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LOK SABHA

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AGENDA:

Deliberating upon the
need for
proclamation of
national emergency
with special emphasis
on measures taken by
the government
during this period.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings Parliamentarians! We gladly welcome you to the twelfth edition of Jaipuria Model United Nations, 2024 and to the historic 5th session of Lok Sabha. It is our utmost pleasure to serve you as the Executive Board of the Lok Sabha this year. Prepare yourself to face the blend of emotions, rhetorics, heated debates, fiery questions and much much more! The Agenda we have for you this year is as follows:

"Deliberating upon the Proclamation of National Emergency with special emphasis on measures taken by the government."

This background guide is designed to provide you with a brief overview of the agenda and will steer your research in the right direction. It will assist you to understand some important aspects related to the agenda at hand and will also provide you with some sources to news articles and research papers so jumpstart your preparation.

Kindly use this guide as a reference point only while carrying out your research. We expect a well-researched debate with arguments that present facts as well as appropriate, implementable solutions and suggestions. It is expected of all the parliamentarians to have a respectful, constructive debate without hurting anyone's sentiments. In case of any query, please feel free to contact us at loksabha.jmun24@gmail.com. We will be happy to help you out. We appreciate your participation and wish you all the best!

Regards,
The Executive Board.

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THE LOWER HOUSE OF THE PARLIAMENT - LOK SABHA

The Lower House of the Indian Parliament is known as Lok Sabha or the House of the People. It consists of the people's representatives who are elected in a secret vote employing universal adult suffrage. The Lok Sabha is allowed a maximum of 552 members, of which 530 are drawn from the states, 20 from the Union Territories, and two from the Anglo-Indian community, who are nominated by the President if they feel they have not been sufficiently represented in the House.

According to the Constitution (One Hundred and Fourth Amendment) Act of 2019, Article 334 no longer includes the special representation of the Anglo-Indian group. In terms of the Act, "Reservation of Seats and Special Representation to cease after a certain Period" There have currently been 17 elections for the Lok Sabha. There are now 543 members of the House, 530 of whom come from the states and 13 from the Union Territories. The Indian National Congress leads the main opposition while the BJP forms the ruling coalition. The Speaker serves as the Lok Sabha's presiding official. The Lok Sabha can be dissolved before the end of its term by the President on the Prime Minister's recommendation, despite the fact that members are chosen for 5-year terms.

Powers and Functions:

- The Lok Sabha is in charge of the Executive. The President appoints the head of the majority party to the position of prime minister, who subsequently selects his or her council of ministers. The Lok Sabha is liable to this Council of Ministers as a whole. Only in the Lok Sabha can the opposition introduce a vote of no confidence. The Legislature has the ability to exert influence on the Executive through the use of Cut Motion, Censure Motion, Adjournment Motion, and Question Period.
- The Lok Sabha is the only place where money bills can be introduced, and the Rajya Sabha cannot reject them after they have been passed. The bill has a maximum of 14 days in the Upper House to be passed. If they do not, the law is considered to have been approved by both Houses and is forwarded to the President for signature.
- Due to its greater strength, the Lok Sabha's judgment will take precedence in the event that a joint session of both Houses of Parliament is called as a result of a deadlock. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House are chosen by the Lok Sabha's members, among other electoral duties. The Lok Sabha is a highly effective House. The House of the People is the Parliament's supreme organ if the Parliament is the supreme instrument of the State.

POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

A position paper is a document that outlines your party's stance and potential fixes on a particular issue. Writing a position paper is crucial since it will give you insight into the subject and help you get ready for the conference. Writing a strong position paper demands not only research prowess but also the capacity to evaluate the data you find during your study.

Format:

- Committee
- Agenda
- Portfolio

A Position Paper must include:

- Introduction to the Agenda
- Party policy towards the Agenda
- Solutions proposed towards the Agenda
- Conclusion

It is not necessary to describe every single item on the agenda. Describe the section(s) that relate to your portfolio. Always keep in mind that having an ignorant position paper is better than having none at all. Try to be as detail-oriented as you can regarding your committee title.

NOTE: All position papers will receive a grade. Please send your position paper to loksabha.jmun24@gmail.com before 11th July, 2024. Your position paper should be two pages in length, single-spaced, with Times New Roman type in size 12. Your portfolio name, committee name, and agenda should be at the top of the position paper. Either Microsoft Word or PDF format should be used.

MAJOR EVENTS BEFORE EMERGENCY DECLARATION

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER:

1. JULY 19th, 1969: NATIONALISATION OF BANKS –

- It was on July 19, 1969, when then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the nationalisation of 14 commercial Indian banks with deposits of over Rs 50 crores. 14 banks that were nationalised banks in 1969: Allahabad Bank, Canara Bank, United Bank of India, UCO Bank, Syndicate Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Central Bank of India, Indian Bank, Dena Bank and Union Bank.
- Mrs. Gandhi weighed the pros and cons of nationalisation by consulting leading economists like K.N. Raj, G.D. Birla and J.R.D. Tata, who had advised her against nationalisation. One of the shareholders of the Central Bank of India, Mr. R.C. Cooper approached the Supreme Court, and the Court declared that the law that had been enacted by the government, was discriminating against the 14 private banks and was unfair for the shareholders. Indira Gandhi commenced the aggressive path to socialism (that eventually led to financial ruin) with the nationalisation of the largest 14 banks by an ordinance in 1969.
- The Supreme Court upheld the nationalisation but struck down the absurd method of calculating the compensation that was to be paid. To make matters worse for the banks, this paltry compensation was then to be paid in bonds which matured after 10 years. This decision was unfortunately projected as an indication of the judiciary being pro-rich and against the poor. The Constitution was later amended to enable expropriation of property on payment of “any amount”. Thus, the ordinance was rejected by the Court. In this way, the battles of Indira Gandhi Government versus courts began (legislative vs judiciary). When the Supreme Court rejected the Ordinance of the Indira Gandhi government, the government brought in a new amendment to the Constitution the next year. And this amendment reversed the Supreme Court's judgement, the Supreme Court's decision.
- She also avenged the bank nationalisation verdict by the 24th Amendment enabling property to be confiscated on payment of “an amount” instead of “compensation”. The 25th Amendment had a startling proposition: If any law contained a mere declaration that it was to give effect to Directive Principles of State Policy, it could not be questioned in any court of law.

2. DECEMBER 28th, 1971: ABOLITION OF PRIVY PURSE

There was a similar case in the Supreme Court between Indira Gandhi government and the Supreme Court.

- Privy Purse used to be a payment given to the royal families of the Princely States in India. It was practised at one point because when the government united all the Princely States to form India in 1947, then a condition was laid down that their ruling families would be given a payment by the Indian government, but the ruling party did not like these payments, therefore the government introduced a Bill to abolish Privy Purse. But this Bill couldn't be passed in the Rajya Sabha. That's why the government came up with a new technique. They came out with the proclamation that the Princely States would cease to be recognised as such. It meant that there would be no more ruling families in the country.
- The abolition of the privy purses was a constitutional betrayal and must rank as one of the most shameful episodes of our constitutional history. At the time of Independence, 555 princely states covered 48 per cent of the territory of undivided India and 28 per cent of its population. Few people remember that under the Indian Independence Act, 1947, each ruler had the option of either acceding to the dominion of India or Pakistan or continuing as an independent sovereign state. It was the herculean effort of V.P. Menon and Sardar Patel that persuaded the rulers to sign Instruments of Accession or Instruments of Merger.
- In return for surrendering their powers, Articles 291 and 362 guaranteed them a tax-free privy purse which was approximately one-fourth of what they had earlier earned. Most Congressmen were opposed to payment of privy purses, as most were seen as lackeys of the British. But Sardar Patel made a stirring speech in the Constituent Assembly on October 12, 1949. He asked members to realise that this was a small price to pay for the integration of India. He told them that the cash assets given by the ruler of Madhya Bharat were alone sufficient to cover the payment of privy purses to all princes. Therefore, to deny them their due would be a breach of faith. That is why Privy Purse would not be needed.
- Once again, the matter reached the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court declared this proclamation null and void. The Congress Party added another Constitutional Amendment, stating the Privy Purse would be abolished for the ruling families, and the judgement of the Court was reversed.

3. DECEMBER 3 – 16, 1971: INDO-PAK WAR

Regaining power in 1971, centralisation of power under the Indira Gandhi government was evident. It is said that the Chief Ministers of the various states and the cabinet ministers, were being selected by Indira Gandhi based on who was favoured by her. 1971 was also the year when the India-Pakistan war took place. The government took office in 1971 and as soon as it came into power it faced a series of calamities, starting with the Bangladesh crisis.

- On 25th March, 1971 army of Pakistan started the holocaust in the East Bengal region (now Bangladesh), Sheikh Mujibur Rehman the leader of the Awami League made a clean sweep in the eastern Pakistan region winning 160 seats out of 160 in its national Assembly of 300 members and thus was now eligible to form the government in the centre. In western Pakistan under the leadership of the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the Peoples

Progressive Party appeared as the largest single party winning 83 seats with them. The election results created a divide between the two parties and in just two months there was a deep-rooted and irreconcilable political split.

- Instantly after the crackdown on the 25th exiles began gushing into West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam burdening these states with heavy economic, social and political costs. When the flow of refugees turned into floods, it became a crisis for India. In the course of just five weeks, 14th April to 21st May, their number jumped from a little more than 100,000 to about 3.5 million. At first, they came in at 60,000 a day, and then at a staggering 150,000 a day. This colossal influx of refugees into the north eastern region of India was putting a lot of strain on the centre. It was only when Indira Gandhi herself visited the refugee camps in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, and Tripura she decided to respond to the crisis.
- It was after the failed negotiation trials the military intervention under Sam Manekshaw was conducted resulting in the liberation of East Pakistan which is now present-day Bangladesh. In the year of 1971-72, expenditure connected with the refugee influx, war with Pakistan and natural calamities in several parts of the country imposed a serious strain on the government finances. Because of the war the United States of America also terminated the economic aid to India when it was most needed which also led to deterioration of the economic situation of the country. Notwithstanding the unprecedented resource mobilisation effort by way of additional taxation, the budgetary operations of Central and State Governments disclosed an overall budgetary deficit of Rs. 738 crores, the largest ever in any single year.

4. AFTERMATH OF INDO-PAK WAR 1971: ECONOMIC CRISIS AND INFLATION

Corruption in public and private life was so endemic and widespread that "black money" was taken for granted, including the financing of the Congress Party. The "rural barons," now becoming wealthy with the "Green Revolution," were hardly touched by increasing taxation, among other reasons because they were strong supporters of Mrs. Gandhi.

- The nationalisation of banks and the closing of privy purses for the former princes-acts introduced shortly after the formation of Mrs. Gandhi's party-were seen as symbolic exercises in defiance of the deposed Congress conservatives, rather than as constructive developments. Indira Gandhi's 1971 election slogan, '*garibi hatao*' (abolish poverty), by 1974 had become a wry joke since the poor were, in many cases, worse off than ever before. Inflation rose at a 30% pace per annum, in part spurred by the high cost of importing petroleum.
- The Indian economy was under a significant strain in the years of 1972-73, the commodity production showed an unsatisfactory growth in the particular period. Agricultural production declined by 1.7% in 1971-72. Also, there was a decline in food production from 108.4 million tons in 1970-71 to 104.7 million tons in 1971-72 due to the erratic behaviour of monsoons.

- The subsequent failure of summer and winter rains in 1972-73 resulted in another sharp decline in agricultural production, which was a staggering 8%. Also, one of the major reasons for set-back of the Indian economy was the overnight fourfold rise in the price of oil by OPEC, the price level rose by 23% in 1973 which was later escalated to 30 % in 1974. Already worse situations worsened India's import bills increased by billions of dollars. The Indian economy became too fragile to survive the mentioned setbacks.
- The economy was already facing low growth and had nothing to cushion the sudden rise in the prices of oil by OPEC which severely affected the balance-of-payments of the country. Thus, the economic crisis became a major cause for the proclamation of Emergency.

5. DEC 20, 1973: NAVNIRMAN ANDOLAN IN GUJARAT -

- In 1974, the Chief Minister of Gujarat was Chimanbhai Patel. A major scam involving him surfaced. People started calling him '*Chiman Chor*' (Thief) in Gujrat. People came out on the roads to protest. Students protested. Buses were burned. Shops were looted. And the police were attacked. It is known as the Navnirman Movement. This was a strong demand from the people of Gujrat to dissolve the then state government. Indira Gandhi was left with no other choice, so she dissolved the state government. In December 1973, students at L D College of Engineering in Ahmedabad went on a strike to protest a hike in school fees. A month later, students at Gujarat University erupted in protest, demanding the dismissal of the state government. It called itself the 'Navnirman movement' or the movement for regeneration. Gujarat now was governed by the Congress under chief minister Chimanbhai Patel. The government was notorious for its corruption, and its head popularly referred to as chiman chor (thief).
- The student protests against the government escalated and soon factory workers and people from other sectors of society joined in. Clashes with the police, burning of buses and government offices and attacks on ration shops became an everyday occurrence. By February 1974, the central government was forced to act upon the protest. It suspended the Assembly and imposed President's rule upon the state.
- "The last act of the Gujarat drama was played in March 1975 when, faced with continuing agitation and fast unto death by Morarji Desai, Indira Gandhi dissolved the assembly and announced fresh elections to it in June," writes historian Bipin Chandra in his book, 'India since Independence.'

6. 1974: THE J.P. MOVEMENT -

- In the same year, a movement like the one in Gujrat began in Bihar by students. It was led by J.P. Narayan. Following in the footsteps of Gujarat or rather inspired by its success, a similar movement was launched in Bihar. A student protest erupted in Bihar in March 1974 to which opposition forces lent their strength. First, it was soon headed by 71-year-old freedom fighter Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly called JP. Second, in the case of Bihar, Indira Gandhi did not concede to the suspension of the Assembly. However, the JP movement was significant in determining her to declare Emergency.

A hero of the freedom struggle, JP had been known for his selfless activism since the days of the nationalist movement. “His entry gave the struggle a great boost, and also changed its name; what was till then the ‘Bihar movement’ now became the ‘JP movement’,” writes Guha. He motivated students to boycott classes and work towards raising the collective consciousness of society. There were a large number of clashes with the police, courts, and offices, schools and colleges were being shut down.

- In June 1974, JP led a large procession through the streets of Patna which culminated in a call for ‘total revolution’. He urged the dissenters to put pressure on the existing legislators to resign, so as to be able to pull down the Congress government. Further, JP toured across large sections of North India, drawing students, traders and sections of the intelligentsia towards his movement.
- Opposition parties who were crushed in 1971, saw in JP a popular leader best suited to stand up against Gandhi. JP too realised the necessity of the organisational capacity of these parties in order to be able to face Gandhi effectively. Gandhi denounced the JP movement as being extra-parliamentary and challenged him to face her in the general elections of March 1976. While JP accepted the challenge and formed the National Coordination Committee for the purpose, Gandhi soon imposed the Emergency. Non-violent protests were held against the corruption of the Congress government and the dissolution of the Bihar government was demanded.

7. MAY 8-27, 1974: RAILWAYS’ STRIKE

The railway strike of 1974 can be called as the largest trade union strike ever took place in the history of India, it is the event which Indira Gandhi government states as one of the major causes and the justification of Emergency.

- The Indian railways was the largest single employer of the country and is considered as the artery and lifeline of the country. The workers’ grievances were the absolute and relative decline in the income of the railway workers. Since an increased wage bill would impose a strain on the government’s budget, every pay commission becomes a political issue. There were three pay commissions between 1947 to 1974.
- The first set down uniform rates of pay out, it also provided a Dearness Allowance (DA) formula that would compensate workers for increases in prices but was not sufficient. By the end of the 1950s railway workers’ incomes had become seriously eroded. Despite the decline, the second pay commission did not actually increase the remuneration. The high inflation years of the mid 1960s cut deeply into workers’ real wages and were merely compensated by the DA. The third pay commission was more or less similar to that second but came in at a very worse time for the railway workers which was 1st January 1973 during which India experienced its worst inflation.
- Due to these agitations between railway workers’ and the government the railway strike took place. All India Railwaymen’s Federation (AIRF) leader led the strike which commenced 8th May 1974 and called off on 27th May 1974. The government had put

in colossal efforts to suppress the strike; it had to take harsh measures and invoking Defence of India rules to bring the agitation to the ground.



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MOST IMPORTANT CAUSE OF EMERGENCY

1975: INDIRA GANDHI VS ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT CASE -

- The judgement delivered by the one-member bench of the Allahabad High Court in regard to the election petition by one of the opposition members, Raj Narain, against the Prime Minister, served the purpose of the opposition, which immediately tried to precipitate matters in the pursuit of the strategy they had already embarked upon for producing conditions of disruption and collapse so that they could come into power.
- Raj Narain, the Prime Minister's electoral opponent who had lost heavily, brought forward fourteen charges of "corrupt practices" against her, which included bribery, corruption, lavish expenditure and illegal soliciting of votes, etc. In fact, the Allahabad High Court judge who heard the election petition dismissed all the graver charges which normally connote corruption in the accepted sense of the term the world over. He did not accept any charge of bribery or illegal soliciting of votes. He also did not accept the charge that Mrs. Gandhi had exceeded the limit of election expenses allowed under the law. The judge upheld only two points, both not really directly related to individual decisions of the Prime Minister but on the basis of which he allowed the appeal of Raj Narain and declared the election invalid. She was convicted for 2 of the crimes by the Court, which were against the Constitution, because of these 2 crimes, the court declared Indira Gandhi's Lok Sabha seat as Null and Void. And Indira Gandhi was removed from the Lok Sabha. Then the newspaper printed as if the decision of the court had basically unseated the Prime Minister from her seat because of a traffic ticket violation.
- The first point concerned the erection of a rostrum by officials in two of Mrs. Gandhi's election meetings in Rae Bareilly and the supply of electric power by the U.P. Government officials at these two meetings. This he regarded as an impermissible practice. The judge, however, observed that the police authorities in various states had the obligation to make arrangements for the security of the Prime Minister even when she was a candidate herself, and he had no objection to the barricades constructed by the police authorities in connection with such security arrangements. It is necessary to point out here that arrangements which are uniformly made by all states for the security of the Prime Minister include the construction of rostrums. It was obviously, therefore, a technical point in the interpretation of law.
- The second point was that her election agent Yashpal Kapoor was a government employee even at the time of the elections, which was against the Constitution. The judgement given against Indira Gandhi concerned the question of the date from which the resignation of an official became effective. The judge accepted that the official concerned had resigned on January 13, 1971, but held that the resignation could not be effective until the formal signing of the letter of acceptance on January 25, by the President of India. He therefore held that the concerned official technically continued to be in service, even though he did not attend office and did not draw his salary during

that period, and concluded that any election work that he might have done was illegal. It is obvious that this again is a technical question of interpretation of law in which no direct personal decision of the Prime Minister was involved.

- The Prime Minister appealed to the Supreme Court and, in accordance with the due processes of law, the vacation judge heard the preliminary plea for a stay order until a full bench appointed by the Chief Justice could consider the issues involved in the appeal. Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer, who heard the stay order appeal, gave his judgement on June 24. He said that there was no legal embargo on Mrs. Gandhi continuing as Prime Minister. He held that she would continue to enjoy all the privileges and prerogatives of the Prime Minister until the full bench of the Supreme Court had declared itself on the appeal. He also said that her disqualification as a member of parliament would be held in abeyance until the decision of the Supreme Court on the appeal. It was only on one point that the Supreme Court judge imposed restrictions: he said that until the disposal of the appeal, Mrs. Gandhi could not vote as member of parliament nor draw her salary and other allowances as a member during this period. He made it clear that he was deciding so because of the precedents established by the Supreme Court in the last 20 years in such cases. Again, therefore, this was a technical issue.
- Despite the judgement of the Allahabad High Court giving an absolute stay order till the Supreme Court considered the issue and despite the subsequent judgement by Justice Krishna Iyer, some of the opposition parties and their leaders embarked upon a countrywide campaign to bring down the Government. As we have noted earlier, even before the Allahabad High Court judgement, they had sought to create conditions that would result in the forcible dissolution of elected legislatures, and elected representatives of the people were prevented from discharging their functions. The minority was dictating to the majority.

JUNE 26, 1975: PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY

On 25th June 1975, Indira Gandhi consulted with some of her ministers and on their advice, sent a written note to the then-President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, requesting that he declare an Emergency in the country on the grounds of “internal disturbance” as mentioned in Article 352.

Jayaprakash Narayan's public call on the evening of June 25 for a civil disobedience campaign to force the resignation of Mrs. Gandhi, including his appeal to the military and the police to disobey illegal orders, was responded to rapidly by the Government of India. The authority of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (enacted for the 1971 Bangladesh war) was used in the early hours of June 26 to arrest one hundred or more of the political leaders who had opposed Mrs. Gandhi and her Party—from the right wing parties, from her own Party, and from certain left parties. Persons arrested included: Jayaprakash Narayan; Morarji Desai (who had led the successful campaign against the Congress in Gujarat); Raj Narain (who had charged Mrs. Gandhi with election corruption in the 1971 General Election); Chandra Sekhar, Ram Dhan, and a good number of Members of Parliament and others from the Congress Party who had urged the Prime Minister to resign; distinguished ex- Congressmen Asoka Mehta and Charan Singh; Samar Guha, President of the Jana Sangh; Jyotirmoy Basu of the Communist Party (Marxist) and others who were followers of the Maoist strategy; Piloo Mody, former leader of the Swatantra Party; K R. Malkani, editor of the Jana Sangh's Motherland; plus an unverified number of other persons throughout the country. The initial group arrested appears to have been somewhat less than 1,000, although some estimates were as high as 3,500. Most of the morning newspapers did not appear because of "electrical failures" that apparently were planned, and strict news censorship was imposed. A Proclamation of Emergency was issued on June 26 by President Fakhruddin 'Ali Ahmed, on the advice of Prime Minister Gandhi. The authority for calling the emergency was Article 352 of the Constitution. Such an emergency can be called by the President whenever he is satisfied that the security of India, or any part of it has been threatened by war, external aggression, or internal disturbance. Within a few hours, several opposition leaders were arrested including Morarji Desai, JP Narayan, LK Advani and Charan Singh. The government cut the power supply to the newspaper offices in Delhi that night. So that no newspaper could be printed the next day. **The next morning, on June 26, 1975, as announced on the radio by Indira Gandhi,** President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared a national state of emergency, on the advice of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Fundamental rights and legal remedies protected by the Constitution of the Republic of India were suspended, for foreigners as well as citizens. Most major political leaders in the Opposition were arrested, as were some members of Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party and others believed to be engaged in activities harmful to the State. The number of persons arrested has never been verified, but more than 10,000 appear to have been jailed by August, and the total up to September may be much higher. Censorship of the press was introduced.

Therefore, the two main root causes for the Proclamation of Emergency in the Country were – first, the High Court judgement declaring Indira Gandhi's seat null and void, and **second,** the protests and strikes led by leaders like J.P. Narayan.

HOW DID THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IMPACT THE COUNTRY AS WELL AS THE SOCIETY?

A dark cloud descended upon India in 1975 with the declaration of the Emergency. The political landscape transformed dramatically. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, facing dissent and legal challenges, cracked down on her opponents. Thousands, including prominent political figures like Jayaprakash Narayan and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, were arrested and imprisoned. But the crackdown extended far beyond political rivals. The very essence of India's democracy, its civil liberties, were suspended. The fundamental right to free speech became a relic of the past. Newspapers were censored, forced to regurgitate government propaganda. The press was effectively muzzled. The government sought to alter the very fabric of the Indian Constitution. Amendments rushed through Parliament, the power balance between the executive and judiciary shifted dramatically. The judiciary's ability to act as a check on the government's power was weakened. These changes threatened the core principles of democracy, raising concerns about a slide towards authoritarianism. To further tighten its grip, the government empowered itself with draconian laws. The infamous Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was strengthened, allowing authorities to detain individuals indefinitely without trial. This created a climate of suspicion and paranoia, where even voicing dissent could lead to imprisonment. The Emergency, though short-lived, left a deep scar on India's democratic conscience. It served as a stark reminder of the importance of vigilance and the fragility of civil liberties.

Shortly after dawn on 26 June the President of India, in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 352(I) of the Constitution, put his signature to a Proclamation of a State of Emergency declaring that the security of India was threatened by internal disturbances. The recommendation to the President had been approved at a Cabinet meeting even earlier the same morning. The timing secured a shock effect for what was already a surprise move; in the situation of some tension before 26 June, speculation had been ample but had apparently not envisaged this particular outcome. Those few hours stand out but can hardly be understood without reference to the days and weeks which preceded and those which have followed.

A list had evidently been prepared: 676 was the number stated to have been detained within the first few hours. On the next day the government spokesman gave the total as 900, describing only one-third of them as political detainees, the rest as thugs. From then on spokesmen have been less communicative on this subject, leaving the way clear for widely differing estimates; opposition sources made it 5,000 by early July, ten times as many a month later; Amnesty International gave the 18 July figure as 6,229. The regional incidence was uneven: no arrests were carried out in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Goa under non-Congress governments, nor in Kerala under a pro congress communist chief minister; the bulk were in northern India, with as many as half of the early '900' figure from Madhya Pradesh, not notable for anti-government agitation but certainly a strong area for the right-wing Jan Sangh and its virulently communalist RSS element.

Almost as prompt as the detentions was, the imposition of the strictest censorship on newspapers and on the press messages of foreign correspondents. Here again Tamil

Nadu, at least initially, behaved and was allowed to behave as a world apart; in that state there were anti-Emergency rallies and a strongly critical resolution from the governing party, the DMK. In Delhi, papers failed to appear at all for two days; it was said that selective power cuts had prevented production and presumably provided time for the censors to learn their unfamiliar job and editors to come to terms with distasteful conditions of work. Even so, difficulties persisted for a little while, as papers tried blank spaces and inserted advertisements which playfully carried half-concealed messages of protest and as foreign newsmen experimented with evasion techniques. Both kinds of resistance were halted by fresh rules and 'guidelines'; in the few cases where these were rejected or disobeyed, detention or expulsion followed.

Ordinances and regulations quickly filled the vacant columns. One of the first amended the already existing Maintenance of Internal Security Act to make unnecessary the statement of grounds for detention, while another suspended the enforcement of relevant Fundamental Rights provisions of the Constitution. Such illiberal steps were joined by others with more popular appeal: traders were required to display lists of prices and stocks if they wished to avoid action being taken against them under the (also already existing) Essential Commodities Act and Defence Regulations. Smugglers were to have as little protection as the hostile politicians; no grounds for their detention had to be given and their cases no longer required reference to advisory boards. A little later, on 4 July, orders under Defence Regulations banned twenty-six organisations including the RSS and Jamaat-e- Islami at the communalist extremes, a set of Maoist and Naxalite groups, and a host of small, eccentric, and violent religio-political societies.

CHAIN OF EVENTS

- **June 26, 1975-** Jayaprakash Narayan's public call on the evening of June 25 for a civil disobedience campaign to force the resignation of Mrs. Gandhi, including his appeal to the military and the police to disobey illegal orders, was responded to rapidly by the Government of India. The authority of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (enacted for the 1971 Bangladesh war) was used in the early hours of June 26 to arrest one hundred or more of the political leaders who had opposed Mrs. Gandhi and her Party—from the right wing parties, from her own Party, and from certain left parties. Persons arrested included: Jayaprakash Narayan; Morarji Desai (who had led the successful campaign against the Congress in Gujarat); Raj Narain (who had charged Mrs. Gandhi with election corruption in the 1971 General Election); Chandra Sekhar, Ram Dhan, and a good number of Members of Parliament and others from the Congress Party who had urged the Prime Minister to resign; distinguished ex-Congressmen Asoka Mehta and Charan Singh; Samar Guha, President of the Jana Sangh; Jyotirmoy Basu of the Communist Party (Marxist) and others who were followers of the Maoist strategy; Piloo Mody, former leader of the Swatantra Party; K R. Malkani, editor of the Jana Sangh's Motherland; plus an unverified number of other persons throughout the country.
- The initial group arrested appears to have been somewhat less than 1,000, although some estimates were as high as 3,500. Most of the morning newspapers did not appear because of "electrical failures" that apparently were planned, and strict news censorship was imposed.
- **June 30, 1975:** The MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) was amended, through an ordinance, and the detention of any person who opposes the government without any trial was allowed.
- Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, Atal Behari Vajpayee, LK Advani, and George Fernandes were arrested and sent to jail under MISA. Chandrashekhar, Indira Gandhi's own party colleague and a member of the Congress Working Committee was also arrested and put in jail for speaking his mind. (**August 5, 1975:** The Central government imposed MISA and arrested over one lakh people including leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, LK Advani, Arun Jaitley, Vijayaraje Scindia, Siddaramaiah and K Stalin.)
- The Government used police forces across the country to place thousands of protestors and strike leaders under preventive detention. Vijayaraje Scindia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Raj Narain, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, Jivatram Kripalani, George Fernandes, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna

Advani, Arun Jaitley, Jai Kishan Gupta, Satyendra Narayan Sinha, Gayatri Devi, the dowager queen of Jaipur, and other protest leaders were immediately arrested.

- **July 4, 1975:** Twenty-six political organisations, including Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Jamaat-e-Islami, were banned. CPI(M) leaders V.S. Achuthanandan and Jyotirmoy Basu were arrested along with many others involved with their party.
- Congress leaders who dissented against the Emergency declaration and amendment to the constitution, such as Mohan Dharia and Chandra Shekhar, resigned their government and party positions and were thereafter arrested and placed under detention.
- Members of regional opposition parties such as DMK also found themselves arrested. Most of these arrests happened under laws such as MISA, DISIR, and COFEPOSA.
- During the emergency 34,988 people were arrested under MISA, and 75,818 people were arrested under DISIR. This included both political prisoners and ordinary criminals. Most states classified those arrested under MISA into multiple categories.
- **July 1st, 1975:** Prime Minister Gandhi's constructive program of economic and social reforms, introduced to justify the authoritarian powers held under the emergency, were announced as "20 Points" (originally 21). The programs were similar to older and unimplemented plans, but there were new elements. Bonded labour in the rural areas was to be banned, and measures were to be introduced to liquidate rural indebtedness. A threat of summary court action against tax evaders was stressed. The improvement of agricultural productivity and the welfare of the rural poor were listed, as was a stern order for the implementation of land reforms. Minimum wages for agricultural labour was to be reviewed. Smuggling was to be ruthlessly attacked, along with land speculation and the misuse of licenses. An exemption limit for income taxes was promised, as were subsidies for food and textbooks for students. More reforms are to follow.
- By **1976**, the program became a twenty five point program after Sanjay Gandhi added five more to it. These additional points aimed at abolishing dowry, eradicating casteism, promoting literacy and encouraging ecological balance and family planning. Of these, the last two became particularly important during the emergency.
- **July 9th, 1975-** Shortly after the declaration of the Emergency, the Sikh leadership convened meetings in Amritsar where they resolved to oppose the "fascist tendency

of the Congress". The "Democracy Bachao Morcha" (translates to 'Campaign to Save Democracy') was organised by the Akali Dal, led by Harchand Singh Longowal, and launched in Amritsar

- **July 14, 1975-** Supreme Court Sets Date for Hearing: The Supreme Court decided that its bench-composed of five of the Court's 13 members-would open hearings on the Prime Minister's appeal on August 11. N. Palkhivala, who had represented Indira Gandhi earlier, refused to represent her for the Supreme Court appeal, and was replaced by Jagannath Kaushal.
- **Week of July 21, 1975-** Parliamentary Approval of the Emergency: The monsoon session of Parliament opened to consider amendments to the Constitution, relating to Articles 123, 213, 239, and 352, that would widen the powers of the President and the State Governors, and thus of the Prime Minister who advises on Presidential and Governors actions; and to amend the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, the Defence of India Rules, and other acts to strengthen the hand of the Government of India. Although there was some criticism of the emergency, for the most part Parliament was dominated by the Congress Party and its chief spokesman (in the absence of Mrs. Gandhi), the senior Minister, Jagjivan Ram. Since many of the prominent members of the Opposition were in jail, and since almost all of Mrs. Gandhi's parliamentary critics in her own Party were in jail, the session was relatively quiet. The Opposition members walked out of the Upper House on July 22 after the emergency was voted on favourably, 136 to 33. The Opposition in the Lower House walked out for the same reason. Also passed by both Houses was legislation taking away the right of people to challenge the emergency in the courts: the vote in the Lower House was 342 to 1; the vote in the Upper House was 164 to none. The Bill needed the approval of twelve State Legislatures—a goal easy to reach since the Congress Party controls a substantial majority of the State legislatures. All of the legislation requested by Mrs. Gandhi to uphold and strengthen the emergency was passed.
- **July 22nd 1975-** The 38th Amendment barred judicial review of proclamations of emergency
- **July 23, 1975-** The Rajya Sabha voted in the favour of the Emergency and the next day, the Lok Sabha also passed it.
- **10th August 1975-** The 39th Amendment stripped the judiciary's power of electoral scrutiny of a person elected as a Prime Minister

- Similarly, the 40th and the 41st Amendment brought about more changes to the Constitution. By the time the 42nd Amendment was passed, people started calling it a “Constitution of Indira”. The 42nd Amendment was an amendment which gave importance to the policy guidelines over the fundamental rights of a common man.
- In August, RSS defied the ban and thousands participated in Satyagraha (peaceful protests) against the ban and the curtailment of fundamental rights. Literature that was censored in the media was clandestinely published and distributed on a large scale and funds were collected for the movement.
- **August 3, 1975-** Legislation to Clear Mrs. Gandhi Retroactively of Charges of Election Corruption: An amendment to the Representation of the People Act was drafted early in August to clear Mrs. Gandhi of the Allahabad High Court ruling against her of June 12, 1975. The legislation specifically legalised the actions Justice Jag Mohan Lal Sinha had declared illegal under the unamended legislation, with retroactive effect. Such legislation, it was believed, would render unnecessary the Supreme Court's appeal hearing scheduled for August 11.
- **August 4, 1975-** Number of Those Detained Claimed to be 50,000 or More: Opponents of Mrs. Gandhi announced in London that at least 50,000 persons had been jailed in India since the emergency was declared on June 26. The announcement was based on a report prepared by George Fernandes, a former Socialist Member of Parliament and President of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, now operating underground in India.
- **August 9, 1975-** Constitutional Amendment: The President of India signed a bill amending the Constitution, giving retroactive effect to changes that were intended to protect Indira Gandhi from the Supreme Court's review of her Allahabad High Court conviction. The amendment passed by both Houses and by more than the required 12 State Legislatures among other changes bars the courts from reviewing the actions, in the electoral process of the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- **August 11, 1975-** Supreme Court Delays Gandhi Hearings: A five member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice A. N. Ray, agreed to delay the hearing of Mrs. Gandhi's appeal against her election law conviction until the Court has had an opportunity to determine the validity of the Constitutional amendment (Number 39) enacted into law on August 9. Hearings on the amendment question were set to begin on August 25. Shanti Bhushan, arguing against the validity of the amendment, asserted that such amendments cannot alter the "basic structure" of the Constitution, as ruled earlier by the Supreme Court. His opinion was that Amendment 39 did alter

the "basic structure," whereas the chief counsel for Mrs. Gandhi, A. K. Sen, argued that the amendment did not so alter "basic structure."

- **August 15, 1975-** President of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Assassinated: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President of Bangladesh, as well as members of his family and some associates, were killed by a group of Bangladeshi military leaders. The assassination raised a series of new external problems for India, even as India was engaged in a serious internal political struggle.²⁰
- **August 25, 1975-** Supreme Court Opens Hearings on the Constitutional Validity of Amendment 39: Shanti Bhushan argued before the Supreme Court that Amendment 39 of the Constitution, enacted into law on August 9, did alter the "basic structure" of the Constitution because it took away the Supreme Court's jurisdiction, and because the effect of the amendment would perpetuate the ruling Congress Party indefinitely and destroy the democratic basis of the Constitution. Bhushan added that the absence of many Members of Parliament in jail nullified the actions of Parliament since June 26. The hearing was continued, and the Government argued against Mr. Bhushan's position. (Later, the Supreme Court decided to continue the hearings but postpone its decision on the constitutional issues and, in the meantime, to take up Mrs. Gandhi's appeal against the June 1975 Allahabad High Court decision.)
- **September 15, 1975-** Delhi High Court Rules That Charges Must Be Entered when Arrests Are Made under the Internal Security Act: Justices Sesha Rangarajan and R. N. Aggarwal of the Delhi High Court ruled on September 15 that the jailing of Kuldeep Nayar, editor of the Indian Express, had been unlawful because specific charges had not been made against him under the Internal Security Act. The ruling of the Court, by implication, did not recognise the amendment to the law passed by Parliament to bar court reviews of those arrested before and under the emergency. The Government of India also was chastised by the Court for not informing them that Kuldeep Nayar, in fact, had been released on September 12. The Nayar case may turn out to be a landmark decision in relation to rulings later to be made by the Supreme Court.
- **January 9, 1976:** The government suspended seven freedoms guaranteed by Article 19 of the Constitution of India. The Government suspended the right to move to court for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights. The arrested leaders were not allowed to meet anyone, including their family members. The fundamental rights of people were crushed, tortured and inhuman treatment meted out towards dissenting citizens became a common occurrence. Indira Gandhi even amended the Representation of the People Act and two other laws in a retrospective manner to ensure that the Supreme Court had no other option but to overturn the Allahabad High Court verdict on the trial of Raj Narain.

- Clocks ticked in unison with arriving trains. Passengers glided onto platforms, breaths released in relief. No frantic dashes, no missed connections. Today, the system hummed like a well-oiled machine, a testament to efficiency, or perhaps, a sign of things to come.
- With the proclamation of the Emergency, Articles 14, 19, 21, and 22 of the Indian Constitution were suspended.

While the Emergency was in force, the Supreme Court later overturned her conviction on November 7, 1975.

In a pivotal moment for Indian democracy, the Supreme Court delivered a unanimous verdict on November 7th, 1975, as reported by the Hindustan Times. This decision overturned a judgement by the Allahabad High Court that had shaken the nation's political scene. The High Court, in a controversial ruling, had disqualified Prime Minister Indira Gandhi from holding office due to alleged electoral malpractices in her 1971 victory from the Rae Bareilly constituency. This verdict sent shockwaves through the country, raising questions about the legitimacy of her government.

The Supreme Court's decision, however, came as a relief to many. The five-judge bench meticulously reviewed the case and ultimately ruled in favour of Gandhi, upholding her election win. This verdict brought a temporary ceasefire to a highly charged legal battle that had captivated the nation's attention for months. While the Court's reasoning and the timing of the decision amidst the Emergency period remain debated by historians, it undeniably played a significant role in the unfolding political drama.

However, the Supreme Court's verdict did not address the broader concerns about electoral malpractices. Additionally, the Court's judgement on certain amendments made to the Constitution during the Emergency raised questions about the balance of power between the judiciary and the executive. The legal battle surrounding Indira Gandhi's election, culminating in the Supreme Court's verdict, remains a complex and controversial chapter in Indian history, serving as a reminder of the importance of an independent judiciary and robust democratic institutions.

DISCONTENTMENT OF CONGRESS WITH THE PRESS

Several newspapers, including some big ones, contributed to the buildup of an atmosphere of tension, agitation, and anarchy. They had no comment to make when the opposition used blatantly un-democratic means, adopted tactics of gherao and intimidation, staged dharnas in Parliament and State Assemblies, and used the most vituperative language in their political campaigns. They adopted a "see no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil" policy where the opposition was concerned, but they were ready to pounce upon the Congress Party and the Government for any major or minor, real or fancied, lapse. They gave respectability to rumours and some of them became openly partisan.

This, by itself, is not necessarily objectionable, however wrong it might have been for any newspaper to adopt such a course of action.

But some of these newspapers appeared not only to tolerate the extra constitutional methods adopted by the opposition front and the atmosphere of lawlessness and violence being created in the country, but even to encourage it by ignoring the undemocratic strategy on the part of the opposition and by magnifying what the Congress and the Government said or did that was considered to be wrong. In fact, they believed that they had become kingmakers in India and were doing everything to establish a situation in which not the people, but the press of India, would decide who would rule the country.

Impact on Media:

The seemingly straightforward statement "All possible bans were imposed on the media" actually masks a more nuanced reality. Instead of outright bans, the government implemented a multi-pronged approach to control information dissemination. This included:

1. **Prior restraint:** Publications were forced to submit content for government approval before printing. This effectively gave the government veto power over what could be published.
1. **Content restrictions:** Critical reporting on the government or the Emergency itself was strictly prohibited. This stifled any dissenting voices and ensured a one-sided narrative.
2. **Government control of information:** Media outlets were pressured to publish government-approved information and propaganda. This turned them into mouthpieces for the ruling party, further limiting access to diverse perspectives.

These measures curtailed press freedom and created a climate of fear for journalists. It essentially choked off independent reporting and left the public with a limited understanding of events.

- According to the New York Times, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said that democracy in India had given too much licence to newspapers and opposition leaders trying to abuse it and weaken the nation's confidence.
- Strict censoring rules were imposed on the press.
- Censorship guidelines, first issued on **June 26**, were amended many times. The last of them were issued on **August 12, 1975**. All of them had been drawn out of the DISIR. These were declared illegal by the Bombay high court, by a single judge, R.P. Bhatt, on **November 25, 1975**.
- As a consequence of the Emergency and the protests following the emergency, a lot of other parties came to the fore. It was no longer a one-party rule. The Emergency also had a significant negative impact on the country's economic front. The strikes and protests had paralysed the government and hurt the economy of the country greatly.
- Beyond direct censorship, the government employed a multifaceted strategy to control the press during the Emergency. This included:
 - A. **Economic pressure:** Government advertising, a crucial revenue stream for many publications, became selectively allocated, rewarding compliant media and punishing critical ones. Additionally, the cost of newsprint, essential for printing, was artificially inflated, further squeezing financially vulnerable outlets.
 - B. **Restricting information flow:** Mergers of news agencies, often orchestrated by the government, limited the diversity of news sources and potentially restricted access to independent reporting. Disruptions in postal and banking services could further hinder distribution and financial operations of critical publications.
 - C. **Intimidation:** Fear tactics played a significant role. Journalists faced threats, harassment, and even arrest. Publishers and shareholders were pressured to toe the government line, creating a climate of self-censorship to avoid repercussions.

These tactics, while less overt than censorship, effectively curtailed press freedom and stifled dissent during a critical period in Indian history

- For the Indian Express, which had been generally critical of the government, the newspaper was forced to appoint government nominees on its board of directors and realign its editorial policies.
- On **June 28**, when The Indian Express resumed its publication, it issued a front-page apology for being out of circulation for two days. It went on to report on the mass arrests that had taken place over the past two days. However, it was its framed blank editorial, representing censorship by the Indira Gandhi government in the name of Emergency. This move was soon followed by other publications too.

More on media

(Source- Satyavani website and several newspapers of that time)

- Indira Gandhi told Gujral that she wanted to see the radio and TV scripts of all news bulletins before they went up, something she achieved completely with the Emergency.
- Sanjay Gandhi had instructed the Lt. Governor of Delhi to instruct BN Malhotra, the general manager of DESU to cut off the power for press offices located on the Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg but forgot the presses of Hindustan Times and The Statesman in Connaught Place. On the night of **June 25, 1975**, a sudden power cut fell upon Delhi's Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg which was home to most of the country's largest newspapers. In other parts of the country, on the other hand, newspaper presses were raided and stopped and bundles of newspapers seized.
- Khushwant Singh, then editor of The Illustrated Weekly, supported the Emergency but was equally displeased with the press censorship imposed, pleading with Indira Gandhi personally to repeal the Emergency only to receive "There cannot be any Emergency without censorship on the press" as a reply.

“TEMPORARY” EMERGENCY BECOMES PERMANENT

Perhaps the most significant and revealing portent of things to come was provided by three momentous resolutions passed unanimously by delegates to the 71st annual session of the Congress party in Chandigarh at the end of the year.

One resolution called for major changes in the Constitution. The other two revealed for the first time the long-awaited decision on two vital issues. One was to continue the state of emergency indefinitely until "the dangers of internal and external subversion have been fully surmounted." The other was to postpone the sixth general elections, scheduled to be held by March 1976, for a year. All of these resolutions, shortly approved by the Indian Parliament, and the prolongation of the present Parliament beyond its otherwise maximum term of five years, are authorized under the Government's emergency powers, but they raise grave questions in the minds of all who are concerned with the future of democracy in India.

Mrs Gandhi's statements during the Emergency have been varied in tone. Some seem to stress the irreversibility of the process she initiated, as when she told Parliament that there could be 'no return to the pre-Emergency days of total licence and political permissiveness'. Others, however, suggest recognition of a sliding slope down which she does not wish to travel and admission that there has to be some way back from the abyss. To the Saturday Review she said that the Emergency would not be 'unduly prolonged', that India will not become totalitarian and has no need for an authoritarian government, only for more discipline and for some adjustments such as the reform of the judicial system to keep in step with social change. To Blitz she explained that such desired changes did not require a Constituent Assembly to frame a new Constitution; the place of Parliament was not to be altered- 'we cannot but be a democracy'. In other interviews, she insisted that Congress had no intention of trying to impose one-party rule and that she was committed to the holding of elections, though not when the 'political situation and the emotional condition of the opposition are disturbed'.

FOREIGN REACTIONS TO THE EMERGENCY

In all of India's near neighbours countries criticism of the eclipse of democracy in India was muted, and in some ruling circles, including those in Pakistan and Nepal, there seemed to be a tendency to welcome the trends in their giant neighbour.

India might henceforth be a less attractive alternative model to their own versions of authoritarianism, and Indian criticisms of their political systems would be less freely expressed. In the neighbouring countries, however, there were increased apprehensions of the consequences for them of the emergence of a more disciplined and controlled political order in India.

The coup in Bangladesh in mid August, and the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, aroused grave apprehensions in India. Officially Mrs. Gandhi and other Indian spokesmen deplored the assassination of the man who had been a champion of friendly relations with India and whose personal relations with Mrs. Gandhi were excellent. But they confined themselves mostly to expressions of regret, and not of denunciation.

Indo-American Relations:

On the whole, 1975 was not a good year for Indo-American relations. When Daniel Patrick Moynihan left India in early January, after service for two years as U.S. Ambassador, he expressed regret that these relations were so "thin" and "fragile." His successor, William Saxbe, who arrived several weeks later, followed a very low-key posture, obviously on instructions from Washington.

The most serious set-back to Indo-American relations was the decision of the American Government, announced on February 24, to lift the 19-year-old embargo on arms sales to India and Pakistan, a decision that was welcomed in Pakistan and sharply criticised in India. Indians were also indignant over non-official reactions in the U.S. to the emergency proclamation and subsequent events, the cancellation of President Ford's plans to visit India, and a statement by the American President that was regarded as unduly critical of events in India. Toward the end of the year relations seemed to take an upward turn. Y. B. Chavan made a successful visit to the United States in October, during which he co-chaired the postponed first meeting of the Indo-U.S. Joint Commission and had a lengthy talk with President Ford.

India in International Diplomacy:

Throughout the year India was particularly active in international diplomacy, in spite of its preoccupations with internal affairs. In January Mrs. Gandhi made official visits to the Maldives Republic and Iraq, and in late April and early May, she participated in the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in Jamaica. President Fakhruddin Ali made official visits to Hungary and Yugoslavia in late September and early October, and to

Egypt and Sudan in December. In addition to visits to the U.S. and to several countries in Latin America and West and South Asia, Foreign Minister Chavan participated in the meeting of the nonaligned coordinating bureau in Havana, the non-aligned foreign ministers' conference in Lima, and the special and regular sessions of the UN in New York.

India gave special attention to its relations with the OPEC countries and with the nonaligned countries generally. It continued to press for acceptance of the resolution of the UN General Assembly of December 1971 declaring the Indian Ocean to be a zone of peace and requesting the great powers to take action to remove their military presence from the area. It expressed particular apprehension over U.S. plans to expand the facilities on the Indian Ocean atoll of Diego Garcia. But it continued to oppose a UN General Assembly resolution of 1974, sponsored by Pakistan, for the establishment of a nuclear weapons-free zone in South Asia.



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REACTION OF THE PUBLIC TO THE EMERGENCY

- **The Public Divided:** The declaration of a state of emergency in India sent shockwaves through the whole nation. It put the whole nation into a state of chaos. Public reactions were far from uniform, reflecting the complex political landscape and the suddenness of the move.
- **State of shock and fear amongst the people:** For the people, the emergency came as a complete surprise. There was a suspension of civil liberties, such as freedom of speech and assembly, which created a climate of fear and uncertainty. Opposition leaders were swiftly arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), silencing dissent. Strict censorship limited the access of media to pivotal information. This period was a black spot on the democracy of our Nation.
- **Stability Issues:** A few people initially supported the Emergency. But since the Prime Minister was facing political unrest and economic challenges in the country, she felt that it was necessary to restore order and stability. Some citizens weary of strikes, protests, and social unrest believed the strong arm tactics could address these issues.
- **Growing Discontent:** However, as the Emergency continued, the consensus gradually began to shift. The savagery of forced sterilisations, a key initiative of the government, alienated many. The targeting of opposition members and media fuelled resentment towards the increasingly authoritarian regime. Thus underground movements emerged, led by figures like Jayaprakash Narayan, to resist the erosion of democratic values.
- **Economic Concerns:** The government did promote economic improvements in the start, but the long-term impact proved to be negative. The suffocation of free markets and innovation hampered economic growth. Shortages of essential commodities and rising unemployment added to the public's discontent.
- **Muzzled Press:** The media, under a tight government check, literally became a mouthpiece for the ruling party. This lack of access to independent news further fuelled public frustration and limited opportunities for open dialogue. However, despite the censorship, some newspapers and journalists bravely challenged the government narrative.
- **The role of judiciary:** The Supreme Court's verdict upholding Indira Gandhi's election in the Allahabad High Court case, while a temporary relief for her, did little to address concerns about the Emergency's legality. The Supreme Court's verdict did not address the broader concerns about electoral malpractices.
- **The 1977 Elections:** The turning point came in 1977 when Gandhi, miscalculating public sentiment, called for elections. And thus the public voted against the ruling party, steering in a new era of coalition politics.

The Emergency remains a controversial chapter in Indian history. While some argue it provided a period of much-needed stability, others highlight its suppression of basic liberties and democratic norms.



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LINKS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research Papers

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