

Vote Congress to save Bangalore: PM

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Thursday exhorted the electorate in this tech city of India to vote for the Congress and save this 'symbol of a new India' from 'opportunistic' parties whose governments had dented its global brand by neglecting its infrastructure development.

Addressing party workers and select invitees including techies, intellectuals and scientists at a 'Citizens Meet' on the last day of campaigning for the first phase of Karnataka assembly poll May 10 in the city and 10 southern districts, Manmohan Singh said the people of [Bangalore](#) and Karnataka had suffered a lot during the last four years due to instability and poor governance.

'The Congress-led coalition government (June 2004-January 2006) was held hostage to selfish motives of other parties. To just gain power, Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed an opportunistic alliance despite conflicting ideologies. With coalition partners indulging in allegations and counter-allegations, the state and the city of Bangalore lost their reputation across the country,' he observed.

Lamenting that stability and good governance were sacrificed at the altar of greed and lust for power by the previous governments, Manmohan Singh said while other cities that were once imitating Bangalore went far ahead on many fronts, the new international airport here did not have proper connectivity even three years after the project took off.

'Though the new Bangalore airport was sanctioned before the [Hyderabad](#) airport, the latter is already operational. And here, we do not even have proper connectivity to the new airport.

'Long-term planning for the future and welfare of the people have suffered grievously. Only the Congress can provide the stable governance this state badly needs,' Manmohan Singh asserted, drawing applause from an attentive audience in the imposing Chowdaiah memorial hall.

Comparing the performance of the Congress government (1999-2004) headed by IT-savvy S.M. Krishna with that of the succeeding two-three coalition governments, including the week-old BJP-led ministry, Manmohan Singh said Karnataka was the pride of India not long before.

As a leading state in industry, Bangalore was the hottest investment destination for IT and electronics, he said. The Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) was a unique public-private partnership involving people in planning and improving the city's infrastructure, he added.

'There was all-round balanced development with emphasis on irrigation, rural and urban infrastructure, poverty alleviation and education during that period. In contrast, the successive governments failed to maintain the momentum and the state lagged behind over the last four years,' Manmohan Singh affirmed.

The prime minister told the prospective voters that India became a hot investment destination because of Bangalore's global brand, as people the world over knew more about Bangalore than they did about India.

'It is the warmth and hospitality of the Kannada people that made Karnataka so popular with global investors. You are the symbol of a new India. India is on the move, rising to fulfil its destiny on the

global stage.

'The success of the IT revolution in Karnataka has placed it on the world map. Investors come from across the world to Bangalore because Kannadigas are so gracious, so gentle, so talented and so forward-looking,' the prime minister said in his 30-minute address.

Earlier, Congress general secretary and in-charge of party affairs in Karnataka Prithivraj Chavan said due to pre-occupation with the budget session of parliament, Manmohan Singh could not visit Bangalore earlier to address a public meeting that was scheduled Tuesday.

'As Thursday was the last campaign day for the first phase of polling, we did not have enough time to arrange a public meeting. Instead, we have decided to hold this meeting with the citizens of Bangalore to enable the prime minister share his vision for the city and the state,' Chavan said.

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