

CONSTITUTION ILLUSTRATION: POLITY

NEWS: Row over 22 illustrations in Constitution: A look at the art, the artists, and the message

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The Parliament witnessed protests over the missing 22 illustrations from most printed copies of the Indian Constitution. Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar emphasized that the signed, illustrated copy is the only authentic version and should be widely recognized.

1. Issue Overview

- On February 11, 2025, Parliament saw heated debates regarding the missing 22 illustrations in most printed copies of the Indian Constitution.
- Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar emphasized that the signed, illustrated copy is the only authentic version.

2. Creation of the Illustrated Constitution

- **Calligraphy:** Handwritten by **Prem Behari Narain Raizada**.
- **Illustrations:** Created by **Nandalal Bose** and his Santiniketan team.
- **Assignment:** Bose was tasked with the artwork in **October 1949**, just before the final Constituent Assembly session.
- **Preservation:**
 - Two copies (English & Hindi) contain the illustrations.
 - Stored in **helium-filled cases** at the Parliament Library.
- **Team Members:**
 - **Kripal Singh Shekhawat, A Perumal, Direndrakrishna Deb Burman** – assisted Bose.
 - **Beohar Rammanohar Sinha** – designed the **Preamble page**.
 - **Dinanath Bhargava** – sketched the **National Emblem**.

3. Concept and Artistic Narrative

- The illustrations do not directly correlate with the Constitution's legal text.
- They depict **India's historical, cultural, and geographical diversity**.
- Planned as a **broad historical narrative**, covering key phases of Indian history.
- Some portraits, such as **Rana Pratap & Ranjit Singh**, were planned but omitted due to space constraints.

4. Thematic Representation in the Illustrations

a. Ancient Civilization and Religious Heritage

- **Indus Valley Civilization:** The **Bull Seal** appears in **Part I**.
- **Hinduism & Jainism:**
 - **Part II:** A hermitage scene with ascetics in meditation.
 - **Part V:** A serene **Buddha** depiction.

- **Part VI: Mahavir**, representing Jainism.
 - **Temples & Architecture: Mahabalipuram sculptures** featured in **Part XIII**.
- b. Depictions from Indian Epics**
- **Ramayana:**
 - **Part III (Fundamental Rights):** Ram, Lakshman, and Sita returning from Lanka.
 - **Mahabharata:**
 - **Part IV (Directive Principles):** Arjun & Krishna before the war.
- c. Indian Rulers in the Illustrations**
- **Part VII: Emperor Ashoka** on an elephant, propagating Buddhism.
 - **Part IX: Vikramaditya** shown with musicians and dancers.
 - **Part XV: Chhatrapati Shivaji & Guru Gobind Singh.**
 - **Part XVI: Rani Lakshmibai & Tipu Sultan.**
- d. Freedom Struggle Leaders**
- **Mahatma Gandhi:**
 - Leading the **Dandi March**.
 - Visiting riot-affected **Noakhali**, welcomed by women & peasants.
 - **Subhas Chandra Bose:**
 - **Part XIX:** Saluting the flag as Azad Hind Fauj marches.
 - **Rabindranath Tagore:**
 - Honored with **three landscapes** for his contribution to the **National Anthem**.
 - **Jawaharlal Nehru:**
 - **Originally planned but omitted** from illustrations.

Illustrations in the Indian Constitution & Their Part Numbers

Illustration	Part
Indus Valley Civilization – Bull Seal	Part I
Hermitage Scene (Hinduism & Jainism)	Part II
Ram, Lakshman & Sita Returning from Lanka (Ramayana)	Part III (Fundamental Rights)
Arjuna & Krishna before the Mahabharata War (Mahabharata)	Part IV (Directive Principles)
Buddha	Part V
Mahavir (Jainism)	Part VI
Ashoka Seated on an Elephant, Spreading Buddhism	Part VII
Vikramaditya with Musicians & Dancers	Part IX
Chhatrapati Shivaji & Guru Gobind Singh	Part XV
Rani Lakshmibai & Tipu Sultan	Part XVI
Sculptures from Mahabalipuram (Temple Architecture)	Part XIII



Illustration	Part
Mahatma Gandhi Leading the Dandi March	Part IV (Directive Principles)
Mahatma Gandhi Visiting Riot-Hit Noakhali	Part IV
Subhas Chandra Bose Saluting the Flag with Azad Hind Fauj	Part XIX
Rabindranath Tagore Honored with Three Landscapes	Multiple Parts

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