

Partition of India

Direct Action Day: August 1946

- Jinnah declared August 16, 1946, Direct Action Day with the stated demand for a Muslim nation in British India after the Cabinet Mission failed.
- The celebration of Direct Action Day was directly linked to the outbreak of the cycle of violence.
- It would later be known as the "Great Calcutta Killing of August 1946" by Muslim returning celebrants who attacked Hindus in Calcutta that very evening.
- The following day, Hindus retaliated, and the rioting lasted for three days, during which time both Hindus and Muslims killed an estimated 4,000 deaths (according to official sources).
- The Calcutta killings were the first to exhibit signs of "ethnic cleansing," even though there had previously been incidents of religious violence in India between Hindus and Muslims.
- The communal unrest spread to Bihar, where Muslims were attacked by Hindus, and Noakhali in Bengal, where Muslims targeted Hindus.

Plan for Partition: 1946-1947

- In order to avoid partition and maintain a United India, Lord Louis Mountbatten was appointed as India's final Viceroy by British Prime Minister Attlee.
- He was given the responsibility of overseeing British India's independence by 30 June 1948.
- Despite his original desire to keep the centre together, the tight communal atmosphere led him to believe that separation was required for a more rapid transfer of power.

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- One of the first Congressmen to support the partition of India as a solution to the growing Muslim separatist movement was Vallabhbhai Patel.
- He had been horrified by Jinnah's Direct Action campaign, which had sparked communal bloodshed throughout India.
- According to Patel, the continued existence of a weak and divided central government would encourage the independence of more than 600 princely kingdoms, further dividing India.
- He received criticism for his perceived eagerness for the partition from Gandhi, Nehru, secular Muslims, and socialists.

Proposal of the Indian Independence Act:

- Sardar Patel voiced his agreement and urged J. Nehru and other Congress leaders to accept the plan when Lord Mountbatten formally suggested it on June 3, 1947.
- He was aware of Gandhi's intense distress over the idea of partition and held private sessions with Gandhi.
- There, he oversaw the split of public property and chose the Indian Council of Ministers alongside Nehru.
- But neither he nor any other Indian leader had imagined the level of bloodshed and demographic shift that would accompany partition.
- British sovereignty over India was to end in June 1948, according to a decision made by the Labour government in Britain.
- The new Viceroy, Louis Mountbatten, advanced the deadline, giving fewer than six months to come up with a mutually acceptable plan for independence and partition of India since the British army was unprepared for the possibility of greater bloodshed.

Radcliffe Line:

- The Radcliffe Line is a significant border that divides India and Pakistan.

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- It was drawn by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a British lawyer, in 1947 during the process of partitioning British India into two separate countries – India and Pakistan.
 - During that time, when India gained independence from British rule, it was decided that there would be a separate country for Muslims, which later became Pakistan.
 - The Radcliffe Line was drawn to determine the boundary between the two newly created nations based on religious demographics.
 - Sir Cyril Radcliffe had the challenging task of drawing the border, even though he had never been to India before.
 - He was given just five weeks to complete this complicated task.
 - The line he drew aimed to separate regions with predominantly Muslim populations from those with mainly Hindu and Sikh populations.
 - The Radcliffe Line caused massive population movements as people tried to move to the country where their religion was the majority.
 - This migration resulted in a tragic and chaotic period with widespread violence and loss of lives.
 - The border was not without controversies and disputes.
 - There were disagreements and conflicts between India and Pakistan over various regions that lay near the Radcliffe Line.
 - Some of these disputes, like the ones over Kashmir and Sir Creek, still persist today.

Independence: 1947

- Muhammad Ali Jinnah was sworn in as Pakistan's first Governor-General on August 14, 1947, in Karachi.
- On the following day, August 15, 1947, India, now the Dominion of India, attained independence.
- The ceremonial celebrations took held in New Delhi, and Viceroy Mountbatten continued to serve as the nation's first Governor-General.

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- Gandhi stayed in Bengal to assist the new sub continental refugees after the partition of India.

