



QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT : HISTORY

NEWS : *August Kranti Day is observed on the 8th August annually in India. In 2024, India celebrates the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India Movement.*

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS ?

Quit India Movement (1942):

- **Launch Date:** August 8, 1942
- **Leader:** Mahatma Gandhi
- **Slogan:** "Do or Die"
- **Objective:** Immediate end to British rule in India, formation of a provisional government post-WWII.
- **Also Known As:** August Kranti Movement
- **Nature:** More radical and violent than traditional Satyagraha.

Causes

1. **British Government's Attitude:**
 - Disillusionment with British promises of self-rule.
 - Failure of the Cripps Mission.
 - British support for the demand of Pakistan.
2. **Growing Nationalism:**
 - Peak of nationalist sentiments by 1942.
 - Groundwork laid by Individual Satyagraha (1940) and Kisan Sabha movements.
 - Experience of self-rule during Congress rule (1937-39).
3. **Socio-Economic Factors:**
 - Economic burdens due to WWII (price hikes, shortages, increased taxes).
 - Bengal Famine (1943) caused by rice shortages and deprivation.
4. **British Defeats in WWII:**
 - British reverses in Southeast Asia.
 - Japanese advancement towards Indian borders.
 - Retreat of British troops from Burma, exposing racial discrimination.

Launch and Government Response

- **Wardha Meeting:** Congress Working Committee met on July 14, 1942, to plan the movement.
- **Formal Launch:** All India Congress Committee passed the Quit India Resolution on August 8, 1942, at Gowalia Tank, Bombay.
- **Government's Response:** Arrest of major leaders, including Gandhi, Nehru, and Azad.

Nature of the Movement

- **Mass Uprising:** Immediate large-scale uprising, unlike earlier peaceful movements.
- **Ends Justify Means:** Gandhi accepted potential violence in self-defense.



- **Clear Objectives:** Complete withdrawal of British rule.
- **Leaderless Movement:** Continued despite the arrest of leaders; developed grassroots and underground activities.

Key Features

- **Violence Against State:** Included violent resistance against British rule.
- **Student Involvement:** Students urged to lead after senior leaders' arrests.
- **Defiance of Authority:** Total non-cooperation with British authorities.
- **Underground Activities:** Organized to maintain morale and distribute arms.
- **Key personalities:** Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta, Biju Patnaik, Chhotubhai Puranik, Achyut Patwardhan, Sucheta Kripalani, and R.P.

Region	Associated leader	Significant activities
Ballia (August 1942)	Chittu Pandey	Released many Congress leaders
Tamluk (1942 - 1944)	Satish Chandra Samanta	Jatiya Sarkar undertook cyclone relief work. Sanctioned grants to schools. The rich supplied paddy to the poor. Organised Vidyut Vahinis (electricity units).
Satara (1943 to 1945)	Y.B. Chavan, Nana Patil, etc.	Named " Prati Sarkar " (Parallel Government). Organised village libraries and Nyayadan Mandals (justice forums). Carried out prohibition campaigns. Organised " Gandhi marriages " (marriages following Gandhi's principles).

Goenka. Usha Mehta established an **underground radio station** in Bombay.

Spread and Regional Participation

1. **Bihar:** Strong underground activities, formation of a parallel government.
2. **Uttar Pradesh:** Armed villagers attacked police posts, strikes in major cities.
3. **Bengal:** Protests, sabotage, and linking with worker, tribal, and peasant movements.
4. **Western India:** Guerrilla-style attacks on government property; formation of the "Azad Government" in Gujarat.
5. **South India:** Strikes organized by leaders like K.T. Bhashyam.

Social Base

- **Students:** Significant participation, especially in Bihar and UP.
- **Peasants:** Active in Bihar and Eastern UP.
- **Tribals:** Participation in Bengal and Orissa.
- **Government Officials:** Some lower-rank officials supported the movement.



- **Women:** Played a crucial role in protests, strikes, and mobilization.

Limitations

- **Failure to Achieve Immediate Objectives:** Independence achieved years later through further struggles.
- **Lack of Central Leadership:** Led to confusion and fragmentation.
- **No Consensus:** Opposition from the Muslim League, Communist Party, Hindu Mahasabha, and leaders like Ambedkar and Periyar.
- **Communal Divide:** Low Muslim participation; Muslim League mobilized masses for the 1945-46 elections, leading to Partition.
- **Neglected by Historians:** Due to lack of involvement by major political parties and leaders.

Significance

- **Most Radical Movement:** More violent and radical than previous movements, supported by the poor and labor class.
- **Grassroots Leadership:** Unprecedented mass participation from subaltern classes.
- **New Leaders:** Emergence of leaders like JP Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, and Aruna Asaf Ali.
- **Set the Tone for Independence:** Contributed to weakening British rule, setting the stage for future protests and independence.

Source : <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=2043414>