



## CHAPTER 9

# Independence and Partition of India

### Syllabus

#### Independence and Partition of India

Cabinet Mission Plan (clauses only); Mountbatten Plan (clauses and its acceptance); and the Indian Independence Act of 1947 (clauses only).

With the end of the Second World War in August 1945, India's freedom struggle entered a new phase. This phase was an extremely difficult and uneasy one. The memories of the serious disturbances during the *Quit India Movement* were still fresh; the failure of the INA was an unfortunate end to a heroic phase; and the Muslim League had stepped up its demand for partition. It was in this tense situation that the Viceroy Lord Wavell, who succeeded Lord Linlithgow in October 1943, took a number of measures to ease the situation. First, he had to break the deadlock persisting since the resignation of the Congress Ministries in

1939. Second, he had to create an atmosphere conducive for talks. Therefore, the British Government released the members of the Congress Working Committee, arrested during the *Quit India Movement*. In order to break the constitutional deadlock he announced a plan, popularly known as the *Wavell Plan*. The main proposals made under the Wavell Plan included — granting of Dominion Status to India in the long run and drafting of their own Constitution by Indians.

The Wavell Plan was rejected by the Muslim League because it fell short of its demand for Pakistan. The Congress rejected it as the Plan did not accept the total independence of India from the foreign rule.

### EVENTS THAT LED TO THE CABINET MISSION

#### 1. Changes in Britain

- (i) The World War changed the balance of power in the world. The United States of America and the Soviet Union, emerged from the War as the two big powers. Both supported India's demand for freedom.
- (ii) Even though Britain was on the winning side of the War, its economic and military power was shattered. It would take Britain years to rehabilitate itself.
- (iii) There was a change of government in Britain. The Conservatives were replaced by the Labour Party, many of them supported the Congress demands.
- (iv) The British soldiers were weary of the War. Having fought and shed their blood



Jawaharlal Nehru welcoming Lord Wavell

for six years, they had no desire to spend many more years away from home suppressing the Indian people's struggle for freedom.

## 2. Revolts in the Administrative Agencies

- (i) The Government could not any longer rely on Indians for its civil administration or on the armed forces for suppression of the National Movement. The INA had shown that patriotic ideas had entered the ranks of the Indian army, the chief instrument of British rule in India.
- (ii) There was a revolt of the Indian Naval ratings at Mumbai in February 1946. The ratings had fought a six-hour battle with the army as well as navy and had surrendered only when asked to do so by the national leaders. Naval ratings in many other parts of the country had gone on sympathetic strikes.
- (iii) There were also widespread strikes in the Royal Indian Air Force. The Indian Signal Corps at Jabalpur also went on strike.
- (iv) The other two major instruments of British rule, the Police and the Civil Service, were showing signs that they could no longer be safely used to suppress the National Movement. For example, the police force in Bihar and Delhi went on strike.

## 3. Mood of the Indian People

The Indians were in a confident and determined mood. They would no longer tolerate the humiliation of foreign rule. They would not rest till freedom was won. In addition to the revolt of Naval ratings and the struggle for the release of INA prisoners, in 1945–46 there were numerous agitations, strikes, hartals and demonstrations all over the country, even in many Princely States such as Hyderabad, Travancore and Kashmir.

## 4. Labour Unrest

There was large-scale labour unrest all over the country.

- (i) In July 1946, there was an all-India strike by the postal and telegraph workers.
- (ii) Railway workers in South India went on strike in August 1946.

- (iii) Peasant movements acquired a fresh thrust after 1945.
- (iv) The most militant of the post War struggles was the Tebhaga struggle by the share croppers of Bengal who declared that they would pay not one-half but one-third of the crop to the landlords.
- (v) Struggles for land and against high rents took place in Hyderabad, Malabar, Bengal, U.P., Bihar and Maharashtra.

## Cabinet Mission in India

Clement Attlee, the new British Prime Minister, declared in the House of Commons on February 19, 1946, that a Cabinet Mission would be sent to India to facilitate the process of transfer of power. The Mission's aim would also be to help the Indian leaders decide the form of government that would suit them after the transfer of power.

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India in 1946. It consisted of three cabinet members:

- (i) Pethic Lawrence, the Secretary of State;
- (ii) Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade; and
- (iii) A.V. Alexander, the First Lord of Admiralty.

They held discussions with various Indian leaders representing all sections and parties.

## THE CABINET MISSION PLAN

The Cabinet Mission proposed a two-tier federal plan which was expected to maintain national unity while conceding the largest measure of regional autonomy.

**1. Federal Union:** There was to be a federal union of the British Provinces and the Princely States. The Union Government (Central Government) should deal with the following subjects: (i) Foreign Affairs; (ii) Defence; and (iii) Communication. The Union Government should have the power to raise the finances required for the above mentioned subjects.

**2. Powers of the Union:** The Union would have its own executive and legislature composed of members elected by all Provinces.

**3. Provincial Autonomy:** The Provinces would enjoy full autonomy for all subjects other than the Union Subjects.



■ Clement Attlee

**4. Grouping of Provinces:** The British Provinces would be divided into groups. Each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.

**Group A:** This would include six Hindu Majority Provinces, viz. (i) Madras; (ii) Bombay; (iii) Central Provinces; (iv) United Provinces; (v) Bihar; and (vi) Orissa (Odisha).

**Group B:** This would include three Muslim Majority provinces, viz. (i) Punjab; (ii) North West Frontier Province (NWFP); and (iii) Sind.

**Group C:** This would include (i) Bengal; and (ii) Assam. Of the Chief Commissioner's Provinces, viz., Delhi, Ajmer-Marwar and Coorg to join Group A and Baluchistan to join Group B.

A province could opt out of any group and join another by a majority of votes.

**5. Formation of a Constituent Assembly:** A Constituent Assembly would be set up to frame the new Constitution of the Indian Union. The composition of the 389 member Constituent Assembly would be as under:

- (i) 296 members to be elected from the British Provinces.
- (ii) 93 members to be elected from the Princely States.

The members of the Constituent Assembly would be elected by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies. Adult suffrage (all eligible voters voting) for this was ruled out to avoid delay in the making of the Constitution.

**6. Representation of Minorities:** Separate representation was to be given to Muslims and Sikhs.

**7. Formation of an Interim Government:** An Interim Government would be formed at the Centre with 14 members. For the time being, the Viceroy would reconstitute his Executive Council consisting of representatives of all communities.

**8. Freedom to Join the Commonwealth:** India would be free to remain within the British Commonwealth or secede from it.

**9. Transfer of Power:** It would be necessary to work out a Treaty between the Constituent Assembly and the United Kingdom for matters arising out of the transfer of power.

### Rejection of the Demand for Pakistan

Muslim League's demand for Pakistan was rejected by the Cabinet Mission for the following reasons:

- (i) The establishment of Pakistan would not solve the problem of communal minorities because the number of Muslims in the remaining part of British India and the number of non-Muslims in Pakistan would be sizeable.
- (ii) There was no justification for including within Pakistan, the non-Muslim districts of Bengal, Assam and the Punjab.
- (iii) The armed forces, transportation as well as the postal and telegraph system had been built for India as a whole and the partition would create many problems.
- (iv) The Princely States would find it difficult to decide which Union to join.
- (v) The two halves of the proposed Pakistan State would be separated by some seven hundred miles and interaction between them would be difficult.

### Reaction to the Cabinet Mission Plan

**The Congress:** The Congress accepted the proposals with reservations. It accepted only that part of the scheme which dealt with the Constitution making.

It considered the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body for drafting the Constitution. The Congress wanted the grouping of the Provinces as optional and not compulsory. This was important in view of the fact that Assam in the proposed Group C had a Congress government at that time.

The Cabinet Mission accepted the complete freedom of the Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution, but insisted on the compulsory grouping of the Provinces.

The Congress, however, rejected the Viceroy's offer to form an Interim Government because of its limited status and powers and also because the principle of parity with Muslim League was not acceptable to it. It was also opposed to the League's claim that it alone had the right to nominate all the Muslim members to the Executive Council.

**The Muslim League:** The League accepted it in its entirety in June 1946 because it felt that the grouping of Muslim majority Provinces in a way meant the formation of Pakistan. The League asked Wavell, the Viceroy, to constitute an Interim Government.

### CONFLICT BETWEEN CONGRESS AND MUSLIM LEAGUE

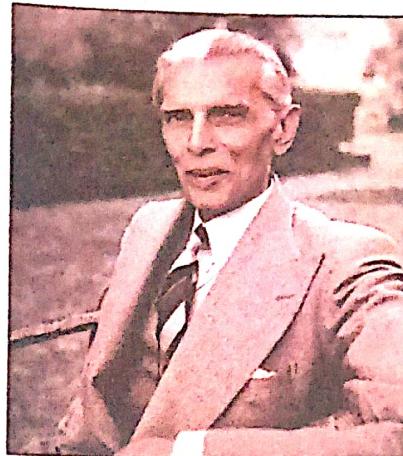
Elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in July 1946, in which the Congress obtained two-third majority. The rest went to other parties. The Congress had an overwhelming majority in the Constituent Assembly. The Muslim League feared that it would be outvoted in the Assembly. It also feared that the British withdrawal from India would mean transfer of power to Hindus, who were in a majority in India.

On September 2, 1946, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues were sworn in as members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Muslim League kept itself out of the Government.

The League observed September 2 as 'a day of mourning' when Muslims all over the country were asked to display black flags.

Though Jinnah had refused to cooperate, the Viceroy resumed his negotiations with him. As a result, in October, the Muslim League decided to join the interim government to safeguard the interests of the Muslims and other minority communities. However, the League's nominees were not prepared to work under Nehru's leadership. They openly rejected the idea of collective responsibility.

Finally the Constituent Assembly met in New Delhi on December 9, 1946, without the



■ M. A. Jinnah

participation of the League. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected President and Nehru moved his famous resolution which declared the Assembly's resolve to make India an 'Independent Sovereign Republic'.

### Attlee's Announcement

The Interim Government was not functioning properly due to the differences between the Congress and the League. The Communal riots were at the peak. Chaos and anarchy prevailed everywhere in the country. Forced by circumstances, Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister of England, declared on February 20, 1947 in the British Parliament:

*'The present state of uncertainty is fraught with danger and cannot be indefinitely prolonged. His Majesty's Government wishes to make it clear that it is their intention to take necessary steps to effect the transference of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June, 1948. If by June, 1948, a Constitution was not framed by a fully representative Constituent Assembly, His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the power of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date; whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments or in some other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people'.*

## LORD MOUNTBATTEN

For the purpose of taking necessary steps for the transfer of power to the Indians, Lord Wavell was recalled and Lord Mountbatten was appointed the new Viceroy. Lord Mountbatten assumed the office of the Viceroy and Governor-General in 1947. His immediate task was to restore peace among the two warring sections—the Congress and the League—both in his Executive Council, and in the country at large.

Lord Mountbatten found that it was difficult to solve the deadlock between the two parties. Mountbatten realised that the Cabinet Mission Plan was unworkable and the partition of India was inevitable. He, therefore, sought to effect the transfer of power without any delay.

### Mountbatten Plan

Mountbatten put his plan for the partition of India before the 'big seven' leaders— Nehru, Patel, Kripalani, Jinnah, Liaquat, Nishtar and Baldev Singh. The Congress accepted the Plan and Jinnah undertook to do his utmost to make the Plan work. The Plan was announced on June 3, 1947. On the same day, Gandhiji said "I repeat that the division of India can only do harm to the country's future."

The main points of the Plan included the following:

**1. Partition:** The country would be divided into two Dominions, i.e. India and Pakistan.

**2. Relations between the two new Dominions:** It was for the two Dominions to



■ Lord Mountbatten

decide what relations they would have with the British Commonwealth and with each other.

**3. A Boundary Commission:** The Plan provided for the creation of a Boundary Commission to settle the boundaries of the two Dominions in case partition was decided upon.

**4. The Princely States:** As regards the Princely States, the treaties with them would come to an end. They would be free to associate themselves with either of the Dominions or to remain independent.

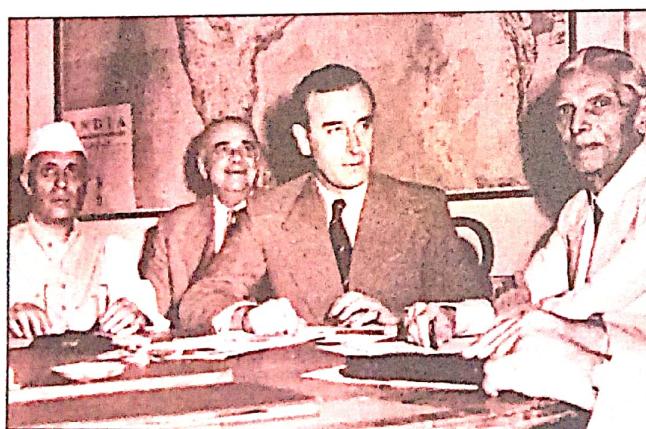
**5. Bengal and Punjab:** The partition of Bengal and Punjab was proposed provided that the Legislative Assemblies of the two provinces decided in favour of partition.

**6. Sind:** The Legislative Assembly of Sind was to take its own decision at a special meeting.

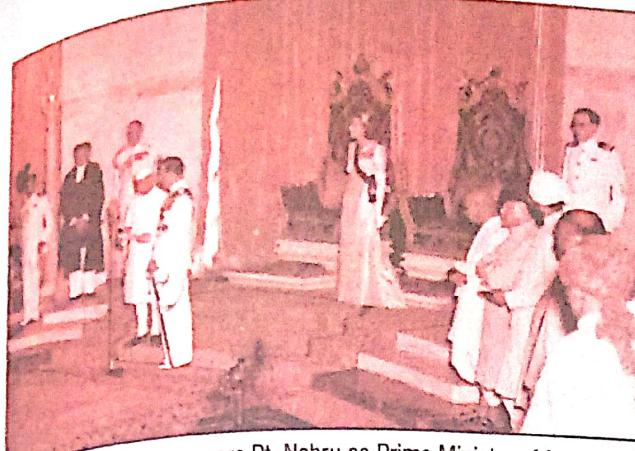
**7. North-West Frontier Province:** A plebiscite was to be held in the North-West Frontier Province to ascertain whether the people wanted to join India or Pakistan.

**8. The District of Sylhet:** The Muslim majority district of Sylhet was to decide by referendum whether it would join East Bengal or remain in Assam.

**9. Constituent Assembly:** The existing Constituent Assembly would continue to work, but the Constitution framed by it would not apply to Pakistan. A separate Constituent Assembly would be constituted for those parts of India which decided in favour of partition.



■ Pt. Nehru and M. Jinnah with Lord Mountbatten



Lord Mountbatten swears Pt. Nehru as Prime Minister of free India as Lady Edwina Mountbatten looks on

**10. Transfer of Power:** The plan ended with a declaration that the transfer of power would take place not in June 1948 but much earlier than that. The British Parliament would pass an Act for the transfer of power before August 15, 1947.

#### Acceptance of Mountbatten Plan

The historic pronouncement was received with mixed feelings by the public. The nationalists deplored the Partition of India, while the Muslim League was not fully satisfied with the way Pakistan was divided, but it accepted the plan for partition.

All-India Congress Committee accepted the Mountbatten Plan because, according to Maulana Azad, the Congress had no other alternative. The reasons for finally accepting the Mountbatten Plan may be summarised as follows:

- (i) The large-scale communal riots that engulfed the whole country convinced all that the only solution to the communal problem lay in the Partition of India. In the words of Sardar Patel, "*Refusal of the demand for Pakistan will amount to dividing the country into so many Pakistans.*"
- (ii) The League had joined the Interim Government to obstruct and not to cooperate. Experience of working with the League had convinced the Congress that it could not have a joint administration with the League.
- (iii) The only alternative to Partition was a Federation with a weak Centre. A smaller India with a strong central authority

was better than a bigger State with a weak Centre.

- (iv) Any further continuation of British rule would mean a greater calamity for India. The British were instigating the rulers of the Indian States to remain independent. Hence, partition was the price for immediate independence.
- (v) The leaders felt that further delay in the transfer of power could find India in the midst of a Civil War.
- (vi) The leaders felt that Partition would rid the Constitution of separate electorates and other undemocratic procedures. India could then evolve a truly secular and democratic polity.

#### THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT, 1947

After the Mountbatten Plan was accepted by the Indian leaders, the British Prime Minister introduced the Indian Independence Bill in the House of Commons. The Indian Independence Act was given the Royal Assent on July 18, 1947. The main provisions of the Act were as follows:

**1. Two New Dominions:** India would be partitioned and two independent Dominions—India and Pakistan—would be created from August 15, 1947. The Act provided legislative supremacy of both the Dominions. The territories of the two Dominions were divided in such terms that Pakistan would comprise Sind, British Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province, the West Punjab and East Bengal. India was to comprise all the remaining territories included in the British India. The exact boundaries of the Dominions would be determined by a Boundary Commission.

**2. Provisions of Partition:** It had the following provisions:

- (i) Both Bengal and Punjab would be divided if so desired by the people. The Provincial Assemblies of the two parts would meet separately representing Hindu majority districts and Muslim majority districts and would decide through a majority vote whether they wanted the division of the province or not.

- (ii) A plebiscite would be held in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) as well as in Sylhet district (Muslim majority area) in East Bengal to determine whether they would like to join Pakistan or India. (Both these provinces joined West and East Pakistan respectively.)
- (iv) The Governor-General was given the power to modify or adopt the Government of India Act 1935 by March 31, 1948.
- (v) The right of the King to veto laws was given up. This right was given to the Governor-General.

#### **3. Governor-General for Each Dominion:**

There would be a Governor-General who would be appointed by the British King on the advice of the Cabinet of the concerned Dominion. This arrangement would work till the framing of the Constitutions.

#### **4. Constituent Assemblies to Serve as Central Legislatures:**

The Constituent Assemblies of both the dominions were to act as the Central Legislatures and would have full powers to make laws for their respective Dominion. They would act as sovereign bodies for legislative purposes.

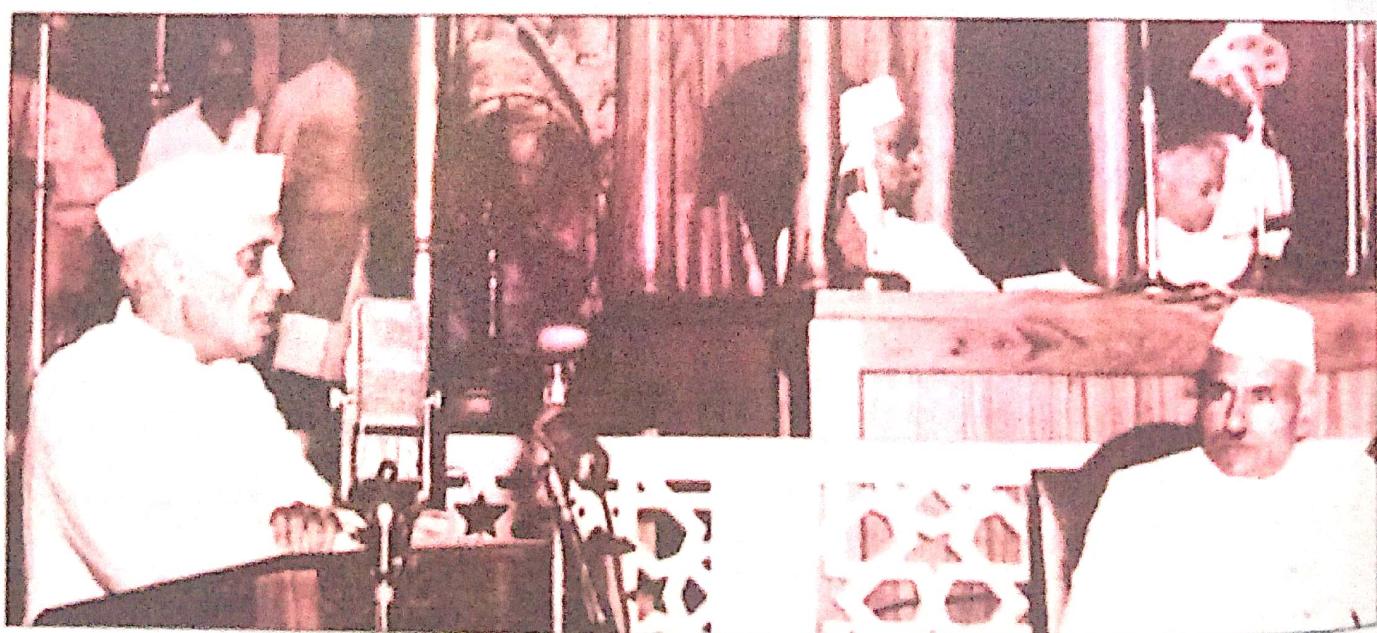
#### **5. End of Jurisdiction of the British Parliament:**

- (i) The legislative authority of the British Parliament would cease from August 15, 1947.
- (ii) Abolition of the use of the title, 'Emperor of India' by the British monarch.
- (iii) Till the new Constitution was framed, each of the Dominions and all Provinces were to be governed in accordance with the Act of 1935.

**6. Princely States:** The Princely States would become independent and all the powers exercised by the British authority were to be terminated. All treaties and agreements made by the British with reference to States would lapse from August 15, 1947. They would be free to associate themselves with either Dominion or to remain independent.

**7. Treaties and Agreements:** With effect from August 15, 1947, His Majesty's Government would cease to have any responsibility for the Government of India. All treaties and agreements between the British government and the rulers of the Indian States or any authority in tribal areas would lapse. Agreements with the tribes of the North West Frontier Province were to be negotiated by the Dominion concerned.

**8. Division of the Army and the Assets:** Provisions were made for the division of the Indian army between the two Dominions and steps were to be taken to share the assets and liabilities between the two Dominions.



Jawaharlal Nehru giving his famous speech (Tryst with Destiny) in the Constituent Assembly on the eve of Independence

**9. Bringing the Act Into Operation:** The Governor-General was vested with necessary powers for bringing the India Independence Act into effective operation.

**10. Office of Secretary of State and Interest of Existing Officers:** Provisions were made for safeguarding the interests of the existing officers appointed by the Secretary of State. The office of the Secretary of State for India was abolished.

### INDEPENDENCE BY AN ACT OF LEGISLATION

Referring to the Indian Independence Act (1947), the then Secretary of State for India remarked, "The bill is unique in the history of legislation of this country. Never before has such a large portion of the world population achieved complete independence through legislation."

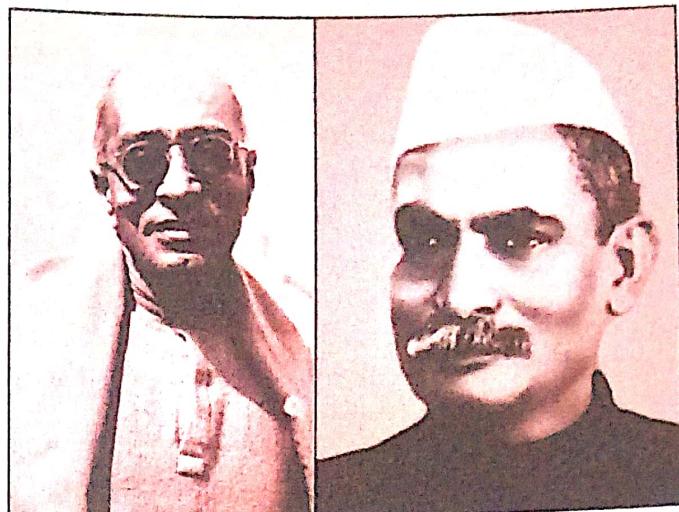
The Act marked the end of the British rule in India. The Dominions of India and Pakistan came into existence on August 15, 1947. Lord Mountbatten on the request of Nehru continued as the Governor-General of India. Muhammad Ali Jinnah became the Governor-General of Pakistan.

Lord Mountbatten remained in office as Governor-General up to June 1948. C. Rajagopalachari succeeded him as the first and last Indian Governor-General.

India became a Republic on January 26, 1950. Dr. Rajendra Prasad took over as the first President of the Indian Republic and the Constituent Assembly became the Parliament of India under the transitional provisions of the new Constitution.

#### Dawn of Freedom

Thus, ended India's unique struggle for



C. Rajagopalachari

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

freedom, which set an example for the other colonial countries of Asia and Africa to follow. This was followed by tragic and bloody partition of the country, causing far more grave problems of national reconstruction.

On the eve of independence, Indian agriculture was backward and stagnant, her industrial development was low and lopsided. There was a near-complete absence for capital goods and machine industries.

It was the vision and foresight of our national leaders, especially our first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, which pulled out India from the web of poverty and economic backwardness and laid the strong foundations on which India today proudly stands. It is one of the major industrialised nations of the world. It is also one of the largest as well as one of the fastest growing economies of the world. Above all, it is the largest democracy in the world, committed to peace, disarmament and non-alignment.

### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE ➤➤➤

**Cabinet Mission:** In March 1946, Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister of England, sent a Cabinet Mission to India. It included Pethic Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander; The objective of the Cabinet Mission was to help India achieve her independence and to set up a Constituent Assembly to prepare a Constitution for India.

**Proposals of the Cabinet Mission Plan:** (i) There will be a federal union of the British Provinces and the Princely States; (ii) The Union Government would control defence, foreign affairs and communications; (iii) The Provinces would enjoy full autonomy for all subjects other than the Union Subjects; (iv) The

British Provinces would be divided into three groups — Group A, Group B and Group C on the basis of religion; (v) A Constituent Assembly would draw up the future Constitution of India; (vi) An Interim government would be formed at the Centre with 14 members.

**Reaction to the Cabinet Mission Plan:** (i) The Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan with reservations. It accepted only that part of the scheme which dealt with Constitution making; (ii) The Muslim League accepted it because it felt that the grouping of Muslim majority provinces in a way meant the formation of Pakistan; (iii) The Sikhs rejected the Plan because Punjab was grouped in Group 'B' along with the Muslim majority States.

**Mountbatten Plan:** (i) India was to be partitioned and two independent and Sovereign States namely India and Pakistan were to be formed on August 15, 1947; (ii) The Plan provided for the partition of Punjab and Bengal; (iii) The Princely States were given the choice of joining either of the two new States – India or Pakistan; (iv) The Congress accepted the Mountbatten Plan because it had no other alternative. The Muslim League also accepted the Plan.

**The Indian Independence Act, 1947:** (i) On the basis of the Mountbatten Plan, the Indian Independence Bill was passed by the British Parliament; (ii) This Act marked the end of the British rule in India and the Dominions of India and Pakistan came into existence on August 15, 1947.

## **EXERCISES**

## I. Multiple-Choice Questions

**A. Select the correct option.**

6. Which of the following is incorrect about the formation of a Constituent Assembly according to the Cabinet Mission Plan?
- (a) Members to be directly elected by the people of India
  - (b) Members to be elected by Provincial Legislative Assemblies
  - (c) 296 members from the Provinces and 93 from princely states
  - (d) Complete freedom to frame the Constitution of the Indian Union.
7. Which of the following forced the British government to send Lord Mountbatten?
- (a) Communal riots
  - (b) Labour Unrest
  - (c) Congress-League deadlock
  - (d) All of the above
8. According to Indian Independence Act, a plebiscite would be held in
- (a) Bihar
  - (b) Sylhet
  - (c) Princely states
  - (d) Central provinces
9. Which of the following provisions regarding the Constituent Assemblies is/are correct?
- (a) Act as Central Legislatures in each dominion
  - (b) Full powers to make laws for their dominion
  - (c) Act as sovereign bodies for legislative purpose
  - (d) All of the above.
10. Who had the power to bring Indian Independence Act into operation?
- (a) The Secretary of State for India
  - (b) The Governor-General
  - (c) The British Prime Minister
  - (d) None of the above.

**B. Select the option that shows the correct relationship between Statements (I) and (II).**

1. (I) The Wavell Plan offered granting of Dominion Status to India in the long run and drafting of their own Constitution by Indians.  
(II) The Wavell Plan was rejected by both the Congress and the Muslim League.
- (a) (II) contradicts (I)
  - (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
  - (c) (I) is true but (II) is false
  - (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.
2. (I) The Cabinet Mission proposed a two-tier federal plan for India.  
(II) The Cabinet Mission was sent in India in 1946 to facilitate the process of transfer of power.
- (a) (I) contradicts (II)
  - (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
  - (c) (I) is true but (II) is false
  - (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.
3. (I) The Muslim League's demand for Pakistan was rejected by the Cabinet Mission.  
(II) The Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan as it felt that the grouping of Muslim majority Provinces in a way meant the formation of Pakistan.
- (a) (II) contradicts (I)
  - (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
  - (c) (I) is true but (II) is false
  - (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.
4. (I) The Congress won an overwhelming majority in the Constituent Assembly, the elections to which were held in 1946.  
(II) The Muslim League kept itself out of the Government.
- (a) (II) contradicts (I)
  - (b) (I) is the reason for (II)
  - (c) (I) is true but (II) is false
  - (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.
5. (I) The Muslim League asked Wavell, the Viceroy, to constitute the Interim Government in 1946.

## **II. Short Answer Questions**

- Short Answer Questions**

  1. State two important reasons that prompted the British to withdraw from India.
  2. Read the excerpt given below and answer the questions that follow:

## INDIAN SAILORS IN REVOLT

#### SIX HOURS BATTLE WITH BRITISH TROOPS.



### **III. Structured Questions**

1. The Cabinet Mission Plan proposed a two-tiered federal union of British Provinces and Princely States. With reference to this describe the following:

  - (a) Name the persons who constituted the Cabinet Mission. What was the purpose of sending the Cabinet Mission to India in 1946?
  - (b) The federal structure proposed by the Cabinet Mission Plan.
  - (c) The option given to the Princely States.

2. The attempt of the British to pacify the Congress and the Muslim League was clearly visible in the Cabinet Mission proposals but in reality neither could be pleased. With reference to this, explain:

- Any three proposals of the Cabinet Mission.
- The reasons for the Muslim League's acceptance and later rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan.
- Why did the Congress refuse to participate in the formation of the Interim Government under the Cabinet Mission Plan?

3. With reference to the newspaper article answer the questions that follow:

- Which Plan is referred to in the given newspaper article? State any two features of this Plan.
- How was the Plan supposed to solve the communal problem existing in India?
- Why did the Congress accept the Plan? State three reasons to justify its acceptance.



4. Read the excerpt given below and answer the questions that follow:

*"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes, when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom... It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still large cause of humanity."*

—Tryst with Destiny Speech by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

- What happened at the stroke of midnight hour? Which 'unending quest' is Jawaharlal Nehru talking about in the excerpt? Who all strived to end this quest?
- Where and when did Jawaharlal Nehru make this historic speech? Name any two famous dignitaries present there?
- Name the British Act that led to Jawaharlal Nehru's speech. State three features of this Act.

#### IV. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

- A number of Acts were passed by the British to pacify the demands of the Indians relating to the Government of India. But the Indian Independence Act, 1947 is considered as a unique piece of legislation. Why is it so? Give reasons to support your answer.
- Do you think that the Congress had no alternative but to accept the Mountbatten Plan? Support your answer with examples.

