

BJP demands general elections

The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has demanded fresh general elections in the country, claiming the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government has lost its mandate in the wake of the Left front's threat of withdrawal of support from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government over the India-US nuclear deal.

Addressing a packed press conference at BJP's national headquarters at Ashoka Road here, BJP's prime ministerial candidate and senior party leader L.K. Advani said: 'This government has no right to continue in office now. Let the country decide afresh.'

'Though normally the house is to meet some time in August, in view of the present situation, my party demands that a session of parliament be immediately convened and Manmohan Singh seek the confidence of the house and move a vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha,' Advani said.

'The UPA is now a charade ... It has neither the needed majority nor the required moral authority to trade the future of many many generations of Indians to come,' Advani said, referring to the government's move to go ahead with the nuclear deal.

'As the UPA is now a minority, it has no right to execute any binding international agreements. Therefore the BJP demands that the government must immediately now call the parliament into session and take it fully into confidence,' Advani said.

Reiterating his party's stand on the nuclear deal, Advani termed it an 'ill conceived, ill timed, ill negotiated and hastily pushed through nuclear agreement with the US administration'.

'We want a strategic relationship with the US but (we want) that to be on equal terms. The nuclear deal in its present form is not acceptable to us. If the BJP comes to power, it would renegotiate the deal,' he said.

Advani accused the Congress-led administration of having reduced governance to a 'theatre of the absurd'. 'I have never seen a government like this. It has made a joke of itself,' he said.

He also took on the government over rising inflation, calling it a 'breach of confidence with the people'.

The leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha said: 'For the past 18 months or so governance in India has come to a standstill. The economy is floundering; prices escalating daily, terrorists attacking and imperilling the life and limb of innocent civilians routinely.'

'The PM goes into a sulk for four days, abandoning all responsibilities. The names of replacements of Manmohan Singh begin crowding news columns,' he added.

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