

CUET · POLITICAL SCIENCE · CLASS XII · CODE 323

Challenges to and Restoration of the Congress System

CUET unit: Politics in India Since Independence — Challenges to and Restoration of the Congress System

By UniDrill · NCERT-grounded study material

WWW.UNIDRILL.IN

UniDrill

Snapshot

- The political transition after Nehru's death (May 1964): Shastri's tenure, the Indira Gandhi era, and the question "After Nehru, what?".
- It explains the 1967 fourth general elections — a "political earthquake" that ended Congress dominance in 9 states, brought in coalitions (SVD), and introduced large-scale defection ("Aya Ram, Gaya Ram").
- The 1969 Congress split (Congress (O) vs Congress (R)) and the ideological turn under Indira Gandhi — Ten Point Programme, bank nationalisation, privy purse abolition, and the V.V. Giri vs Sanjeeva Reddy presidential contest.
- The 1971 Lok Sabha election restored Congress dominance through the "Garibi Hatao" slogan against the opposition Grand Alliance, but on Indira Gandhi's personal popularity rather than party organisation.
- CUET tests this chapter heavily for direct facts (slogans, persons, years), match-the-following on terms like Syndicate, Defection, Non-Congressism, and case-based items on the 1967 elections and 1969 split.

Detailed Notes

2.1 Core concepts

- **The succession question.** Jawaharlal Nehru passed away in May 1964, raising the twin questions "after Nehru, who?" and "after Nehru, what?" — outsiders had long feared that India's democracy might collapse like other newly independent countries; some predicted military rule (NCERT §Challenge of Political Succession, p. 73). NCERT underlines that the smooth succession that followed was itself a major democratic achievement.
- **'Dangerous decade'.** The 1960s were called the 'dangerous decade' because unresolved problems like **poverty, inequality, communal and regional divisions** could, it was thought, lead to the failure of the democratic project or even the disintegration of the country (NCERT §Challenge of Political Succession, p. 74).
- **From Nehru to Shastri.** **K. Kamaraj**, the Congress President, consulted party leaders and MPs; a consensus emerged in favour of **Lal Bahadur Shastri**, who was unanimously chosen as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and became PM (NCERT §From Nehru to Shastri, p. 74). The Congress's ability to manage

succession through internal consultation strengthened its image as a robust political organisation.

- **Shastri's tenure.** Lal Bahadur Shastri was PM from **1964 to 1966**; he coined the famous slogan '**Jai Jawan Jai Kisan**' to symbolise the country's resolve in the face of the **1965 war with Pakistan** and a serious food crisis (NCERT §From Nehru to Shastri, p. 74).
- **Shastri's death.** Shastri died abruptly on **11 January 1966 at Tashkent** (then in USSR, now capital of Uzbekistan), after signing an agreement with Pakistan President Ayub Khan to end the war (NCERT §From Nehru to Shastri, p. 74). His death triggered the second succession in less than two years.
- **From Shastri to Indira.** After Shastri the Congress faced succession a second time within two years; the contest was between **Morarji Desai** and **Indira Gandhi**; senior leaders backed Indira but the decision was not unanimous and was resolved through a **secret ballot of Congress MPs**. Indira Gandhi defeated Morarji Desai with the support of **more than two-thirds** of Congress MPs — a peaceful transition seen as a sign of maturity of Indian democracy (NCERT §From Shastri to Indira Gandhi, p. 74).
- **Context of the 1967 elections.** The fourth general elections were held in **February 1967** against the backdrop of grave economic crisis: failed monsoons, drought, fall in agricultural and industrial production, depleted foreign exchange, rise in military expenditure following the 1962 and 1965 wars, and **devaluation of the rupee** (one US dollar from less than Rs. 5 to more than Rs. 7) (NCERT §Fourth General Elections, 1967 / Context of the elections, pp. 76–77).
- **Mass distress.** The economic crisis triggered price rise, food scarcity, unemployment, and a wave of **bandhs and hartals**. The communist and socialist parties launched struggles for greater equality, and a CPI(ML) splinter led armed agrarian struggles (NCERT §Context of the elections, p. 77).
- **Non-Congressism.** Socialist leader **Ram Manohar Lohia** gave the strategy of '**non-Congressism**' — disparate opposition parties forming anti-Congress fronts and electoral adjustments because the division of opposition votes kept Congress in power. Lohia argued that Congress rule was undemocratic and opposed to ordinary poor people. The strategy gave the opposition a way to overcome ideological incompatibility for the limited purpose of defeating Congress (NCERT §Non-Congressism, p. 78).
- **1967 verdict — 'political earthquake'.** Contemporary observers called the result a 'political earthquake'. Congress did get a majority in the Lok Sabha but with its **lowest tally of seats and share of votes since 1952**. Half the ministers in Indira's cabinet were defeated, and stalwarts like **Kamaraj (Tamil Nadu)**, **S.K. Patil (Maharashtra)**, **Atulya Ghosh (West Bengal)** and **K.B. Sahay (Bihar)** all lost (NCERT §Electoral verdict, p. 78).

- **Nine-state collapse.** Congress lost majority in **seven states** and was prevented by defections from forming government in two others — the nine states being **Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala** (NCERT §Electoral verdict, p. 80).
- **DMK in Madras.** In Madras (Tamil Nadu) the **DMK** came to power with a clear majority after leading an **anti-Hindi agitation** — the first time any non-Congress party secured a majority of its own in any state. In the other eight states **coalition governments** were formed (NCERT §Electoral verdict, p. 80).
- **Coalitions — SVD. Samyukt Vidhayak Dal (SVD)** governments brought together ideologically incongruent partners — e.g., in **Bihar** the SSP, PSP, CPI (Left) and **Jana Sangh (Right)** sat in the same government; in **Punjab** the 'Popular United Front' included Akali Sant and Master groups, CPI, CPI(M), SSP, Republican Party and BJS (NCERT §Coalitions, p. 80). The SVD experience demonstrated both the possibilities and the instability of coalition politics.
- **Defection.** Defection means an elected representative leaving the party on whose symbol s/he was elected to join another. The phrase '**Aya Ram, Gaya Ram**' originated from Haryana MLA **Gaya Lal** who changed parties **thrice in a fortnight** in 1967; Rao Birendra Singh's quip "Gaya Ram was now Aya Ram" became iconic. The Constitution was later amended (Anti-Defection Law, 52nd Amendment, 1985) to prevent defections (NCERT §Defection, p. 81).
- **The Syndicate.** The **Syndicate** was an informal group of powerful Congress leaders controlling the party organisation, led by **K. Kamaraj**, with **S.K. Patil (Bombay)**, **S. Nijalingappa (Mysore/Karnataka)**, **N. Sanjeeva Reddy (Andhra Pradesh)** and **Atulya Ghosh (West Bengal)**; both Shastri and Indira owed their PM positions to the Syndicate's support (NCERT §The Congress 'Syndicate', p. 82). The Kamaraj Plan (1963) — under which senior Congressmen resigned office to make way for younger workers — had ironically strengthened the organisational wing whose leaders became the Syndicate.
- **Indira's two challenges.** Indira Gandhi faced two challenges: build independence from the Syndicate, and regain ground lost in 1967. She converted a power struggle into an ideological struggle and got the CWC to adopt a **Ten Point Programme (May 1967)** — social control of banks, **nationalisation of General Insurance**, ceiling on urban property and income, public distribution of food grains, land reforms, and house sites for the rural poor (NCERT §Indira vs. the 'Syndicate', pp. 82–83). The Syndicate accepted the programme verbally but had reservations about its implementation.
- **1969 Presidential election.** After President **Zakir Hussain's** death, the Syndicate nominated **N. Sanjeeva Reddy** as the official Congress candidate; Indira encouraged **Vice-President V.V. Giri** to file as an independent and gave a '**conscience vote**' call. She also, in dramatic moves, announced **nationalisation of 14 leading private banks** and **abolition of privy purses** to bolster her socialist credentials. **V.V. Giri won** narrowly (NCERT §Presidential election, 1969, pp. 83–84).

- **November 1969 split.** The defeat of the official Congress candidate formalised the Congress split: **Congress (O) — Organisation**, led by the Syndicate (Old Congress); **Congress (R) — Requisitionists**, led by Indira (New Congress). Indira projected the split as an ideological divide between **socialists vs conservatives, pro-poor vs pro-rich** (NCERT §Presidential election, 1969, p. 84).
- **Privy Purse.** Privy Purse was a **hereditary grant** promised to rulers of integrated princely states; a 1970 constitutional amendment to abolish it **failed in Rajya Sabha**; an ordinance was struck down by the Supreme Court; after the 1971 victory, the Constitution was amended to abolish privy purses (NCERT §Abolition of Privy Purse box, p. 84).
- **1971 election — the contest.** Congress (R) was reduced to a minority after the split but Indira **dissolved the Lok Sabha in December 1970** to seek a popular mandate. The opposition — **SSP, PSP, BJS, Swatantra (SWA), BKD** — formed the **Grand Alliance (non-Communist, non-Congress)**; Congress (R) had an alliance with **CPI** (NCERT §The 1971 Election and Restoration of Congress / The contest, p. 86).
- **'Garibi Hatao' vs 'Indira Hatao'.** Indira's slogan was **'Garibi Hatao'** (Remove Poverty), countering the Grand Alliance's only common programme of **'Indira Hatao'**. She built a support base among **landless labourers, Dalits, Adivasis, minorities, women and unemployed youth** — a coalition very different from the older Congress (NCERT §The contest, p. 86).
- **1971 outcome.** Congress(R)-CPI alliance won **375 Lok Sabha seats with 48.4% votes**; Congress(R) alone won **352 seats with about 44% votes**; Congress(O) won only **16 seats with less than one-fourth of Indira's votes**; the Grand Alliance's combined tally was **less than 60 seats** (NCERT §The outcome and after, p. 87).
- **Bangladesh and 1972 Assembly polls.** After the 1971 elections came the **Bangladesh crisis and the Indo-Pak war** leading to the creation of Bangladesh; this added to Indira's popularity. Her party also swept the **State Assembly elections in 1972** — Congress dominance was restored (NCERT §The outcome and after, p. 88).
- **A restored but re-invented Congress.** Restoration was actually a re-invention: the new Congress relied entirely on the **supreme leader's popularity**, had a **weak organisational structure**, fewer factions, and depended more on the poor, women, Dalits, Adivasis and minorities — Indira restored the Congress system by changing its very nature. The party's old federal, factional character was gone (NCERT §Restoration?, p. 89).

2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
Syndicate		82

Term	Definition	Page
	Informal group of powerful Congress leaders, led by K. Kamaraj, that controlled the party's organisation and helped install Shastri and Indira Gandhi as PMs.	
Defection	An elected representative leaving the party on whose symbol he/she was elected and joining another party.	81
Non-Congressism	Strategy by Ram Manohar Lohia of bringing together ideologically disparate non-Congress parties to defeat the Congress by avoiding division of opposition votes.	78
SVD (Samyukt Vidhayak Dal)	Joint legislative parties of non-Congress members that supported coalition (non-Congress) governments in states after the 1967 elections.	80
'Aya Ram, Gaya Ram'	Popular phrase to describe frequent floor-crossing by legislators, originating from Haryana MLA Gaya Lal in 1967.	81
Privy Purse	Hereditary grant in money given to former rulers of princely states upon integration, abolished by constitutional amendment after the 1971 election.	84
Garibi Hatao	Indira Gandhi's 1971 election slogan promising removal of poverty; mobilised support among the poor, Dalits, Adivasis, minorities, women.	86
Indira Hatao	The Grand Alliance's only common programme in 1971, contrasted by Indira with her positive Garibi Hatao plank.	86
Congress (O)	Old Congress / Congress (Organisation) — the faction led by the Syndicate after the November 1969 split.	84
Congress (R)	New Congress / Congress (Requisitionists) — the faction led by Indira Gandhi after the November 1969 split.	84
Grand Alliance	1971 electoral alliance of non-Communist, non-Congress parties — SSP, PSP, BJS, Swatantra (SWA) and BKD — that opposed Indira Gandhi.	86
Kamaraj Plan	1963 proposal that all senior Congressmen should resign from office to make way for younger party workers.	81
Conscience vote	Indira Gandhi's call in 1969 that Congress MPs/MLAs be free to vote as they wished in the presidential election, despite the official whip.	84
Ten Point Programme (May 1967)	Indira-era policy package — bank social control, General Insurance nationalisation, urban property/income ceiling, food PDS, land reforms, rural house sites.	82–83
Bank nationalisation (1969)	Indira Gandhi's takeover of 14 leading private banks announced before the 1969 presidential election.	83–84
'Dangerous decade'	The 1960s — feared period of poverty, inequality, communal and regional divisions threatening democracy and unity.	74

Term	Definition	Page
Devaluation (1966)	Reduction of the rupee from Rs. 7 per dollar — perceived to be under US pressure.	76–77
Bandhs / hartals	Mass protest forms that proliferated during the 1965–67 economic crisis.	77
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam — won majority in Madras (Tamil Nadu) in 1967 after the anti-Hindi agitation.	80
Political earthquake	Description used for the 1967 election verdict that broke Congress dominance in nine states.	78
1972 Assembly sweep	Congress(R) victory in State elections after Bangladesh war, consolidating Indira's restoration.	88

2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- Map / illustration showing the nine states where Congress lost power in 1967 — Punjab, Haryana, UP, MP, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras, Kerala (NCERT p. 79).
- R.K. Laxman cartoon "The Left Hook" depicting V.V. Giri (boxer with garland) defeating the Syndicate's candidate Nijalingappa in the 1969 presidential election (p. 83).
- Cartoon on Charan Singh's 1974 attempt to build a United Front of non-communist parties — illustrates coalition politics (p. 80).
- R.K. Laxman "The Grand Finish" cartoon interpreting the 1971 election outcome — opposition leaders defeated (p. 87).
- **Succession timeline:** Nehru (d. May 1964) → Shastri (1964 – 11 Jan 1966) → Indira Gandhi (1966–1977 and 1980–1984).
- **Ten Point Programme (May 1967):** bank social control, General Insurance nationalisation, urban property/income ceiling, food PDS, land reforms, house sites for rural poor (pp. 82–83).
- **1969 split process diagram:** Zakir Hussain dies → Syndicate nominates Sanjeeva Reddy → Indira backs V.V. Giri + conscience vote + bank nationalisation + privy purse → V.V. Giri wins → Indira expelled by Nijalingappa → November 1969 split into Congress (O) and Congress (R).
- **1971 numbers chart:** Cong(R)+CPI 375 (48.4%) | Cong(R) alone 352 (44%) | Cong(O) 16 (<11%) | Grand Alliance <60.

2.5 Key Articles / Treaties / Events

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
Nehru's death, May 1964	Triggered the "After Nehru, who?" succession question	p. 73

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
Shastri PM, 1964–1966	"Jai Jawan Jai Kisan" slogan; 1965 war	p. 74
1965 India-Pakistan War	Shastri-era conflict	p. 74
Tashkent Agreement, 10 January 1966	Signed by Shastri (died that night) and Ayub Khan	p. 74
Indira Gandhi PM, 1966	Defeated Morarji Desai by 2/3 secret ballot	p. 74
Rupee Devaluation, 1966	One dollar from Rs. 7	pp. 76–77
Fourth General Election, February 1967	"Political earthquake"; Congress lost 9 states	pp. 78–80
Anti-Hindi Agitation (Madras)	Brought DMK to majority in Madras	p. 80
Samyukt Vidhayak Dal (SVD)	Non-Congress coalitions in 8 states	p. 80
Kamaraj Plan, 1963	Senior Congress leaders resigned office	p. 81
Anti-Defection Law (52nd Amendment), 1985	Legislative response to "Aya Ram Gaya Ram"	p. 81
Ten Point Programme, May 1967	Indira's policy package	pp. 82–83
Zakir Hussain's death, May 1969	Triggered the 1969 Presidential election	p. 83
Bank Nationalisation, 19 July 1969	14 leading private banks	pp. 83–84
V. V. Giri elected President, August 1969	Defeated Sanjeeva Reddy	p. 84
Congress Split, November 1969	Congress (O) vs Congress (R)	p. 84
26th Amendment (post-1971)	Abolished privy purses	p. 84
Lok Sabha dissolved, December 1970	Indira sought fresh mandate	p. 86
Fifth Lok Sabha Election, March 1971	Congress (R)+CPI won 375 seats (48.4%)	p. 87
Bangladesh Liberation War, December 1971	Boosted Indira's popularity	p. 88
1972 State Assembly Elections	Congress (R) swept; consolidation of Indira system	p. 88

2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- Confusing Congress (O) with Old Congress vs Congress (R) with New Congress — remember "O = Organisation = Old = Syndicate"; "R = Requisitionists = Indira = New".
- 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' is Shastri's slogan; 'Garibi Hatao' is Indira's 1971 slogan; 'Indira Hatao' was the only common programme of the Grand Alliance.

- The Grand Alliance was non-Communist AND non-Congress — **CPI was actually allied with Congress(R)**; SSP, PSP, BJS, Swatantra and BKD were the Grand Alliance partners.
- DMK was the only non-Congress party that won a clear majority of its own in any state in 1967; coalitions (SVD) formed in the other eight states.
- Shastri died at **Tashkent** (then in USSR, now Uzbekistan) — not Moscow.
- Privy purse abolition: 1970 constitutional amendment **failed in Rajya Sabha**; ordinance struck down by Supreme Court; amendment passed only after the 1971 victory.
- The 1971 election was the **FIFTH** general election (not fourth — the fourth was 1967).
- V.V. Giri contested as an **independent** candidate, not as the official Congress nominee — the official Congress candidate was N. Sanjeeva Reddy.
- 14 banks were nationalised in **1969**; **General Insurance** nationalisation was part of the **Ten Point Programme (1967)**.
- Cong(R)-CPI = **375 seats** | Cong(R) alone = **352 seats** | NTA loves to swap these.
- "Aya Ram, Gaya Ram" originates with **Gaya Lal of Haryana** (changed parties thrice in a fortnight in 1967) — not any other state.

Practice MCQs

PYQ Alignment

This chapter is heavily tested in CUET — direct factual recall (Shastri's slogan, year of split, V.V. Giri vs Sanjeeva Reddy, DMK in Madras), match-the-following on Syndicate / Defection / Non-Congressism / SVD, and statement-based questions on the 1967 'political earthquake' and the 1971 Grand Alliance. Expect 2–4 questions per CUET paper on this chapter, with passage-based items on the Indira-Syndicate rivalry and the Garibi Hatao strategy.

CUET 2023 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.12 (CUET 2023) E. V. Ramaswami Naicker (Periyar) is primarily known for his ideas on:

- A) Anti-casteism and rediscovery of Dravidian identity B) Women suffrage C) Promotion of Sanskrit language D) Support for religious minorities **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2024 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.13 (CUET 2024) Who proposed in 1963 that all senior Congressmen should resign from office to make way for younger party workers?

- A) S. Nijalingappa B) V.V. Giri C) K. Kamaraj D) Indira Gandhi **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.14 (CUET 2024) Who gave the strategy of 'Non-Congressism'?

- A) Ram Manohar Lohia B) C. Natarajan Annadurai C) K. Kamaraj D) Karpoori Thakur **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.18 (CUET 2024) Who led the Anti-Brahmin movement, worked for the Justice Party and founded Dravidar Kazhagam?

- A) A.K. Gopalan B) E.V. Ramasami Naicker C) K. Kamaraj D) Potti Sriramulu **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2025 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.12 (CUET 2025) Which statements are not true about Privy Purse? (A) Privy purse was given to princely states. (B) At the time of dissolution of princely states the rulers' families were given property and allowance. (C) At that time the issue of privileges was not the main aim of integration. (D) Hereditary privileges were consistent with equality. Options:

- A) (A), (B) and (D) B) (B) and (C) only C) (A), (B), (C) and (D) D) (D) only **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.13 (CUET 2025) Arrange the following events in chronological order: (A) DMK was formed (B) Indira Gandhi adopted Ten Point Programme (C) K. Kamaraj proposed resignation of Congressmen (D) Fifth general election to Lok Sabha Options:

- A) (A), (B), (C), (D) B) (D), (B), (A), (C) C) (B), (C), (D), (A) D) (A), (C), (B), (D) **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.14 (CUET 2025) The DMK came to power for the first time in state elections because:

- A) It demanded President's rule in Andhra Pradesh B) It opposed floor crossing of legislators C) It led anti-Hindi agitation against the centre D) It supported Congress Syndicate **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.17 (CUET 2025) In which movement was the slogan "Vakkulau Vazhagiradhu; Therku Thaikiradhu" used?

- A) Gujarat movement B) Anna movement C) Assam movement D) Dravidian movement **Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.18 (CUET 2025) Who started the Self-Respect Movement in 1925?

- A) E.V. Ramasami Naicker B) K. Kamaraj C) B.R. Ambedkar D) Jyotiba Phule
- Tests:** Challenges to and restoration of the Congress system **Answer:** Not in extracted key

