

80 years of Quit India movement

August 10, 2022

In news– 9th August 2022 marked 80 years of Quit India movement.

History of Quit India movement-

- The Quit India Movement, also known as the August Movement, **was a movement launched at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee by Mohandas Gandhi** on 8th August 1942, during World War II, demanding an end to British rule in India.
- **Foundation to the movement was laid back in 1939** when the **Governor-general of India was Lord Lilingthow**.
- The Quit India Movement Resolution was passed at the Wardha Conference of All India Congress Committee in July 1942.
- **South Mumbai's historic August Kranti Maidan**(the Gowalia Tank Maidan) **was where Mahatma Gandhi had given the call** for the Quit India movement on August 8, 1942.
- After the failure of the Cripps Mission, **Gandhi made a call to Do or Die in his Quit India speech** delivered in Bombay on 8 August 1942.
- **Mahatma Gandhi, who had told the Raj to "Quit India"** on the previous day (August 8) was already in jail along with the entire Congress leadership, so when August 9 dawned, the people were on their own – out on the street, driven by the Mahatma's call of "Do or Die".
- The slogan **"Quit India" was coined by Yusuf Meherally**, a socialist and trade unionist who also served as Mayor of Bombay. A few years ago, **in 1928, it was Meherally who had coined the slogan "Simon Go Back"**.
- Adoption of Indian attire like the 'dhoti kurta' and 'Gandhi cap' was also a widely celebrated feature of

this movement.

- The government cracked down immediately, and by August 9, Gandhi and all other senior Congress leaders had been jailed.
- **Gandhi was taken to the Aga Khan Palace in Poona (Pune), and later to Yerwada jail.** It was during this time that **Kasturba Gandhi died at the Aga Khan Palace.**
- **The British Government banned the Congress Committee declaring it an unlawful association.**
- Aruna Asaf Ali, popularly known as the 'Grand Old Lady' of the Independence Movement, hoisted the National Flag at Mumbai's Gowalia Tank Maidan.
- This event was followed by an uproar among the people and the emergence of several young leaders such as Ram Manohar Lohia, Jai Prakash Narayan, SM Joshi, and others who continued to fuel the fire of the movement throughout India during the period of World War II.
- **The arrest of their leaders failed to deter the masses.** With no one to give directions, people took the movement into their own hands.
- In Bombay, Poona, and Ahmedabad, hundreds of thousands of ordinary Indians clashed with the police. The following day (August 10), protests erupted in Delhi, UP, and Bihar.
- There were strikes, demonstrations and people's marches in defiance of prohibitory orders in Kanpur, Patna, Varanasi, and Allahabad.
- The protests spread rapidly into smaller towns and villages. Till mid-September, police stations, courts, post offices, and other symbols of government authority came under repeated attack.
- Hence, it was a **mass upsurge against colonial rule on a scale not seen earlier**, and it sent out the unmistakable message that the sun was about to set on the British Empire in India.

Causes of Quit India Movement-

- **Involvement of India in World War II without prior consultation with the leaders-**The Indian Nationalists were disgruntled with the Governor-General of India, Lord Linlithgow, as he brought India to the verge of World War II without consulting them.
- **Failure of Cripps Mission-**
 - The British sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India to gain the cooperation of India, which failed because the Cripps Mission **offered India not complete freedom but the Dominion Status to India**, along with the **partition**.
 - After the failure of Cripps Mission, the Indian Nationalist Leaders knew that the Britishers were in no mood to amend the Constitution before the end of World War II.
- **Shortage of essential commodities-** There was widespread discontent due to the shortage of essential commodities and rising prices of salt, rice, etc., and commandeering of boats in Bengal and Orissa.
- **Prevalence of anti-British sentiment-** The sentiments were widely anti-British, and the masses were demanding complete independence from the British Government.
- **Centralisation of many small movements-** The Ground for the movement was already prepared by various associated and affiliated bodies of the Congress, like Forward Bloc, All India Kisan Sabha, and others.

Phases of Quit India Movement-

The Quit India Movement can be viewed in three phases from its inception to end. The phases are as follows:

- **First phase:** The first phase or the inception of the movement **had no violence. It began with civil**

disobedience, boycotts, strikes that the British Government quickly suppressed. Almost all members of the Congress Committee, including Gandhiji, were arrested and kept in Jail till 1945 without any trial.

- **Second phase:** In its second phase, **the movement shifted to the countryside**. The second phase of the movement **took a violent and aggressive turn**. Any building or offices which were the symbol of colonial authority was attacked and distracted. Communication systems, railway stations & tracks, telegraph poles and wires were also targeted.
- **Third and last phase:** In the last phase of the movement, **there was the formation of many independent national or parallel governments** in the isolated pockets of the country, such as Ballia, Satara, Tamruk, etc.