

Congress poll campaign in Karnataka from April 13

The Congress will begin its campaign for the May assembly election in Karnataka from April 13 in a bid to wrest power after a gap of four years.

The party's election campaign committee chairman Siddaramaiah told reporters here Saturday that the campaign would be launched with a massive farmers rally at Davanagere, about 370 km from here, where the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's Rs.600 billion loan-waiver scheme would be flagged off.

'We will express our gratitude to party president Sonia Gandhi and the UPA government at the rally for the loan-waiver scheme, which will benefit thousands of small and marginal farmers across the state. We will also highlight other programmes announced in the union budget for the benefit of farmers and rural poor,' said Siddaramaiah.

Prithviraj Chavan, central minister and party's state unit in-charge, will preside over the first poll campaign rally and address the gathering.

The party's state unit leaders including election management committee chairman and former chief minister S.M. Krishna, Karnataka Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, central ministers M. Rajashekaraiiah and K.H. Muniyappa and former state ministers H.K. Patil and R.V. Deshpande will participate in the rally and address over 100,000 farmers.

The party will organise a women's rally at Mandya in the old Mysore region April 15, a convention for social justice at Kolar near [Bangalore](#) April 17 and a minorities rally at Gulbarga in north Karnataka April 19.

The next phase of electioneering in the run-up to the three-phase polls on May 10, 16 and 22 will be chalked out after finalising the list of contestants for the 224-member legislative house.

'We are drafting the poll manifesto to list our priorities and programmes for the welfare of the people and the socio-economic development of the state. The thrust of the manifesto will be to provide a stable government and achieve sustainable progress for making Karnataka a 'suvarna' (golden) state in the country,' said Siddaramaiah.

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