municipalities.
2. We will **launch MGNREGA 3.0** to address issues of water security, soil quality and similar issues that aggravate farmers' distress. To this end, we will:
 1. Increase the guaranteed days of employment up to 150 days in cases where 100 days have been achieved in a block/district;
 2. Use MGNREGA labour in the Water Bodies Restoration Mission and the Wasteland Regeneration Mission; and
 3. Use MGNREGA funds to build public assets such as primary health centres, classrooms, libraries, etc.
3. Congress promises to connect all villages and habitations with a population of 250 with a road under the **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**. Broadband connectivity will be provided to all village Panchayats by the year 2021.

Informal And Unorganised Sector

Congress promises a fair deal to the crores of workers and the self-employed who toil every day in the unorganised and informal sector.

1. We will encourage and **support micro and small enterprises** that collectivise unorganised sector workers including waste pickers and scrap collectors.
2. Congress will ensure that notified **minimum wages** are paid to workers in the unorganised sector.
3. Congress will **ratify ILO Convention 87** (Freedom of Association) and **ILO Convention 98** (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining).

An Economy That Works For All

Agriculture

Many years ago, Jawaharlal Nehru had said, ‘Everything can wait but not agriculture.’ In the last 5 years, under the BJP Government, the agriculture sector has been driven into deep crisis. Adequate MSP was denied for 4 years; the procurement machinery was non-existent or weak; debts of farmers mounted; prices of inputs increased steadily; credit was inadequate; demonetisation devastated the cash-based agricultural economy; co-operative credit societies and the apex co-operative banks were denied the right to convert their deposits, thereby choking co-operative credit to the farmer; the terms of trade moved decisively against agriculture; the crop insurance scheme robbed the farmer and enriched the insurance companies; and with little or no support from the government, farmers and farm labourers were left to fend for themselves. Congress has heard the cry of anguish of farmers, and feels the pain of their acute distress.

1. Immediately after forming governments in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the 3 Congress Governments waived the loans of farmers - as had been promised. Congress promises to **waive the outstanding farm loans** in other States as well.
2. We will not stop with just providing “*Karz Maafi*” or a loan waiver. Through a combination of remunerative prices, lower input costs, and assured access to institutional credit, we will set our Kisans on the path to “*Karz Mukti*,” or **Freedom from Indebtedness**.
3. **Debt is a civil liability**, and we will not allow criminal proceedings to be instituted against a farmer who is unable to pay his/her debt.

Economic Policy

India is a developing country, aspiring to be a middle-income country by the year 2030. Wealth creation and the welfare of our people are our 2 principal goals. Congress's economic philosophy is based on embracing the idea of an open and liberal market economy, creation of wealth, sustainable development,

reduction of inequalities, and assurance of welfare of all sections of people. Such growth will be driven by both the private sector and a viable public sector, and underpinned by a robust system of social security. Our economy is still over-regulated. Structural problems remain. Government control and bureaucratic interference are aplenty. Regulators have morphed into controllers. There is growing interference by the courts in economic policies. The BJP Government has reversed the clock of reforms. Congress promises to undo these distortions and restore an open, liberal market economy.

1. **Fiscal stability** is the starting point. Congress promises to reverse the BJP Government's fiddling with the target of fiscal deficit. Congress promises to achieve the target of 3 percent of GDP by 2020-21, and remain under that limit. Revenue deficit will be contained, as far as possible, under 1 per cent of GDP. Off-Budget and Extra-Budget borrowings will be faithfully reported with the justification for such debt, and the means of servicing and repaying such debt.
2. **Monetary policy** is the province of the Reserve Bank of India. Congress promises to reverse the unwarranted and illegal interference by the BJP Government into the functioning of the RBI. Congress will respect the **autonomy of the RBI** in matters reserved to the RBI under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1939, including the formulation of monetary policy. However, the Governor shall periodically render an account to a Committee of Parliament. Congress promises that the government will work closely with the RBI to ensure that fiscal policy and monetary policy are aligned to achieve the common goal of growth with price stability.

NYAY

The abolition of poverty remains the foremost goal of the Congress. We recall with pride that the Congress-led UPA government lifted 14 crore people out of poverty between 2004 and 2014. It is true that rapid and broad-based growth will reduce poverty, and, in the medium to long term, eliminate poverty. On the other hand, decisive and focused intervention has the capacity to eliminate poverty within a decade. Congress, therefore, sets the goal of elimination of abject poverty by the year 2030.

Fiscal stability is the starting point. Congress promises to reverse the BJP Government's fiddling with the target of fiscal deficit. Congress promises to achieve the target of 3 percent of GDP by 2020-21, and remain under that limit. Revenue deficit will be contained, as far as possible, under 1 per cent of GDP. Off-Budget and Extra-Budget borrowings will be faithfully reported with the justification for such debt, and the means of servicing and repaying such debt.

1. Congress believes that the size of India's GDP and the level of Total Expenditure (Central and State Governments) allow us to undertake an ambitious programme of cash transfers to the poorest sections of the people, without, in any way, affecting the goal of fiscal prudence. The main features of the **Minimum Income Support Programme (MISP) or Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY)** will be:
 1. The **target population** will be **5 crore families** who constitute the poorest 20 percent of all families. They will be the beneficiaries of MISP or NYAY;
 2. Each family will be guaranteed a cash transfer of **Rs. 72,000 a year**;
 3. As far as possible, the money will be transferred to **the account of a woman** of the family who has a bank account, or who will be urged to open a bank account;
 4. There will a Design Phase (3 months), followed by Pilot and Testing Phases (6-9 months) before the rollout;
 5. The rollout will be implemented in phases;
 6. The estimated cost will be <1 percent of GDP in Year 1 and <2 percent of GDP in Year 2 and thereafter;
 7. As the nominal GDP grows and families move out of poverty, the cost will decline as a proportion of GDP.
2. Congress will appoint an **independent panel of eminent economists**, social scientists, and statisticians to oversee the design, testing, rollout and implementation of the programme. The programme will move from one stage to the other only after a 'go-ahead' from the panel. Congress intends to implement NYAY as a **joint scheme of the Central and State Governments**. The scheme will be funded through new revenues and rationalisation of expenditure. Current merit subsidy schemes that are intended to achieve specific objectives will be continued.
3. The Congress goal is that **'No Indian Family Shall Be Left Behind.'**

Science, Technology, and Innovation

Investment in science, technology, and innovation is an investment in the future of the country. Development of scientific temper and inculcating a spirit of inquiry are critical for India's progress.

1. Congress promises to work with industry to increase the **expenditure on science and technology** to **2 percent** of GDP.
2. Congress promises to allocate sufficient **funds** to promote science, technology and innovation.
3. Congress promises to recruit more scientists to the various institutes of research and development and to fill all current **vacancies** in the posts of researchers and scientists within 12 months.

Tax and Tax Reforms

The 2 major taxes that will be the backbone of the economy are Income Tax, and Goods and Services Tax. Congress reiterates its firm belief that the principles underlying these taxes should be simplicity, transparency and, progressivity. Besides, a good tax administration must place trust in, and enjoy the trust of, taxpayers. Congress will put an end to the tax terrorism unleashed by the BJP government that has put uncertainty and fear in the minds of individuals and businesses.

Direct Taxes Code

1. Congress promises to enact the **Direct Taxes Code** in the first year of our government. It will usher in an era of simplicity, transparency, tax equity, easy compliance and impartial administration.
2. Congress promises that the Direct Taxes Code will levy taxes at **reasonable and progressive rates** having regard to the level of current income, income inequalities, and the principles of tax equity.

Goods & Services Tax 2.0

1. Congress promises to review and replace the current GST laws with the **GST 2.0** regime that will truly reflect the intent and purpose of a non-cascading, value-added, indirect tax.
2. The GST 2.0 regime will be based on a **single, moderate, standard rate of tax** on all goods and services. The rate will be revenue neutral to the current indirect tax revenues of the Central and State Governments and will take note of the potential of GST 2.0 to boost their tax revenues.
3. The GST 2.0 regime will levy a special rate of duty on **demerit goods**.

Banking and Financial Sector

Congress affirms its belief in a competitive banking and financial sector. The BJP government has considerably weakened the banking sector in the last 5 years; there has been a sharp rise in non-performing assets; crony capitalism has thrived; and deserving sectors and individuals have been denied credit. Congress promises to reverse these developments.

1. Congress promises a comprehensive review of the concept, role and functions of **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** in order to make PSBs robust and competitive with healthy balance sheets.
2. Congress will **amalgamate** 2 or more **PSBs** so that there will be only 6-8 PSBs with a national presence and reach. Each of the amalgamated PSBs will be adequately capitalised.

3. We will undertake a comprehensive **review** of the **governance structure of PSBs** and implement changes to make the PSB an independent commercial banking organisation that is competitive, healthy, efficient and profitable. We will abolish the redundant Banking Board Bureau.

Fisheries and Fisherfolk

Over 140 lakh Indians depend, directly or indirectly, on fishing as a source of livelihood. Congress is committed to faster growth of the fisheries industry.

1. Congress will establish a separate **Ministry of Fisheries and Welfare of Fisherfolk**.
2. We will constitute a **National Fisherfolk Commission** to promote fishing and the welfare of fisherfolk. It will address indebtedness and appropriate funding mechanisms for fishing.
3. Congress promises to **recognise inland fishing and aquaculture** as ‘agriculture’ and extend to them all the benefits available to agriculture.

SHAAN

Pride In Our Hard And Soft Power

National Security

National security is dependent on a sound defence policy, a sound foreign policy, and wise leadership. National security is not enhanced by chest-thumping or exaggerated claims.

1. Congress will reverse the trend of declining **defence spending** under the NDA government, and will ensure that defence spending is increased to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces. We will expedite all **modernisation** programmes of the armed forces in a transparent manner.
2. Congress promises to take strategic and hard measures to defend the **territorial integrity** of India and ensure the safety of our people.
3. The concept of national security in the 21st century has expanded beyond defence of the territory to include **data security, cyber security, financial security, communication security** and security of trade routes. Congress promises to evolve suitable policies to address each of these subjects.

Internal Security

Congress promises that it will keep a vigilant eye on the security situation and take every measure that is required to maintain law and order and to provide a sense of security for every citizen and for every visitor to India.

1. The key to internal security is intelligence, analysis and quick response. Congress had put in place the Multi-Agency Centre and the NSG regional hubs. Congress had also proposed to establish the **National Counter-Terrorism Centre and NATGRID**. The BJP government dismantled the preparatory work and wasted 5 years. NCTC was put in the cold storage and NATGRID is yet to be made operational. Congress promises that NCTC will be set up within 3 months and NATGRID will be made operational by December 2019.
2. The most serious threats to internal security emanate from (1) **terrorism**, (2) **infiltration of militants**, (3) **Maoism or Naxalism** and (4) **caste or communal violence**. Congress believes that each of these threats deserves a separate and distinct response.
 1. We promise an uncompromising approach and hard measures to put an end to terrorism and to the infiltration of militants.
 2. In the case of Maoism, the Congress will resolutely fight violent activities. At the same time, Congress will address developmental challenges in the areas concerned, enlist the support of the people and win over the Maoist cadres.
 3. In the case of caste or communal violence, Congress will put down such violence with a firm hand using the police forces at its command, apprehend the instigators and bring them to justice. There will be no room for self-appointed vigilante groups and moral policing brigades.
3. Congress will work with State Governments to increase the strength of **State police forces**, fill all vacancies, equip and train them, and deploy them impartially to maintain law and order and to detect and punish violators and instigators.

Foreign Policy

Foreign tourist arrival in India in 2018 is estimated at about 1 crore. Comparing this number with the numbers of comparable countries, it indicates substantial under-performance. Congress will take measures to achieve an annual growth of 20 per cent in tourist arrivals. Tourism is important for many reasons, the most important being its capacity to create jobs for people with different levels of education.

1. Congress promises a **special tax regime** for tourism-related businesses and income.
2. We will establish an adequately capitalised **Tourism Development Bank** to provide low-cost, long-term funds for investment in tourism-related businesses.

3. Congress will work with State Governments to provide, and improve, the **infrastructure** in and around places of tourist interest.

Border Security

India's borders must be secure. Secure borders protect the sovereignty and integrity of India. Congress promises to enhance border security by undertaking a number of measures.

1. We will increase the **strength of border guarding forces** — BSF, SSB, ITBP and Assam Rifles — and post them on or close to the border to prevent infiltration, illegal immigration and smuggling.
2. We will construct modern, well-equipped **Integrated Border Outposts** to provide good working and living conditions for the forces. The distance between 2 border outposts will be reduced. The period of posting in high altitude border outposts will be reduced to 3 months at a time.
3. We will accelerate the construction of **border roads** along all borders of India, especially, the India-China border. We will enhance the capacity of the Border Roads Organisation and create separate divisions to build roads along the India-China and the India-Myanmar borders.

Ex Servicemen

Under the UPA Governments, Congress accepted the principle of One Rank One Pension (OROP) and took 3 steps in 2006, 2010 and 2013 towards implementing the same. In February 2014, the UPA Government decided to close the gap for all retirees in all ranks. Ex-servicemen believe that the BJP Government has not implemented OROP to their satisfaction. Congress promises to remove the anomalies in the implementation of OROP.

1. Under the UPA Governments, Congress accepted the principle of **One Rank One Pension (OROP)** and took 3 steps in 2006, 2010 and 2013 towards implementing the same. In February 2014, the UPA Government decided to close the gap for all retirees in all ranks. Ex-servicemen believe that the BJP Government has not implemented OROP to their satisfaction. Congress promises to remove the anomalies in the implementation of OROP.

2. Congress promises to formulate and implement a policy of **compensation to the families of martyrs** that will include full pay and allowances, funding children's education, a government job for a member of the martyr's family and suitable monetary compensation.
3. Congress will formulate and implement a policy that will allow Armed Forces personnel, who retired after a period of colour service or earlier, **lateral entry** into the civil services based on their qualifications.

Central Armed Police Forces

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) are our first line of defence at our borders. They are also the force of choice when there is a breakdown of law and order. Thousands of jawans have sacrificed their lives in the discharge of their duties. Congress promises to enhance the capabilities of the force and to improve the welfare of our jawans.

1. We will increase the **strength of the CAPFs** to meet the growing requirements of border security and internal security
2. At any given time, an adequate number of battalions will be on **rest, recuperation and training** and will not be deployed on operational duties.
3. Congress promises to ensure increased **representation of women** to achieve a minimum of 33 per cent in the force strength of CISF, CRPF and BSF. Every effort will be made to induct more women into the other border guarding forces, namely, ITBP, SSB and Assam Rifles.

Art, Culture, and Heritage

Art, culture and heritage constitute the identity of a people. A multicultural country like India can be truly proud of our many identities, which deserve to be protected and preserved.

1. Congress is committed to protecting the rich diversity of India's art and culture and to ensure it flourishes in an atmosphere of freedom and creativity. We will resolutely **oppose censorship** as well as any attempt to denigrate the art and culture of any group.
2. Sufficient support and **funds** will be provided to preserve and promote the art, culture and heritage of the groups of people whose identities are unique and are of anthropological significance.
3. We will provide **fellowships** to artists and craftspeople working in the field of traditional arts and crafts.

Tourism

Foreign tourist arrivals in India in 2018 is estimated at about 1 crore. Comparing this number with the numbers of comparable countries, it indicates substantial under-performance. Congress will take measures to achieve an annual growth of 20 per cent in tourist arrivals.

1. Congress promises a **special tax regime** for tourism-related businesses and income.
2. We will establish an adequately capitalised **Tourism Development Bank** to provide low-cost, long-term funds for investment in tourism-related businesses.
3. Congress will work with State Governments to provide, and improve, the **infrastructure** in and around places of tourist interest.

NRI

Congress affirms its belief that non-resident Indians, wherever they live and work, are an inseparable part of India.

1. Congress promises to **re-establish the Ministry of Overseas Indians** that will be tasked to address the concerns of NRIs including their safety, conditions of work, social security and health benefits, education of their children, need for financial services and safe return to India.
2. Congress will task India's Missions abroad to pay special attention to **work safety and work conditions** of Indian citizens in foreign countries. We will appoint a Committee of Overseas Indian Citizens to review the work of the Missions in this regard.
3. We will review and expand the opportunities for **higher education** and review the fee structure for the children of NRIs in colleges and universities in India.

Engaging with Citizens and Civil Society

Congress affirms its belief that civil society organisations and groups are an important pillar of a parliamentary democracy. During the tenure of the UPA Governments, civil society played a key role in developing our rights-based agenda. We will continue to engage with civil society activists and organisations and draw on their experience and knowledge.

1. Congress promises to re-constitute the **National Integration Council** to promote unity, solidarity, communal harmony, fraternity and reconciliation. Congress promises to work with the Council to fight divisive and communal forces that are a danger to the unity and solidarity of the country.

2. Congress will set up an **Inter-faith Council** consisting of leaders of all religions in order to promote respect for all religions, mutual tolerance and fraternity, to hold interfaith dialogues, and enhance cultural exchanges between people belonging to different religions.
3. We will encourage citizens to form **civil society organisations**. We will create an institutional framework under which Central and State Governments may consult civil society organisations on formulating policies, implementing programmes and obtaining feedback on outcomes.

SAMMAN

A Life Of Dignity For All

Healthcare

Healthcare, like education, is a public good. Full healthcare is the right of every citizen – children, adults and senior citizens. Providing healthcare is a shared responsibility of the Central and State Governments.

1. Congress promises that the total **government expenditure** on healthcare will be doubled to 3 percent of GDP by the year 2023-24. The Annual Budgets will indicate the step up in each year in order to achieve the target in 2023-24.
2. Congress promises to enact the **Right to Healthcare Act** that will guarantee to every citizen the right to healthcare services, including free diagnostics, out-patient care, medicines and hospitalisation through a network of public hospitals and enlisted private hospitals.
3. We are of the firm belief that the insurance-based model cannot be the preferred model to provide universal healthcare in our country. Congress promises to vigorously promote and implement the **free public hospitals-model** to provide universal healthcare.

Education

Education is a merit good and must be available to all children as a public good. Congress promises that State and Central Governments shall be responsible for providing educational opportunities to all children. Schools, colleges and universities shall be, mostly, public institutions funded through public resources. Private educational institutions may supplement public educational institutions.

1. Congress will propose that **School Education** be **transferred to the State List** in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution while retaining the subject of Higher Education in the Union List.
2. Congress promises that school education from **Class I to Class XII** in **public schools** shall be **compulsory and free**. Suitable amendments will be made in the Right to Education Act, 2009. We will end the practice of charging special fees for different purposes in public schools.
3. We are deeply concerned about the quality of education and poor **learning outcomes** as reported in the Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER). Congress promises to attach the highest importance to learning outcomes.

Food and Nutrition Security

The passage of the National Food Security Act, 2013 by the UPA Government was a revolutionary step that linked Wealth (the Green Revolution) to Welfare (assurance of food security).

1. Congress promises to work tirelessly to assure **food security** to all.
2. Some **Tribal communities** and groups are particularly vulnerable. We will pay special attention to them and ensure that food grains are delivered to them through mobile fair price shops.
3. We will review and update the **list of beneficiaries** within 6 months. Care shall be taken to include the homeless, destitute persons and migrant workers. No eligible person shall be excluded.

Child Welfare

Children are the most valuable human resource of a country. Congress believes that it is the duty of the Central and State Governments to ensure that every child enjoys all the rights of a child, especially complete education and full health.

1. Congress promises to expand the **ICDS programme**, increase funding support and increase the number of Anganwadis. Anganwadi workers shall be paid the notified State minimum wage.
2. Based on need and demand, **Anganwadis** will include a **crèche** to provide daycare to small children and to empower working mothers.

3. Nutritious food is the mainstay of the ICDS programme. We will closely monitor the coverage and **quality** of the programme. There will be a **social audit** of the outcomes pertaining to the improvement of children's nutrition levels.

Water Management

Access to water, and sanitation are basic human rights. Congress promises to address the challenges of water and sanitation through advocacy, technology and legislation.

1. Congress promises universal access to **potable drinking water**. The National Drinking Water Mission will be reviewed and strengthened. Budget allocations will be substantially increased.
2. Congress recognises the challenge of water scarcity and promises to create a Ministry **of Water** to bring all water-related activities and departments under one authority.
3. We will pay special attention to **access to water and** democratic sharing of water. We will address these issues by focusing on storage in dams and water bodies, replenishing groundwater and creating a large participatory programme of water management involving the State Governments, civil society organisations, farmers, other users, Panchayats and Gram Sabhas.

Environment and Climate Change

Congress was the first Indian political party to acknowledge the consequences of Climate Change (Smt. Indira Gandhi in Stockholm on 14 June 1972). It is a bitter truth that India's environment has deteriorated. The 2018 Global Environmental Performance Index placed India at rank 177 out of 180 countries. The BJP Government has done virtually nothing in the last 5 years to arrest this decline.

1. Congress promises an action agenda that will place India at the forefront of the battle against **global warming** and for the protection of the environment. At the same time, Congress will defend and advance India's interests in international negotiations on Climate Change and the Environment.
2. We will constitute, by law, an independent, empowered and transparent **Environment Protection Authority (EPA)** to establish, monitor and enforce environmental standards and regulations. The EPA will replace all other bodies that currently exercise jurisdiction and powers.
3. Congress recognises that air pollution is a national public health emergency. We will significantly strengthen the **National Clean Air Programme** in order to urgently tackle the problem of pollution.

All major sources of emission will be targeted, mitigated and reduced to acceptable levels. Sectoral emission standards will be set.

Climate Resilience and Disaster Management

It is not possible to eradicate poverty without tackling the dual threats of climate change and natural disasters. It is the poor who suffer most on account of natural disasters and climate change.

1. Congress promises to re-visit the **National Disaster Management Act, 2005** and incorporate changes, based upon the experience gained in the workings of the Act and in managing natural disasters that have occurred over the last 14 years.
2. We will review the workings of the **National Disaster Management Authority** and emphasise the equally important function of preventing disasters.
3. We will not limit **disaster management** to humans and will include it to cover the impact of disasters on wild animals, domestic animals, pets, livestock, agricultural crops and plantations.

Digital Rights of Every Citizen

Congress affirms its belief that every Indian shall enjoy digital rights and freely access the digital world.

1. Provide access to all persons to high quality internet at affordable rates;
2. Uphold the principle of ‘net neutrality’ to ensure the internet stays a level playing field;
3. Regulate the power to shut down the internet and to prevent arbitrary shut downs;

Sports

Congress affirms its belief that India has the potential to become a great sporting nation. Our sports policy will aim to inculcate in our citizens, especially students and youth, the culture of sports and fitness and will encourage sports as a career.

1. Congress promises to respect the autonomy of the Indian Olympic Association and the Apex Body of each sport. Government will work with each body to promote the sport concerned.
2. Congress will take suitable measures to ensure that the Constitution of each sports body is in accordance with certain norms and principles, that elections are held according to them, and that there is adequate representation in each sports body for active players, former players, and women.

3. We will make physical education and sports an integral and mandatory part of the school curriculum and encourage higher education institutions to accord sports an important place.

SUSHASAN

Governance, Transparency And Accountability

Institutions

Never before have the institutions that underpin a parliamentary democracy been so brazenly undermined, denigrated and captured as in the last 5 years. Examples of this include the Reserve Bank of India, Central Vigilance Commission, Election Commission of India, Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate, Central Information Commission, National Statistics Commission and National Human Rights Commission.

1. In order to make governance more transparent, result-oriented and accountable, Congress promises to place before the people, annually, a statement on the **implementation of manifesto promises**.
2. We will ensure that **Social Audits** of the programmes taken up for implementation are conducted and placed before the people, at the end of every year, with a report card on achievements and what remains to be done.
3. Congress will review the **Right to Information Act**, 2005 in the light of its working in the last 14 years and omit provisions that may have diluted the Act and add provisions to strengthen the Act. In accordance with the letter and spirit of the Act, Congress promises to appoint as Information Commissioners qualified persons drawn from different sections of the society.

Anti Corruption

Congress will enforce anti-corruption laws without discrimination

1. Congress will enforce **anti-corruption laws** without discrimination
2. Congress will cause to be investigated several deals entered into by the **BJP Government** in the last 5 years and, in particular, the **Rafale deal**.

3. Congress will also investigate the circumstances under which a number of scamsters were allowed to leave the country and will take determined steps to bring them back and face legal proceedings

Governance

In order to make governance more transparent, result-oriented and accountable, Congress promises to place before the people, annually, a statement on the implementation of manifesto promises.

1. In order to make governance more transparent, result-oriented and accountable, Congress promises to place before the people, annually, a statement on the **implementation of manifesto promises**.
2. We will ensure that **Social Audits** of the programmes taken up for implementation are conducted and placed before the people, at the end of every year, with a report card on achievements and what remains to be done.
3. Congress will review the **Right to Information Act**, 2005 in the light of its working in the last 14 years and omit provisions that may have diluted the Act and add provisions to strengthen the Act. In accordance with the letter and spirit of the Act, Congress promises to appoint as Information Commissioners qualified persons drawn from different sections of the society.

Federalism

A basic feature of the Constitution of India is the principle of federalism. Congress acknowledges that, over the last 5 years, this principle has been eroded to the detriment of the States. Congress believes that a large country like India cannot be administered by the Central Government alone. In fact, in most matters concerning the daily lives of the people, it is the State Government that is close to the people and, in some matters, it is the Local Government (Municipality or Panchayat) that is even closer to the people.

1. We will review the distribution of legislative fields in the **Seventh Schedule of the Constitution** and build a consensus on transferring some legislative fields from List III (Concurrent List) to List II (State List).

2. We will reduce the **size of Ministries and Departments** in the Central Government in such areas where sufficient capacity has been built by the State Governments.
3. Congress promises to give **primacy to State Governments** in subjects such as school education, primary and secondary health care, child nutrition, drinking water, sanitation and distribution of electricity, and ensure that the Central Government plays a supportive role to State Governments.

Local Self Governments

Congress promises that the independence and integrity of the judiciary will be maintained and protected at all costs. Congress was the proponent and author of the Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendments.

Panchayati Raj lies at the core of good governance in our country, where the majority of citizens live outside metropolitan cities. Congress promises to take further measures to strengthen the concept of Local Government – Panchayats and Municipalities.

1. We will remove all provisions stipulating **pre-qualifications** (such as minimum education) for candidates at elections to local bodies.
2. Congress will work with State Governments to ensure that a **share of GST revenue** is allocated to **Panchayats and Municipalities**.
3. Congress promises to enhance the role and authority of the **Gram Sabhas** in matters concerning the villages and Panchayats. Congress will make it obligatory for the Gram Sabha to meet at least twice a year.

Judiciary

Congress promises that the independence and integrity of the judiciary will be maintained and protected at all costs.

1. Congress will introduce a Bill to amend the Constitution to make the **Supreme Court a Constitutional Court** that will hear and decide cases involving the interpretation of the Constitution and other cases of legal significance or national importance.

2. Congress will introduce a Bill to amend the Constitution to establish a **Court of Appeal** between the High Courts and the Supreme Court, to hear appeals from judgments and orders of High Courts. The Court of Appeal will sit in multiple Benches of 3 judges each in 6 locations.
3. We will enhance **representation** at all levels of the judiciary for women, SC, ST, OBC, minorities and other under-represented sections of society.

Review of Laws

Freedom is the hallmark of our open and democratic Republic. The purpose of law is regulation in order to strengthen freedom. Laws must be just and reasonable and reflect our Constitutional values.

Congress believes that we are an over-legislated and over-regulated country. Laws, Rules and Regulations have proliferated and restricted freedoms. Consequently, there are severe restrictions on innovation, enterprise and experimentation, and economic growth has suffered.

1. Repeal instruments that are outdated or unjust or unreasonably restrict the freedoms of the people;
2. Amend instruments to bring them in accord with the Constitutional values of a democracy; and
3. Codify and reduce the number of instruments that must be complied with by a citizen.

Specifically, Congress promises to:

1. Decriminalise laws that are essentially laws directed against **civil violations** and can be subjected to civil penalties;
2. **Omit Section 499** of the Indian Penal Code and make ‘defamation’ a civil offence;
3. **Omit Section 124A** of the Indian Penal Code (that defines the offence of ‘sedition’) that has been misused and, in any event, has become redundant because of subsequent laws;

Electoral Reforms

The greatest challenge to free and fair elections is the Election Commission’s inability to prevent the use of black money in election campaigns and the use of inducements to influence voters. We will take steps to curb and eliminate this menace.

1. We will scrap the opaque **Electoral Bond Scheme** that was designed to favour the ruling party.

2. Congress promises to set up a **National Election Fund** to which any person may make a contribution. Funds will be allocated at the time of elections to recognised political parties in accordance with criteria laid down by law.
3. Congress will ensure that **EVMs and VVPATs** are tamperproof. During counting, the count in at least 50 per cent of the EVMs will be matched against the physical count of the voting slips in the corresponding VVPATs.

Police Reforms

‘Police’ and ‘Law & Order’ are State subjects. Congress promises to consult State Governments and reach a consensus on the police reforms directed by the Supreme Court in the *Prakash Singh* case. Based on the consensus, Congress will pass a Model Police Act that the States will be advised to adopt and enact in the State Legislatures.

1. ‘Police’ and ‘Law & Order’ are State subjects. Congress promises to consult State Governments and reach a consensus on the police reforms directed by the Supreme Court in the *Prakash Singh* case. Based on the consensus, Congress will pass a **Model Police Act** that the States will be advised to adopt and enact in the State Legislatures.
2. The objectives of the Model Police Act will be to make the police forces **modern, technology-enabled, people-friendly**, and upholders of human rights and legal rights.
3. Provisions will be made in the Model Police Act to:
 1. Make the State police force accountable to an independent **Police Accountability Commission** as well as to give an annual report to the State Legislature.
 2. **Decentralise the police force** in the State and to involve the community in the oversight of the police force.
 3. Cause investigations into cases of communal riots, lynchings and gang rapes by a **special wing of the State police** under the direct command of the State Headquarters of the police.

Media and Freedom of the Media

Congress firmly believes that the media must be free and self-regulated.

1. In recent times, sections of the media have abused or surrendered their freedom. Nevertheless, we believe that self-regulation is the best way to correct the abuse of media freedom. Congress promises to amend the **Press Council of India Act**, 1978 to strengthen the system of self-regulation, protect the freedom of journalists, uphold editorial independence and guard against government interference.
2. Congress will amend the **Press Council of India Act** to empower the Council to deal with the menace of fake news and paid news.
3. We will work with the Press Council of India and associations of newspapers and media to formulate and enforce a **Code of Conduct** on reporting in situations of natural disaster, communal conflict, riots, terrorist attacks and war in order to ensure a balance between the need to inform, need for restraint, maintenance of law and order, and interest of national security.

Perspective Planning and the New Planning Commission

In a federal system comprising States and a Central Government with numerous ministries and departments administering specific subjects, it is necessary to have an expert body to (i) independently evaluate competing claims; (ii) mediate between the Central and State Governments and between the Ministry of Finance and the various departments regarding allocation of funds; (iii) monitor the utilisation of funds; and (iv) assess and evaluate the gap between expenditure and outcomes. The Planning Commission performed these functions besides other functions. The BJP Government's decision to abolish the Planning Commission was thoughtless and absurd.

1. Congress will **scrap the Niti Aayog**, which has proved to be a noisy and incompetent intermeddler. Congress promises to constitute a Planning Commission with re-defined responsibilities such as to formulate medium and long-term perspective plans and to function as an independent expert body to perform crucial functions in a federal system.
2. Congress promises that the new Planning Commission will be a **lean organisation** with renowned economists and financial experts as members assisted by a small but high-quality team of scholars from different fields and support staff totalling a maximum of 100 persons.

Self Esteem For The Deprived

Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice

Historically, Congress has been at the forefront of the struggle for women's rights, equality and empowerment. India's only woman Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, belonged to the Congress. We passed many laws that empowered women. We mainstreamed gender in government schemes.

1. Congress promises to pass the Constitution (Amendment) Bill to provide for reservation of 33 percent of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies in the first session of the 17th Lok Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha.
2. We will amend the Service Rules to reserve for women 33 percent of appointments to posts in the Central Government.
3. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 will be enforced effectively. We will review all laws that stipulate wage rates to provide that men and women are paid the same wage for similar work.

SC, ST, and OBC

The Constitution of India provides for reservation in employment and educational institutions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. We must do even more to ensure justice to the historically disadvantaged sections of our people.

1. Congress promises a holistic agenda of affirmative action for SCs, STs and OBCs who constitute a little more than 75 percent of the population. Hence, Congress promises to set up an **Equal Opportunities Commission**, which will recommend affirmative action strategies and policies to achieve equality — and equity — in education, employment, and economic opportunities. We will implement the recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Commission.
2. We will pass a law to restore the original purpose and intent of the **200-point roster system** and implement it for the institution as a whole.
3. Congress promises to fill all backlog **vacancies reserved** for SCs, STs and OBCs in government, semi-government and central public sector organisations within 12 months.

Jammu and Kashmir

Congress has stood witness to the developments in Jammu & Kashmir since the Instrument of Accession was signed on 26 October 1947. Congress affirms that the whole of Jammu & Kashmir is part of India. We also acknowledge the unique history of the State and the unique circumstances under which the State acceded to India that led to the inclusion of Article 370 in the Constitution of India. Nothing will be done or allowed to change the Constitutional position.

1. Congress has long held the view that **dialogue** is the only way to understand the aspirations of the people of the 3 regions of Jammu & Kashmir and find an honourable solution to their issues. We will take that path.
2. We will adopt a **two-pronged approach**: *firstly*, uncompromising firmness on the border and ending infiltration; and *secondly*, absolute fairness in dealing with the demands of the people and winning their hearts and minds.
3. Congress promises to review the **deployment of armed forces**, move more troops to the border to stop infiltration completely, reduce the presence of the Army and CAPFs in the Kashmir Valley, and entrust more responsibility to the J&K police for maintaining law and order.

Northeastern States

Congress affirms that the North Eastern States (NES) are a unique and valued part of India that bring into our Union many diverse and rich cultures, languages, traditions and biodiversity. We are committed to defending and protecting the interests of the NES and their people and to ensure the rapid economic development of the region.

1. Congress promises to restore the **Special Category status** to the NES.
2. Congress promises an **industrial policy** for the NES.
3. We will withdraw immediately the widely resented **Citizenship Amendment Bill** introduced by the BJP Government against the wishes of the people of the NES.

Religious and Linguistic Minorities

The strength and vibrancy of a true democracy are often judged by the rights and protection accorded to its minorities. In the last 5 years under the BJP Government, hate crimes and atrocities against the minorities and other vulnerable sections of the people have increased manifold. The perpetrators of these crimes walk on the streets with impunity.

1. Congress promises to uphold the **rights of religious minorities**: to non-discrimination, to equal opportunity in employment, to religious freedom and to establish educational institutions guaranteed under Articles 15, 16, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 30 of the Constitution.
2. We also promise to uphold the **rights of linguistic minorities**: to non-discrimination, to equal opportunity in employment and to establish educational institutions guaranteed under Articles 15, 16, 29 and 30 of the Constitution.
3. use of such languages, including the languages of Scheduled Tribes and Nomadic Tribes, in the administration of areas where such languages are widely spoken by the people.

Denotified Tribes

Denotified and Semi-Nomadic Tribes have long suffered discrimination and neglect. Congress believes that it is the duty of the Central and State Governments to reach out to these groups and correct these injustices.

1. Congress promises a Special Census and the enumeration of Denotified and Semi-Nomadic Tribes and the integration of the data in the decennial census.
2. We will examine the feasibility of providing compartmental reservation for Denotified and Semi-Nomadic Tribes as citizens belonging to socially and educationally Backward Classes.
3. We will immediately repeal the Habitual Offenders Act, 1952 that has discriminated against and stigmatised Denotified and Semi-Nomadic Tribes and led to their harassment.

Senior Citizens

Congress acknowledges that about 9 percent of the population of India is over the age of 60 years and this proportion will increase. Congress promises to review current policies on senior citizens and make suitable changes, taking into account advances in medical science and technology.

1. Under the **Right to Healthcare Act**, we will provide affordable and quality healthcare to senior citizens in hospitals including free diagnostics, out-patient treatment, medicines and hospital treatment. Geriatric wards with sufficient beds will be opened in every district-level hospital.
2. We will introduce well-designed **pension and health insurance** schemes that will guarantee insured persons a life of dignity and comfort when they become senior citizens.

3. Senior citizens can contribute to the development of the communities in which they live. We will create **opportunities** for senior citizens to do so.

Persons with Disabilities

By one estimate, there are 4 crore people in India who are persons with disabilities. Congress is firmly committed to upholding the rights, dignity and self-respect of persons with disabilities. We promise a fair deal for persons with disabilities and opportunities for them to be employed, productive and contributing to the welfare of their families and to the progress of our nation.

1. Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution will be amended to prohibit **discrimination** on the ground of ‘disability’ or ‘impairment.’
2. All **public services and public spaces**, government offices and private premises will be made inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.
3. We will set up an **information portal** to enable easy access to information on all 21 disabilities included in the Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and to create awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Rights of LGBTQIA

Congress promises to ensure the effective implementation of the judgment in the *Navtej Singh Johar* case. We will protect the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.

1. Congress promises to ensure the effective implementation of the judgment in the *Navtej Singh Johar* case. We will protect the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.
2. We will immediately withdraw the **Transgender Bill, 2018**, pending in Parliament. Instead, Congress will introduce a Bill that will be consistent with the judgment in the *NALSA* case. The new Bill will be drafted in consultation with the LGBTQIA+ community.
3. We will direct that **gender sensitivity training**, especially for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community, be made mandatory in all government departments and organisations including the Armed Forces and the Police Forces.