

= Independence Day (India) =

Independence Day , observed annually on 15 August is a national holiday in India commemorating the nation 's independence from the British Empire on 15 August 1947 . India attained independence following an Independence Movement noted for largely nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience led by the Indian National Congress (INC) . Independence coincided with the partition of India , in which the British Indian Empire was divided along religious lines into the Dominions of India and Pakistan ; the partition was accompanied by violent riots and mass casualties , and the displacement of nearly 15 million people due to sectarian violence . On 15 August 1947 , Jawaharlal Nehru , who had become the first Prime Minister of India that day , raised the Indian national flag above the Lahori Gate of the Red Fort in Delhi . On each subsequent Independence Day , the prime minister has raised the flag and given a speech .

The holiday is observed throughout India with flag @-@ hoisting ceremonies , parades and cultural events . Indians celebrate the day by displaying the national flag on their attire , accessories and homes ; by listening to patriotic songs , watching patriotic movies ; and bonding with family and friends . Books and films feature the independence and partition in their narrative . There have been threats of terrorist attack on and around 15 August by separatist and militant organisations .

= = History = =

European traders had established outposts on the Indian subcontinent by the 17th century . Through overwhelming military strength , the British East India company subdued local kingdoms and established themselves as the dominant force by the 18th century . Following the Rebellion of 1857 , the Government of India Act 1858 led the British Crown to assume direct control of India . In the decades following , civic society gradually emerged across India , most notably the Indian National Congress Party , formed in 1885 . The period after World War I was marked by British reforms such as the Montagu ? Chelmsford Reforms , but it also witnessed the enactment of the repressive Rowlatt Act and calls for self @-@ rule by Indian activists . The discontent of this period crystallized into nationwide non @-@ violent movements of non @-@ cooperation and civil disobedience , led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi .

During the 1930s , reform was gradually legislated by the British ; Congress won victories in the resulting elections . The next decade was beset with political turmoil : Indian participation in World War II , the Congress ' final push for non @-@ cooperation , and an upsurge of Muslim nationalism led by the All @-@ India Muslim League . The escalating political tension was capped by Independence in 1947 . The jubilation was tempered by the bloody partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan .

= = = Independence Day before Independence = = =

At the 1929 Lahore session of the Indian National Congress , the Purna Swaraj declaration , or " Declaration of the Independence of India " was promulgated , and 26 January was declared as Independence Day . The Congress called on people to pledge themselves to civil disobedience and " to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time " until India attained complete independence . Celebration of such an Independence Day was envisioned to stoke nationalistic fervour among Indian citizens , and to force the British government to consider granting independence .

The Congress observed 26 January as the Independence Day between 1930 and 1946 . The celebration was marked by meetings where the attendants took the " pledge of independence " . Jawaharlal Nehru described in his autobiography that such meetings were peaceful , solemn , and " without any speeches or exhortation " . Gandhi envisaged that besides the meetings , the day would be spent " ... in doing some constructive work , whether it is spinning , or service of ' untouchables , ' or reunion of Hindus and Mussalmans , or prohibition work , or even all these together " . Following actual independence in 1947 , the Constitution of India came into effect on and from 26 January

1950 ; since then 26 January is celebrated as Republic Day .

= = = Immediate background = = =

In 1946 , the Labour government in Britain , its exchequer exhausted by the recently concluded World War II , realised that it had neither the mandate at home , the international support , nor the reliability of native forces for continuing to control an increasingly restless India . In February 1947 , Prime Minister Clement Attlee announced that the British government would grant full self @-@ governance to British India by June 1948 at the latest .

The new viceroy , Lord Mountbatten , advanced the date for the transfer of power , believing the continuous contention between the Congress and the Muslim League might lead to a collapse of the interim government . He chose the second anniversary of Japan 's surrender in World War II , 15 August , as the date of power transfer . The British government announced on 3 June 1947 that it had accepted the idea of partitioning British India into two states ; the successor governments would be given dominion status and would have an implicit right to secede from the British Commonwealth . The Indian Independence Act 1947 (10 & 11 Geo 6 c . 30) of the Parliament of the United Kingdom partitioned British India into the two new independent dominions of India and Pakistan (including what is now Bangladesh) with effect from 15 August 1947 , and granted complete legislative authority upon the respective constituent assemblies of the new countries . The Act received royal assent on 18 July 1947 .

= = = Partition and independence = = =

Millions of Muslim , Sikh and Hindu refugees trekked across the newly drawn borders in the months surrounding independence . In Punjab , where the borders divided the Sikh regions in halves , massive bloodshed followed ; in Bengal and Bihar , where Mahatma Gandhi 's presence assuaged communal tempers , the violence was mitigated . In all , between 250 @,@ 000 and 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 people on both sides of the new borders died in the violence . While the entire nation was celebrating the Independence Day , Gandhi stayed in Calcutta in an attempt to stem the carnage . On 14 August 1947 , the Independence Day of Pakistan , the new Dominion of Pakistan came into being ; Muhammad Ali Jinnah was sworn in as its first Governor General in Karachi .

The Constituent Assembly of India met for its fifth session at 11 pm on 14 August in the Constitution Hall in New Delhi . The session was chaired by the president Rajendra Prasad . In this session , Jawaharlal Nehru delivered the Tryst with Destiny speech proclaiming India 's independence .

The members of the Assembly formally took the pledge of being in the service of the country . A group of women , representing the women of India , formally presented the national flag to the assembly .

The Dominion of India became an independent country as official ceremonies took place in New Delhi . Nehru assumed office as the first prime minister , and the viceroy , Lord Mountbatten , continued as its first governor general . Gandhi 's name was invoked by crowds celebrating the occasion ; Gandhi himself however took no part in the official events . Instead , he marked the day with a 24 @-@ hour fast , during which he spoke to a crowd in Calcutta , encouraging peace between Hindu and Muslim .

= = = Celebration = = =

Independence Day , one of the three national holidays in India (the other two being the Republic Day on 26 January and Mahatma Gandhi 's birthday on 2 October) , is observed in all Indian states and union territories . On the eve of Independence Day , the President of India delivers the " Address to the Nation " . On 15 August , the prime minister hoists the Indian flag on the ramparts of the historical site Red Fort in Delhi . Twenty @-@ one gun shots are fired in honour of the solemn occasion . In his speech , the prime minister highlights the past year 's achievements , raises important issues and calls for further development . He pays tribute to the leaders of the Indian

independence movement . The Indian national anthem , " Jana Gana Mana " is sung . The speech is followed by march past of divisions of the Indian Armed Forces and paramilitary forces . Parades and pageants showcase scenes from the independence struggle and India 's diverse cultural traditions . Similar events take place in state capitals where the Chief Ministers of individual states unfurl the national flag , followed by parades and pageants .

Flag hoisting ceremonies and cultural programmes take place in governmental and non @-@ governmental institutions throughout the country . Schools and colleges conduct flag hoisting ceremonies and cultural events . Major government buildings are often adorned with strings of lights . In Delhi and some other cities , kite flying adds to the occasion . National flags of different sizes are used abundantly to symbolise allegiance to the country . Citizens adorn their clothing , wristbands , cars , household accessories with replicas of the tri @-@ colour . Over a period of time , the celebration has changed emphasis from nationalism to a broader celebration of all things India .

The Indian diaspora celebrates Independence Day around the world with parades and pageants , particularly in regions with higher concentrations of Indian immigrants . In some locations , such as New York and other US cities , 15 August has become " India Day " among the diaspora and the local populace . Pageants celebrate " India Day " either on 15 August or an adjoining weekend day .

= = Security threats = =

As early as three years after independence , the Naga National Council called for a boycott of Independence Day in northeast India . Separatist protests in this region intensified in the 1980s ; calls for boycotts and terrorist attacks by insurgent organisations such as the United Liberation Front of Assam and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland , marred celebrations . With increasing insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir from the late 1980s , separatist protesters boycotted Independence Day there with bandh (strikes) , use of black flags and by flag burning . Terrorist outfits such as Lashkar @-@ e @-@ Taiba , the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Jaish @-@ e @-@ Mohammed have issued threats , and have carried out attacks around Independence Day . Boycotting of the celebration has also been advocated by insurgent Maoist rebel organisations .

In the anticipation of terrorist attacks , particularly from militants , security measures are intensified , especially in major cities such as Delhi and Mumbai and in troubled states such as Jammu and Kashmir . The airspace around the Red Fort is declared a no @-@ fly zone to prevent aerial attacks and additional police forces are deployed in other cities .

= = In popular culture = =

On Independence Day and Republic Day , patriotic songs in Hindi and regional languages are broadcast on television and radio channels . They are also played alongside flag hoisting ceremonies . Patriotic films are broadcast . Over the decades , according to The Times of India , the number of such films broadcast has decreased as channels report that audiences are oversaturated with patriotic films . The population cohort that belong to the Generation Next often combine nationalism with popular culture during the celebrations . This mixture is exemplified by outfits and savouries dyed with the tricolour and designer garments that represent India 's various cultural traditions . Retail stores offer Independence Day sales promotions . Some news reports have decried the commercialism . Indian Postal Service publishes commemorative stamps depicting independence movement leaders , nationalistic themes and defence @-@ related themes on 15 August .

Independence and partition inspired literary and other artistic creations . Such creations mostly describe the human cost of partition , limiting the holiday to a small part of their narrative . Salman Rushdie 's novel Midnight 's Children (1980) , which won the Booker Prize and the Booker of Bookers , wove its narrative around children born at midnight of 14 ? 15 August 1947 with magical abilities . Freedom at Midnight (1975) is a non @-@ fiction work by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre that chronicled the events surrounding the first Independence Day celebrations in 1947 . Few films center on the moment of independence , instead highlighting the circumstances of

partition and its aftermath . On the Internet , Google has commemorated Independence Day since 2003 with a special doodle on its Indian homepage .