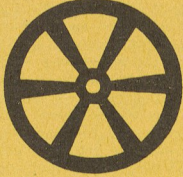





The manifestoes

Topics	 National Front	 CPI(M)
Ayodhya issue	Must be resolved either through a negotiated settlement or by due process of law; to make sustained efforts.	Either a negotiated settlement acceptable to both sides or, failing this, a court verdict binding on all; this is the only way.
Other places of worship	Status of all religious monuments and places of worship, as on August 15, 1947 shall be maintained.	Adoption of a law by Parliament to maintain <i>status quo</i> of all religious places of worship under dispute as on August 15, 1947.
Minorities	Communal riots to be put down strongly; fullest protection to their beliefs and practices and develop their institutions; complete non-interference in personal laws; statutory status for the Minorities Commission; a special anti-riot force; compensation to victims of communal riots; reservation for socially and educationally backward among the minorities under the Mandal report.	Firmly stands for protection of minority rights (the acid test of democracy), full freedom of conscience, equal opportunities; deep concern and sympathy for riot victims. Only the common fight of all democratic and class forces will save the minorities from injustice; to expose and isolate those arousing communal passions; protection of life and property of the minorities during riots.
Social justice	Committed to removing social inequality in all forms with a sense of urgency; 27 per cent jobs in Central Government and its undertakings for the socially and educationally backward shall be fully implemented; in addition, 5 to 10 per cent jobs for the economically backward sections not covered by the Mandal Commission; experts' committee to remove anomalies in Mandal recommendations; special courts to deal with atrocities against SCST; special committees to recommend steps to provide equal rights to Dalit converts; reservation for SCST to continue, with special recruitment drive.	Supports Mandal Commission recommendation, a step towards social justice, giving some opportunities for the socially backward to enter State sector; opposed to any move to scuttle reservations; benefits should reach deserving sections; Karpoori Thakur formula, the basis for a consensus on the issue; the poorer sections within upper castes also require relief; basic problems of the rural poor in backward communities can be solved only through radical land reforms, elimination of feudal relations in villages and speedy industrialisation; check atrocities against SCST and to ensure that their job quota is filled.
Land reforms	Committed to land reforms; an equitable distribution of land; the ultimate objective — making tiller of the land its owner; expeditious implementation; to give copies of land-holding records to actual cultivators; cancellation of fraudulent land transfers; expeditious distribution of surplus lands to agricultural labourers; land army of agricultural workers; land tribunals to settle disputes.	No alleviation of poverty and no raising of economic and social status is possible without land reforms. Only one per cent of the total cultivable land is redistributed. Only the CPI(M)-led governments have taken up this task sincerely. The party demands implementation of land reforms; distribution of land; plugging of loopholes in land reform laws; correction of land records; an administrative machinery to implement these laws; an immediate end to evictions.
Agriculture	To correct the structural disadvantage to end the exploitation of land and labour; minimum support price for farm produce; remunerative prices to farmers; representative bodies of farmers at State, district, block levels, marketing committees for liberal credit, regular supply of inputs; consolidation of land holdings.	Implementation of land reforms; to enact a comprehensive Central legislation to protect the rights of agricultural workers in relation to wages, living conditions and social benefits; cancellation of debts of the impoverished rural masses; adequate irrigation facilities; to concentrate on minor and medium irrigation projects.
Education	Highest priority; committed to raising investment in education to 6 per cent of GNP by 1995; at least 50 per cent of allocation for elementary education; universal elementary education within this decade. Vocational education for all students at the secondary level and relate it to employment market; continuous assessment to replace annual exam system. Capitation fee system to be replaced by loan-linked education. In higher education, to promote creative knowledge, national service and social cohesion.	Free and compulsory education for all children by the state by law; free education up to the secondary level; full state support to mass literacy campaign; to end the elitist New Education Policy which was introduced by the Rajiv Gandhi government to meet the needs of monopolists and the private sector; syllabus and curriculum to strengthen scientific temper, secularism, national unity and integrity.

What is on offer

Compiled by
R. VIJAYA SANKAR



Congress(I)



BJP

A negotiated settlement which fully respects the sentiments of both communities; if not, all parties must respect the court verdict.

Committed to building Shri Ram Mandir at Janmasthan by relocating superimposed Babri structure with due respect; temple construction, a symbol of vindication of our cultural heritage and national self-respect; purely a national issue, not to allow any vested interests to give it a sectarian and communal colour.

The *status quo* as it existed on the August 15, 1947 should not now be altered. Any controversy over any place of worship (including Somnath temple) should be foreclosed.

Centre's responsibility to protect their constitutional and legal rights; special administrative measures to prevent riots; statutory status for the Minorities Commission; to desist from alteration in personal laws until an unequivocal demand is made by the section of people governed by these laws; Rapid Action Force to quell communal riots; reservations for socially and educationally backward minorities.

To guarantee peace and security and full opportunities for progress and development; a Human Rights Commission in place of the Minorities Commission; a Commission to evolve a common civil law; to rationalise and amend Article 30 which permits minorities to run their own schools.

Unshakable commitment to the struggle for social justice; continued commitment to reservation as an important instrument of social justice; special measures in favour of the socially and educationally backward classes, with preference for the poorer sections among them; to establish a Backward Classes Development Corporation; reservation for other economically backward sections not covered by the existing schemes; reservations for SCST to continue; to ensure that their reservation quotas are duly filled; scavenging to be eradicated in the next five years.

Pledged to the socio-economic uplift of other backward castes, particularly the more backward among them; reservation policy as an instrument of social justice and for promoting social harmony; reservation for Other Backward Classes broadly on the basis of the Mandal Commission report, with preference to the poorer among them; reservation for people of other castes on the basis of their economic condition; to energetically enforce anti-untouchability laws; a financial agency to meet the credit needs of SCST; to fill up promptly the shortfalls in jobs reserved for SCST; to protect SCST from exploitation and indebtedness.

A major national drive to establish accurate and verifiable land records and to update them periodically; to take agricultural development to new heights using land reforms...

To issue pass books to kisans and implement the land laws.

Agricultural growth, main weapon against rural poverty; committed to ensuring fair and remunerative prices for farm produce; a comprehensive agricultural policy using land reforms; modern methods of management, environmental conservation, and modern technology; to expand allocation of bank loans; crop insurance scheme; 10 lakh irrigation wells per year.

First priority; to ensure remunerative prices to farmers, minimum wages to the farm labour, abundant supply of water and energy over which farmers have a natural right; price parity between agricultural and industrial products; 60 per cent of plan allocation for rural development; to launch a million small, labour-intensive rural projects; a total ban on slaughter of cow on whose patient back the entire structure of Indian agriculture rests; to ban slaughter of bulls and bullocks too.

Highest priority; to implement vigorously the New Education Policy; to expand investment in primary, secondary education; intensify Operation Blackboard; to multiply middle level technical courses; one Navodaya Vidyalaya in every district with reservations for SC, ST and backward class students; investment in education to be progressively increased to reach 6 per cent of GNP by the end of the Ninth Plan.

Equalisation of educational opportunities; to build up a system worthy of the genius of our heritage and the undoubted capacities of our youth; to implement Article 45 of the Constitution to give free education to all children in the 6-14 age group to enforce the principle of universal primary education; to give vocational and technical content to education; to establish agro-industrial polytechnics in each district; to ensure academic freedom and the autonomy of universities, raise the emoluments and status of teachers; to increase progressively the allocation for education till it reaches 6 per cent of GNP.

Topics	National Front	CPI(M)
Industrial policy	Industrial growth to maximise employment; emphasis on producing wage goods and services for the consumption by the mass of our people; full support to agro-processing industries, village industries and rural artisans; items of mass consumption to be reserved for these; to correct the policies biased towards large-sized, capital-intensive, urban-based production, whose potential to create additional jobs is limited; commanding position for public sector which will be made more efficient with professional management; foreign collaboration only when it helps national self-reliance.	Effective steps to check the growth of monopolies, tighten up the MRTP law; to check the growing penetration of multinationals in the economy; nationalisation of jute and cotton textile industries; to safeguard the public sector and improve its efficiency. State takeover or measures to re-open sick and closed industrial units (240,000).
Labour policy	Workers as effective partners in management at plant and shop levels; Industrial Relations Bill with more democratic, rational provisions; secret ballot for recognition of trade unions; regularisation of casual labour in government and public sector units; Agricultural Labour Bill to guarantee statutory minimum wages; National Commission on Bonded Labour.	Workers' participation in management with equal status; to stop massacre of jobs in the name of promoting advanced technology; adequate relief to powerloom and handloom workers; annul Articles 311(a), (b), (c) of the Constitution; law to protect workers in unorganised industries; new Industrial Relations Bill with provision for secret ballot for recognising trade unions.
Employment	Employment generation, highest policy priority; to eradicate unemployment within a decade through 1. stepping up investment in agriculture and irrigation, 2. labour-intensive projects, 3. decentralised, appropriate technology that uses local labour resources and supervisory skills in rural development projects, 4. encouragement to labour-intensive industries with high export potential.	The right to work and unemployment benefits alone can relieve the distressing unemployment situation (3.4 crore registered unemployed); right to work as a fundamental right embodied in the Constitution; concrete plans to generate employment in rural and urban areas; proper facilities for registration, recruitment through employment exchanges; legislation to provide unemployment benefits.
Economy	Measures to bring down growing disparities in incomes and wealth; rationalisation of direct and indirect taxation; commitment to planning to widen the social base of the economy by expanding the people's purchasing power; benefit of development to the masses rather than to a small class of people; higher tax revenue from the affluent, relief to low-income groups; to curb unnecessary imports and augment exports through incentives for improving balance of payments position.	Reverse the IMF-World Bank dictated economic policies; preserve economic independence and self-reliance; alternative policies to raise resources by increasing direct taxes; to curb black money; taxes on the rich; cut in imports; stop wasteful expenditure by government; to curb high prices; to check the price rise; no increase in indirect taxes which affect the common people; expansion of PDS to cover 14 essential commodities; firm steps against black marketing and hoarding; against uneven pace of development which exacerbates regional imbalances.
Federalism	True federalism alone can broaden and deepen the bonds of unity and integrity of the nation. States ought to enjoy genuine autonomy; review of Centre-State relations on the basis of the Sarkaria Commission Report; to effectively activate the Inter-States Council and the National Development Council; the role, powers and functions of Governors to be reviewed. The much-abused Article 356 will be reviewed.	Restructuring Centre-State relations with more powers to the States; to abrogate Article 356 of the Constitution; support to the progressive policies of Left-led governments; immediate implementation of the proposals formulated at the Srinagar conclave concerning Centre-State relations.
National unity	Restoration of faith in democratic political process within the Federal Constitution, the ultimate solution for violent militancy. With true commitment to federalism, can find a solution, heal the wounds, initiate an era of reconciliation and bring back alienated sections into the national mainstream; to preserve the sanctity of Article 370 of the Constitution; for economic development of Punjab, J & K; sympathetic interest in the problems of Assam; legitimate aspirations of the people of North-East to be fulfilled; to deal firmly with secessionism.	Without giving more powers to the States and autonomy for ethnic, tribal minorities within the States, separatist, divisive threats cannot be countered. For defence of national unity against secessionism, communal and divisive forces by mobilising the people; vigilance against imperialist agencies' attempts to destabilise; immediate solution to Punjab, J&K and Assam problems by conceding the genuine demands of the people in these States for protection of their identity within the framework of Indian unity.
Foreign policy	To maintain traditional friendly relations with the Soviet Union; to improve further relations with the U.S., Japan, countries of the Commonwealth, Europe; to resist attempts at trade, technological and financial discrimination by adding new vigour to the Non-aligned movement; to safeguard collectively the economic and political sovereignties of the Third World countries; to try to normalise relations with Pakistan; to carry forward time-tested relations with Arab nations, support Palestine struggle.	Defence of non-aligned foreign policy, world peace and support to national liberation movements; for the establishment of a Palestinian state, vacation of Arab territories occupied by Israel; for an end to apartheid in South Africa, full equal rights to the black people; the right of the Sahrawi Arab Republic to independence and to their own land; top priority to Sino-Indian relations; to strive to find a solution to the Tamil minorities problem in Sri Lanka on the basis of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord.
Women	To constitute National Commission on women; equal property rights; review of discriminatory laws; special programmes for women's education; India to be made a signatory to U.N. Convention on Women's Rights; 30 per cent reservation in Panchayati Raj and municipal bodies.	Stern measures against atrocities and crimes on women; implementation of legal and democratic rights guaranteed in the Constitution; end to discrimination in pay, recruitment and promotion; social security for women working in agricultural and unorganised sectors; equal rights in land property.

Congress(I)	BJP
To encourage entrepreneurship, develop capital markets, simplify the regulatory system, bring in new technology and increase competitiveness of the common man; to oversee the gradual withdrawal of the public sector from areas where the private and joint sectors have developed capabilities; special assistance for traditional industries; priority to cottage, khadi and village industries.	Four main principles: self-reliance, modernisation, decentralisation, Daridra Narayan Sewa — minimum of material welfare for every citizen in terms of food, clothing, shelter, health and education; to debureaucratise the industry; cut down the plethora of controls; Industrial Development and Regulation Act to be replaced by Industrial Development Act; to reconsider public sector's role and reorganise it into a more efficient, productive, profitable and people-oriented sector; foster Swadeshi spirit; encourage foreign capital in high-tech, import substitution and strictly export-oriented areas; promote agro-based industries; apply MRTP law to business houses with assets value crossing Rs. 1000 crores.
Committed to increasing workers' participation in management; stock of public sector companies will be sold to workers on a preferential basis; as far as possible, workers would be represented at the Board level; to recognise the inevitability of technological change; to seek a national consensus on linkage between wages and productivity and the desirability of reducing multiplicity of unions.	To rationalise and simplify labour laws; recognise unions on the basis of secret ballot; to introduce worker participation from the shop floor to the board room in all public sector projects, public limited companies and foreign companies operating in India; to set up a permanent Employees Welfare Board to resolve long-standing problems of government employees.
To work out strategy to expand employment opportunities at 3 per cent per annum through suitable industrial, agricultural, economic and fiscal policies; 10 million new jobs per year, 100 million jobs by the end of the century, 1000 million mandays of guaranteed rural employment every year.	To recognise citizen's right to work in principle; to launch an employment guarantee scheme, in a phased manner; a contributory family pension scheme to cover particularly the daily wage earner; Antyodaya scheme to serve the poorest in the land; investments in handloom and handicrafts, gems and jewellery units to create jobs.
To restore fiscal balance in the budgetary system by drastic cut in wasteful expenditure, rationalise non-developmental expenditure and expand government's revenue base; not to increase tax burdens excessively; stable tax regime; to curb conspicuous consumption, tackle the menace of black money. Restoration of Congress Government indispensable pre-requisite to set right balance of payments position; vigorous export promotion, effective import substitution, appropriate exchange rate mechanism, increasing productivity and efficiency to solve foreign exchange crisis; prudent debt management.	A white paper on the state of the economy; an economy of the people, by the people and for the people; to hold the price line; to liberate economy from the clutches of bureaucracy; no hike in excise duties on items of mass consumption for five years; to rationalise the tax structure; bring down highest rate of income tax to 40 per cent; to raise income-tax exemption limit to Rs. 48,000; to abolish octroi; a uniform sales tax; revenue budgetary deficits to be reduced to zero and fiscal deficits to be brought down from 9 per cent to 5 per cent of GDP; thrust to promotion of exports; to rationalise imports and restrict them to absolutely essential items.
—	For a strong Centre and strong autonomous states; to implement the Sarkaria Committee report on Centre-State relations; Article 356 to be evoked only when the constitutional machinery has in fact broken down, and not to promote any partisan interest; a commission to report on formation of smaller, economically and democratically viable states; fairer share of Central revenues for states; Inter-State Council under Article 263 to settle all inter-State and Centre-State disputes.
Struggle against terrorism, secessionism, fanaticism; to restore law and order, reestablish peace and rebuild democratic process in Punjab; people's committees in J&K till State Assembly is constituted; border with Pakistan, along the Line of Control in J&K, to be sealed; jobs to unemployed youth in J&K; to speed up economic development, bring benefits to youth and other needy sections in Assam.	Wedded to national unity and national integrity and a balanced development of all regions and sections; to have the grievances of the people of Punjab examined by experts and redress them; security belt along the Indo-Pakistan border; to rehabilitate the widows and orphans of the 1984 outrages and punish the guilty; to end all uncertainty about the future status of J&K by deleting Article 370 of the Constitution.
To maintain national consensus on non-alignment as the basis of foreign policy; to strengthen friendship with the Soviet Union; to enlarge the area of mutual understanding and cooperation with the United States; friendly relations with neighbours and other Asian countries; special attention to complex West Asian problems; for a just, comprehensive, definite settlement in West Asia, including the Palestinian homeland; for strengthening relations with East European countries; to strengthen South-South cooperation; commitment to the Indo-Sri Lanka accord.	Wedded to national interest and world peace; the Non-aligned Movement has lost its relevance in the post-Cold War period; to set up an experts' committee to formulate a long-term foreign policy; for national consensus on foreign policy issues; for a stronger SAARC in view of the old bipolar world giving place to a unipolar world; to invite Pakistan to resolve disputes under the Shimla pact; to develop cooperative economic and media relations with Pakistan; to develop friendly relations with South-East Asian nations.
Programmes for women's emancipation and empowerment to be expanded; 30 per cent membership in local government and other statutory bodies and committees; equal pay for equal work by women; Commissioner for women's rights; strict enforcement of the ban on practice, propagation, celebration and glorification of sati.	Looks upon womankind as matru shakti; preference to women as primary school teachers; make women equal shareholders in the husband's wealth and income; strengthen family courts, presided over by women judges; equal pay for equal work; more and more hostels for single working women; commission to study women's problems.