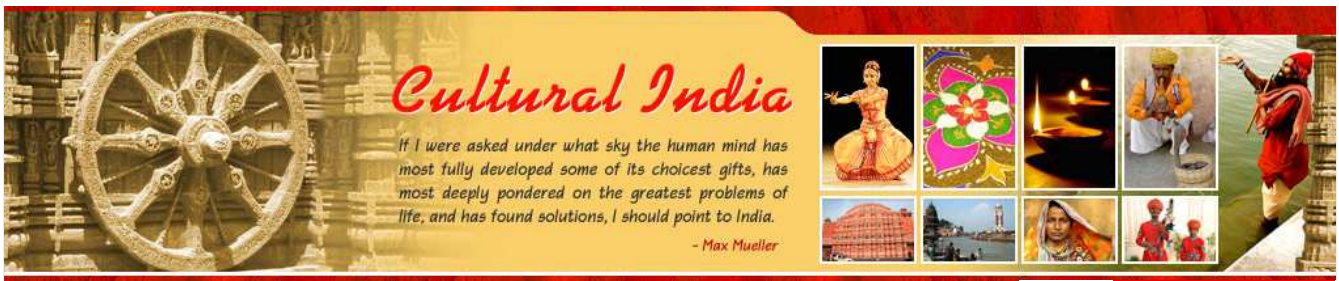

Leaders

- Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- Bhagat Singh
- Chandrasekhar Azad
- Gopal Krishna Gokhale
- Indira Gandhi
- Jawaharlal Nehru
- Lala Lajpat Rai
- Lal Bahadur Shastri
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose
- Dr. Rajendra Prasad
- Rajiv Gandhi
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
- Sarojini Naidu

Rajiv Gandhi was the youngest prime minister of India. He brought a revolutionary change in the field of telecom and information technology in India. To know more about Rajiv Gandhi, read this brief biography and profile.

Cultural India : Leaders : Rajiv Gandhi

Rajiv Gandhi

Born: 20 August 1944
Passed Away: 21 May 1991

Contribution

Rajiv Gandhi was one of the popular Prime Ministers of India. The developmental projects launched by him include the national education policy and expansion of telecom sector. Besides his achievement and subsequent popularity, Rajiv Gandhi also emerged as one of India's controversial Prime Ministers. He was allegedly involved in the "Bofors scandal" worth Rs 640 million.

Early Life

Rajiv Gandhi was born on 20 August 1944, into the country's eminent political dynasty - the Nehru-Gandhi family. His mother Indira Gandhi was the first and the only woman Prime Minister of India. Feroze, a key member of the Indian National Congress became the editor of The National Herald newspaper founded by Motilal Nehru in Allahabad.

Rajiv Gandhi initially attended the Welham Boys' School and subsequently sent to the elite Doon School in Dehradun. Later, he went to the United Kingdom to study at the Cambridge University. It was here in Cambridge University, young Rajiv met Sonia Maino (later Sonia Gandhi) from Italy. After his return from the United Kingdom, Rajiv Gandhi exhibited least interest in the politics and focused onto becoming a professional pilot. He, later, worked for Indian Airlines, as a pilot.

His Brother

Unlike Rajiv, his younger brother had developed an interest and knowledge in the subjects of public administration and political developments. Although he had not been elected, Sanjay began exercising his influence with police officers, high-level government officers and even the Cabinet Ministers. Many senior ministers, as a protest against Sanjay Gandhi, resigned from office. Sanjay, gradually promoted as a close political advisor to Indira Gandhi. On June 23, 1980, Sanjay Gandhi died in an air crash in Delhi.

Entry into politics

After the death of his brother Sanjay, the senior members of the Indian National Congress party approached Rajiv Gandhi, in order to persuade him joining politics. But, Rajiv was reluctant about joining and said "no" to them. His wife, Sonia Gandhi, also stood by Rajiv's stand of not entering into politics. But after constant request from his mother Indira Gandhi, he decided to contest. His entry was criticized by many in the press, public and opposition political parties. They saw the entry of Nehru-Gandhi scion into politics as a forced-hereditary-participation. Within a few months of his election as a Member of Parliament, Rajiv Gandhi acquired significant party influence and became an important political advisor to his mother. He was also elected as the general secretary of the All-India Congress Committee and subsequently became the president of the Youth Congress.

Assassination

Following the assassination of his mother, on 31 October 1984, the Congress leaders and partisans favored Rajiv as the immediate successor to the coveted throne. The decision was also supported by Zail Singh, the then President of India.

Achievements

As Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi endeavored to eliminate the corrupt and criminal faces within the Indian National Congress party. To deal with the anti-Sikh agitation, that followed the death of his mother, Rajiv Gandhi signed an accord with Akali Dal president Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, on 24 July, 1985. The key points of the pact were:

- Along with ex-gratia payment to those innocent killed in agitation or any action after 1- 8-1982, compensation for property damaged will also be paid.
- All citizens of the country have the right to enroll in the Army and merit will remain the criterion for selection.

Indian Culture

- Leaders
- Reformers
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- Indian Jewelry
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- Precious Stones
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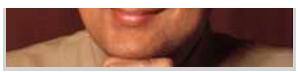
  - Bride Preparations
  - Regional Weddings
  - Groom Preparations
  - Wedding Rituals
  - Wedding Preparations



- For all those discharged, efforts will be made to rehabilitate and provide gainful employment.

Revived Policies
The economic policies adopted by Rajiv Gandhi were different from his precursors like Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Going, against the traditional socialism, Rajiv Gandhi decided to improve the bilateral relationships with the United States of America and subsequently expanded the economic and scientific cooperation with it. A revived foreign policy, emphasizing on the economic liberalization and information and technology moved India closer to the West.

His introductory measures to reduce the "Red Tapism" and allow business house to set up their establishments was remarkable. In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi announced a "national education policy" to modernize and expand higher education programs across India. Rajiv Gandhi brought a revolution in the field of information technology and telecom. The idea helped in originating the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, popularly known as MTNL. Rajiv Gandhi was the man to transcend telecom services to the rural India or "India in true sense".

Controversies
While commenting on the anti-Sikh riots, that followed the assassination of India Gandhi in Delhi, Rajiv Gandhi said, "' When a giant tree falls, the earth below shakes". The statement was widely criticized both within and outside the Congress Party. Many viewed the statement as "provocative" and demanded an apology from him. Beside, Rajiv Gandhi's name had also surfaced in the major controversies like Bofors and the formation of Indian Peace Keeping Force.

Bofors Case
The infamous Bofors scandal that still haunts the political walls of the country was exposed during Rajiv Gandhi's reign. A strong corruption racket involving many stalwarts of the Congress Party was unearthed in the 1980s. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India and several others prominent leaders were accused of receiving kickbacks from Bofors for winning a bid to supply India's 155 mm field howitzer (a type of artillery piece).

IPKF
In 1987, the Indian Peace Keeping Force was formed to end the Sri Lankan Civil War between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan military. The acts of the military contingent was opposed by the Opposition parties of Sri Lanka and as well as LTTE. But, Rajiv Gandhi refused to withdraw the IPKF. The idea also turned out to be unpopular in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. The IPKF operation cost over 1100 Indian soldiers lives and cost over 2000 crores.

Death
On 21 May, 1991, on his way towards the dais, Rajiv Gandhi was garlanded by many Congress supporters and well wishers. At around 10 pm, the assassin greeted him and bent down to touch his feet. She then exploded an RDX explosive laden belt attached to her waist-belt. The act of violence was reportedly carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, expressing their resentment over the formation Indian Peace-keeping Force.

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