

India's Political System

British Political History

- ▶ Colony of Great Britain
 - ▶ Came under British rule in 1858
- ▶ Growing feeling of nationalism
- ▶ Mahatma Gandhi
 - ▶ Leader of anti-British civil disobedience in 1920
- ▶ End of British rule in 1947
- ▶ Creation of India's constitution in 1949



President, Vice President, & Council of Ministers

- ▶ President is the head of state and elected by electoral college
 - ▶ 5 year term
 - ▶ Commander of armed forces
 - ▶ Can put India in a state of emergency
- ▶ Vice-President is the Chairman of the Council of States
 - ▶ 5 year term
 - ▶ Elected by electoral college
- ▶ Council of Ministers is the supreme governing body
 - ▶ Cabinet members, ministers of state
 - ▶ The president approves them and they must be members of Parliament
 - ▶ Help the president and prime minister exercise their power



President Pranab Mukherjee

Prime Minister vs President

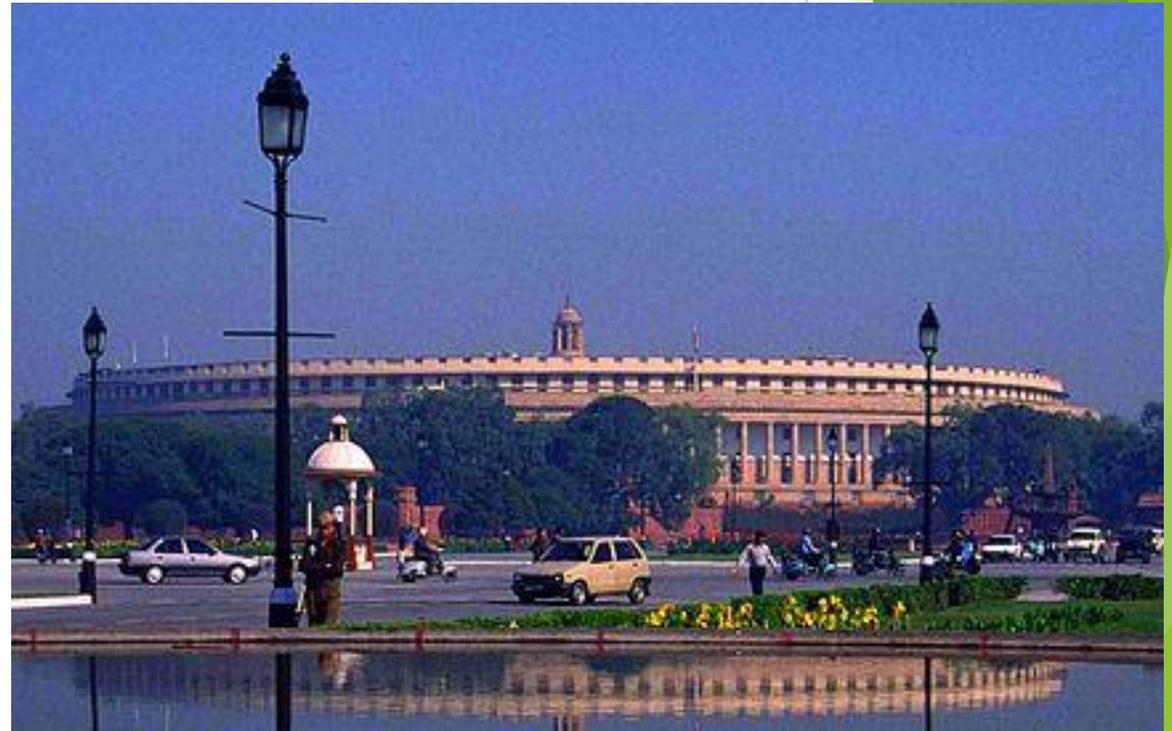
- ▶ **President**
 - ▶ Nominal executive
 - ▶ Oversees ceremonial functions (similar to royalty in Great Britain)
 - ▶ The Presidents signs all the bills, but can not reject them
- ▶ **Prime Minister**
 - ▶ Chosen by the political party that is in power
 - ▶ Known as the “chief advisor” to the president, but is actually the head of the government and the most powerful
 - ▶ Picks the Council of Ministers



*Prime Minister
Narendra Modi*

Council of States (Rajya Sabha)

- ▶ Upper house
- ▶ Elected by the state parliaments
- ▶ 250 members
- ▶ Mostly elected from their state parliaments
- ▶ 12 members are assigned by the President
- ▶ 6 year terms
 - ▶ Rolling retirement - 1/3 retire every year



The People's Assembly (Lok Sabha)

- ▶ Lower house
- ▶ Elected directly by the people
- ▶ 545 Members
 - ▶ 543 members are selected from the states
 - ▶ 2 members are selected by the president
- ▶ Elected every 5 years

Supreme Court

- ▶ One chief justice
- ▶ 30 other judges
- ▶ Final court of appeals
- ▶ Primary purposes
 - ▶ Protect rights of its citizens
 - ▶ Settle disputes between governments in India



States and Territories

- ▶ India has 28 states and seven union territories
- ▶ State governors are appointed by the president
 - ▶ They serve five year terms
- ▶ States have their own parliaments
 - ▶ They oversee education, agriculture, local government, etc
- ▶ The federal government has power over anything not assigned to the states



Political Party Overview

- ▶ Multi-party system classified as national, state or regional level
- ▶ Status of party is accorded by the Election Commission of India
- ▶ All parties are registered with Election Commission

National Political Parties

- ▶ Political parties which participate in different elections all over India
- ▶ Criteria for Recognition:
 - ▶ A party must live up to at least one of the following qualifications to be recognized
 - ▶ Win a minimum of 2% of the seats in the Lok Sabha from at least 3 different states
 - ▶ In General Elections, party must manage to win 6% of votes and win at least 4 Lok Sabha seats
 - ▶ The party is recognized as a state level party in four or more states
- ▶ Very few political parties are able to make presence as a national party
- ▶ These parties have a big presence in India: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM), India National Congress (INC), National Congress Party (NCP)

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)



- ▶ The word “ bahujan” means the majority of the people and “Samaj” means society
- ▶ BSP represents the majority of the people and represents mainly the oppressed sections of society
- ▶ The elephant on the symbol represents physical strength and will-power

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)



- ▶ Translates to “ Indian People’s Party”
- ▶ Right-wing political position
- ▶ Strongly adheres to cultural nationalism through social conservatism and integral humanism
- ▶ The symbol contains a lotus, which is India’s flower and is used to indicate national identity

Communist Party of India (CPI)



- ▶ Oldest party to have begun the communist movement in India
- ▶ Symbol is ears of corn and a sickle with a red background
- ▶ Red is the color of struggle symbolizing a communist party
- ▶ The ears of corn and a sickle depicts that CPI contains peasants, farmers and laborers who work the fields for a living

Communist Party of India (Marxist)



- ▶ Left-wing political party with communist political ideology
- ▶ The symbol is red which represents communism
- ▶ The intersecting hammer and sickle depicts that the party is a party of working class (peasants, farmers and laborers)
- ▶ The sickle and hammer are used to cut corn and all other crops in the field
- ▶ Symbol is very similar from the CPI because their ideologies are not much different

India National Congress (INC)



- ▶ Country' s oldest political party
- ▶ One of the two major national political parties
- ▶ Operates on the ideology of Gandhian Socialism and Social Democracy
- ▶ Center- left political position
- ▶ Symbol is the “right hand” with its palm-side facing front, usually seen in the center of the Indian flag which is the background

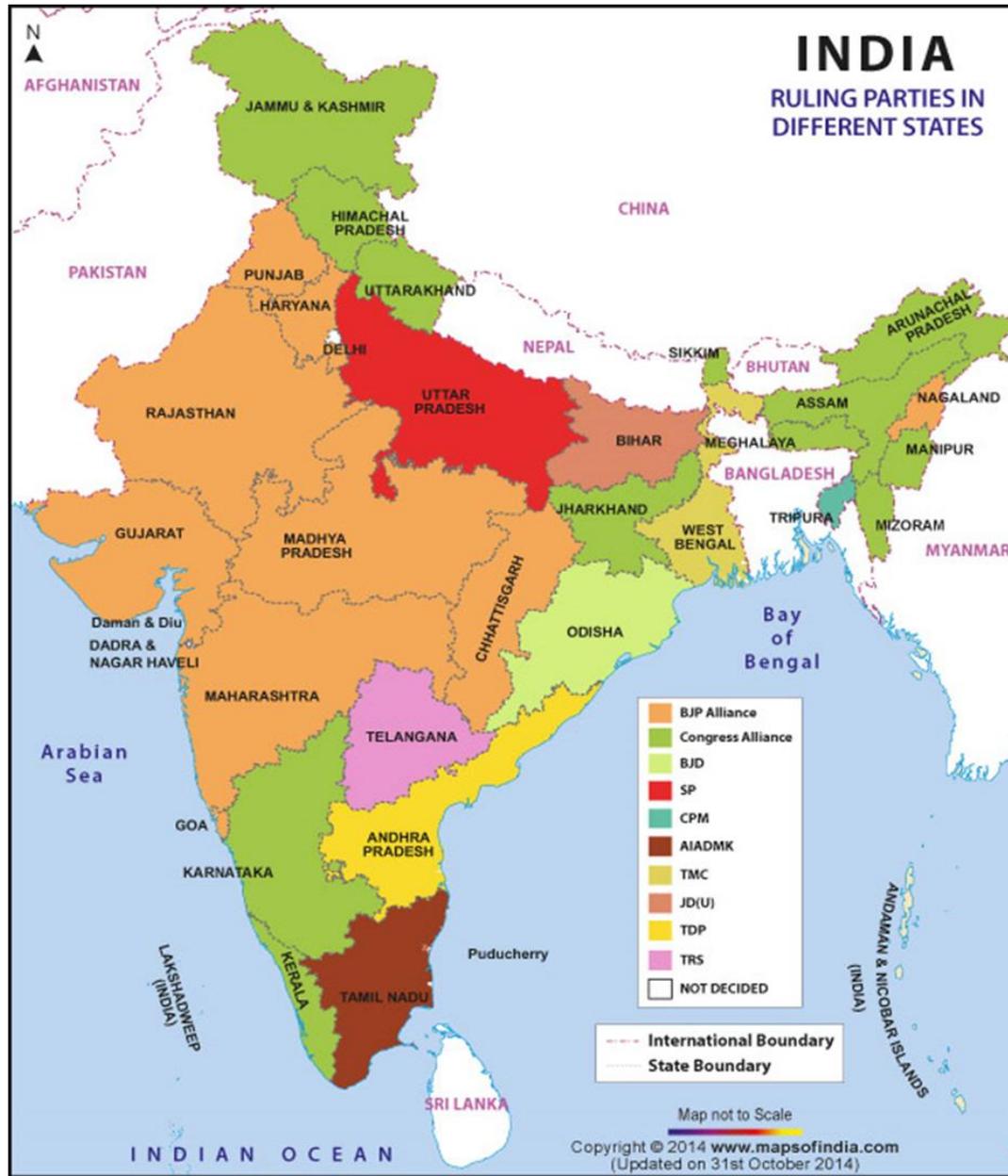
Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)



- ▶ Born out of the Indian National Congress when 3 members were expelled
- ▶ Stands for upholding democratic secular society along with equality, social justice and unity in the nation
- ▶ Believe integrity of India can be achieve by strengthening federalism and decentralizing power
- ▶ Symbol is a clock that reads 10:10, drawn in blue and has 2 legs and an alarm button- denotes that NCP will keep fighting for its principle no matter how difficult the situation

State Parties

- ▶ Political parties that participate in different elections but only within one state
- ▶ Some states have more than one state party
- ▶ Criteria of a State Party
 - ▶ A party must live up to at least one of the following qualifications to be acknowledged as a state party
 - ▶ Win at least 3 seats or 3% of the seats in the state legislative assembly
 - ▶ Win minimum one seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction allotted to the state
 - ▶ Status of a state party can still be bestowed upon an entity even if it fails to win any seats in the Lok Sabha or the assembly if it wins 8% of the total votes cast in the entire state
- ▶ Critical to make or break alliances in the Lok Sabha election



Regional Parties

- ▶ Smaller parties that hold considerable clout in individual states leading to high fragmentation of vote distribution
- ▶ “Trump card” of India’s political system

Political Parties

- ▶ Political parties in which one person pulls all the strings
 - ▶ Shiv Sena have their stronghold in the public not because of leaders but because of party ideology
- ▶ Other parties are completely dependent on respect the leader has in public
- ▶ Also independent candidates
- ▶ High number of film actors join Indian politics
 - ▶ Many state parties attract local film industry actors in their party

Sources

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