

Congress in the middle ages

The Indian National Congress may be the country's oldest party at 122 years but the profile of its candidates in Punjab's Feb 13 assembly election is distinctly middle-aged. Of its 117 candidates, 71 are in the 44-60 age group - regarded as middle age in political circles. Twenty-six are above 60 years of age, 17 are between 36-45 and only three are under 35.

The Shiromani Akali Dal, contesting 94 seats on its own and leaving the remaining 23 to alliance partner Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has the highest number of old leaders with 28 candidates who are 60 years and above. Akali Dal president Parkash Singh Badal - who is taking a shot at being chief minister for the fourth time - is himself 80 years old.

Money-wise, of the top 10 richest candidates, seven belong to the Congress and three to the Akalis. But the top two slots go to the Akalis - former Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee president Jagir Kaur (Rs.890 million) and Surjit Singh Rakhra (Rs.545 million). Congress Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is the richest individual among Congress candidates and the third overall with assets of Rs.507 million.

Jaideep Sarin (© IANS / India eNews)