



Quit India Movement Day

For Prelims: [Quit India Movement](#), [World War II](#), [Mahatma Gandhi](#), [Muslim League](#)

For Mains: Significance of the Quit India Movement in India's freedom struggle, Indian National Movement

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Why in News?

India celebrates **8th August** every year as **Quit India Movement Day**, also known as **August Kranti Diwas**, to commemorate the [Quit India Movement \(QIM\)](#), which demanded the immediate end of British rule in India.

What was the Quit India Movement?

- **Launch and Purpose:** Launched by [Mahatma Gandhi](#) on **8th August 1942** during the **All-India Congress Committee session** in Bombay, the movement demanded the immediate end of British rule following the failure of the **Cripps Mission**.
- **Gandhi's Call:** Gandhi gave the powerful call of **"Do or Die"** at the **Gowalia Tank Maidan** (now August Kranti Maidan), urging Indians to demand an immediate end to British rule.
- **Slogan and Symbolism:** The slogan **"Quit India"** was coined by **Yusuf Meherally**, a socialist and trade unionist from Bombay, who had also created the earlier slogan **"Simon Go Back."**
 - During the movement, **Aruna Asaf Ali** became a prominent figure, famously hoisting the Indian flag at the Gowalia Tank maidan as a symbol of defiance.
- **Rise of New Leaders:** New leaders like [Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia](#), [Jayaprakash Narayan](#) rose to prominence during this movement.
 - Women also played a significant role, leading protests and sacrificing their lives, such as **Matangini Hazra**, who died with the Tricolour in hand, and [Sucheta Kripalani](#), who later became **India's first female Chief Minister (Uttar Pradesh)**.
- **Nature of the QIM:** The QIM was distinct from earlier peaceful protests like [Non-Cooperation](#) and [Civil Disobedience](#), as it was a mass uprising demanding the complete withdrawal of British rule.
 - Though **Gandhi emphasized non-violence**, the movement was accommodating of **violence in self-defense**. It allowed spontaneous actions like **sabotage and guerrilla attacks against British properties**.
 - Widespread protests, strikes, and sabotage erupted across India, with **students and youth taking the lead**, especially in urban centers, after Congress leaders were arrested.
 - The **Muslim community** largely stayed absent from the QIM, it was seen as a **Hindu nationalist cause**, highlighting the growing communal divide and the [Muslim League's](#) push for a separate state.
- **Legacy:** The movement became a key turning point in India's freedom struggle, demonstrating

unity and determination that ultimately led to the end of British rule.

- The Quit India Movement was a **watershed moment that shaped India's future politics**. In his speech at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Gandhi said **power would belong to the people of India**. The movement marked the freedom struggle truly belonging to **"We the People."**

What were the Events that Led to the Quit India Movement?

- **Impact of World War II (1939-1945):** Britain involved India in [World War II](#) without consulting Indian leaders. The Congress demanded full independence in exchange for support, but Britain refused, causing widespread anger.
- **Failure of the Cripps Mission (March 1942):** The Cripps Mission was sent by the British in March 1942 to secure **India's support in World War II** and resolve the political crisis.
 - **Stafford Cripps** proposed granting **India dominion status after the war**, with a **Constituent Assembly** where provinces and princely states could opt out.
 - Gandhi met Cripps but rejected the **proposal, calling it a "post-dated cheque on a crashing bank"** because it **encouraged division and failed to offer immediate independence**. The mission ultimately failed to meet Indian demands.
- **Nationalist Sentiment and Economic Hardships:** By 1942, growing frustration over British **delays in granting independence**, political repression, **wartime exploitation**, and the export of rice from Bengal during the war caused a food crisis that eventually led to the [Bengal famine of 1943](#).
 - The famine worsened public suffering and fueled anger against British rule.
- **Fall of Burma (1942):** The **Japanese invasion of Burma** brought the war to India's doorstep, heightening invasion fears and urgency for British withdrawal.
 - Meanwhile, [Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose](#) formation of the **Indian National Army** intensified the fight for independence.
- **Mahatma Gandhi's Leadership:** Facing rising demands for independence, Gandhi launched the Quit India call, declaring, **"We shall either free India or die in the attempt."**
 - On **8th August 1942** the All-India Congress Committee passed the Quit India Resolution, urging non-violent mass resistance.

What were the Outcomes of the Quit India Movement?

- **British Repression:** The British government responded with harsh repression, arresting key leaders, but the movement caused a temporary collapse of **British authority in several regions**.
- **Emergence of Parallel Governments:** In places like **Ballia (Uttar Pradesh)**, **Tamluk (West Bengal)**, and **Satara (Maharashtra)**, local parallel governments briefly challenged British authority, signaling the strong desire for self-rule.
- **Increased National Unity:** The movement unified Indians across regions and classes in the struggle for full independence, strengthening the collective resolve against colonial rule.
- **Divisions within Indian Politics:** The movement also exposed divisions within Indian politics, with the **Muslim League largely staying away**, highlighting the growing rift between Congress and the League over the future of India.
- **Path to Independence:** While the movement did not immediately end British rule, it set the stage for India's independence in 1947, as it showed the **British that their hold on India was no longer tenable**.

Conclusion

The Quit India Movement was a watershed moment in India's freedom struggle, a **bold, fiery demand for liberty** that captured the spirit of millions willing to sacrifice everything for their country's independence.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the significance of the Quit India Movement in shaping India's struggle for independence.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. With reference to 8th August, 1942 in Indian history, which one of the following statements is correct? (2021)

- (a) The Quit India Resolution was adopted by the AICC.
- (b) The Viceroy's Executive Council was expanded to include more Indians.
- (c) The Congress ministries resigned in seven provinces.
- (d) Cripps proposed an Indian Union with full Dominion Status once the Second World War was over.

Ans: (a)

Q. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, consider the following events: (2017)

1. Mutiny in Royal Indian Navy
2. Quit India Movement launched
3. Second Round Table Conference

What is the correct chronological sequence of the above events?

- (a) 1 - 2 - 3
- (b) 2 - 1 - 3
- (c) 3 - 2 - 1
- (d) 3 - 1 - 2

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. What were the events that led to the Quit India Movement? Point out its results. (2024)