

Encyclopedia of Indian History 20th Century, Vol 5

Johnny Cunningham



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INDIAN HISTORY
20TH CENTURY, VOL 5**

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by Johnny Cunningham

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Contents

Chapter 49	Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's Mysterious Death.....	855
Chapter 50	Indira Gandhi becomes Prime Minister.....	876
Chapter 51	Indo-Pakistani War of 1971.....	925
Chapter 52	Operation Smiling Buddha.....	960
Chapter 53	The Emergency (India)	972
Chapter 54	1984 Anti-Sikh Riots.....	992
Chapter 55	Rajiv Gandhi is Assassinated by a Suicide Bomber.....	1016
Chapter 56	Demolition of the Babri Masjid.....	1044
Chapter 57	Bombay Riots	1054
Chapter 58	Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee	1059

Chapter 49

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's Mysterious Death

Lal Bahadur Shastri (2 October 1904 – 11 January 1966) was an Indian statesman who served as the second Prime Minister of India. He promoted the White Revolution – a national campaign to increase the production and supply of milk – by supporting the Amul milk co-operative of Anand, Gujarat and creating the National Dairy Development Board. Underlining the need to boost India's food production, Shastri also promoted the Green Revolution in India in 1965. This led to an increase in food grain production, especially in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Shastri was born to Sharada Prasad Srivastava and Ramdulari Devi in Mughalsarai on 2 October 1904, sharing his birthday with Mahatma Gandhi. He studied in East Central Railway Inter college and Harish Chandra High School, which he left to join the non-cooperation movement. He worked for the betterment of the Harijans at Muzaffarpur and dropped his caste-derived surname of "Srivastava". Shastri's thoughts were influenced by reading about Swami Vivekananda, Gandhi and Annie Besant. Deeply impressed and influenced by Gandhi, he joined the Indian independence movement in the 1920s. He served as the president of Servants of the People Society (Lok Sevak Mandal), founded by Lala Lajpat Rai and held prominent positions in Indian National Congress. Following independence in 1947, he joined the Indian government and became one of Prime Minister Nehru's key cabinet colleagues, first as

Railways Minister (1951–56), and then in numerous other prominent positions, including the Home Minister.

He led the country during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. His slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" ("Hail to the soldier; Hail to the farmer") became very popular during the war. The war formally ended with the Tashkent Agreement on 10 January 1966; he died the following day, still in Tashkent, with the cause of his death in dispute; it was reported to be a cardiac arrest, but his family was not satisfied with the proffered reason. He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna.

Early years (1904–1917)

Shastri was born on 2 October 1904 at the home of his maternal grandparents in Mughalsarai in a Kayastha Hindu family. Shastri's paternal ancestors had been in the service of the *zamindar* of Ramnagar, Varanasi and Shastri lived there for the first year of his life. Shastri's father, Sharada Prasad Srivastava, was a school teacher who later became a clerk in the revenue office at Allahabad, while his mother, Ramdulari Devi, was the daughter of Munshi Hazari Lal, the headmaster and English teacher at a railway school in Mughalsarai. Shastri was the second child and eldest son of his parents; he had an elder sister, Kailashi Devi (b. 1900).

In April 1906, When Shastri was hardly a year and 6 months old, his father, who had only recently been promoted to the post of deputy tahsildar, died in an epidemic of bubonic plague. Smt Ramdulari Devi, then only 23 and pregnant with her third child, took her two children and moved from Ramnagar to her father's house in Mughalsarai and settled

there for good. She gave birth to a daughter, Sundari Devi, in July 1906. Thus, Shastri and his sisters grew up in the household of his maternal grandfather, Hazari Lalji. However, Hazari Lalji himself died from a stroke in mid-1908, after which the family was looked after by his brother (Shastri's great-uncle) Darbari Lal, who was the head clerk in the opium regulation department at Ghazipur, and later by his son (Ramdulari Devi's cousin) Bindeshwari Prasad, a school teacher in Mughalsarai.

In Shastri's family, as with many Kayastha families, it was the custom in that era for children to receive an education in the Urdu language and culture. This is because Urdu/Persian had been the language of government for centuries, before being replaced by English, and old traditions persisted into the 20th century. Therefore, Shastri began his education at the age of four under the tutelage of a *maulvi* (a Muslim cleric), Budhan Mian, at the East Central Railway Inter college in Mughalsarai. He studied there until the sixth standard. In 1917, Bindeshwari Prasad (who was now head of the household) was transferred to Varanasi, and the entire family moved there, including Ramdulari Devi and her three children. In Varanasi, Shastri joining the seventh standard at Harish Chandra High School. At this time, he decided to drop his caste-derived surname of "Srivastava" (which is a traditional surname for a sub-caste of Kayastha families).

Gandhi's disciple (1921–1945)

While his family had no links to the independence movement then taking shape, among his teachers at Harish Chandra High School was an intensely patriotic and highly respected teacher

named Nishkameshwar Prasad Mishra, who gave Shastri much-needed financial support by allowing him to tutor his children. Inspired by Mishra's patriotism, Shastri took a deep interest in the freedom struggle, and began to study its history and the works of several of its noted personalities, including those of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Annie Besant. In January 1921, when Shastri was in the 10th standard and three months from sitting the final examinations, he attended a public meeting in Benares hosted by Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Inspired by the Mahatma's call for students to withdraw from government schools and join the non-cooperation movement, Shastri withdrew from Harish Chandra High School the next day and joined the local branch of the Congress Party as a volunteer, actively participating in picketing and anti-government demonstrations. He was soon arrested and jailed, but was then let off as he was still a minor.

Shastri's immediate supervisor was a former Benares Hindu University lecturer named J.B. Kripalani, who would become one of the most prominent leaders of the Indian independence movement and one among Gandhi's closest followers. Recognising the need for the younger volunteers to continue their educations, Kripalani and a friend, V.N. Sharma, had founded an informal school centered around "nationalist education" to educate the young activists in their nation's heritage and with the support of a wealthy philanthropist and ardent Congress nationalist, Shiv Prasad Gupta, the Kashi Vidyapith was inaugurated by Gandhi in Benares as a national institution of higher education on 10 February 1921. Among the first students of the new institution, Shastri graduated with a first-class degree in philosophy and ethics from the

Vidyapith in 1925. He was given the title *Shastri* ("scholar"). The title was a bachelor's degree awarded by the institution but it stuck as part of his name.

Shastri enrolled himself as a life member of the Servants of the People Society (Lok Sevak Mandal), founded by Lala Lajpat Rai, and began to work for the betterment of the Harijans under Gandhi's direction at Muzaffarpur. Later he became the President of the Society.

Independence Activism of Lal Bahadur Shastri

In 1928 Shastri became an active and mature member of the Indian National Congress at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. He was imprisoned for two and a half years. Later, he worked as the Organizing Secretary of the Parliamentary Board of U.P. in 1937. In 1940, he was sent to prison for one year, for offering individual Satyagraha support to the independence movement.

On 8 August 1942, Mahatma Gandhi issued the Quit India speech at Gowalia Tank in Bombay, demanding that the British leave India. Shastri, who had just then come out after a year in prison, travelled to Allahabad. For a week, he sent instructions to the independence activists from Jawaharlal Nehru's home, Anand Bhavan. He served as a elected representative for United Provinces in 1937 and 1946.

Political Career (1947–1964)

State minister

Following India's independence, Shastri was appointed Parliamentary Secretary in his home state, Uttar Pradesh. He became the Minister of Police and Transport under Govind Ballabh Pant's Chief Ministership on 15 August 1947 following Rafi Ahmed Kidwai's departure to become a minister at the centre. As the Transport Minister, he was the first to appoint women conductors. As the minister in charge of the Police Department, he ordered that police use water jets, whose instructions was given by him, instead of lathis to disperse unruly crowds. His tenure as police minister (As Home Minister was called prior to 1950) saw successful curbing of communal riots in 1947, mass migration and resettlement of refugees.

Cabinet minister

In 1951, Shastri was made the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee with Jawaharlal Nehru as the Prime Minister. He was directly responsible for the selection of candidates and the direction of publicity and electioneering activities. His cabinet consisted of the finest business men of India including Ratilal Premchand Mehta. He played an important role in the landslide successes of the Congress Party in the Indian General Elections of 1952, 1957 and 1962. In 1952, he successfully contested UP Vidhansabha from Soraon North cum Phulpur West seat and won by getting over 69% of vote. He was believed to be retained as home minister of UP, but in a surprise move was called to Centre as minister by

Nehru. Shastri was made Minister of Railways and Transport in First Cabinet of Republic of India on 13 May 1952. He served as the Minister of Commerce and Industry in 1959 and Minister of Home Affairs in 1961. Shastri laid the foundation of Mangalore Port in 1964 as a minister without a portfolio.

Prime Minister (1964–1966)

Jawaharlal Nehru died in office on 27 May 1964. Then Congress Party president K. Kamaraj was instrumental in making Shastri Prime Minister on 9 June. Shastri, though mild-mannered and soft-spoken, was a Nehruvian socialist and thus held appeal to those wishing to prevent the ascent of conservative right-winger Morarji Desai.

In his first broadcast as Prime Minister, on 11 June 1964, Shastri stated:

There comes a time in the life of every nation when it stands at the cross-roads of history and must choose which way to go. But for us, there need be no difficulty or hesitation, no looking to right or left. Our way is straight and clear—the building up of a socialist democracy at home with freedom and prosperity for all, and the maintenance of world peace and friendship with all nations.

Domestic policies

Shastri retained many members of Nehru's Council of Ministers. T. T. Krishnamachari was retained as the Finance Minister of India, as was Defence Minister Yashwantrao Chavan. He appointed Swaran Singh to succeed him as

External Affairs Minister. He also appointed Indira Gandhi, daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru and former Congress President, as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. Gulzarilal Nanda continued as the Minister of Home Affairs.

- Main article: Anti-Hindi agitations of Tamil Nadu

Lal Bahadur Shastri's tenure witnessed the Madras anti-Hindi agitation of 1965. The government of India had for a long time made an effort to establish Hindi as the sole national language of India. This was resisted by the non-Hindi speaking states particularly Madras State. To calm the situation, Shastri gave assurances that English would continue to be used as the official language as long the non-Hindi speaking states wanted. The riots subsided after Shastri's assurance, as did the student agitation.

Economic policies

Shastri continued Nehru's socialist economic policies with central planning. He promoted the White Revolution – a national campaign to increase the production and supply of milk – by supporting the Amul milk co-operative of Anand, Gujarat and creating the National Dairy Development Board. He visited Anand on 31 October 1964 for inauguration of the Cattle Feed Factory of Amul at Kanjari. As he was keenly interested in knowing the success of this co-operative, he stayed overnight with farmers in a village, and even had dinner with a farmer's family. He discussed his wish with Verghese Kurien, then the General Manager of Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd (Amul) to replicate this model to other parts of the country for improving the socio-

economic conditions of farmers. As a result of this visit, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) was established at Anand in 1965.

While speaking on the chronic food shortages across the country, Shastri urged people to voluntarily give up one meal so that the food saved could be distributed to the affected populace. However, he ensured that he first implemented the system in his own family before appealing to the country. He went on air to appeal to his countrymen to skip a meal a week. The response to his appeal was overwhelming. Even restaurants and eateries downed the shutters on Monday evenings. Many parts of the country observed the "Shastri Vrat". He motivated the country to maximize the cultivation of food grains by ploughing the lawn himself, at his official residence in New Delhi. During the 22-day war with Pakistan in 1965, On 19 October 1965, Shastri gave the seminal 'Jai Jawan Jai Kishan' ("Hail the soldier, Hail the farmer") slogan at Urwa in Allahabad that became a national slogan. Underlining the need to boost India's food production, Shastri also promoted the Green Revolution in India in 1965. This led to an increase in food grain production, especially in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. Major milestones in this undertaking were the development of high-yielding varieties of wheat, and rust resistant strains of wheat.

Though he was a socialist, Shastri stated that India cannot have a regimented type of economy. His government passed the National Agricultural Products Board Act and was responsible for setting up the Food Corporation of India under the Food Corporation's Act 1964.

Jai Jawan Jai Kisan

For the outstanding slogan given by him during Indo-Pak war of 1965 Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (India) commemorated Shastri even after 47 years of his death on his 48th martyr's day:

Former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was one of those great Indians who has left an indelible impression on our collective life. Lal Bahadur Shastri's contribution to our public life were unique in that they were made in the closest proximity to the life of the common man in India. Lal Bahadur Shastri was looked upon by Indians as one of their own, one who shared their ideals, hopes and aspirations. His achievements were looked upon not as the isolated achievements of an individual but of our society collectively. Under Shastri's leadership India faced and repulsed the Pakistani invasion of 1965. It is not only a matter of pride for the Indian Army but also for every citizen of the country. His slogan **Jai Jawan! Jai Kisan!!** reverberates even today through the length and breadth of the country. Underlying this is the inner-most sentiments 'Jai Hind'. The war of 1965 was fought and won for our self-respect and our national prestige. For using our Defence Forces with such admirable skill, the nation remains beholden to Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. He will be remembered for all times to come for his large heartedness and public service.

Foreign policies

Shastri continued Nehru's policy of non-alignment but also built closer relations with the Soviet Union. In the aftermath of

the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the formation of military ties between China and Pakistan, Shastri's government decided to expand the country's defence budget.

In 1964, Shastri signed an accord with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike regarding the status of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka, then called Ceylon. This agreement is also known as the Sirima-Shastri Pact or the Bandaranaike-Shastri Pact.

Under the terms of this agreement, 600,000 Indian Tamils were to be repatriated, while 375,000 were to be granted Sri Lankan citizenship.

This settlement was to be done by 31 October 1981. However, after Shastri's death, by 1981, India had taken only 300,000 Tamils as repatriates, while Sri Lanka had granted citizenship to only 185,000 citizens (plus another 62,000 born after 1964). Later, India declined to consider any further applications for citizenship, stating that the 1964 agreement had lapsed.

India's relationship with Burma had been strained after the 1962 military coup followed by the repatriation of many Indian families in 1964 by Burma. While the central government in New Delhi monitored the overall process of repatriation and arranged for identification and transportation of the Indian returnees from Burma, it fell under the responsibilities of local governments to provide adequate facilities to shelter the repatriates upon disembarkation on Indian soil.

Particularly in the Madras State the Chief Minister during that time, Minjur K. Bhaktavatsalam, showed care in rehabilitation of the returnees. In December 1965, Shastri made an official

visit with his family to Rangoon, Burma and re-established cordial relations with the country's military government of General Ne Win.

War with Pakistan

Shastri's greatest moment came when he led India in the 1965 Indo-Pak War. Laying claim to half the Kutch peninsula, the Pakistani army skirmished with Indian forces in August 1965. In his report to the Lok Sabha on the confrontation in Kutch, Shastri stated:

In the utilization of our limited resources, we have always given primacy to plans and projects for economic development. It would, therefore, be obvious for anyone who is prepared to look at things objectively that India can have no possible interest in provoking border incidents or in building up an atmosphere of strife... In these circumstances, the duty of Government is quite clear and this duty will be discharged fully and effectively... We would prefer to live in poverty for as long as necessary but we shall not allow our freedom to be subverted.

On 1 August 1965, major incursions of militants and Pakistani soldiers began, hoping not only to break down the government but incite a sympathetic revolt. The revolt did not happen, and India sent its forces across the Ceasefire Line (now Line of Control) and threatened Pakistan by crossing the International Border near Lahore as war broke out on a general scale. Massive tank battles occurred in the Punjab, and while the Pakistani forces made gains in the northern part of subcontinent, Indian forces captured the key post at Haji Pir,

in Kashmir, and brought the Pakistani city of Lahore under artillery and mortar fire.

The Indo-Pak war ended on 23 September 1965 with a United Nations-mandated ceasefire. In a broadcast to the nation on the day of the ceasefire, Shastri stated:

While the conflict between the armed forces of the two countries has come to an end, the more important thing for the United Nations and all those who stand for peace is to bring to an end the deeper conflict.... How can this be brought about? In our view, the only answer lies in peaceful coexistence. India has stood for the principle of coexistence and championed it all over the world. Peaceful coexistence is possible among nations no matter how deep the differences between them, how far apart they are in their political and economic systems, no matter how intense the issues that divide them.

During his tenure as Prime Minister, Shastri visited many countries including Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, England, Canada, Nepal, Egypt and Burma. Incidentally while returning from the Non Alliance Conference in Cairo on the invitation of then President of the Pakistan, Mohammed Ayub Khan to have lunch with him, Shastri made a stop over at Karachi Airport for few hours and breaking from the protocol Ayub Khan personally received him at the Airport and had an informal meeting during October 1964. After the declaration of ceasefire with Pakistan in 1965, Shastri and Ayub Khan attended a summit in Tashkent (former USSR, now in modern Uzbekistan), organized by Alexei Kosygin. On 10 January 1966, Shastri and Ayub Khan signed the Tashkent Declaration.

Death

Shastri died in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (then Soviet Union) on 11 January 1966, one day after signing a peace treaty to end the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. Many among Shastri's supporters and close relatives, refused at the time, and have refused since, to believe the circumstances of his death and allege foul play. Conspiracy theories appeared within hours of his death and have thereafter persisted. He was eulogized as a national hero and the Vijay Ghat memorial established in his memory. Upon his death, Gulzarilal Nanda once again assumed the role of Acting Prime Minister until the Congress Parliamentary Party elected Indira Gandhi over Morarji Desai to officially succeed Shastri.

After Shastri's death, his wife Lalita Shastri alleged he was poisoned. An epic poetry book in Hindi titled *Lalita Ke Aansoo* written by Krant M. L. Verma was published in 1978. In this book, the tragic story about the death of Shastri has been narrated by his wife Lalita.

The Indian Government released no information about his death and the media then was kept silent. The possible existence of a conspiracy was covered in India by the 'Outlook' magazine. A query was later posed by Anuj Dhar, author of *CIA's Eye on South Asia*, under the Right to Information Act to declassify a document supposedly related to Shastri's death, but the Prime Minister's Office refused to oblige, reportedly citing that this could lead to harming of foreign relations, cause disruption in the country and cause breach of parliamentary privileges. Another RTI plea by Kuldeep Nayar was also declined, as PMO cited exemption from disclosure on the

plea. The home ministry is yet to respond to queries whether India conducted a post-mortem on Shastri, and if the government had investigated allegations of foul play. The Delhi Police in their reply to an RTI application said they do not have any record pertaining to Shastri's death. The Ministry of External Affairs has already said no post-mortem was conducted in the USSR. The Central Public Information Officer of Delhi Police in his reply dated 29 July 2009 said, "No such record related to the death of the former Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri is available in this district. Hence the requisite information pertaining to New Delhi district may please be treated as nil." This has created more doubts. The death of Lal Bahadur Shastri is considered to be one of the biggest unsolved mysteries of Indian politics.

The PMO answered only two questions of the RTI application, saying it has only one classified document pertaining to the death of Shastri, which is exempted from disclosure under the RTI Act. It sent the rest of the questions to the Ministry of External Affairs and Home Ministry to answer. The MEA said the only document from the erstwhile Soviet Government is "the report of the Joint Medical Investigation conducted by a team comprising R. N. Chugh, Doctor in-Attendance to the PM and some Russian doctors" and added no post-mortem was conducted in the USSR. The Home Ministry referred the matter to Delhi Police and National Archives for the response pertaining to any post-mortem conducted on the body of Shastri in India.

Later, Gregory Douglas, a journalist who interviewed former CIA operative Robert Crowley over a period of 4 years, recorded their telephone conversations and published a transcription in

a book titled *Conversations with the Crow*. In the book, Crowley claimed that the CIA was responsible for eliminating Homi Bhabha, an Indian nuclear scientist whose plane crashed in the Alps, when he was going to attend a conference in Vienna; and Lal Bahadur Shastri. Crowley said that the USA was wary of India's rigid stand on nuclear policy and of then prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who wanted to go ahead with nuclear tests. He also said that the agency was worried about collective domination by India and Russia over the region, for which a strong deterrent was required.

Family and personal life

Shastri was 5 ft 2 inches tall and always used to wear *dhoti*. The only occasion on which he wore *pyjamas* was dinner in honor of the Queen of the United Kingdom in 1961 in the Rashtrapati Bhawan. On 16 May 1928, Shastri married Lalita Devi who was from Mirzapur. The couple had four sons and two daughters, namely Kusum Shastri, the eldest daughter, Hari Krishna Shastri, the eldest son, Suman Shastri, whose son, Siddharth Nath Singh is a spokesman of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Minister of Health, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Anil Shastri who is a member of his father's Congress Party, his son Adarsh Shastri gave up his corporate career with Apple Inc to contest the General elections of 2014 from Allahabad on an Aam Aadmi Party ticket. He lost that election but was elected in 2015 as a member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly. Sunil Shastri who is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Ashok Shastri, the youngest son who worked in the corporate world before his death at the age of 37, his wife Neera Shastri was a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party

national executive. Other members of the family, have also been involved in the corporate and social life of India.

Legacy

Shastri was a secularist who refused to mix religion with politics. In a public meeting held at the Ram Lila grounds in Delhi, a few days after the ceasefire, he complained against a BBC report which claimed that Shastri's identity as a Hindu meant that he was ready for a war with Pakistan. He stated:

Kuldip Nayar, Shastri's media advisor from 1960 to 1964, recalls that, during the Quit India Movement, his daughter was ill and he was released on parole from jail. However, he could not save her life because doctors had prescribed costly drugs. Later on in 1963, on the day when he was dropped from the cabinet, he was sitting in his home in the dark, without a light. When asked about the reason, he said as he no longer is a minister, all expenses will have to be paid by himself and that as an MP and minister he didn't earn enough to save for time of need.

Although Shastri had been a cabinet minister for many years in the 1950s, he was poor when he died. All he owned at the end was an old car, which he had bought in instalments from the government and for which he still owed money. He was a member of Servants of India society (which included Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Gopal Krishna Gokhle) which asked all its members to shun accumulation of private property and remain in public life as servants of the people. He was the first railway minister who resigned from office following a major train accident as he felt moral responsibility.

The foundation stone of Bal Vidya Mandir, a distinguished school of Lucknow, was laid by him during his tenure as the Prime Minister, on 19 November 1964. He inaugurated the Central Institute of Technology Campus at Tharamani, Chennai, in November 1964. He inaugurated the Plutonium Reprocessing Plant at Trombay in 1965. As suggested by Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha, Shastri authorized the development of nuclear explosives. Bhabha initiated the effort by setting up the nuclear explosive design group Study of Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes (SNEPP). He inaugurated the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University at Hyderabad on 20 March 1965 which was renamed the Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University in 1996 and was separated into two universities after the formation of Telangana State. The University in Telangana was named in July 2014 as Professor Jayashanker Agricultural University. Shastri also inaugurated the National Institute of Technology, Allahabad. Lal Bahadur Shastri inaugurated the Jawahar Dock of the Chennai Port Trust and started the construction work of V. O. Chidambaranar Port Trust in November 1964. He inaugurated the Sainik School Balachadi, in the state of Gujarat. He laid the foundation stone of Almatti dam. The commissioned dam bears his name.

Memorials

Shastri was known for his honesty and humility throughout his life. He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, and a memorial "Vijay Ghat" was built for him in Delhi. Several educational institutes including Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (Mussorie, Uttarakhand) bear his name. The Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management was established in Delhi by the Lal Bahadur Shastri Educational

Trust in 1995. The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute was named after Shastri due to his role in promoting scholarly activity between India and Canada. *Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial* run by the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Memorial Trust, is situated next to 10 Janpath his residence when he was Prime Minister, at 1, Motilal Nehru Place, New Delhi. One of the halls of residence of IIT Kharagpur is named after him as *Lal Bahadur Shastri Hall of Residence*.

In 2011, on Shastri's 45th death anniversary, the Uttar Pradesh Government announced the renovation of Shastri's ancestral house at Ramnagar in Varanasi and declared plans to convert it into a biographical museum. Varanasi International Airport is named after him. The Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture with a monument and a street named after him are in the city of Tashkent, Uzbekistan. A few stadiums are named after him in the cities of Hyderabad, Telangana, Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Kollam in Kerala, Ghazhiabad and Bhawanipatna in Odisha. The Almatti Dam across the River Krishna in northern Karnataka was renamed the Lal Bahadur Shastri Sagar. The foundation stone was laid by him. MV Lal Bahadur Shastri, a cargo ship, is named after him. The Reserve Bank of India released coins in the denomination of 5 rupees during his birth century celebrations. An All India Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey tournament has been held every year since 1991 - it a major hockey tournament. The Left Bank Canal of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam in Andhra Pradesh is named the Lal Bahadur Shastri Canal and is 295 km in Length.

Life-sized statues of Shastri are erected at Mumbai, Bangalore (Vidhana Soudha), New Delhi (CGO Complex), Gorakhpur,

Almatti Dam Site, Ramnagar, UP, Hisar, Vishakapatnam, Nagarjuna Dam site, Warangal, Nagpur, Wardha, Bokaro, Jodhpur, Hyderabad and at the Varanasi Airport. Life-sized busts of Shastri are erected at Thiruvananthapuram, Pune, Varanasi (airport), Ahmedabad (lakeside), Kurukshetra, Shimla, Kasargod, Indore, Jalandar, Mhow, Uran, Raheempura, Dharmsala, Midnapore and Bhopal. Some major roads in the cities of New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Puduchery, Lucknow, Warangal and Allahabad and Ernakulam are named after him, as is Sashtri Road, Kottayam, Kerala. There is a Lal Bahadur Shastri Medical College in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh and Shastri Bhavans in New Delhi, Chennai and Lucknow. In 2005, the Government of India created a chair in his honour in the field of democracy and governance at Delhi University.

A portrait of Shastri hangs in the Central Hall of the Parliament House of India. The portrait, painted by Vidya Bhushan, was unveiled by the then President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma on 2 October 1993.

In popular culture

Shastri's life and death, in particular, have been a subject of Indian popular culture. *Homage to Lal Bahadur Shastri* is a 1967 short documentary film directed by S. Sukhdev and produced by the Films Division of India which pays tribute to the former prime minister. *Apne Shastri Ji* (1986) was also made as a homage to him.

Jai Jawaan Jai Kisaan is a 2015 Indian Hindi-language biographical drama film by Milan Ajmera, titled after the popular slogan by Shastri it portrays his entire life from birth

to death where he is portrayed by Akhilesh Jain. *Lal Bahadur Shastri's Death*, a 2018 television documentary film by Jyoti Kapur Das reconstructs his death and covers various conspiracy theories around it, including interviews with his son Sunil Shastri. A film titled *The Tashkent Files* (2019), directed by Vivek Agnihotri revolves around the mystery of the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Pradhanmantri (lit. 'Prime Minister'), a 2013 Indian documentary television series which aired on ABP News and covers the various policies and political tenures of Indian PMs, dedicated the entire seventh episode "Lal Bahadur Shastri" to his term as the country's leader with Akhil Mishra in the role of Shastri.

The 1967 film *Upkar* by Manoj Kumar, which is based on the 1965 war, was dedicated to Shastri. *Lal Bahadur Shastri*, a 2014 Indian Malayalam-language comedy film by Rejishh Midhila is titled after the prime minister but has no apparent connection with his life.

Chapter 50

Indira Gandhi becomes Prime Minister

Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi (19 November 1917 – 31 October 1984) was an Indian politician and a central figure of the Indian National Congress. She was the 3rd prime minister of India and was also the first and, to date, only female prime minister of India. Indira Gandhi was the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, the 1st prime minister of India. She served as prime minister from January 1966 to March 1977 and again from January 1980 until her assassination in October 1984, making her the second longest-serving Indian prime minister after her father.

During Nehru's premiership from 1947 to 1964, Gandhi was considered a key assistant and accompanied him on his numerous foreign trips. She was elected president of the Indian National Congress in 1959. Upon her father's death in 1964, she was appointed as a member of the Rajya Sabha (upper house) and became a member of Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet as Minister of Information and Broadcasting. In the Congress Party's parliamentary leadership election held in early 1966 (upon the death of Shastri), she defeated her rival Morarji Desai to become leader, and thus succeeded Shastri as Prime Minister of India.

As prime minister, Gandhi was known for her political intransigency and unprecedented centralisation of power. She went to war with Pakistan in support of the independence

movement and war of independence in East Pakistan, which resulted in an Indian victory and the creation of Bangladesh, as well as increasing India's influence to the point where it became the sole regional power of South Asia. Citing separatist tendencies, and in response to a call for revolution, Gandhi instituted a state of emergency from 1975 to 1977 where basic civil liberties were suspended and the press was censored. Widespread atrocities were carried out during the emergency. In 1980, she returned to power after free and fair elections. After Gandhi ordered military action in the Golden Temple in Operation Blue Star, her own bodyguards and Sikh nationalists assassinated her on 31 October 1984.

In 1999, Indira Gandhi was named "Woman of the Millennium" in an online poll organised by the BBC. In 2020, Gandhi was named by *Time* magazine among the world's 100 powerful women who defined the last century.

Early life and career

Indira Gandhi was born Indira Nehru into a Kashmiri Pandit family on 19 November 1917 in Allahabad. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a leading figure in the movement for independence from British rule, and became the first Prime Minister of the Dominion (and later Republic) of India. She was the only child (she had a younger brother who died young), and grew up with her mother, Kamala Nehru, at the Anand Bhavan, a large family estate in Allahabad. She had a lonely and unhappy childhood. Her father was often away, directing political activities or incarcerated, while her mother was frequently bedridden with illness, and later suffered an early

death from tuberculosis. She had limited contact with her father, mostly through letters.

- Indira was taught mostly at home by tutors and attended school intermittently until matriculation in 1934. She was a student at the Modern School in Delhi, St Cecilia's and St Mary's Christian convent schools in Allahabad, the International School of Geneva, the Ecole Nouvelle in Bex, and the Pupils' Own School in Poona and Bombay, which is affiliated with the University of Mumbai. She and her mother Kamala moved to the Belur Math headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission where Swami Ranganathananda was her guardian. She went on to study at the Vishwa Bharati in Santiniketan, which became Visva-Bharati University in 1951. It was during her interview with him that Rabindranath Tagore named her *Priyadarshini*, literally "looking at everything with kindness" in Sanskrit, and she came to be known as Indira Priyadarshini Nehru. A year later, however, she had to leave university to attend to her ailing mother in Europe. There it was decided that Indira would continue her education at the University of Oxford. After her mother died, she attended the Badminton School for a brief period before enrolling at Somerville College in 1937 to study history. Indira had to take the entrance examination twice, having failed at her first attempt with a poor performance in Latin. At Oxford, she did well in history, political science and economics, but her grades in Latin—a compulsory subject—remained poor. Indira did, however, have an active part within

the student life of the university, such as membership in the Oxford Majlis Asian Society.

During her time in Europe, Indira was plagued with ill-health and was constantly attended to by doctors. She had to make repeated trips to Switzerland to recover, disrupting her studies. She was being treated there in 1940, when Germany rapidly conquered Europe. Indira tried to return to England through Portugal but was left stranded for nearly two months. She managed to enter England in early 1941, and from there returned to India without completing her studies at Oxford. The university later awarded her an honorary degree. In 2010, Oxford honoured her further by selecting her as one of the ten Oxasians, illustrious Asian graduates from the University of Oxford. During her stay in Britain, Indira frequently met her future husband Feroze Gandhi (no relation to Mahatma Gandhi), whom she knew from Allahabad, and who was studying at the London School of Economics. Their marriage took place in Allahabad according to Adi Dharm rituals, though Feroze belonged to a Zoroastrian Parsi family of Gujarat. The couple had two sons, Rajiv Gandhi (born 1944) and Sanjay Gandhi (born 1946).

In the 1950s, Indira, now Mrs. Indira Gandhi after her marriage, served her father unofficially as a personal assistant during his tenure as the first prime minister of India. Towards the end of the 1950s, Gandhi served as the President of the Congress. In that capacity, she was instrumental in getting the Communist led Kerala State Government dismissed in 1959. That government had the distinction of being India's first-ever elected Communist Government. After her father's death in 1964 she was appointed a member of the Rajya Sabha (upper

house) and served in Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet as Minister of Information and Broadcasting. In January 1966, after Shastri's death, the Congress legislative party elected her over Morarji Desai as their leader. Congress party veteran K. Kamaraj was instrumental in Gandhi achieving victory. Because she was a woman, other political leaders in India saw Gandhi as weak and hoped to use her as a puppet once elected:

Congress President Kamaraj orchestrated Mrs. Gandhi's selection as prime minister because he perceived her to be weak enough that he and the other regional party bosses could control her, and yet strong enough to beat Desai [her political opponent] in a party election because of the high regard for her father ... a woman would be an ideal tool for the Syndicate.

First term as prime minister between 1966 and 1977

Gandhi's first eleven years serving as prime minister saw her evolve from the perception of Congress party leaders as their puppet, to a strong leader with the iron resolve to split the party over her policy positions, or to go to war with Pakistan to liberate Bangladesh. At the end of 1977, she was such a dominating figure in Indian politics that Congress party president D. K. Barooah had coined the phrase "India is Indira and Indira is India."

First year

Gandhi formed her government with Morarji Desai as deputy prime minister and finance minister. At the beginning of her first term as prime minister, she was widely criticised by the media and the opposition as a "*Goongi goodiya*" (Hindi for a "dumb doll" or "puppet") of the Congress party bosses who had orchestrated her election and then tried to constrain her.

1967–1971

The first electoral test for Gandhi was the 1967 general elections for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The Congress Party won a reduced majority in the Lok Sabha after these elections owing to widespread disenchantment over the rising prices of commodities, unemployment, economic stagnation and a food crisis. Gandhi was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Raebareli constituency. She had a rocky start after agreeing to devalue the rupee which created hardship for Indian businesses and consumers. The importation of wheat from the United States fell through due to political disputes.

For the first time, the party also lost power or lost its majority in a number of states across the country. Following the 1967 elections, Gandhi gradually began to move towards socialist policies. In 1969, she fell out with senior Congress party leaders over several issues. Chief among them was her decision to support V. V. Giri, the independent candidate rather than the official Congress party candidate Neelam Sanjiva Reddy for the vacant position of president of India. The other was the announcement by the prime minister of Bank nationalisation without consulting the finance minister, Morarji Desai. These

steps culminated in party president S. Nijalingappa expelling her from the party for indiscipline. Gandhi, in turn, floated her own faction of the Congress party and managed to retain most of the Congress MPs on her side with only 65 on the side of the Congress (O) faction. The Gandhi faction, called Congress (R), lost its majority in the parliament but remained in power with the support of regional parties such as DMK. The policies of the Congress under Gandhi, before the 1971 elections, also included proposals for the abolition of the Privy Purse to former rulers of the princely states and the 1969 nationalization of the fourteen largest banks in India.

1971-1977

Garibi Hatao (Eradicate Poverty) was the resonant theme for Gandhi's 1971 political bid. The slogan was developed in response to the combined opposition alliance's use of the two word manifesto—"Indira Hatao" (Remove Indira). The Garibi Hatao slogan and the proposed anti-poverty programs that came with it were designed to give Gandhi independent national support, based on the rural and urban poor. This would allow her to bypass the dominant rural castes both in and of state and local governments as well as the urban commercial class. For their part, the previously voiceless poor would at last gain both political worth and political weight. The programs created through Garibi Hatao, though carried out locally, were funded and developed by the Central Government in New Delhi. The program was supervised and staffed by the Indian National Congress party. "These programs also provided the central political leadership with new and vast patronage resources to be disbursed ... throughout the country."

Gandhi's biggest achievement following the 1971 election came in December 1971 with India's decisive victory over Pakistan in the Indo-Pakistani War that occurred in the last two weeks of the Bangladesh Liberation War, which led to the formation of independent Bangladesh. She was said to be hailed as Goddess Durga by opposition leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the time. In the elections held for State assemblies across India in March 1972, the Congress (R) swept to power in most states riding on the post-war "Indira wave".

Despite the victory against Pakistan, the Congress government faced numerous problems during this term. Some of these were due to high inflation which in turn was caused by wartime expenses, drought in some parts of the country and, more importantly, the 1973 oil crisis. Opposition to her in the 1973–75 period, after the Gandhi wave had receded, was strongest in the states of Bihar and Gujarat. In Bihar, Jayaprakash Narayan, the veteran leader came out of retirement to lead the protest movement there.

Verdict on electoral malpractice

On 12 June 1975, the Allahabad High Court declared Indira Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha in 1971 void on the grounds of electoral malpractice. In an election petition filed by her 1971 opponent, Raj Narain (who later defeated her in the 1977 parliamentary election running in the Raebareli constituency), alleged several major as well as minor instances of the use of government resources for campaigning. Gandhi had asked one of her colleagues in government, Ashoke Kumar Sen, to defend her in court. She gave evidence in her defence during the trial. After almost four years, the court found her

guilty of dishonest election practices, excessive election expenditure, and of using government machinery and officials for party purposes. The judge, however, rejected the more serious charges of bribery, laid against her in the case.

The court ordered her stripped of her parliamentary seat and banned her from running for any office for six years. As the constitution requires that the Prime Minister must be a member of either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, the two houses of the Parliament of India, she was effectively removed from office. However, Gandhi rejected calls to resign. She announced plans to appeal to the Supreme Court and insisted that the conviction did not undermine her position. She said: "There is a lot of talk about our government not being clean, but from our experience the situation was very much worse when [opposition] parties were forming governments." And she dismissed criticism of the way her Congress Party raised election campaign money, saying all parties used the same methods. The prime minister retained the support of her party, which issued a statement backing her. After news of the verdict spread, hundreds of supporters demonstrated outside her house, pledging their loyalty. Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Braj Kumar Nehru said Gandhi's conviction would not harm her political career. "Mrs Gandhi has still today overwhelming support in the country," he said. "I believe the prime minister of India will continue in office until the electorate of India decides otherwise".

State of Emergency (1975–1977)

Gandhi moved to restore order by ordering the arrest of most of the opposition participating in the unrest. Her Cabinet and

government then recommended that President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declare a state of emergency because of the disorder and lawlessness following the Allahabad High Court decision. Accordingly, Ahmed declared a State of Emergency caused by internal disorder, based on the provisions of Article 352(1) of the Constitution, on 25 June 1975.

Rule by decree

Within a few months, President's rule was imposed on the two opposition party ruled states of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu thereby bringing the entire country under direct Central rule or by governments led by the ruling Congress party. Police were granted powers to impose curfews and detain citizens indefinitely; all publications were subjected to substantial censorship by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Finally, the impending legislative assembly elections were postponed indefinitely, with all opposition-controlled state governments being removed by virtue of the constitutional provision allowing for a dismissal of a state government on the recommendation of the state's governor.

Indira Gandhi used the emergency provisions to change conflicting party members:

Unlike her father Jawaharlal Nehru, who preferred to deal with strong chief ministers in control of their legislative parties and state party organizations, Mrs. Gandhi set out to remove every Congress chief minister who had an independent base and to replace each of them with ministers personally loyal to her...Even so, stability could not be maintained in the states...

President Ahmed issued ordinances that did not require debate in the Parliament, allowing Gandhi to rule by decree.

Rise of Sanjay

The Emergency saw the entry of Gandhi's younger son, Sanjay Gandhi, into Indian politics. He wielded tremendous power during the emergency without holding any government office. According to Mark Tully, "His inexperience did not stop him from using the Draconian powers his mother, Indira Gandhi, had taken to terrorise the administration, setting up what was in effect a police state."

It was said that during the Emergency he virtually ran India along with his friends, especially Bansi Lal. It was also quipped that Sanjay Gandhi had total control over his mother and that the government was run by the PMH (Prime Minister House) rather than the PMO (Prime Minister Office).

1977 election and opposition years

In 1977, after extending the state of emergency twice, Gandhi called elections to give the electorate a chance to vindicate her rule. She may have grossly misjudged her popularity by reading what the heavily censored press wrote about her. She was opposed by the Janata alliance of Opposition parties. The alliance was made up of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Congress (O), The Socialist parties, and Charan Singh's Bharatiya Kranti Dal representing northern peasants and farmers. The Janata alliance, with Jai Prakash Narayan as its spiritual guide, claimed the elections were the last chance for India to choose between "democracy and dictatorship". The Congress Party

split during the election campaign of 1977: veteran Gandhi supporters like Jagjivan Ram, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna and Nandini Satpathy were compelled to part ways and form a new political entity, the CFD (Congress for Democracy), due primarily to intra-party politicking and the circumstances created by Sanjay Gandhi. The prevailing rumour was that he intended to dislodge Gandhi, and the trio stood to prevent that. Gandhi's Congress party was soundly crushed in the elections. The Janata Party's democracy or dictatorship claim seemed to resonate with the public. Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi lost their seats, and Congress was reduced to 153 seats (compared with 350 in the previous Lok Sabha), 92 of which were in the South. The Janata alliance, under the leadership of Morarji Desai, came to power after the State of Emergency was lifted. The alliance parties later merged to form the Janata Party under the guidance of Gandhian leader, Jayaprakash Narayan. The other leaders of the Janata Party were Charan Singh, Raj Narain, George Fernandes and Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

In opposition and return to power

Since Gandhi had lost her seat in the election, the defeated Congress party appointed Yashwantrao Chavan as their parliamentary party leader. Soon afterwards, the Congress party split again with Gandhi floating her own Congress faction. She won a by-election in the Chikmagalur Constituency and took a seat in the Lok Sabha in November 1978 after the Janata Party's attempts to have Kannada matinee idol Rajkumar run against her failed when he refused to contest the election saying he wanted to remain apolitical. However, the Janata government's home minister, Choudhary Charan Singh, ordered her arrest along with Sanjay Gandhi on

several charges, none of which would be easy to prove in an Indian court. The arrest meant that Gandhi was automatically expelled from Parliament. These allegations included that she "had planned or thought of killing all opposition leaders in jail during the Emergency". However, this strategy backfired disastrously. In response to her arrest, Gandhi's supporters hijacked an Indian Airlines jet and demanded her immediate release. Her arrest and long-running trial gained her sympathy from many people. The Janata coalition was only united by its hatred of Gandhi (or "that woman" as some called her). The party included right wing Hindu Nationalists, Socialists and former Congress party members. With so little in common, the Morarji Desai government was bogged down by infighting. In 1979, the government began to unravel over the issue of the dual loyalties of some members to Janata and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)—the Hindu nationalist, paramilitary organisation. The ambitious Union finance minister, Charan Singh, who as the Union home minister during the previous year had ordered the Gandhi's' arrests, took advantage of this and started courting the Congress. After a significant exodus from the party to Singh's faction, Desai resigned in July 1979. Singh was appointed prime minister, by President Reddy, after Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi promised Singh that Congress would support his government from outside on certain conditions. The conditions included dropping all charges against Gandhi and Sanjay. Since Singh refused to drop them, Congress withdrew its support and President Reddy dissolved Parliament in August 1979.

Before the 1980 elections Gandhi approached the then Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid, Syed Abdullah Bukhari and entered into an agreement with him on the basis of 10-point programme to

secure the support of the Muslim votes. In the elections held in January, Congress returned to power with a landslide majority.

1980 elections and third term

The Congress Party under Gandhi swept back into power in January 1980. In this election, Gandhi was elected by the voters of the Medak constituency. On 23 June, Sanjay was killed in a plane crash while performing an aerobatic manoeuvre in New Delhi. In 1980, as a tribute to her son's dream of launching an indigenously manufactured car, Gandhi nationalized Sanjay's debt ridden company, Maruti Udyog, for Rs. 43,000,000 (4.34 crore) and invited joint venture bids from automobile companies around the world. Suzuki of Japan was selected as the partner. The company launched its first Indian manufactured car in 1984.

By the time of Sanjay's death, Gandhi trusted only family members, and therefore persuaded her reluctant son, Rajiv, to enter politics.

Her PMO office staff included H.Y.Sharada Prasad as her information adviser and speechwriter.

Operation Blue Star

Following the 1977 elections, a coalition led by the Sikh-majority Akali Dal came to power in the northern Indian state of Punjab. In an effort to split the Akali Dal and gain popular support among the Sikhs, Gandhi's Congress Party helped to bring the orthodox religious leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to prominence in Punjab politics. Later, Bhindranwale's

organisation, Damdami Taksal, became embroiled in violence with another religious sect called the Sant Nirankari Mission, and he was accused of instigating the murder of Jagat Narain, the owner of the *Punjab Kesari* newspaper. After being arrested over this matter, Bhindranwale disassociated himself from the Congress Party and joined Akali Dal. In July 1982, he led the campaign for the implementation of the Anandpur Resolution, which demanded greater autonomy for the Sikh-majority state. Meanwhile, a small group of Sikhs, including some of Bhindranwale's followers, turned to militancy after being targeted by government officials and police for supporting the Anandpur Resolution. In 1982, Bhindranwale and approximately 200 armed followers moved into a guest house called the Guru Nanak Niwas near the Golden Temple.

By 1983, the Temple complex had become a fort for many militants. *The Statesman* later reported that light machine guns and semi-automatic rifles were known to have been brought into the compound. On 23 April 1983, the Punjab Police Deputy Inspector General A. S. Atwal was shot dead as he left the Temple compound. The following day, Harchand Singh Longowal (then president of Shiromani Akali Dal) confirmed the involvement of Bhindranwale in the murder.

After several futile negotiations, in June 1984, Gandhi ordered the Indian army to enter the Golden Temple to remove Bhindranwale and his supporters from the complex. The army used heavy artillery, including tanks, in the action code-named Operation Blue Star. The operation badly damaged or destroyed parts of the Temple complex, including the Akal Takht shrine and the Sikh library. It also led to the deaths of many Sikh fighters and innocent pilgrims. The number of

casualties remains disputed with estimates ranging from many hundreds to many thousands.

Gandhi was accused of using the attack for political ends. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer stated that she attacked the temple complex to present herself as a great hero in order to win the general elections planned towards the end of 1984. There was fierce criticism of the action by Sikhs in India and overseas. There were also incidents of mutiny by Sikh soldiers in the aftermath of the attack.

Assassination

On 31 October 1984, two of Gandhi's Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, shot her with their service weapons in the garden of the prime minister's residence at 1 Safdarjung Road, New Delhi, allegedly in revenge for Operation Blue Star. The shooting occurred as she was walking past a wicket gate guarded by the two men. She was to be interviewed by the British filmmaker Peter Ustinov, who was filming a documentary for Irish television. Beant Singh shot her three times using his side-arm; Satwant Singh fired 30 rounds. The men dropped their weapons and surrendered. Afterwards, they were taken away by other guards into a closed room where Beant Singh was shot dead. Kehar Singh was later arrested for conspiracy in the attack. Both Satwant and Kehar were sentenced to death and hanged in Delhi's Tihar Jail.

Gandhi was taken to the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences at 9:30 AM where doctors operated on her. She was declared dead at 2:20 PM. The post-mortem examination was conducted by a team of doctors headed by Tirath Das Dogra.

Dogra stated that Gandhi had sustained as many as 30 bullet wounds, from two sources: a Sten submachine gun and a .38 Special revolver. The assailants had fired 31 bullets at her, of which 30 hit her; 23 had passed through her body while seven remained inside her. Dogra extracted bullets to establish the make of the weapons used and to match each weapon with the bullets recovered by ballistic examination. The bullets were matched with their respective weapons at the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) Delhi. Subsequently, Dogra appeared in Shri Mahesh Chandra's court as an expert witness (PW-5); his testimony took several sessions. The cross examination was conducted by Shri Pran Nath Lekhi, the defence counsel. Salma Sultan provided the first news of her assassination on Doordarshan's evening news on 31 October 1984, more than 10 hours after she was shot.

Gandhi was cremated in accordance with Hindu tradition on 3 November near Raj Ghat. The site where she was cremated is known today as Shakti Sthal. In order to pay homage, Gandhi's body lay in state at Teen Murti House. Thousands of followers strained for a glimpse of the cremation. Her funeral was televised live on domestic and international stations, including the BBC. After her death, the Parade Ground was converted to the Indira Gandhi Park which was inaugurated by her son, Rajiv Gandhi.

Gandhi's assassination dramatically changed the political landscape. Rajiv Gandhi succeeded his mother as Prime Minister within hours of her murder and anti-Sikh riots erupted in for several days, killing more than 3,000 Sikhs in New Delhi and an estimated 8,000 across India. Many

Congress leaders were believed to be behind anti-Sikh massacre.

International reaction

Gandhi's death was mourned worldwide. World leaders condemned assassination and said her death would leave a 'big emptiness' in international affairs. In Moscow, Soviet President Konstantin Chernenko sent condolences stating, "The Soviet people learned with pain and sorrow about the untimely death in a villainous assassination of the glorious daughter of the great Indian people, a fiery fighter for peace and security of peoples and a great friend of the Soviet Union". President Ronald Reagan, along with secretary of state George Shultz, visited the Indian Embassy to sign a book of condolences and expressed his 'shock, revulsion, and grief' over the assassination. 42nd vice president of the United States Walter Mondale called Gandhi 'a great leader of a great democracy' and deplored 'this shocking act of violence'. Asian, African and European leaders mourned Gandhi as a great champion of democracy and leader of the Non-Aligned Movement expressed its 'deepest grief' and called the killing a 'terrorist' act. South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan, said Gandhi's death meant the 'loss of a great leader to the whole world.' Yugoslav President Veselin Đuranović, Pakistani President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, Italian President Sandro Pertini, Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, French President Francois Mitterrand condemned the killing. At the United Nations, the General Assembly paused in its work as shocked delegates mourned the death. Assembly President Paul Lusaka of Zambia postponed a scheduled debate and hastily organized a memorial meeting.

Foreign relations

Gandhi is remembered for her ability to effectively promote Indian foreign policy measures.

South Asia

- In early 1971, disputed elections in Pakistan led then East Pakistan to declare independence as Bangladesh. Repression and violence by the Pakistani army led to 10 million refugees crossing the border into India over the following months. Finally, in December 1971, Gandhi intervened directly in the conflict to liberate Bangladesh. India emerged victorious following the war with Pakistan to become the dominant power of South Asia. India had signed a treaty with the Soviet Union promising mutual assistance in the case of war, while Pakistan received active support from the United States during the conflict. U.S. President Richard Nixon disliked Gandhi personally, referring to her as a "witch" and a "clever fox" in his private communication with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Nixon later wrote of the war: "[Gandhi] suckered [America]. Suckered us ... this woman suckered us." Relations with the U.S. became distant as Gandhi developed closer ties with the Soviet Union after the war. The latter grew to become India's largest trading partner and its biggest arms supplier for much of Gandhi's premiership. India's new hegemonic position, as articulated under the

"Indira Doctrine", led to attempts to bring the Himalayan states under India's sphere of influence. Nepal and Bhutan remained aligned with India, while in 1975, after years of building up support, Gandhi incorporated Sikkim into India, after a referendum in which a majority of Sikkimese voted to join India. This was denounced as a "despicable act" by China.

India maintained close ties with neighbouring Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) following the Liberation War. Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman recognised Gandhi's contributions to the independence of Bangladesh. However, Mujibur Rahman's pro-India policies antagonised many in Bangladeshi politics and the military, which feared that Bangladesh had become a client state of India. The Assassination of Mujibur Rahman in 1975 led to the establishment of Islamist military regimes that sought to distance the country from India. Gandhi's relationship with the military regimes was strained because of her alleged support of anti-Islamist leftist guerrilla forces in Bangladesh. Generally, however, there was a rapprochement between Gandhi and the Bangladeshi regimes, although issues such as border disputes and the Farakka Dam remained an irritant to bilateral ties. In 2011, the Government of Bangladesh conferred its highest state award for non-nationals, the Bangladesh Freedom Honour posthumously on Gandhi for her "outstanding contribution" to the country's independence.

Gandhi's approach to dealing with Sri Lanka's ethnic problems was initially accommodating. She enjoyed cordial relations with Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. In 1974, India ceded the tiny islet of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka to save

Bandaranaike's socialist government from a political disaster. However, relations soured over Sri Lanka's movement away from socialism under J. R. Jayewardene, whom Gandhi despised as a "western puppet". India under Gandhi was alleged to have supported the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) militants in the 1980s to put pressure on Jayewardene to abide by Indian interests. Nevertheless, Gandhi rejected demands to invade Sri Lanka in the aftermath of Black July 1983, an anti-Tamil pogrom carried out by Sinhalese mobs. Gandhi made a statement emphasising that she stood for the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, although she also stated that India cannot "remain a silent spectator to any injustice done to the Tamil community."

India's relationship with Pakistan remained strained following the Shimla Accord in 1972. Gandhi's authorisation of the detonation of a nuclear device at Pokhran in 1974 was viewed by Pakistani leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as an attempt to intimidate Pakistan into accepting India's hegemony in the subcontinent. However, in May 1976, Gandhi and Bhutto both agreed to reopen diplomatic establishments and normalise relations. Following the rise to power of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan in 1978, India's relations with its neighbour reached a nadir. Gandhi accused General Zia of supporting Khalistani militants in Punjab. Military hostilities recommenced in 1984 following Gandhi's authorisation of Operation Meghdoot. India was victorious in the resulting Siachen conflict against Pakistan.

In order to keep the Soviet Union and the United States out of South Asia, Gandhi was instrumental in establishing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1983

Middle East

Gandhi remained a staunch supporter of the Palestinians in the Arab–Israeli conflict and was critical of the Middle East diplomacy sponsored by the United States. Israel was viewed as a religious state, and thus an analogue to India's archrival Pakistan. Indian diplomats hoped to win Arab support in countering Pakistan in Kashmir. Nevertheless, Gandhi authorised the development of a secret channel of contact and security assistance with Israel in the late 1960s. Her lieutenant, P. V. Narasimha Rao, later became prime minister and approved full diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992.

- India's pro-Arab policy had mixed success. Establishment of close ties with the socialist and secular Baathist regimes to some extent neutralised Pakistani propaganda against India. However, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 presented a dilemma for the Arab and Muslim states of the Middle East as the war was fought by two states both friendly to the Arabs. The progressive Arab regimes in Egypt, Syria, and Algeria chose to remain neutral, while the conservative pro-American Arab monarchies in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates openly supported Pakistan. Egypt's stance was met with dismay by the Indians, who had come to expect close co-operation with the Baathist regimes. But, the death of Nasser in 1970 and Sadat's growing friendship with Riyadh, and his mounting differences with Moscow, constrained Egypt to a policy of neutrality. Gandhi's overtures to Muammar Gaddafi were rebuffed. Libya agreed with

the Arab monarchies in believing that Gandhi's intervention in East Pakistan was an attack against Islam.

The 1971 war became a temporary stumbling block in growing Indo-Iranian ties. Although Iran had earlier characterized the Indo-Pakistani war in 1965 as Indian aggression, the Shah had launched an effort at rapprochement with India in 1969 as part of his effort to secure support for a larger Iranian role in the Persian Gulf. Gandhi's tilt towards Moscow and her dismemberment of Pakistan was perceived by the Shah as part of a larger anti-Iran conspiracy involving India, Iraq, and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Iran had resisted Pakistani pressure to activate the Baghdad Pact and draw the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) into the conflict. Gradually, Indian and Iranian disillusionment with their respective regional allies led to a renewed partnership between the nations. Gandhi was unhappy with the lack of support from India's Arab allies during the war with Pakistan, while the Shah was apprehensive at the growing friendship between Pakistan and Arab states of the Persian Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia, and the growing influence of Islam in Pakistani society. There was an increase in Indian economic and military cooperation with Iran during the 1970s. The 1974 India-Iranian agreement led to Iran supplying nearly 75 percent of India's crude oil demands. Gandhi appreciated the Shah's disregard of Pan-Islamism in diplomacy.

Asia-Pacific

One of the major developments in Southeast Asia during Gandhi's premiership was the formation of the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967. Relations between ASEAN and India were mutually antagonistic. India perceived ASEAN to be linked to the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and, therefore, it was seen as a pro-American organisation. On their part, the ASEAN nations were unhappy with Gandhi's sympathy for the Viet Cong and India's strong links with the USSR. Furthermore, they were also apprehensions in the region about Gandhi's plans, particularly after India played a big role in breaking up Pakistan and facilitating the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign country in 1971. India's entry into the nuclear weapons club in 1974 also contributed to tensions in Southeast Asia. Relations only began to improve following Gandhi's endorsement of the ZOPFAN declaration and the disintegration of the SEATO alliance in the aftermath of Pakistani and American defeats in the region. Nevertheless, Gandhi's close relations with reunified Vietnam and her decision to recognize the Vietnam-installed Government of Cambodia in 1980 meant that India and ASEAN were unable to develop a viable partnership.

On 26 September 1981, Gandhi was conferred with the honorary degree of Doctor at the Laucala Graduation at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji.

Africa

Although independent India was initially viewed as a champion of various African independence movements, its cordial relationship with the Commonwealth of Nations and its liberal views of British policies in East Africa had harmed its image as a staunch supporter of various independence movements in the third world. Indian condemnation of militant struggles in

Kenya and Algeria was in sharp contrast to China, who had supported armed struggle to win African independence. After reaching a high diplomatic point in the aftermath of Nehru's role in the Suez Crisis, India's isolation from Africa was complete when only four nations—Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Libya—supported her during the Sino-Indian War in 1962. After Gandhi became prime minister, diplomatic and economic relations with the states which had sided with India during the Sino-Indian War were expanded. Gandhi began negotiations with the Kenyan government to establish the Africa-India Development Cooperation. The Indian government also started considering the possibility of bringing Indians settled in Africa within the framework of its policy goals to help recover its declining geo-strategic influence. Gandhi declared the people of Indian origin settled in Africa as "Ambassadors of India". Efforts to rope in the Asian community to join Indian diplomacy, however, came to naught, in part because of the unwillingness of Indians to remain in politically insecure surroundings, and because of the exodus of African Indians to Britain with the passing of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1968. In Uganda, the African Indian community suffered persecution and eventually expulsion under the government of Idi Amin.

Foreign and domestic policy successes in the 1970s enabled Gandhi to rebuild India's image in the eyes of African states. Victory over Pakistan and India's possession of nuclear weapons showed the degree of India's progress. Furthermore, the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet treaty in 1971, and threatening gestures by the United States, to send its nuclear armed Task Force 74 into the Bay of Bengal at the height of the East Pakistan crisis had enabled India to regain its anti-

imperialist image. Gandhi firmly tied Indian anti-imperialist interests in Africa to those of the Soviet Union. Unlike Nehru, she openly and enthusiastically supported liberation struggles in Africa. At the same time, Chinese influence in Africa had declined owing to its incessant quarrels with the Soviet Union. These developments permanently halted India's decline in Africa and helped to reestablish its geo-strategic presence.

The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of mainly former British colonies. India maintained cordial relations with most of the members during Gandhi's time in power. In the 1980s, she, along with Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau, Zambia's president Kenneth Kaunda, Australian prime minister Malcolm Fraser and Singapore prime minister Lee Kuan Yew was regarded as one of the pillars of the Commonwealth. India under Gandhi also hosted the 1983 Commonwealth Heads of Government summit in New Delhi. Gandhi used these meetings as a forum to put pressure on member countries to cut economic, sports, and cultural ties with Apartheid South Africa.

The Non-aligned Movement

In the early 1980s under Gandhi, India attempted to reassert its prominent role in the Non-Aligned Movement by focusing on the relationship between disarmament and economic development. By appealing to the economic grievances of developing countries, Gandhi and her successors exercised a moderating influence on the Non-aligned movement, diverting it from some of the Cold War issues that marred the

controversial 1979 Havana meeting where Cuban leader Fidel Castro attempted to steer the movement towards the Soviet Union. Although hosting the 1983 summit at Delhi boosted Indian prestige within the movement, its close relations with the Soviet Union and its pro-Soviet positions on Afghanistan and Cambodia limited its influence.

Western Europe

Gandhi spent a number of years in Europe during her youth and had formed many friendships there. During her premiership she formed friendships with many leaders such as West German chancellor, Willy Brandt and Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky. She also enjoyed a close working relationship with many British leaders including conservative premiers, Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher.

Soviet Union and Eastern block countries

The relationship between India and the Soviet Union deepened during Gandhi's rule. The main reason was the perceived bias of the United States and China, rivals of the USSR, towards Pakistan. The support of the Soviets with arms supplies and the casting of a veto at the United Nations helped in winning and consolidating the victory over Pakistan in the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war. Before the war, Gandhi signed a treaty of friendship with the Soviets. They were unhappy with the 1974 nuclear test conducted by India but did not support further action because of the ensuing Cold War with the United States. Gandhi was unhappy with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but once again calculations involving relations with Pakistan and China kept her from criticising the Soviet

Union harshly. The Soviets became the main arms supplier during the Gandhi years by offering cheap credit and transactions in rupees rather than in dollars. The easy trade deals also applied to non-military goods. Under Gandhi, by the early 1980s, the Soviets had become India's largest trading partner.

United States

When Gandhi came to power in 1966, Lyndon Johnson was the US president. At the time, India was reliant on the US for food aid. Gandhi resented the US policy of food aid being used as a tool to force India to adopt policies favoured by the US. She also resolutely refused to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Relations with the US were strained badly under President Richard Nixon and his favouring of Pakistan during the Bangladesh liberation war. Nixon despised Gandhi politically and personally. In 1981, Gandhi met President Ronald Reagan for the first time at the North–South Summit held to discuss global poverty. She had been described to him as an 'Ogre', but he found her charming and easy to work with and they formed a close working relationship during her premiership in the 1980s.

Economic policy

Gandhi presided over three Five-Year Plans as prime minister, two of which succeeded in meeting their targeted growth.

There is considerable debate whether Gandhi was a socialist on principle or out of political expediency. Sunanda K. Datta-Ray described her as "a master of rhetoric ... often more posture

than policy", while *The Times* journalist, Peter Hazelhurst, famously quipped that Gandhi's socialism was "slightly left of self-interest." Critics have focused on the contradictions in the evolution of her stance towards communism. Gandhi was known for her anti-communist stance in the 1950s, with Meghnad Desai even describing her as "the scourge of [India's] Communist Party." Yet, she later forged close relations with Indian communists even while using the army to break the Naxalites. In this context, Gandhi was accused of formulating populist policies to suit her political needs. She was seemingly against the rich and big business while preserving the status quo to manipulate the support of the left in times of political insecurity, such as the late 1960s. Although in time Gandhi came to be viewed as the scourge of the right-wing and reactionary political elements of India, leftist opposition to her policies emerged. As early as 1969, critics had begun accusing her of insincerity and machiavellianism. *The Indian Libertarian* wrote that: "it would be difficult to find a more machiavellian leftist than Mrs Indira Gandhi ... for here is Machiavelli at its best in the person of a suave, charming and astute politician." J. Barkley Rosser Jr. wrote that "some have even seen the declaration of emergency rule in 1975 as a move to suppress [leftist] dissent against Gandhi's policy shift to the right." In the 1980s, Gandhi was accused of "betraying socialism" after the beginning of *Operation Forward*, an attempt at economic reform. Nevertheless, others were more convinced of Gandhi's sincerity and devotion to socialism. Pankaj Vohra noted that "even the late prime minister's critics would concede that the maximum number of legislations of social significance was brought about during her tenure ... [and that] she lives in the hearts of millions of Indians who shared her concern for the poor and weaker sections and who supported her politics."

In summarising the biographical works on Gandhi, Blema S. Steinberg concludes she was decidedly non-ideological. Only 7.4% (24) of the total 330 biographical extractions posit ideology as a reason for her policy choices. Steinberg notes Gandhi's association with socialism was superficial. She had only a general and traditional commitment to the ideology by way of her political and family ties. Gandhi personally had a fuzzy concept of socialism. In one of the early interviews she gave as prime minister, Gandhi had ruminated: "I suppose you could call me a socialist, but you have understand what we mean by that term ... we used the word [socialism] because it came closest to what we wanted to do here – which is to eradicate poverty. You can call it socialism; but if by using that word we arouse controversy, I don't see why we should use it. I don't believe in words at all." Regardless of the debate over her ideology or lack thereof, Gandhi remains a left-wing icon. She has been described by *Hindustan Times* columnist, Pankaj Vohra, as "arguably the greatest mass leader of the last century." Her campaign slogan, *Garibi Hatao* ('Remove Poverty'), has become an often used motto of the Indian National Congress Party. To the rural and urban poor, untouchables, minorities and women in India, Gandhi was "Indira Amma or Mother Indira."

Green Revolution and the Fourth Five-Year Plan

Gandhi inherited a weak and troubled economy. Fiscal problems associated with the war with Pakistan in 1965, along with a drought-induced food crisis that spawned famines, had plunged India into the sharpest recession since independence. The government responded by taking steps to liberalise the economy and agreeing to the devaluation of the currency in

return for the restoration of foreign aid. The economy managed to recover in 1966 and ended up growing at 4.1% over 1966–1969. Much of that growth, however, was offset by the fact that the external aid promised by the United States government and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), meant to ease the short-run costs of adjustment to a liberalised economy, never materialised. American policy makers had complained of continued restrictions imposed on the economy. At the same time, Indo-US relations were strained because of Gandhi's criticism of the American bombing campaign in Vietnam. While it was thought at the time, and for decades after, that President Johnson's policy of withholding food grain shipments was to coerce Indian support for the war, in fact, it was to offer India rainmaking technology that he wanted to use as a counterweight to China's possession of the atomic bomb. In light of the circumstances, liberalisation became politically suspect and was soon abandoned. Grain diplomacy and currency devaluation became matters of intense national pride in India. After the bitter experience with Johnson, Gandhi decided not to request food aid in the future. Moreover, her government resolved never again to become "so vulnerably dependent" on aid, and painstakingly began building up substantial foreign exchange reserves. When food stocks slumped after poor harvests in 1972, the government made it a point to use foreign exchange to buy US wheat commercially rather than seek resumption of food aid.

The period of 1967–75 was characterised by socialist ascendancy in India, which culminated in 1976 with the official declaration of state socialism. Gandhi not only abandoned the short-lived liberalisation programme but also aggressively

expanded the public sector with new licensing requirements and other restrictions for industry. She began a new course by launching the Fourth Five-Year Plan in 1969. The government targeted growth at 5.7% while stating as its goals, "growth with stability and progressive achievement of self-reliance." The rationale behind the overall plan was Gandhi's *Ten-Point Programme* of 1967. This had been her first economic policy formulation, six months after coming to office. The programme emphasised greater state control of the economy with the understanding that government control assured greater welfare than private control. Related to this point were a set of policies which were meant to regulate the private sector. By the end of the 1960s, the reversal of the liberalisation process was complete, and India's policies were characterised as "protectionist as ever."

To deal with India's food problems, Gandhi expanded the emphasis on production of inputs to agriculture that had already been initiated by her father, Jawaharlal Nehru. The Green Revolution in India subsequently culminated under her government in the 1970s. It transformed the country from a nation heavily reliant on imported grains, and prone to famine, to one largely able to feed itself, and becoming successful in achieving its goal of food security. Gandhi had a personal motive in pursuing agricultural self-sufficiency, having found India's dependency on the U.S. for shipments of grains humiliating.

The economic period of 1967–75 became significant for its major wave of nationalisation amidst increased regulation of the private sector.

Some other objectives of the economic plan for the period were to provide for the minimum needs of the community through a rural works program and the removal of the privy purses of the nobility. Both these, and many other goals of the 1967 programme, were accomplished by 1974–75. Nevertheless, the success of the overall economic plan was tempered by the fact that annual growth at 3.3–3.4% over 1969–74 fell short of the targeted figure.

The Fifth Five-Year Plan

The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974–79) was enacted against the backdrop of the state of emergency and the *Twenty Point Program* of 1975. It was the economic rationale of the emergency, a political act which has often been justified on economic grounds. In contrast to the reception of Gandhi's earlier economic plan, this one was criticised for being a "hastily thrown together wish list." Gandhi promised to reduce poverty by targeting the consumption levels of the poor and enact wide-ranging social and economic reforms. In addition, the government targeted an annual growth rate of 4.4% over the period of the plan.

The measures of the emergency regime was able to halt the economic trouble of the early to mid-1970s, which had been marred by harvest failures, fiscal contraction, and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchanged rates. The resulting turbulence in the foreign exchange markets was accentuated further by the oil shock of 1973. The government was able to exceed the targeted growth figure with an annual growth rate of 5.0–5.2% over the five-year period of the plan (1974–79). The economy grew at the rate of 9% in

1975–76 alone, and the Fifth Plan, became the first plan during which the per capita income of the economy grew by over 5%.

Operation Forward and the Sixth Five-Year Plan

Gandhi inherited a weak economy when she became prime minister again in 1980. The preceding year—1979–80—under the Janata Party government saw the strongest recession (–5.2%) in the history of modern India with inflation rampant at 18.2%. Gandhi proceeded to abrogate the Janata Party government's Five-Year Plan in 1980 and launched the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980–85). Her government targeted an average growth rate of 5.2% over the period of the plan. Measures to check inflation were also taken; by the early 1980s it was under control at an annual rate of about 5%.

Although Gandhi continued professing socialist beliefs, the Sixth Five-Year Plan was markedly different from the years of *Garibi Hatao*. Populist programmes and policies were replaced by pragmatism. There was an emphasis on tightening public expenditures, greater efficiency of the state-owned enterprises (SOE), which Gandhi qualified as a "sad thing", and on stimulating the private sector through deregulation and liberation of the capital market. The government subsequently launched *Operation Forward* in 1982, the first cautious attempt at reform. The Sixth Plan went on to become the most successful of the Five-Year Plans yet; showing an average growth rate of 5.7% over 1980–85.

Inflation and unemployment

During Lal Bahadur Shastri's last full year in office (1965), inflation averaged 7.7%, compared to 5.2% at the end of Gandhi's first term in office (1977). On average, inflation in India had remained below 7% through the 1950s and 1960s. It then accelerated sharply in the 1970s, from 5.5% in 1970–71 to over 20% by 1973–74, due to the international oil crisis. Gandhi declared inflation the gravest of problems in 1974 (at 25.2%) and devised a severe anti-inflation program. The government was successful in bringing down inflation during the emergency; achieving negative figures of –1.1% by the end of 1975–76. Gandhi inherited a tattered economy in her second term; harvest failures and a second oil shock in the late 1970s had caused inflation to rise again. During Charan Singh's short time in office in the second half of 1979, inflation averaged 18.2%, compared to 6.5% during Gandhi's last year in office (1984). General economic recovery under Gandhi led to an average inflation rate of 6.5% from 1981–82 to 1985–86—the lowest since the beginning of India's inflation problems in the 1960s.

The unemployment rate remained constant at 9% over a nine-year period (1971–80) before declining to 8.3% in 1983.

Domestic policy

Nationalisation

Despite the provisions, control and regulations of the Reserve Bank of India, most banks in India had continued to be owned

and operated by private persons. Businessmen who owned the banks were often accused of channeling the deposits into their own companies and ignoring priority sector lending. Furthermore, there was a great resentment against *class* banking in India, which had left the poor (the majority of the population) unbanked. After becoming prime minister, Gandhi expressed her intention of nationalising the banks to alleviate poverty in a paper titled, "Stray thoughts on Bank Nationalisation". The paper received overwhelming public support. In 1969, Gandhi moved to nationalise fourteen major commercial banks. After this, public sector bank branch deposits increased by approximately 800 percent; advances took a huge jump by 11,000 percent. Nationalisation also resulted in significant growth in the geographic coverage of banks; the number of bank branches rose from 8,200 to over 62,000, most of which were opened in unbanked, rural areas. The nationalisation drive not only helped to increase household savings, but it also provided considerable investments in the informal sector, in small- and medium-sized enterprises, and in agriculture, and contributed significantly to regional development and to the expansion of India's industrial and agricultural base. Jayaprakash Narayan, who became famous for leading the opposition to Gandhi in the 1970s, solidly praised her nationalisation of banks.

Having been re-elected in 1971 on a nationalisation platform, Gandhi proceeded to nationalise the coal, steel, copper, refining, cotton textiles, and insurance industries. Most of this was done to protect employment and the interests of organised labour. The remaining private sector industries were placed under strict regulatory control.

During the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, foreign-owned private oil companies had refused to supply fuel to the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force. In response, Gandhi nationalised some oil companies in 1973. However, major nationalisations also occurred in 1974 and 1976, forming the oil majors. After nationalisation, the oil majors such as the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) and the Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) had to keep a minimum stock level of oil, to be supplied to the military when needed.

Administration

In 1966, Gandhi accepted the demands of the Akalis to reorganise Punjab on linguistic lines. The Hindi-speaking southern half of Punjab became a separate state, Haryana, while the Pahari speaking hilly areas in the northeast were joined to Himachal Pradesh. By doing this she had hoped to ward off the growing political conflict between Hindu and Sikh groups in the region. However, a contentious issue that was considered unresolved by the Akalis was the status of Chandigarh, a prosperous city on the Punjab-Haryana border, which Gandhi declared a union territory to be shared as a capital by both the states.

Victory over Pakistan in 1971 consolidated Indian power in Kashmir. Gandhi indicated that she would make no major concessions on Kashmir. The most prominent of the Kashmiri separatists, Sheikh Abdullah, had to recognise India's control over Kashmir in light of the new order in South Asia. The situation was normalised in the years following the war after Abdullah agreed to an accord with Gandhi, by giving up the

demand for a plebiscite in return for a special autonomous status for Kashmir. In 1975, Gandhi declared the state of Jammu and Kashmir as a constituent unit of India. The Kashmir conflict remained largely peaceful if frozen under Gandhi's premiership.

In 1972, Gandhi granted statehood to Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura, while the North-East Frontier Agency was declared a union territory and renamed Arunachal Pradesh. The transition to statehood for these territories was successfully overseen by her administration. This was followed by the annexation of Sikkim in 1975.

Social reform

The principle of equal pay for equal work for both men and women was enshrined in the Indian Constitution under the Gandhi administration.

Gandhi questioned the continued existence of a privy purse for former rulers of princely states. She argued the case for abolition based on equal rights for all citizens and the need to reduce the government's revenue deficit. The nobility responded by rallying around the Jana Sangh and other right-wing parties that stood in opposition to Gandhi's attempts to abolish royal privileges. The motion to abolish privy purses, and the official recognition of the titles, was originally brought before the Parliament in 1970. It was passed in the Lok Sabha but fell short of the two-thirds majority in the Rajya Sabha by a single vote. Gandhi responded by having a Presidential proclamation issued; de-recognising the princes; with this withdrawal of recognition, their claims to privy purses were

also legally lost. However, the proclamation was struck down by the Supreme Court of India. In 1971, Gandhi again motioned to abolish the privy purse. This time, it was passed successfully as the 26th Amendment to the Constitution of India.

Gandhi claimed that only "clear vision, iron will and the strictest discipline" can remove poverty. She justified the imposition of the state of emergency in 1975 in the name of the socialist mission of the Congress. Armed with the power to rule by decree and without constitutional constraints, Gandhi embarked on a massive redistribution program. The provisions included rapid enforcement of land ceilings, housing for landless labourers, the abolition of bonded labour and a moratorium on the debts of the poor. North India was at the centre of the reforms. millions of hectares of land were acquired and redistributed. The government was also successful in procuring houses for landless labourers; According to Francine Frankel, three-fourths of the targeted four million houses was achieved in 1975 alone. Nevertheless, others have disputed the success of the program and criticised Gandhi for not doing enough to reform land ownership. The political economist, Jyotindra Das Gupta, cryptically questioned "...whether or not the real supporters of landholders were in jail or in power?" Critics also accused Gandhi of choosing to "talk left and act right", referring to her concurrent pro-business decisions and endeavours. J. Barkley Rosser Jr. wrote that "some have even seen the declaration of emergency rule in 1975 as a move to suppress dissent against Gandhi's policy shift to the right." Regardless of the controversy over the nature of the reforms, the long-term effects of the social changes gave rise to the prominence of

middle-ranking farmers from intermediate and lower castes in North India. The rise of these newly empowered social classes challenged the political establishment of the Hindi Belt in the years to come.

Language policy

Under the 1950 Constitution of India, Hindi was to have become the official national language by 1965. This was unacceptable to many non-Hindi speaking states, which wanted the continued use of English in government. In 1967, Gandhi introduced a constitutional amendment that guaranteed the de facto use of both Hindi and English as official languages. This established the official government policy of bilingualism in India and satisfied the non-Hindi speaking Indian states. Gandhi thus put herself forward as a leader with a pan-Indian vision. Nevertheless, critics alleged that her stance was actually meant to weaken the position of rival Congress leaders from the northern states such as Uttar Pradesh, where there had been strong, sometimes violent, pro-Hindi agitations. Gandhi came out of the language conflicts with the strong support of the south Indian populace.

National security

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Gandhi had the Indian army crush militant Communist uprisings in the Indian state of West Bengal. The communist insurgency in India was completely suppressed during the state of emergency.

Gandhi considered the north-eastern region important, because of its strategic situation. In 1966, the Mizo uprising

took place against the government of India and overran almost the whole of the Mizoram region. Gandhi ordered the Indian Army to launch massive retaliatory strikes in response. The rebellion was suppressed with the Indian Air Force carrying out airstrikes in Aizawl; this remains the only instance of India carrying out an airstrike in its own territory. The defeat of Pakistan in 1971 and the secession of East Pakistan as pro-India Bangladesh led to the collapse of the Mizo separatist movement. In 1972, after the less extremist Mizo leaders came to the negotiating table, Gandhi upgraded Mizoram to the status of a union territory. A small-scale insurgency by some militants continued into the late 1970s, but it was successfully dealt with by the government. The Mizo conflict was resolved definitively during the administration of Gandhi's son Rajiv. Today, Mizoram is considered one of the most peaceful states in the north-east.

Responding to the insurgency in Nagaland, Gandhi "unleashed a powerful military offensive" in the 1970s. Finally, a massive crackdown on the insurgents took place during the state of emergency ordered by Gandhi. The insurgents soon agreed to surrender and signed the Shillong Accord in 1975. While the agreement was considered a victory for the Indian government and ended large-scale conflicts, there have since been spurts of violence by rebel holdouts and ethnic conflict amongst the tribes.

India's nuclear programme

Gandhi contributed to, and carried out further, the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru, former premier of India, to develop its nuclear program. Gandhi authorised the development of

nuclear weapons in 1967, in response to *Test No. 6* by the People's Republic of China. Gandhi saw this test as Chinese nuclear intimidation and promoted Nehru's views to establish India's stability and security interests independent from those of the nuclear superpowers.

The programme became fully mature in 1974, when Dr. Raja Ramanna reported to Gandhi that India had the ability to test its first nuclear weapon. Gandhi gave verbal authorisation for this test, and preparations were made in the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range. In 1974, India successfully conducted an underground nuclear test, unofficially code named "*Smiling Buddha*", near the desert village of Pokhran in Rajasthan. As the world was quiet about this test, a vehement protest came from Pakistan as its prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, described the test as "Indian hegemony" to intimidate Pakistan. In response to this, Bhutto launched a massive campaign to make Pakistan a nuclear power. Bhutto asked the nation to unite and slogans such as "hum ghaas aur pattay kha lay gay magar nuclear power ban k rhe gay" ("We will eat grass or leaves or even go hungry, but we will get nuclear power") were employed. Gandhi directed a letter to Bhutto, and later to the world, claiming the test was for peaceful purposes and part of India's commitment to develop its programme for industrial and scientific use.

In spite of intense international criticism and steady decline in foreign investment and trade, the nuclear test was popular domestically. The test caused an immediate revival of Gandhi's popularity, which had flagged considerably from its heights after the 1971 war. The overall popularity and image of the

Congress Party was enhanced and the Congress Party was well received in the Indian Parliament.

Family, personal life and outlook

She married Feroze Gandhi at the age of 25, in 1942. Their marriage lasted 18 years until he died of a heart attack in 1960. They had two sons—Rajiv (b. 1944) and Sanjay (b. 1946). Initially, her younger son Sanjay had been her chosen heir, but after his death in a flying accident in June 1980, Gandhi persuaded her reluctant elder son Rajiv to quit his job as a pilot and enter politics in February 1981. Rajiv took office as prime minister following his mother's assassination in 1984; he served until December 1989. Rajiv Gandhi himself was assassinated by a suicide bomber working on behalf of LTTE on 21 May 1991.

Gandhi's yoga guru, Dharendra Brahmachari, helped her in making certain decisions and also executed certain top level political tasks on her behalf, especially from 1975 to 1977 when Gandhi "declared a state of emergency and suspended civil liberties."

Views on women

In 1952 in a letter to her American friend Dorothy Norman, Gandhi wrote: "I am in no sense a feminist, but I believe in women being able to do everything ... Given the opportunity to develop, capable Indian women have come to the top at once." While this statement appears paradoxical, it reflects Gandhi's complex feelings toward her gender and feminism. Her

egalitarian upbringing with her cousins helped contribute to her sense of natural equality. "Flying kites, climbing trees, playing marbles with her boy cousins, Indira said she hardly knew the difference between a boy and a girl until the age of twelve."

Gandhi did not often discuss her gender, but she did involve herself in women's issues before becoming the prime minister. Before her election as prime minister, she became active in the organisational wing of the Congress party, working in part in the Women's Department. In 1956, Gandhi had an active role in setting up the Congress Party's Women's Section. Unsurprisingly, a lot of her involvement stemmed from her father. As an only child, Gandhi naturally stepped into the political light. And, as a woman, she naturally helped head the Women's section of the Congress Party. She often tried to organise women to involve themselves in politics. Although rhetorically Gandhi may have attempted to separate her political success from her gender, Gandhi did involve herself in women's organizations. The political parties in India paid substantial attention to Gandhi's gender before she became prime minister, hoping to use her for political gain. Even though men surrounded Gandhi during her upbringing, she still had a female role model as a child. Several books on Gandhi mention her interest in Joan of Arc. In her own accounts through her letters, she wrote to her friend Dorothy Norman, in 1952 she wrote: "At about eight or nine I was taken to France; Jeanne d'Arc became a great heroine of mine. She was one of the first people I read about with enthusiasm." Another historian recounts Indira's comparison of herself to Joan of Arc: "Indira developed a fascination for Joan of Arc, telling her aunt, 'Someday I am going to lead my people to

freedom just as Joan of Arc did!" Gandhi's linking of herself to Joan of Arc presents a model for historians to assess Gandhi. As one writer said: "The Indian people were her children; members of her family were the only people capable of leading them."

Gandhi had been swept up in the call for Indian independence since she was born in 1917. Thus by 1947, she was already well immersed in politics, and by 1966, when she first assumed the position of prime minister, she had held several cabinet positions in her father's office.

Gandhi's advocacy for women's rights began with her help in establishing the Congress Party's Women's Section. In 1956, she wrote in a letter: "It is because of this that I am taking a much more active part in politics. I have to do a great deal of touring in order to set up the Congress Party Women's Section, and am on numerous important committees." Gandhi spent a great deal of time throughout the 1950s helping to organise women. She wrote to Norman in 1959, irritable that women had organised around the communist cause but had not mobilised for the Indian cause: "The women, whom I have been trying to organize for years, had always refused to come into politics. Now they are out in the field." Once appointed president in 1959, she "travelled relentlessly, visiting remote parts of the country that had never before received a VIP ... she talked to women, asked about child health and welfare, inquired after the crafts of the region" Gandhi's actions throughout her ascent to power clearly reflect a desire to mobilise women. Gandhi did not see the purpose of feminism. She saw her own success as a woman, and also noted that:

"Given the opportunity to develop, capable Indian women have come to the top at once."

Gandhi felt guilty about her inability to fully devote her time to her children. She noted that her main problem in office was how to balance her political duties with tending to her children, and "stressed that motherhood was the most important part of her life." At another point, she went into more detail: "To a woman, motherhood is the highest fulfilment ... To bring a new being into this world, to see its perfection and to dream of its future greatness is the most moving of all experiences and fills one with wonder and exaltation."

Her domestic initiatives did not necessarily reflect favourably on Indian women. Gandhi did not make a special effort to appoint women to cabinet positions. She did not appoint any women to full cabinet rank during her terms in office. Yet despite this, many women saw Gandhi as a symbol for feminism and an image of women's power.

Legacy

After leading India to victory against Pakistan in the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971, President V. V. Giri awarded Gandhi with India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna.

In 2011, the Bangladesh Freedom Honour (Bangladesh Swadhinata Sammanona), Bangladesh's highest civilian award, was posthumously conferred on Gandhi for her "outstanding contributions" to Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Gandhi's main legacy was standing firm in the face of American pressure to defeat Pakistan and turn East Pakistan into independent Bangladesh. She was also responsible for India joining the group of countries with nuclear weapons. Despite India being officially part of the Non-Aligned Movement, she gave Indian foreign policy a tilt towards the Soviet bloc. In 1999, Gandhi was named "Woman of the Millennium" in an online poll organised by the BBC. In 2012, she was ranked number seven on *Outlook India's* poll of the Greatest Indian.

Being at the forefront of Indian politics for decades, Gandhi left a powerful but controversial legacy on Indian politics. The main legacy of her rule was destroying internal party democracy in the Congress party. Her detractors accuse her of weakening State chief ministers and thereby weakening the federal structure, weakening the independence of the judiciary, and weakening her cabinet by vesting power in her secretariat and her sons. Gandhi is also associated with fostering a culture of nepotism in Indian politics and in India's institutions. She is also almost singularly associated with the period of Emergency rule and the dark period in Indian Democracy that it entailed.

The Congress party was a "broad church" during the independence movement; however, it started turning into a family firm controlled by Indira Gandhi's family during the emergency. This was characterised by servility and sycophancy towards the family which later turned into a hereditary succession of Gandhi family members to power.

One of her legacies is supposed to be the systematic corruption of all parts of India's government from the executive to the judiciary due to her sense of insecurity.

The Forty-second Amendment of the Constitution of India which was adopted during the emergency can also be regarded as part of her legacy. Although judicial challenges and non-Congress governments tried to water down the amendment, the amendment still stands.

Although the Maruti Udyog company was first established by Gandhi's son, Sanjay, it was under Indira that the then nationalized company came to prominence.

She remains the only woman to occupy the Office of the Prime Minister of India. In 2020, Gandhi was named by *Time* magazine among the world's 100 powerful women who defined the last century.

Posthumous honours

- Bangladesh Freedom Honour, Bangladesh's highest civilian honour for non-nationals.
- The southernmost Indira Point (6.74678°N 93.84260°E) is named after Gandhi.
- The Indira Awaas Yojana, a central government low-cost housing programme for the rural poor, was named after her.
- The international airport at New Delhi is named Indira Gandhi International Airport in her honour.

- The Indira Gandhi National Open University, the largest university in the world, is also named after her.
- Indian National Congress established the annual Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration in 1985, given in her memory on her death anniversary.
- The Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust also constituted the annual Indira Gandhi Prize.

Chapter 51

Indo-Pakistani War of 1971

The **Indo-Pakistani War of 1971** was a military confrontation between India's Mitro Bahini forces and Pakistan that occurred during the Bangladesh Liberation War in East Pakistan from 3 December 1971 to the fall of Dacca (Dhaka) on 16 December 1971. The war began with Operation Chengiz Khan's preemptive aerial strikes on 11 Indian air stations, which led to the commencement of hostilities with Pakistan and Indian entry into the war for independence in East Pakistan on the side of Bengali nationalist forces. Lasting just 13 days, it is one of the shortest wars in history. In the process, it also became part of the nine-month long Bangladesh Liberation War.

During the war, Indian and Pakistani militaries simultaneously clashed on the eastern and western fronts; the war ended after the Eastern Command of the Pakistan military signed the Instrument of Surrender on 16 December 1971 in Dhaka, marking the formation of East Pakistan as the new nation of Bangladesh. Officially, East Pakistan had earlier called for its secession from Pakistan on 26 March 1971. Approximately 90,000 to 93,000 Pakistani servicemen were taken prisoner by the Indian Army, which included 79,676 to 81,000 uniformed personnel of the Pakistan Armed Forces, including some Bengali soldiers who had remained loyal to Pakistan. The remaining 10,324 to 12,500 prisoners were civilians, either family members of the military personnel or collaborators (Razakars).

It is estimated that members of the Pakistani military and supporting pro Pakistani Islamist militias killed between 300,000 and 3,000,000 civilians in Bangladesh. As a result of the conflict, a further eight to ten million people fled the country to seek refuge in India.

During the 1971 Bangladesh war for independence, members of the Pakistani military and supporting pro Pakistani Islamist militias called the Razakars raped between 200,000 and 400,000 Bangladeshi women and girls in a systematic campaign of genocidal rape.

Background

The Indo-Pakistani conflict was sparked by the Bangladesh Liberation War, a conflict between the traditionally dominant West Pakistanis and the majority East Pakistanis. The political tensions between East Bengal and West Pakistan had its origin in the creation of Pakistan as a result of the partition of India by the United Kingdom in 1947; the popular language movement in 1950; mass riots in East Bengal in 1964; and the mass protests in 1969. These led to the resignation of President Ayub Khan, who invited army chief General Yahya Khan to take over the central government. The geographical distance between the eastern and western wings of Pakistan was vast; East Pakistan lay over 1,600 kilometres (1,000 mi) away, which greatly hampered any attempt to integrate the Bengali and the Pakistani cultures.

To overcome the Bengali domination and prevent formation of the central government in Islamabad, the controversial One Unit programme established the two wings of East and West

Pakistan. West Pakistanis' opposition to these efforts made it difficult to effectively govern both wings. In 1969, President Yahya Khan announced the first general elections and disestablished the status of West Pakistan as a single province in 1970, in order to restore it to its original heterogeneous status comprising four provinces, as defined at the time of establishment of Pakistan in 1947. In addition, there were religious and racial tensions between Bengalis and the multi-ethnic West Pakistanis, as Bengalis looked different from the dominant West Pakistanis.

The general elections, held in 1970, resulted in East Pakistan's Awami League gaining 167 out of 169 seats for the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly, and a near-absolute majority in the 313-seat National Assembly, while the vote in West Pakistan was mostly won by the socialist Pakistan Peoples Party. The Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stressed his political position by presenting his Six Points and endorsing the Bengalis' right to govern. The League's election success caused many West Pakistanis to fear that it would allow the Bengalis to draft the constitution based on the six-points and liberalism.

To resolve the crisis, the Admiral Ahsan Mission was formed to provide recommendations. Its findings were met with favourable reviews from the political leaders of West Pakistan, with the exception of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

However, the military top brass vetoed the mission's proposal. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto endorsed the veto, and subsequently refused to yield the premiership of Pakistan to Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman. The Awami League called for general strikes in the country. President Yahya Khan postponed the inauguration of the National Assembly, causing a shattering disillusionment to the Awami League and their supporters throughout East Pakistan. In reaction, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called for general strikes that eventually shutdown the government, and dissidents in the East began targeting the ethnic Bihari community, which had supported West Pakistan.

In early March 1971, approximately 300 Biharis were slaughtered in riots by Bengali mobs in Chittagong alone. The Government of Pakistan used the "Bihari massacre" to justify its deployment of the military in East Pakistan on 25 March, when it initiated its military crackdown. President Yahya Khan called on the military – which was overwhelmingly led by West Pakistanis – to suppress dissent in the East, after accepting the resignation of Lieutenant-General Yaqub Ali Khan, the chief of staff of the East-Pakistani military.

Mass arrests of dissidents began and, after several days of strikes and non-cooperation, the Pakistani military, led by Lieutenant-General Tikka Khan, cracked down on Dhaka on the night of 25 March 1971. The government outlawed the Awami League, which forced many of its members and sympathisers into refuge in Eastern India. Mujib was arrested on the night of 25/26 March 1971 at about 1:30 am (as per Radio Pakistan's news on 29 March 1971) and taken to West Pakistan. Operation Searchlight, followed by Operation Barisal, attempted to kill the intellectual elite of the east.

On 26 March 1971, Major Ziaur Rahman of Pakistan Army declared the independence of Bangladesh on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In April, the exiled Awami League leaders formed a government-in-exile in Baidyanathtala of Meherpur. The East Pakistan Rifles and Bengali officers in Pakistan's army, navy, and marines, defected to the rebellion after taking refuge in different parts of India. The Bangladesh Force, namely the Mukti Bahini, consisting of Niyomito Bahini (Regular Force) and Oniyomito Bahini (Guerilla Force), was formed under the retired colonel Mohammad Ataul Gani Osmani.

India's involvement in Bangladesh

Liberation War

After the resignations of Admiral S.M. Ahsan and Lieutenant-General Yaqub Ali Khan, the media correspondents began airing reports of the Pakistani military's widespread genocide against their Bengali citizens, particularly aimed at the minority Bengali Hindu population, which led to approximately 10 million people seeking refuge in the neighbouring states of Eastern India. The Indian government opened the East Pakistan–India border to allow the Bengali refugees to find safe shelter; the governments of West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura established refugee camps along the border. The resulting flood of impoverished East Pakistani refugees strained India's already overburdened economy.

The Indian government repeatedly appealed to the international community for assistance, but failed to elicit any

response, despite the External Affairs minister Swaran Singh meeting foreign ministers of other countries. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 27 March 1971 expressed full support of her government for the independence struggle of the people of East Pakistan, and concluded that instead of taking in millions of refugees, it was economical to go to war against Pakistan. On 28 April 1971, the Gandhi cabinet had ordered the Chief of the Army Staff General Sam Manekshaw to "Go into East Pakistan". Defected East Pakistan military officers and the elements of Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) immediately started using the Indian refugee camps for recruitment and training of Mukti Bahini guerrillas that were to be trained against Pakistan.

The news media's mood in Pakistan had also turned increasingly jingoistic and militaristic against East Pakistan and India when the Pakistani news media reported the complexity of the situation in the East, though the reactions from Pakistan's news media pundits were mixed. By the end of September 1971, a propaganda campaign, possibly orchestrated by elements within the Government of Pakistan, resulted in stickers endorsing "*Crush India*" becoming a standard feature on the rear windows of vehicles in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Lahore; this soon spread to the rest of West Pakistan. By October, other stickers proclaimed *Hang the Traitor* in an apparent reference to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. By the first week of December, the conservative print media outlets in the country had published *jihad* related materials to boost the recruitment in the military.

India's official engagement with Pakistan

Objective

By the end of April 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had asked the Indian Army chief General Sam Manekshaw if he was ready to go to war with Pakistan. According to Manekshaw's own personal account, he refused, citing the onset of monsoon season in East Pakistan and also the fact that the army tanks were being refitted. He offered his resignation, which Gandhi declined. He then said he could guarantee victory if she would allow him to prepare for the conflict on his terms, and set a date for it; Gandhi accepted his conditions. In reality, Gandhi was well aware of the difficulties of a hasty military action, but she needed to get the military's views to satisfy her hawkish colleagues and the public opinion, which were critical of India's restraint.

By November 1971, an Indian-Pakistani war seemed inevitable. The Soviet Union reportedly warned Pakistan against the war, which they termed as "suicidal course for Pakistan's unity." Despite this warning, in November 1971, thousands of people led by conservative Pakistani politicians marched in Lahore and across Pakistan, calling for Pakistan to "crush India". India responded by starting a massive buildup of the Indian Army on the western borders; the army waited until December, when the drier ground in the East made for easier operations and the Himalayan passes were closed by snow, preventing any Chinese intervention. On 23 November, President Yahya Khan

declared a national state of emergency and told the country to prepare for war. On the evening of 3 December, at about 17:40, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) launched surprise pre-emptive strikes on eleven airfields in north-western India, including Agra, which was 480 kilometres (300 mi) from the border. At the time of the attack, the Taj Mahal had been camouflaged with a forest of twigs and leaves and draped with burlap, because its marble glowed like a white beacon in the moonlight.

These pre-emptive strikes, known as Operation Chengiz Khan, were inspired by the success of Israeli Operation Focus in the Arab–Israeli Six-Day War. Unlike the Israeli attack on Arab airbases in 1967, which involved a large number of Israeli planes, Pakistan flew no more than 50 planes to India.

In an address to the nation on radio that same evening, Prime Minister Gandhi held that the air strikes were a declaration of war against India and the Indian Air Force (IAF) responded with initial air strikes the same night. These expanded to massive retaliatory air strikes the next morning.

This air action marked the official start of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971; Gandhi ordered the immediate mobilisation of troops and launched a full-scale invasion of Pakistan. This involved Indian forces in massive coordinated air, sea and land assaults on Pakistan from all fronts. The main Indian objective on the Eastern front was to capture Dacca, and on the Western front was to prevent Pakistan from entering Indian soil. There was no Indian intention of conducting any major offensive into Pakistan to dismember it into different states.

Naval hostilities

Unlike the 1965 war, the Navy NHQ staffers and commanders of the Pakistan Navy knew very well that the Navy was ill-prepared for the naval conflict with India. The Pakistan Navy was in no condition of fighting an offensive war in deep sea against the Indian Navy, and neither was it in a condition to mount serious defence against Indian Navy's seaborne encroachment.

In the western theatre of the war, the Indian Navy's Western Naval Command under Vice admiral S.N. Kohli, successfully launched a surprise attack on Karachi port on the night of 4/5 December 1971 under the codename *Trident*. The naval attack involving the Soviet-built Osa missile boats sank the Pakistan Navy's destroyer PNS *Khaibar* and minesweeper PNS *Muhafiz* while PNS *Shah Jahan* was also badly damaged. Pakistani naval sources reported that about 720 Pakistani sailors were killed or wounded, and Pakistan lost reserve fuel and many commercial ships, thus crippling the Pakistan Navy's further involvement in the conflict. In retaliation, the Pakistan Navy submarines, *Hangor*, *Mangro*, and *Shushuk*, began their operations to seek out the major Indian warships. On 9 December 1971, *Hangor* sank INS *Khukri*, inflicting 194 Indian casualties, and this attack was the first submarine kill since World War II.

The sinking of INS *Khukri* was followed by another Indian attack on Karachi port on the night of 8/9 December 1971 under the codename *Python*. A squadron of Indian Navy's Osa missile boats approached the Karachi port and launched a series of Soviet-acquired Styx missiles, that resulted in further

destruction of reserve fuel tanks and the sinking of three Pakistani merchant ships, as well as foreign ships docked in Karachi. The Pakistan Air Force did not attack the Indian Navy ships, and confusion remained the next day when the civilian pilots of Pakistan International, acting as reconnaissance war pilots, misidentified PNS *Zulfiqar* and the air force attacked its own warship, inflicting major damages and killing several officers on board.

In the eastern theatre of the war, the Indian Eastern Naval Command, under Vice Admiral Nilakanta Krishnan, completely isolated East Pakistan by a naval blockade in the Bay of Bengal, trapping the Eastern Pakistan Navy and eight foreign merchant ships in their ports. From 4 December onwards, the aircraft carrier INS *Vikrant* was deployed, and its Sea Hawk fighter-bombers attacked many coastal towns in East Pakistan, including Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. Pakistan countered the threat by sending the submarine PNS *Ghazi*, which sank off Visakhapatnam's coast, due to an internal explosion, though whether this was triggered by Indian depth charges, diving to avoid them or some other reason has never been established.

Due to high number of defections, the Navy relied on deploying the Pakistan Marines, led by Rear Admiral Leslie Mungavin, where they had to conduct riverine operations against the Indian Army, but they too suffered major losses, mainly due to their lack of understanding of expeditionary warfare and the wet terrain of East Pakistan.

The damage inflicted on the Pakistan Navy stood at 7 gunboats, 1 minesweeper, 1 submarine, 2 destroyers, 3 patrol crafts belonging to the coast guard, 18 cargo, supply and

communication vessels; and large-scale damage inflicted on the naval base and docks in the coastal town of Karachi. Three merchant navy ships – *Anwar Baksh*, *Pasni* and *Madhumathi* – and ten smaller vessels were captured. Around 1900 personnel were lost, while 1413 servicemen were captured by Indian forces in Dacca. According to one Pakistani scholar, Tariq Ali, Pakistan lost half its navy in the war.

Air operations

After the attempted pre-emptive attack, the PAF adopted a defensive stance in response to the Indian retaliation. As the war progressed, the IAF continued to battle the PAF over conflict zones, but the number of sorties flown by the PAF decreased day-by-day. The IAF flew 4,000 sorties while the PAF offered little in retaliation, partly because of the paucity of non-Bengali technical personnel.

This lack of retaliation has also been attributed to the deliberate decision of the PAF's Air AHQ to cut its losses, as it had already incurred huge losses in the conflict in the liberation war in the East. The PAF avoided making contacts with the Indian Navy after the latter raided the port of Karachi twice, but the PAF did retaliate by bombing Okha harbour, destroying the fuel tanks used by the boats that had attacked.

In the East, No. 14 Squadron Tail Choppers under Squadron Leader PQ Mehdi, who was taken as POW, was destroyed, putting the Dhaka air defence out of commission and resulting in Indian air superiority in the East.

At the end of the war, PAF pilots made successful escapes from East Pakistan to neighbouring Burma; many PAF personnel

had already left the East for Burma on their own before Dacca was overrun by the Indian military in December 1971.

Indian attacks on Pakistan

As the Indian Army tightened its grip in East Pakistan, the Indian Air Force continued with its attacks against Pakistan as the campaign developed into a series of daylight anti-airfield, anti-radar, and close-support attacks by fighter jets, with night attacks against airfields and strategic targets by Canberras and An-12s, while Pakistan responded with similar night attacks with its B-57s and C-130s.

The PAF deployed its F-6s mainly on defensive combat air patrol missions over their own bases, leaving the PAF unable to conduct effective offensive operations. The IAF's raids damaged one USAF and one UN aircraft in Dacca, while a RCAF DHC-4 Caribou was destroyed in Islamabad, along with the USAF's Beech U-8 owned by the US military's liaison chief Brigadier-General Chuck Yeager. Sporadic raids by the IAF continued against PAF forward air bases in Pakistan until the end of the war, and interdiction and close-support operations were maintained.

One of the most successful air raids by India into West Pakistan happened on 8 December 1971, when Indian Hunter aircraft from the Pathankot-based 20 Squadron, attacked the Pakistani base in Murid and destroyed 5 F-86 aircraft on the ground. This was confirmed by Pakistan's military historian, Air Commodore M Kaiser Tufail, in his book *In The Ring and on Its Feet: Pakistan Air Force in the 1971 Indo-Pak War*.

The PAF played a more limited role in the operations. They were reinforced by Mirages from an unidentified Middle Eastern ally (whose identity remains unknown). According to author Martin Bowman, "Libyan F-5s were reportedly deployed to Sargodha AFB, perhaps as a potential training unit to prepare Pakistani pilots for an influx of more F-5s from Saudi Arabia." The IAF was able to conduct a wide range of missions – troop support; air combat; deep penetration strikes; para-dropping behind enemy lines; feints to draw enemy fighters away from the actual target; bombing and reconnaissance. The PAF, which was solely focused on air combat, was blown out of the subcontinent's skies within the first week of the war. Those PAF aircraft that survived took refuge at Iranian air bases or in concrete bunkers, refusing to offer a fight.

India flew 1,978 sorties in the East and about 4,000 in Pakistan, while the PAF flew about 30 and 2,840 at the respective fronts. More than 80 percent of IAF sorties were close-support and interdiction and about 45 IAF aircraft were lost.

Pakistan lost 75 aircraft, not including any F-6s, Mirage IIIs, or the six Jordanian F-104s which failed to return to their donors. The imbalance in air losses was explained by the IAF's considerably higher sortie rate and its emphasis on ground-attack missions.

Ground operations

Before the start of the war, the Indian Army was well organised on both fronts and enjoyed significant numerical superiority over the Pakistan Army. The Indian Army's extraordinary war

performance at both fronts restored the prestige, confidence, and dignity that it had lost during the Sino-Indian War in 1962.

When the conflict started, the war immediately took a decisive turn in favour of India and their Bengali rebel allies militarily and diplomatically. On both fronts, Pakistan launched several ground offensives, but the Indian Army held its ground and initiated well-coordinated ground operations on both fronts. Major ground attacks were concentrated on the western border by the Pakistan Army, fighting together with the Pakistan Marines in the southern border, but the Indian Army was successful in penetrating into Pakistani soil. It eventually made some quick and initial gains, including the capture of around 15,010 km (5,795 sq mi) of Pakistani territory; this land gained by India in Azad Kashmir, Punjab and Sindh sectors was later ceded in the Simla Agreement of 1972, as a gesture of goodwill. Casualties inflicted to Pakistan Army's I Corps, II Corps, and Pakistan Marines' Punjab detachment were very high, and many soldiers and marines perished due to lack of operational planning and lack of coordination within the marine-army formations against Indian Army's Southern and Western Commands. By the time the war came to end, the army soldiers and marines were highly demoralised— both emotionally and psychologically— on the western front and had no will to put up a defensive fight against the approaching Indian Army soldiers.

The War Enquiry Commission later exposed the fact that for the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Marines, the arms and training of marines, soldiers and officers were needed at every level, and every level of command.

On 23 November 1971, the Indian Army conventionally penetrated to the eastern fronts and crossed East Pakistan's borders to join their Bengali nationalist allies. Contrary to the 1965 war, which had emphasised set-piece battles and slow advances, this time the strategy adopted was a swift, three-pronged assault of nine infantry divisions with attached armoured units and close air support that rapidly converged on Dacca, the capital of East Pakistan. Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Indian Army's Eastern Command, led the full Indian thrust into East Pakistan. As the Indian Eastern Command attacked the Pakistan Eastern Command, the Indian Air Force rapidly destroyed the small air contingent in East Pakistan and put the Dacca airfield out of commission. In the meantime, the Indian Navy effectively blockaded East Pakistan.

The Indian campaign's "*blitzkrieg*" techniques exploited weaknesses in the Pakistani positions and bypassed opposition; this resulted in a swift victory. Faced with insurmountable losses, the Pakistani military capitulated in less than a fortnight and psychological panic spread in the Eastern Command's military leadership. Subsequently, the Indian Army encircled Dacca and issued an ultimatum to surrender in "30-minutes" time window on 16 December 1971. Upon hearing the ultimatum, the East-Pakistan government collapsed when the Lt-Gen. A.A.K. Niazi (Cdr. of Eastern Command) and his deputy, V-Adm. M.S. Khan, surrendered without offering any resistance. On 16 December 1971, Pakistan ultimately called for unilateral ceasefire and surrendered its entire four-tier military to the Indian Army—hence ending the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971.

On the ground, Pakistan suffered the most, with 8,000 killed and 25,000 wounded, while India only had 3,000 dead and 12,000 wounded. The loss of armoured vehicles was similarly imbalanced and this finally represented a major defeat for Pakistan.

Surrender of Pakistan Eastern Command in East

Pakistan

Officially, the Instrument of Surrender of Pakistan Eastern Command stationed in East Pakistan, was signed between the Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, the GOC-in-C of Indian Eastern Command and Lieutenant-General A.A.K. Niazi, the Commander of the Pakistan Eastern Command, at the Ramna Race Course in Dacca at 16:31Hrs IST on 16 December 1971. As the surrender was accepted silently by Lieutenant-General Aurora, the surrounding crowds on the race course started shouting anti-Pakistan slogans, and there were reports of abuses aimed at the surrendering commanders of Pakistani military.

Hostilities officially ended at 14:30 GMT on 17 December, after the fall of Dacca on 15 December, and India claimed large gains of territory in Pakistan (although pre-war boundaries were recognised after the war). The war confirmed the independence of Bangladesh.

Following the surrender, the Indian Army took approximately 90,000 Pakistani servicemen and their Bengali supporters as POWs, making it the largest surrender since World War II. Initial counts recorded that approximately 79,676 war prisoners were uniformed personnel, and the overwhelming

majority of the war prisoners were officers – most of them from the army and navy, while relatively small numbers were from the air force and marines; others in larger number were serving in the paramilitary.

The remaining prisoners were civilians who were either family members of the military personnel or collaborators (razakars). The Hamoodur Rahman Commission and the POW Investigation Commission reports instituted by Pakistan lists the Pakistani POWs as given in the table below. Apart from soldiers, it was estimated that 15,000 Bengali civilians were also made prisoners of war.

Foreign reaction and involvement

United States and Soviet Union

The Soviet Union sympathised with the East Pakistanis, and supported the Indian Army and Mukti Bahini's incursion against Pakistan during the war, in a broader view of recognising that the succession of East Pakistan as Independent Bangladesh would weaken the position of its rivals— the United States and China. The Soviet Union gave assurances to India that if a confrontation with the United States or China developed, it would take counter-measures. This assurance was enshrined in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in August 1971.

However, the Indo-Soviet treaty did not mean a total commitment to every Indian position, even though the Soviet Union had accepted the Indian position during the conflict, according to author Robert Jackson. The Soviet Union

continued its sympathetic gesture to Pakistan until mid-October 1971, when it stressed Pakistan to come up with a political settlement and affirmed its continuation of industrial aid to Pakistan. By November 1971, the Soviet ambassador to Pakistan Alexei Rodionov directed a secretive message (*Rodionov message*) that ultimately warned Pakistan that "it will be embarking on a suicidal course if it escalates tensions in the subcontinent.

The United States stood with Pakistan by supporting it morally, politically, economically and materially when U.S. President Richard Nixon and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger refused to use rhetoric in a hopeless attempt to intervene in a large civil war. The U.S. establishment perceived to the impression that they needed Pakistan to help stop Soviet influence in South Asia in an informal alliance with India. During the Cold War, Pakistan was a close formal ally of the United States and also had close relations with the People's Republic of China, with whom Nixon had been negotiating a *rapprochement* and where he intended to visit in February 1972. Nixon feared that an Indian invasion of Pakistan would mean total Soviet domination of the region, and that it would seriously undermine the global position of the United States and the regional position of America's new tactical ally, China. Nixon encouraged Jordan and Iran to send military supplies to Pakistan, while also encouraging China to increase its arms supplies to Pakistan, but all supplies were very limited. The Nixon administration also ignored reports it received of the "genocidal" activities of the Pakistani military in East Pakistan, most notably the Blood telegram, and this prompted widespread criticism and condemnation – both by the United States Congress and in the international press.

Then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, George H.W. Bush, introduced a resolution in the UN Security Council calling for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of armed forces by India and Pakistan. However, it was vetoed by the Soviet Union, and the following days witnessed the use of great pressure on the Soviets from the Nixon-Kissinger duo to get India to withdraw, but to no avail.

When Pakistan's defeat in the eastern sector seemed certain, Nixon deployed Task Force 74, led by the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise*, into the Bay of Bengal. *Enterprise* and its escort ships arrived on station on 11 December 1971. According to a Russian documentary, the United Kingdom also deployed a carrier battle group led by the aircraft carrier HMS *Eagle* to the Bay, on her final deployment.

On 6 and 13 December, the Soviet Navy dispatched two groups of cruisers and destroyers from Vladivostok; they trailed US Task Force 74 into the Indian Ocean from 18 December 1971 until 7 January 1972. The Soviets also had a nuclear submarine to help ward off the threat posed by the USS *Enterprise* task force in the Indian Ocean.

As the war progressed, it became apparent to the United States that India was going to invade and disintegrate Pakistan in a matter of weeks, therefore President Nixon spoke with the USSR General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev on a hotline on 10 December, where Nixon reportedly urged Brezhnev to restrain India as he quoted: "in the strongest possible terms to restrain India with which ... you [Brezhnev] have great influence and for whose actions you must share responsibility."

After the war, the United States accepted the new balance of power and recognised India as a dominant player in South Asia; the US immediately engaged in strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries in the successive years. The Soviet Union, while being sympathetic to Pakistan's loss, decided to engage with Pakistan after sending an invitation through Rodionov to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who paid a state visit to the Soviet Union in 1972 to strengthen bilateral relations that continued over the years.

A 2019 study argues "that Nixon and Kissinger routinely demonstrated psychological biases that led them to overestimate the likelihood of West Pakistani victory" in the war, and that they overestimated "the importance of the crisis to broader U.S. policy. The evidence fails to support Nixon and Kissinger's own framing of the 1971 crisis as a contest between cool-headed realpolitik and idealistic humanitarianism, and instead shows that Kissinger and Nixon's policy decisions harmed their stated goals because of repeated decision-making errors."

China

During the course of the war, China harshly criticised India for its involvement in the East Pakistan crises, and accused India of having imperialistic designs in South Asia. Before the war started, Chinese leaders and officials had long been philosophically advising the Pakistan government to make peaceful political settlements with the East Pakistani leaders, as China feared that India was secretly supporting, infiltrating, and arming the Bengali rebels against the East Pakistani government. China was also critical of the Government of East

Pakistan, led by its Governor Lieutenant-General Tikka Khan, which used ruthless measures to deal with the Bengali opposition, and did not endorse the Pakistani position on that issue.

When the war started, China reproached India for its direct involvement and infiltration in East Pakistan. It disagreed with Pakistani President Yahya Khan's consideration of military options, and criticised East Pakistan Awami League politicians' ties with India. China reacted with great alarm when the prospects of Indian invasion of Pakistan and integration of Pakistan-administered Kashmir into their side of Kashmir, became imminent. US President Nixon encouraged China to mobilise its armed forces along its border with India to discourage the Indian assault, but the Chinese did not respond to this encouragement since the Indian Army's Northern Command was well prepared to guard the Line of Actual Control, and was already engaging and making advances against the Pakistan Army's X Corps in the Line of Control.

China did not welcome the break-up of Pakistan's unity by the East Pakistani politicians, and effectively vetoed the membership of Bangladesh when it applied to the United Nations in 1972. China objected to admitting Bangladesh on the grounds that two UN resolutions concerning Bangladesh, requiring the repatriation of Pakistani POWs and civilians, had not yet been implemented. Furthermore, China was also among the last countries to recognise the independence of Bangladesh, refusing to do so until 31 August 1975. To this date, its relations with Bangladesh are determined by the Pakistan factor.

Iran

During the course of the conflict, Iran also stood with Pakistan politically and diplomatically. It was concerned with the imminent break-up of Pakistan which, it feared, would have caused the state to fractionalise into small pieces, ultimately resulting in Iran's encirclement by rivals. After the war, however, Iran began cementing ties with India based on mutual security co-operation. At the beginning of the conflict, Iran had helped Pakistan by sheltering PAF's fighter jets and providing it with free fuel to take part in the conflict, in an attempt to keep Pakistan's regional integrity united. When Pakistan called for unilateral ceasefire and the surrender was announced, the Shah of Iran hastily responded by preparing the Iranian military to come up with contingency plans to forcefully invade Pakistan and annex its Balochistan province into its side of Balochistan, by any means necessary, before anybody else did it.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka saw the partition of Pakistan as an example for themselves and feared India might use its enhanced power against them in the future. Despite the left wing government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike following a neutral non-aligned foreign policy Sri Lanka decided to help Pakistan in the war. As Pakistani aircraft could not fly over Indian territory, they would have to take a longer route around India and so they stopped at Bandaranaike Airport in Sri Lanka where they were refuelled before flying to East Pakistan.

Arab World

As many Arab countries were allied with both the United States and Pakistan, it was easy for Kissinger to encourage them to participate. He sent letters to both, the King of Jordan and the King of Saudi Arabia. President Nixon gave permission for Jordan to send ten F-104s and promised to provide replacements. F-86s from Saudi Arabia helped camouflage the extent of PAF losses, and some Libyan F-5s were reportedly deployed to Sargodha AFB, perhaps as a potential training unit to prepare Pakistani pilots for an influx of more F-5s from Saudi Arabia. Libyan leader Gaddafi also personally directed a strongly worded letter to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi accusing her of aggression against Pakistan, which endeared him to all Pakistanis. In addition to these three countries, an unidentified Middle Eastern ally also supplied Pakistan with Mirage IIIs. However, other countries such as Syria and Tunisia were against interfering describing it as an internal matter of Pakistan.

Aftermath

India

The war stripped Pakistan of more than half of its population, and with nearly one-third of its army in captivity, clearly established India's military and political dominance of the subcontinent. India successfully led a diplomatic campaign to isolate Pakistan and skilfully manipulate Pakistan's supporting countries to limit the extent of support to Pakistan. In addition, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's state visit to United

Kingdom and France further helped break ice with the United States, and blocked any pro-Pakistan resolution in the United Nations. There was also a meeting between Prime Minister Gandhi and President Nixon in November 1971, where she rejected the US advice against intervening in the conflict.

The victory also defined India's much broader role in foreign politics, as many countries in the world had come to realise – including the United States – that the balance of power had shifted to India as a major player in the region. In the wake of changing geopolitical realities, India sought to establish closer relations with regional countries such as Iran, which was a traditional ally of Pakistan. The United States itself accepted a new balance of power, and when India conducted a surprise nuclear test in 1974, the US notified India that it had no "interest in actions designed to achieve new balance of power."

In spite of the magnitude of the victory, India was surprisingly restrained in its reaction. Mostly, Indian leaders seemed pleased by the relative ease with which they had accomplished their goals—the establishment of Bangladesh and the prospect of an early return to their homeland of the 10 million Bengali refugees who were the cause of the war. In announcing the Pakistani surrender, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared in the Indian Parliament:

Dacca is now the free capital of a free country. We hail the people of Bangladesh in their hour of triumph. All nations who value the human spirit will recognise it as a significant milestone in man's quest for liberty.

Colonel John Gill of National Defense University, US, remarks that, while India achieved a military victory, it was not able to

reap the political fruits it might have hoped for in Bangladesh. After a brief 'honeymoon' phase between India and Bangladesh, their relationship began to sour. The perceived Indian overstay revived Bangladeshi anxieties of Hindu control. Many were concerned that Mujib was permitting Indian interference in the country's internal matters and many in the Bangladeshi army resented his attachment with India. Whilst India enjoys excellent relations with Bangladesh during the Awami League tenures, relations deteriorated when the Bangladesh Nationalist Party assumed power. A 2014 Pew Research Center opinion poll found that 27% of Bangladeshis were wary of India. However, 70% of Bangladeshis held a positive view of India: while 50% of Bangladeshis held a positive view of Pakistan.

Pakistan

For Pakistan, the war was a complete and humiliating defeat, a psychological setback that came from a defeat at the hands of rival India. Pakistan lost half its population and a significant portion of its economy, and suffered setbacks to its geopolitical role in South Asia. In the post-war era, Pakistan struggled to absorb the lessons learned from the military interventions in the democratic system and the impact of the Pakistani military's failure was grave and long-lasting.

From the geopolitical point of view, the war ended in the breaking-up of the unity of Pakistan from being the largest Muslim country in the world to its politico-economic and military collapse that resulted from a direct foreign intervention by India in 1971. The Pakistani policy-making institutions further feared that the historicity of the two-nation

theory had been disproved by the war, that Muslim nationalism had proved insufficient to keep Bengalis a part of Pakistan.

The Pakistani people were not mentally prepared to accept the magnitude of this kind of defeat, as the state electronic media had been projecting imaginary victories; however, the privately owned electronic news media coverage in East Pakistan had reported the complexity of the situation. When the ceasefire that came from the surrender of East Pakistan was finally announced, the people could not come to terms with the magnitude of defeat; spontaneous demonstrations and massive protests erupted on the streets of major metropolitan cities in Pakistan. According to Pakistani historians, the trauma was extremely severe, and the cost of the war for Pakistan in monetary terms and in human resources was very high. Demoralized and finding itself unable to control the situation, the Yahya administration fell when President Yahya Khan turned over his presidency to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was sworn in on 20 December 1971 as President with the control of the military.

The loss of East Pakistan shattered the prestige of the Pakistani military. Pakistan lost half its navy, a quarter of its air force, and a third of its army. The war also exposed the shortcomings of Pakistan's declared strategic doctrine that the "defence of East Pakistan lay in West Pakistan". Hussain Haqqani, in his book *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* notes,

Moreover, the army had failed to fulfill its promises of fighting to the last man. The eastern command had laid down arms after losing only 1,300 men in battle. In West Pakistan 1,200

military deaths had accompanied lackluster military performance.

- —□*aqqānī, p. 87*

In his book *The 1971 Indo-Pak War: A Soldier's Narrative*, Pakistan Army's Major General Hakeem Arshad Qureshi, a veteran of this conflict, noted:

We must accept the fact that, as a people, we had also contributed to the bifurcation of our own country. It was not a Niazi, or a Yahya, even a Mujib, or a Bhutto, or their key assistants, who alone were the cause of our break-up, but a corrupted system and a flawed social order that our own apathy had allowed to remain in place for years. At the most critical moment in our history we failed to check the limitless ambitions of individuals with dubious antecedents and to thwart their selfish and irresponsible behaviour. It was our collective 'conduct' that had provided the enemy an opportunity to dismember us.

- —□*Qureshi, p. 288*

After the war, the Pakistan Army's generals in the East held each other responsible for the atrocities committed, but most of the burden was laid on Lieutenant-General Tikka Khan, who earned notoriety from his actions as governor of the East; he was called the "Butcher of Bengal" because of the widespread atrocities committed within the areas of his responsibility. Unlike his contemporary Yaqub who was a pacifist and knew well of the limits of force, Tikka was a "soldier known for his eager use of force" to settle his differences.

Confessing at the hearings of the War Enquiry Commission, Lieutenant-General A. A. K. Niazi reportedly commented on Tikka's actions and noted: "On the night between 25/26 March 1971, [General] Tikka struck. Peaceful night was turned into a time of wailing, crying and burning. [General] Tikka let loose everything at his disposal as if raiding an enemy, not dealing with his own misguided and misled people. The military action was a display of stark cruelty more merciless than the massacres at Bukhara and Baghdad by Chengiz Khan and Halaku Khan... [General] Tikka... resorted to the killing of civilians and a scorched earth policy. His orders to his troops were: "I want the land, not the people..." Major-General Rao Farman reportedly had written in his table diary: "Green land of East Pakistan will be painted red. It was painted red by Bengali blood." Farman forcefully denied writing that comment, and laid all responsibility on Tikka, while testifying at the War Enquiry Commission in 1974.

Major reforms were carried out by successive governments in Pakistan after the war in the light of many recommendations made in the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report. To address the economic disparity, the National Finance Commission system was established to equally distribute the taxation revenue among the four provinces, the large-scale nationalisation of industries and nationwide census were carried out in 1972. The Constitution was promulgated in 1973 that reflected this equal balance and a compromise between Islamism and Humanism, and provided guaranteed equal human rights to all. The military was heavily reconstructed and heavily reorganised, with President Bhutto appointing chiefs of staff in each inter-service, contrary to C-in-Cs, and making instruction on human rights compulsory in the military

syllabus in each branch of inter-services. Major investments were directed towards modernising the navy. The military's chain of command was centralized in Joint Staff Headquarters (JS HQ) led by an appointed Chairman Joint Chiefs Committee to coordinate military efforts to safeguard the nation's defence and unity. In addition, Pakistan sought to have a diversified foreign policy, as Pakistani geostrategists had been shocked that both China and the United States provided limited support to Pakistan during the course of the war, with the US displaying an inability to supply weapons that Pakistan needed the most.

On 20 January 1972, Pakistan under Bhutto launched the clandestine development of nuclear weapons with a view to "never to allow[ing] another foreign invasion of Pakistan." This crash programme reached parity in 1977 when the first weapon design was successfully achieved.

Bangladesh

As a result of the war, East Pakistan became an independent country, Bangladesh, as the world's fourth most populous Muslim state on 16 December 1971. West Pakistan, now just Pakistan, secured the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the Headquarter Prison and allowed him to return to Dacca. On 19 January 1972, Mujib was inaugurated as the first President of Bangladesh, later becoming the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in 1974.

On the brink of defeat in around 14 December 1971, the media reports indicated that the Pakistan Army soldiers, the local East Pakistan Police they controlled, *razakars* and the *Shanti*

Committee carried out systematic killings of professionals such as physicians, teachers, and other intellectuals, as part of a pogrom against the Bengali Hindu minorities who constituted the majority of urban educated intellectuals.

Young men, especially students, who were seen as possible rebels and recruiters were also targeted by the stationed military, but the extent of casualties in East Pakistan is not known, and the issue is itself controversial and contradictory among the authors who wrote books on the pogrom; the Pakistani government denied the charges of involvement in 2015. R.J. Rummel cites estimates ranging from one to three million people killed. Other estimates place the death toll lower, at 300,000. Bangladesh government figures state that Pakistani forces aided by collaborators killed three million people, raped 200,000 women and displaced millions of others.

According to authors Kenton Worcester, Sally Bermanzohn and Mark Ungar, Bengalis themselves killed about 150,000 non-Bengalis living in the East. There had been reports of Bengali insurgents indiscriminately killing non-Bengalis throughout the East; however, neither side provided substantial proofs for their claims and both Bangladeshi and Pakistani figures contradict each other over this issue. Bihari representatives in June 1971 claimed a higher figure of 500,000 killed by Bengalis.

In 2010, the Awami League's government decided to set up a tribunal to prosecute the people involved in alleged war crimes and those who collaborated with Pakistan. According to the government, the defendants would be charged with crimes against humanity, genocide, murder, rape and arson.

According to John H. Gill, there was widespread polarisation between pro-Pakistan Bengalis and pro-liberation Bengalis during the war, and those internal battles are still playing out in the domestic politics of modern-day Bangladesh. To this day, the issue of committed atrocities and pogroms is an influential factor in the Bangladesh–Pakistan relations.

Impact

Pakistan: War Enquiry Commission and War prisoners

In the aftermath of the war, the Pakistani Government constituted the War Enquiry Commission, to be headed by Chief Justice Hamoodur Rahman, who was an ethnic Bengali, and composed of the senior justices of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The War Enquiry Commission was mandated with carrying out thorough investigations into the intelligence, strategic, political and military failures that causes the defeat in the war.

The War Commission also looked into Pakistan's political and military involvement in the history of East Pakistan that encompasses 1947–71. The First War Report was submitted in July 1972, but it was very critically opined and penned on political misconducts of politicians and the military interference in national politics. Written in moral and philosophical perspective, the First Report was lengthy and provided accounts that were unpalatable to be released to the public. Initially, there were 12 copies that were all destroyed, except for the one that was kept and marked as "Top Secret" to prevent the backlash effects on the demoralised military. In

1976, the Supplementary Report was submitted, which was the comprehensive report compiled together with the First Report; this report was also marked as classified.

In 2000, the excerpts of the Supplementary Report were leaked to a political correspondent of Pakistan's *Dawn*, which the *Dawn* published together with *India Today*. The First Report is still marked as classified, while the Supplementary Report's excerpts were suppressed by the news correspondents. The War Report's supplementary section was published by the Pakistan Government, but it did not officially hand over the report to Bangladesh despite its requests.

The War Report exposed many military failures, from the strategic to the tactical-intelligence levels, while it confirmed the looting, rapes and the unnecessary killings by the Pakistan military and their local agents. It laid the blame squarely on Pakistan Army generals, accusing them of debauchery, smuggling, war crimes and neglect of duty. The War Commission had recommended public trial of Pakistan Army generals on the charges that they had been responsible for the situation in the first place and that they had succumbed without a fight, but no actions were ever taken against those responsible, except the dismissal of chiefs of the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, and decommissioning of the Pakistan Marines.

The War Commission, however, rejected the charge that 200,000 Bengali girls were raped by the Pakistan Army, remarking, "It is clear that the figures mentioned by the Dacca authorities are altogether fantastic and fanciful," and cited the evidence of a British abortion team that had carried out the

termination of "only a hundred or more pregnancies". The Commission also claimed that "approximately 26,000 persons (were) killed during the action by the Pakistan military" Bina D'Costa states that the War Commission was aware of the military's brutality in East Pakistan, but "chose to downplay the scale of the atrocities committed."

The second commission was known as Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 Prisoners of War Investigation, conducted solely by the Pakistani government, that was to determine the numbers of Pakistani military personnel who surrendered, including the number of civilian POWs. The official number of the surrendered military personnel was soon released by the Government of Pakistan after the war was over.

India: Indo-Pakistani summits

On 2 July 1972, the Indo-Pakistani summit was held in Simla, Himachal Pradesh, India where the Simla Agreement was reached and signed between President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The treaty provided insurance to Bangladesh that Pakistan recognised Bangladesh's sovereignty, in exchange for the return of the Pakistani POWs. Over the next five months, India released more than 90,000 war prisoners, with Lieutenant-General A.A.K. Niazi being the last war prisoner to be handed over to Pakistan.

The treaty also gave back more than 13,000 km of land that the Indian Army had seized in Pakistan during the war, though India retained a few strategic areas, including Turtuk, Dhothang, Tyakshi (earlier called Tiaqsi) and Chalunka of Chorbat Valley, which was more than 804 km. The Indian

hardliners, however, felt that the treaty had been too lenient to President Bhutto, who had pleaded for leniency, arguing that the fragile stability in Pakistan would crumble if the accord was perceived as being overly harsh by Pakistanis and that he would be accused of losing Kashmir in addition to the loss of East Pakistan. As a result, Prime Minister Gandhi was criticised by a section in India for believing Bhutto's "sweet talk and false vows", while the other section claimed the agreement to be successful, for not letting it to fall into "Versailles Syndrome" trap.

In 1973, India and Pakistan reached another compromise when both countries signed a trilateral agreement with Bangladesh that actually brought the war prisoners, non-Bengali and Pakistan-loyal Bengali bureaucrats and civilian servants to Pakistan. The Delhi Agreement witnessed the largest mass population transfer since the Partition of India in 1947.

Bangladesh: International Crimes Tribunal

In 2009, the issue of establishing the International Crimes Tribunal began to take public support. The tribunal was formally established in 2010 to investigate and prosecute suspects for the genocide committed in 1971 by the Pakistan Army and their local collaborators, *Razakars*, *Al-Badr* and *Al-Shams* during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Long-term consequences

- Steve Coll, in his book *Ghost Wars*, argues that the Pakistan military's experience with India, including Pervez Musharraf's experience in 1971, influenced

the Pakistani government to support jihadist groups in Afghanistan even after the Soviets left, because the jihadists were a tool to use against India, including bogging down the Indian Army in Kashmir.

- After the war, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto authorised the highly secretive and clandestine atomic bomb programme, as part of its new Nuclear deterrence policy, to defend itself and never to allow another armed invasion from India. Many Pakistani scientists, working abroad at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the European and American nuclear weapons programmes, immediately returned to what remained of Pakistan and participated in making Pakistan a nuclear power.
- Writing about the war in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto stated "There is no parallel in contemporary history to the cataclysm which engulfed Pakistan in 1971. A tragic civil war, which rent asunder the people of the two parts of Pakistan, was seized by India as an opportunity for armed intervention. The country was dismembered, its economy shattered and the nation's self-confidence totally undermined." This statement of Bhutto has given rise to the myth of betrayal prevalent in modern Pakistan. This view was contradicted by the post-War Hamoodur Rahman Commission, ordered by Bhutto himself, which in its 1974 report indicted generals of the Pakistan Army for creating conditions which led to the eventual loss of East Pakistan and for inept handling of military operations in the East.

Chapter 52

Operation Smiling Buddha

Operation Smiling Buddha (MEA designation: **Pokhran-I**) was the assigned code name of India's first successful nuclear bomb test on 18 May 1974. The bomb was detonated on the army base Pokhran Test Range (PTR), in Rajasthan, by the Indian Army under the supervision of several key Indian generals.

Pokhran-I was also the first confirmed nuclear weapons test by a nation outside the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Officially, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) characterised this test as a "peaceful nuclear explosion". Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India saw a massive rise in popularity following this test. After this, a series of nuclear tests were carried out in 1998 under the name Pokhran-II.

History

Early origins, 1944–1960s

India started its own nuclear programme in 1944 when Homi Jehangir Bhabha founded the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Physicist Raja Ramanna played an essential role in nuclear weapons technology research; he expanded and supervised scientific research on nuclear weapons and was the first directing officer of the small team of scientists that supervised and carried out the test.

After Indian independence from the British Empire, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru authorised the development of a nuclear programme headed by Homi Bhabha. The *Atomic Energy Act* of 1948 focused on peaceful development. India was heavily involved in the development of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but ultimately opted not to sign it.

We must develop this atomic energy quite apart from war – indeed I think we must develop it for the purpose of using it for peaceful purposes. ... Of course, if we are compelled as a nation to use it for other purposes, possibly no pious sentiments of any of us will stop the nation from using it that way.

- —□ *Jawaharlal Nehru, First Prime Minister of India,*

In 1954, Homi Jehangir Bhabha steered the nuclear programme in the direction of weapons design and production. Two important infrastructure projects were commissioned. The first project established Trombay Atomic Energy Establishment at Mumbai. The other one created a governmental secretariat, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), of which Bhabha was the first secretary. From 1954 to 1959, the nuclear programme grew swiftly. By 1958, the DAE had one-third of the defence budget for research purposes. In 1954, India reached a verbal understanding with Canada and the United States under the Atoms for Peace programme; Canada and the United States ultimately agreed to provide and establish the CIRUS research reactor also at Trombay. The acquisition of CIRUS was a watershed event in nuclear proliferation with the understanding between India and the United States that the reactor would be used for peaceful purposes only. CIRUS was

an ideal facility to develop a plutonium device, and therefore Nehru refused to accept nuclear fuel from Canada and started the programme to develop an indigenous nuclear fuel cycle.

In July 1958, Nehru authorised "Project Phoenix" to build a reprocessing plant with a capacity of 20 tons of fuel a year – a size to match the production capacity of CIRUS. The plant used the PUREX process and was designed by the Vitro Corporation of America. Construction of the plutonium plant began at Trombay on 27 March 1961, and it was commissioned in mid-1964.

The nuclear programme continued to mature, and by 1960, Nehru made the critical decision to move the programme into production. At about the same time, Nehru held discussions with the American firm Westinghouse Electric to construct India's first nuclear power plant in Tarapur, Maharashtra. Kenneth Nichols, a US Army engineer, recalls from a meeting with Nehru, "it was that time when Nehru turned to Bhabha and asked Bhabha for the timeline of the development of a nuclear weapon". Bhabha estimated he would need about a year to accomplish the task.

By 1962, the nuclear programme was still developing, but things had slowed down. Nehru was distracted by the Sino-Indian War, during which India lost territory to China. Nehru turned to the Soviet Union for help, but the Soviet Union was preoccupied with the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Soviet Politburo turned down Nehru's request for arms and continued backing the Chinese. India concluded that the Soviet Union was an unreliable ally, and this conclusion strengthened India's determination to create a nuclear deterrent. Design

work began in 1965 under Bhabha and proceeded under Raja Ramanna who took over the programme after the Bhabha's death.

Weapons development, 1960–1972

Bhabha was now aggressively lobbying for nuclear weapons and made several speeches on Indian radio. In 1964, Bhabha told the Indian public via radio that "such nuclear weapons are remarkably cheap" and supported his arguments by referring to the economic cost of the American nuclear testing programme *Project Plowshare*. Bhabha stated to the politicians that a 10 kt device would cost around \$350,000, and \$600,000 for a 2 mt. From this, he estimated that "a stockpile" of around 50 atomic bombs would cost under \$21 million and a stockpile of 50 two-megaton hydrogen bombs would cost around \$31.5 million." Bhabha did not realise, however, that the U.S. *Plowshare* cost-figures were produced by a vast industrial complex costing tens of billions of dollars, which had already manufactured nuclear weapons numbering in the tens of thousands. The delivery systems for nuclear weapons typically cost several times as much as the weapons themselves.

The nuclear programme was partially slowed when Lal Bahadur Shastri became the prime minister. Shastri faced the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965. He appointed physicist Vikram Sarabhai as the head of the nuclear programme but, because of his non-violent Gandhian beliefs, Sarabhai directed it toward peaceful purposes rather than military development.

In 1967, Indira Gandhi became the prime minister and work on the nuclear programme resumed with renewed vigour. Homi

Sethna, a chemical engineer, played a significant role in the development of weapon-grade plutonium, while Ramanna designed and manufactured the entire nuclear device. India's first nuclear bomb project did not employ more than 75 scientists because of its sensitivity. The weapons programme was now directed towards the production of plutonium rather than uranium.

In 1968–69, P. K. Iyengar visited the Soviet Union with three colleagues and toured the nuclear research facilities at Dubna, Russia. During his visit, Iyengar was impressed by the plutonium-fueled pulsed fast reactor. Upon his return to India, Iyengar set about developing plutonium reactors approved by the Indian political leadership in January 1969. The secret plutonium plant was known as *Purnima*, and construction began in March 1969. The plant's leadership included Iyengar, Ramanna, Homi Sethna, and Sarabhai. Sarabhai's presence indicates that, with or without formal approval, the work on nuclear weapons at Trombay had already commenced.

Secrecy and test preparations, 1972–1974

In December 1971, during the Indo-Pakistani War, the U.S. government sent a carrier battle group led by the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65) into the Bay of Bengal in an attempt to intimidate India. The Soviet Union responded by sending a submarine armed with nuclear missiles from Vladivostok to trail the US task force. The Soviet response demonstrated the deterrent value and significance of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile submarines to Indira Gandhi. India gained the military and political initiative over Pakistan after acceding to

the treaty that divided Pakistan and led to the creation of Bangladesh.

On 7 September 1972, near the peak of her post-war popularity, Indira Gandhi authorised the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) to manufacture a nuclear device and prepare it for a test. Although the Indian Army was not fully involved in the nuclear testing, the army's highest command was kept fully informed of the test preparations. The preparations were carried out under the watchful eyes of the Indian political leadership, with civilian scientists assisting the Indian Army.

The device was formally called the "Peaceful Nuclear Explosive", but it was usually referred to as the *Smiling Buddha*. The device was detonated on 18 May 1974, Buddha Jayanti (a festival day in India marking the birth of Gautama Buddha). Indira Gandhi maintained tight control of all aspects of the preparations of the *Smiling Buddha* test, which was conducted in extreme secrecy; besides Gandhi, only advisers Parmeshwar Haksar and Durga Dhar were kept informed. Scholar Raj Chengappa asserts the Indian Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram was not provided with any knowledge of this test and came to learn of it only after it was conducted. Swaran Singh, the Minister of External Affairs, was given only a 48 hours advance notice. The Indira Gandhi administration employed no more than 75 civilian scientists, while General G. G. Bewoor, Indian army chief, and the commander of Indian Western Command were the only military commanders kept informed.

Development teams and sites

The head of this entire nuclear bomb project was the director of the BARC, Raja Ramanna. In later years, his role in the nuclear programme would be more deeply integrated as he remained head of the nuclear programme most of his life. The designer and creator of the bomb was P. K. Iyengar, who was the second in command of this project. Iyengar's work was further assisted by the chief metallurgist, R. Chidambaram, and by Nagapattinam Sambasiva Venkatesan of the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory, who developed and manufactured the high explosive implosion system. The explosive materials and the detonation system were developed by Waman Dattatreya Patwardhan of the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory.

The overall project was supervised by chemical engineer Homi Sethna, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India. Chidambaram, who would later coordinate work on the Pokhran-II tests, began work on the equation of state of plutonium in late 1967 or early 1968. To preserve secrecy, the project employed no more than 75 scientists and engineers from 1967 to 1974. Abdul Kalam also arrived at the test site as the representative of the DRDO.

A. K. Ganguly, of the BARC, was the "Test" project chief of health and safety, as well as, chief of post "Test" scientific investigations programme. As early as 1956, Ganguly was selected by Homi J. Bhabha, from his academic perch, at the University of Notre Dame, USA, where he had originated the Ganguly-Magee theory in Radiation Chemistry. During Ganguly's career in the BARC, Vikram A. Sarabhai selected

him to lead the process of formation of the Ministry of Environment.

The device was of the implosion-type design and had a close resemblance to *Fat Man*, the American nuclear bomb detonated over Nagasaki in 1945. The implosion system was assembled at the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL) of the DRDO in Chandigarh. The detonation system was developed at the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) of the DRDO in Pune, Maharashtra State. The 6 kg of plutonium came from the CIRUS reactor at BARC. The neutron initiator was of the polonium–beryllium type and code-named *Flower*. Dr. V. K. Iya of BARC was on the team which developed the neutron initiator. The entire nuclear bomb was engineered and finally assembled by Indian engineers at Trombay before transportation to the test site.

Nuclear weapon design

Cross-section

The fully assembled device had a hexagonal cross section, 1.25 metres in diameter, and weighed 1400 kg. The device was mounted on a hexagonal metal tripod, and was transported to the shaft on rails which the army kept covered with sand. The device was detonated when Dr. Pranab R. Dastidar pushed the firing button at 8.05 a.m.; it was in a shaft 107 m under the army Pokhran test range in the Thar Desert (or Great Indian Desert), Rajasthan.

Controversy regarding the yield

The nuclear yield of this test still remains controversial, with unclear data provided by Indian sources, although Indian politicians have given the country's press a range from 2 kt to 20 kt. The official yield was initially set at 12 kt; post-Operation Shakti claims have raised it to 13 kt. Independent seismic data from outside and analysis of the crater features indicate a lower figure. Analysts usually estimate the yield at 4 to 6 kt, using conventional seismic magnitude-to-yield conversion formulas. In recent years, both Homi Sethna and P. K. Iyengar have conceded the official yield to be an exaggeration.

Iyengar has variously stated that the yield was 8–10 kt, that the device was designed to yield 10 kt, and that the yield was 8 kt "exactly as predicted". Although seismic scaling laws lead to an estimated yield range between 3.2 kt and 21 kt, an analysis of hard rock cratering effects suggests a narrow range of around 8 kt for the yield, which is within the uncertainties of the seismic yield estimate.

Aftermath

Domestic reaction

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had already gained much popularity after her successful military campaign against Pakistan in the 1971 war. The test caused an immediate revival of Indira Gandhi's popularity, which had flagged considerably from its heights after the 1971 war. The overall popularity and

image of the Congress Party was enhanced and the Congress Party was well received in the Indian Parliament. In 1975, Homi Sethna, a chemical engineer and the chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AECI), Raja Ramanna of BARC, and Basanti Nagchaudhuri of DRDO, all were honoured with the *Padma Vibhushan*, India's second highest civilian award. Five other project members received the *Padma Shri*, India's fourth highest civilian award. India consistently maintained that this was a peaceful nuclear bomb test and that it had no intentions of militarising its nuclear programme. However, according to independent monitors, this test was part of an accelerated Indian nuclear programme. In 1997 Raja Ramanna, speaking to the *Press Trust of India*, maintained:

The Pokhran test was a bomb, I can tell you now.... An explosion is an explosion, a gun is a gun, whether you shoot at someone or shoot at the ground.... I just want to make clear that the test was not all that peaceful.

- —□ *Raja Ramanna 1997*, giving interview to *Press Trust of India* in 1997

International reaction

While India continued to state that the test was for peaceful purposes, it encountered opposition from many quarters. The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) was formed in reaction to the Indian tests to check international nuclear proliferation. The NSG decided in 1992 to require full-scope IAEA safeguards for any new nuclear export deals, which effectively ruled out nuclear exports to India, but in 2008 it waived this restriction on nuclear trade with India as part of the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement.

Pakistan

Pakistan did not view the test as a "peaceful nuclear explosion", and cancelled talks scheduled for 10 June on normalisation of relations. Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto vowed in June 1974 that he would never succumb to "nuclear blackmail" or accept "Indian hegemony or domination over the subcontinent". The chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Munir Ahmed Khan, said that the test would force Pakistan to test its own nuclear bomb. Pakistan's leading nuclear physicist, Pervez Hoodbhoy, stated in 2011 that he believed the test "pushed [Pakistan] further into the nuclear arena".

Canada and United States

The plutonium used in the test was created in the CIRUS reactor supplied by Canada and using heavy water supplied by the United States. Both countries reacted negatively, especially in light of then ongoing negotiations on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the economic aid both countries had provided to India. Canada concluded that the test violated a 1971 understanding between the two states, and froze nuclear energy assistance for the two heavy water reactors then under construction. The United States concluded that the test did not violate any agreement and proceeded with a June 1974 shipment of enriched uranium for the Tarapur reactor.

France

France sent a congratulatory telegram to India but later withdrew it.

Subsequent nuclear explosions

Despite many proposals, India did not carry out further nuclear tests until 1998. After the 1998 general elections, Operation Shakti (also known as Pokhran-II) was carried out at the Pokhran test site, using technology designed and built over the preceding two decades.

Chapter 53

The Emergency (India)

The Emergency in India was a 21-month period from 1975 to 1977 when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had a state of emergency declared across the country. Officially issued by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed under Article 352 of the Constitution because of the prevailing "internal disturbance", the Emergency was in effect from 25 June 1975 until its withdrawal on 21 March 1977.

The order bestowed upon the Prime Minister the authority to rule by decree, allowing elections to be cancelled and civil liberties to be suspended. For much of the Emergency, most of Indira Gandhi's political opponents were imprisoned and the press was censored.

Several other human rights violations were reported from the time, including a mass forced sterilization campaign spearheaded by Sanjay Gandhi, the Prime Minister's son. The Emergency is one of the most controversial periods of independent India's history.

The final decision to impose an emergency was proposed by Indira Gandhi, agreed upon by the president of India, and thereafter ratified by the cabinet and the parliament (from July to August 1975), based on the rationale that there were imminent internal and external threats to the Indian state.

Prelude

Rise of Indira Gandhi

Between 1967 and 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came to obtain near-absolute control over the government and the Indian National Congress party, as well as a huge majority in Parliament. The first was achieved by concentrating the central government's power within the Prime Minister's Secretariat, rather than the Cabinet, whose elected members she saw as a threat and distrusted. For this, she relied on her principal secretary, P. N. Haksar, a central figure in Indira's inner circle of advisors. Further, Haksar promoted the idea of a "committed bureaucracy" that required hitherto-impartial government officials to be "committed" to the ideology of the ruling party of the day.

Within the Congress, Indira ruthlessly outmanoeuvred her rivals, forcing the party to split in 1969—into the Congress (O) (comprising the old-guard known as the "Syndicate") and her Congress (R). A majority of the All-India Congress Committee and Congress MPs sided with the prime minister. Indira's party was of a different breed from the Congress of old, which had been a robust institution with traditions of internal democracy. In the Congress (R), on the other hand, members quickly realised that their progress within the ranks depended solely on their loyalty to Indira Gandhi and her family, and ostentatious displays of sycophancy became routine. In the coming years, Indira's influence was such that she could install hand-picked loyalists as chief ministers of states,

rather than their being elected by the Congress legislative party.

Indira's ascent was backed by her charismatic appeal among the masses that was aided by her government's near-radical leftward turns. These included the July 1969 nationalisation of several major banks and the September 1970 abolition of the privy purse; these changes were often done suddenly, via ordinance, to the shock of her opponents. She had strong support in the disadvantaged sections—the poor, Dalits, women and minorities. Indira was seen as "standing for socialism in economics and secularism in matters of religion, as being pro-poor and for the development of the nation as a whole."

In the 1971 general elections, the people rallied behind Indira's populist slogan of *Garibi Hatao!* (abolish poverty!) to award her a huge majority (352 seats out of 518). "By the margin of its victory," historian Ramachandra Guha later wrote, Congress (R) came to be known as the real Congress, "requiring no qualifying suffix." In December 1971, under her proactive war leadership, India routed arch-enemy Pakistan in a war that led to the independence of Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan. Awarded the Bharat Ratna the next month, she was at her greatest peak; for her biographer Inder Malhotra, "*The Economist's* description of her as the 'Empress of India' seemed apt." Even opposition leaders, who routinely accused her of being a dictator and of fostering a personality cult, referred to her as *Durga*, a Hindu goddess.

Increasing government control of the judiciary

In 1967's *Golaknath* case, the Supreme Court said that the Constitution could not be amended by Parliament if the changes affect basic issues such as fundamental rights. To nullify this judgement, Parliament dominated by the Indira Gandhi Congress, passed the 24th Amendment in 1971. Similarly, after the government lost a Supreme Court case for withdrawing the privy purse given to erstwhile princes, Parliament passed the 26th Amendment. This gave constitutional validity to the government's abolition of the privy purse and nullified the Supreme Court's order.

This judiciary–executive battle would continue in the landmark *Kesavananda Bharati* Case, where the 24th Amendment was called into question. With a wafer-thin majority of 7 to 6, the bench of the Supreme Court restricted Parliament's amendment power by stating it could not be used to alter the "basic structure" of the Constitution. Subsequently, Prime Minister Gandhi made A. N. Ray—the senior-most judge amongst those in the minority in *Kesavananda Bharati*—Chief Justice of India. Ray superseded three judges more senior to him—J. M. Shelat, K. S. Hegde and Grover—all members of the majority in *Kesavananda Bharati*. Indira Gandhi's tendency to control the judiciary met with severe criticism, both from the press and political opponents such as Jayaprakash Narayan ("JP").

Political unrest

This led some Congress party leaders to demand a move towards a presidential system emergency declaration with a

more powerful directly elected executive. The most significant of the initial such movement was the Nav Nirman movement in Gujarat, between December 1973 and March 1974. Student unrest against the state's education minister ultimately forced the central government to dissolve the state legislature, leading to the resignation of the chief minister, Chimanbhai Patel, and the imposition of President's rule. Meanwhile, there were assassination attempts on public leaders as well as the assassination of the railway minister Lalit Narayan Mishra by a bomb. All of these indicated a growing law and order problem in the entire country, which Mrs Gandhi's advisors warned her of for months.

In March–April 1974, a student agitation by the Bihar Chatra Sangharsh Samiti received the support of Gandhian socialist Jayaprakash Narayan, referred to as *JP*, against the Bihar government. In April 1974, in Patna, JP called for "total revolution," asking students, peasants, and labour unions to non-violently transform Indian society. He also demanded the dissolution of the state government, but this was not accepted by the centre. A month later, the railway-employees union, the largest union in the country, went on a nationwide railways strike. This strike which was led by the firebrand trade union leader George Fernandes who was the President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation. He was also the President of the Socialist Party. The strike was brutally suppressed by the Indira Gandhi government, which arrested thousands of employees and drove their families out of their quarters.

Raj Narain verdict

Raj Narain, who had been defeated in the 1971 parliamentary election by Indira Gandhi, lodged cases of election fraud and use of state machinery for election purposes against her in the Allahabad High Court. Shanti Bhushan fought the case for Narain. Indira Gandhi was also cross-examined in the High Court which was the first such instance for an Indian Prime Minister.

On 12 June 1975, Justice Jagmohanlal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court found the prime minister guilty on the charge of misuse of government machinery for her election campaign. The court declared her election null and void and unseated her from her seat in the Lok Sabha. The court also banned her from contesting any election for an additional six years. Serious charges such as bribing voters and election malpractices were dropped and she was held responsible for misusing government machinery and found guilty on charges such as using the state police to build a dais, availing herself of the services of a government officer, Yashpal Kapoor, during the elections before he had resigned from his position, and use of electricity from the state electricity department.

Because the court unseated her on comparatively frivolous charges, while she was acquitted on more serious charges, *The Times* described it as "firing the Prime Minister for a traffic ticket". Her supporters organised mass pro-Indira demonstrations in the streets of Delhi close to the Prime Minister's residence. The persistent efforts of Narain were praised worldwide as it took over four years for Justice Sinha to pass judgement against the prime minister.

Indira Gandhi challenged the High Court's decision in the Supreme Court. Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer, on 24 June 1975, upheld the High Court judgement and ordered all privileges Gandhi received as an MP be stopped, and that she be debarred from voting. However, she was allowed to continue as Prime Minister pending the resolution of her appeal. Jayaprakash Narayan and Morarji Desai called for daily anti-government protests. The next day, Jayaprakash Narayan organised a large rally in Delhi, where he said that a police officer must reject the orders of government if the order is immoral and unethical as this was Mahatma Gandhi's motto during the freedom struggle. Such a statement was taken as a sign of inciting rebellion in the country. Later that day, Indira Gandhi requested a compliant President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed to proclaim a state of emergency. Within three hours, the electricity to all major newspapers was cut and the political opposition arrested. The proposal was sent without discussion with the Union Cabinet, who only learnt of it and ratified it the next morning.

Proclamation of the Emergency

The Government cited threats to national security, as a war with Pakistan had recently been concluded. Due to the war and additional challenges of drought and the 1973 oil crisis, the economy was in poor condition. The Government claimed that the strikes and protests had paralysed the government and hurt the economy of the country greatly. In the face of massive political opposition, desertion and disorder across the country and the party, Gandhi stuck to the advice of a few loyalists and her younger son Sanjay Gandhi, whose own power had grown

considerably over the last few years to become an "extra-constitutional authority". Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, proposed to the prime minister to impose an "internal emergency". He drafted a letter for the President to issue the proclamation based on information Indira had received that "there is an imminent danger to the security of India being threatened by internal disturbances". He showed how democratic freedom could be suspended while remaining within the ambit of the Constitution.

After a quick question regarding a procedural matter, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared a state of internal emergency upon the prime minister's advice on the night of 25 June 1975, just a few minutes before the clock struck midnight.

As the constitution requires, Mrs Gandhi advised and President Ahmed approved the continuation of Emergency over every six months until she decided to hold elections in 1977. In 1976, Parliament voted to delay elections, something it could only do with the Constitution suspended by the Emergency.

Administration

Indira Gandhi devised a '20-point' economic programme to increase agricultural and industrial production, improve public services and fight poverty and illiteracy, through "the discipline of the graveyard". In addition to the official twenty points, Sanjay Gandhi declared his five-point programme promoting literacy, family planning, tree planting, the eradication of casteism and the abolition of dowry. Later

during the Emergency, the two projects merged into a twenty-five-point programme.

Arrests

Invoking article 352 of the Indian Constitution, Gandhi granted herself extraordinary powers and launched a massive crackdown on civil rights and political opposition. The Government used police forces across the country to place thousands of protestors and strike leaders under preventive detention. Vijayaraje Scindia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Raj Narain, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, Jivatram Kripalani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, Arun Jaitley, Satyendra Narayan Sinha, Gayatri Devi, the dowager queen of Jaipur, and other protest leaders were immediately arrested. Organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Jamaat-e-Islami, along with some political parties, were banned. Numerous Communist leaders were arrested along with many others involved with their party. Congress leaders who dissented against the Emergency declaration and amendment to the constitution, such as Mohan Dharia and Chandra Shekhar, resigned their government and party positions and were thereafter arrested and placed under detention.

Cases like the Baroda dynamite case and the Rajan case became exceptional examples of atrocities committed against civilians in independent India.

Laws, human rights and elections

Elections for the Parliament and state governments were postponed. Gandhi and her parliamentary majorities could

rewrite the nation's laws since her Congress party had the required mandate to do so – a two-thirds majority in the Parliament. And when she felt the existing laws were 'too slow', she got the President to issue 'Ordinances' – a law-making power in times of urgency, invoked sparingly – completely bypassing the Parliament, allowing her to rule by decree. Also, she had little trouble amending the Constitution that exonerated her from any culpability in her election-fraud case, imposing President's Rule in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, where anti-Indira parties ruled (state legislatures were thereby dissolved and suspended indefinitely), and jailing thousands of opponents. The 42nd Amendment, which brought about extensive changes to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, is one of the lasting legacies of the Emergency. In the conclusion of his *Making of India's Constitution*, Justice Khanna writes:

If the Indian constitution is our heritage bequeathed to us by our founding fathers, no less are we, the people of India, the trustees, and custodians of the values which pulsate within its provisions! A constitution is not a parchment of paper, it is a way of life and has to be lived up to. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and in the final analysis, its only keepers are the people. The imbecility of men, history teaches us, always invites the impudence of power.

A fallout of the Emergency era was the Supreme Court laid down that, although the Constitution is amenable to amendments (as abused by Indira Gandhi), changes that tinker with its *basic structure* cannot be made by the Parliament. (see *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*)

In the *Rajan* case, P. Rajan of the Regional Engineering College, Calicut, was arrested by the police in Kerala on 1 March 1976, tortured in custody until he died and then his body was disposed of and was never recovered. The facts of this incident came out owing to a *habeas corpus* suit filed in the Kerala High Court.

Many cases where teens were arrested and imprisoned have come into light, one such example is of Dilip Sharma who aged 16 was arrested and imprisoned for over 11 months. He was released based on Patna High Court's judgment on 29 July 1976.

Forced sterilisation

In September 1976, Sanjay Gandhi initiated a widespread compulsory sterilisation programme to limit population growth. The exact extent of Sanjay Gandhi's role in the implementation of the programme is disputed, with some writers holding Gandhi directly responsible for his authoritarianism, and other writers blaming the officials who implemented the programme rather than Gandhi himself. It is clear that international pressure from the United States, United Nations, and World Bank played a role in the implementation of these population control measures. Rukhsana Sultana was a socialite known for being one of Sanjay Gandhi's close associates and she gained a lot of notoriety in leading Sanjay Gandhi's sterilisation campaign in Muslim areas of old Delhi. The campaign primarily involved getting males to undergo vasectomy. Quotas were set up that enthusiastic supporters and government officials worked hard to achieve. There were allegations of coercion of unwilling candidates too. In 1976–1977, the programme led to

8.3 million sterilisations, most of them forced, up from 2.7 million the previous year. The bad publicity led every government since 1977 to stress that family planning is entirely voluntary.

- Kartar, a cobbler, was taken to a Block Development Officer (BDO) by six policemen, where he was asked how many children he had. He was forcefully taken for sterilisation in a jeep. En route, the police forced a man on the bicycle into the jeep because he was not sterilised. Kartar had an infection and pain because of the procedure and could not work for months.
- Shahu Ghalake, a peasant from Barsi in Maharashtra, was taken for sterilisation. After mentioning that he was already sterilised, he was beaten. A sterilisation procedure was undertaken on him for a second time.
- Hawa Singh, a young widower, from Pipli was taken from the bus against his will and sterilised. The ensuing infection took his life.
- Harijan, a 70-year-old with no teeth and bad eyesight, was sterilised forcefully.
- Ottawa, a village 80 kilometres south of Delhi, woke up to the police loudspeakers at 03:00. Police gathered 400 men at the bus stop. In the process of finding more villagers, police broke into homes and looted. A total of 800 forced sterilisations were done.
- In Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, on 18 October 1976, police picked up 17 people, nine Hindus, and eight Muslims, of which two were over 75 and two under 18. Hundreds of people surrounded the police

station demanding they free captives. The police refused to release them and used tear gas shells. The crowd retaliated by throwing stones and to control the situation, the police fired on the crowd. 30 people died as a result.

Criticism of the Government

Criticism and accusations from the Emergency era may be grouped as:

- Detention of people by police without charge or notification of families
- Abuse and torture of detainees and political prisoners
- Use of public and private media institutions, like the national television network Doordarshan, for government propaganda
- During the Emergency, Sanjay Gandhi asked the popular singer Kishore Kumar to sing for a Congress party rally in Bombay, but he refused. As a result, Information and broadcasting minister Vidya Charan Shukla put an unofficial ban on playing Kishore Kumar songs on state broadcasters All India Radio and Doordarshan from 4 May 1976 till the end of Emergency.
- Forced sterilisation.
- Destruction of the slum and low-income housing in the Turkmen Gate and Jama Masjid area of old Delhi.
- Large-scale and illegal enactment of new laws (including modifications to the Constitution).

Resistance movements

The role of RSS

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which was seen close to opposition leaders, was also banned. Police clamped down on the organisation and thousands of its workers were imprisoned. The RSS defied the ban and thousands participated in Satyagraha (peaceful protests) against the ban and the curtailment of fundamental rights. Later, when there was no letup, the volunteers of the RSS formed underground movements for the restoration of democracy. Literature that was censored in the media was clandestinely published and distributed on a large scale and funds were collected for the movement. Networks were established between leaders of different political parties in the jail and outside for the co-ordination of the movement.

The attitude of senior RSS leaders about the Emergency was divided: several opposed it staunchly, others apologised and were released, and several senior leaders, notably Balasaheb Deoras and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, sought an accommodation with Sanjay and Indira Gandhi. Nanaji Deshmukh and Madan Lal Khurana managed to escape the police and led the RSS resistance to the Emergency. As did Subramanian Swamy.

Zonal RSS leaders also authorised Eknath Ramakrishna Ranade to quietly enter into a dialogue with Indira Gandhi.

Indira Gandhi had helped Ranade, who had been second to Golwalkar in the RSS hierarchy, in numerous projects to commemorate Vivekananda. She had nominated Ranade to the

governing council of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, and the two used ICCR as a facade to conduct secret one-on-one negotiations.

Arun Jaitley, head of the ABVP in Delhi, was among the first to be arrested, and he spent the entire Emergency in jail. However, other ABVP leaders such as Balbir Punj and Prabhu Chawla pledged allegiance to Indira Gandhi's Twenty Point Programme and Sanjay Gandhi's Five Point Programme, in return for staying out of jail.

In November 1976, over 30 leaders of the RSS, led by Madhavrao Muley, Dattopant Thengadi, and Moropant Pingle, wrote to Indira Gandhi, promising support to the Emergency if all RSS workers were released from prison. Their 'Document of Surrender', to take effect from January 1977, was processed by H.Y. Sharada Prasad.

On his return from his meeting with Om Mehta, Vajpayee ordered the cadres of the ABVP to apologise unconditionally to Indira Gandhi. The ABVP students refused.

The RSS 'Document of Surrender', was also confirmed by Subramanian Swamy in his article: "...I must add that not all in the RSS were in a surrender mode...But a tearful Muley told me in early November 1976 and I had better escape abroad again since the RSS had finalised the Document of Surrender to be signed in end January 1977, and that on Mr. Vajpayee's insistence I would be sacrificed to appease an irate Indira and a fulminating Sanjay....".

Sikh opposition

Shortly after the declaration of the Emergency, the Sikh leadership convened meetings in Amritsar where they resolved to oppose the "fascist tendency of the Congress". The first mass protest in the country, known as the "Campaign to Save Democracy" was organised by the Akali Dal and launched in Amritsar, 9 July. A statement to the press recalled the historic Sikh struggle for independence under the Mughals, then under the British, and voiced concern that what had been fought for and achieved was being lost. The police were out in force for the demonstration and arrested the protestors, including the Shiromani Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) leaders.

The question before us is not whether Indira Gandhi should continue to be prime minister or not. The point is whether democracy in this country is to survive or not.

According to Amnesty International, 140,000 people had been arrested without trial during the twenty months of Gandhi's Emergency. Jasjit Singh Grewal estimates that 40,000 of them came from India's two per cent Sikh minority.

The role of CPI(M)

Members of CPI(M) were identified and arrested all over India. Raids were conducted in houses suspected to be sympathetic of CPI(M) or the opposition to the emergency.

Those jailed during the Emergency include the current general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Sitaram Yechury, and his predecessor, Prakash Karat. Both were then

leaders of the Students Federation of India, the party's student wing. Other Communist Party of India (Marxist) members to be jailed included the current Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan, then a young MLA. He was taken into custody during the Emergency and subjected to third degree methods. On his release, Pinarayi reached the Assembly and made an impassionate speech holding up the blood-stained shirt he wore when in police custody, causing serious embarrassment to the then C. Achutha Menon government.

Hundreds of Communists, whether from the Communist Party of India (Marxist), other Marxist parties, or the Naxalites, were arrested during the Emergency. Some were tortured or, as in the case of the Kerala student P Rajan, killed.

Elections of 1977

On 18 January 1977, Gandhi called fresh elections for March and released a few political prisoners, many remained in prison even after she was ousted, though the Emergency officially ended on 21 March 1977. The opposition Janata movement's campaign warned Indians that the elections might be their last chance to choose between "democracy and dictatorship."

In the Lok Sabha elections, held in March, Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay both lost their Lok Sabha seats, as did all the Congress candidates in northern states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Many Congress Party loyalists deserted Mrs Gandhi. The Congress was reduced to just 153 seats, 92 of which were from four of the southern states. The Janata Party's 298 seats and its allies' 47 seats (of a total 542) gave it a massive

majority. Morarji Desai became the first non-Congress Prime Minister of India.

Voters in the electorally largest state of Uttar Pradesh, historically a Congress stronghold, turned against Gandhi and her party failed to win a single seat in the state. Dhanagare says the structural reasons behind the discontent against the Government included the emergence of the strong and united opposition, disunity and weariness inside Congress, an effective underground opposition, and the ineffectiveness of Gandhi's control of the mass media, which had lost much credibility. The structural factors allowed voters to express their grievances, notably their resentment of the emergency and its authoritarian and repressive policies. One grievance often mentioned as the 'nasbandi' (vasectomy) campaign in rural areas. The middle classes also emphasised the curbing of freedom throughout the state and India. Meanwhile, Congress hit an all-time low in West Bengal because of the poor discipline and factionalism among Congress activists as well as the numerous defections that weakened the party. Opponents emphasised the issues of corruption in Congress and appealed to a deep desire by the voters for fresh leadership.

The Tribunal

The efforts of the Janata administration to get government officials and Congress politicians tried for Emergency-era abuses and crimes were largely unsuccessful due to a disorganised, over-complex and politically motivated process of litigation. The Thirty-eighth Amendment of the Constitution of India, put in place shortly after the outset of the Emergency and which among other things prohibited judicial reviews of

states of emergencies and actions taken during them, also likely played a role in this lack of success. Although special tribunals were organised and scores of senior Congress Party and government officials arrested and charged, including Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi, police were unable to submit sufficient evidence for most cases, and only a few low-level officials were convicted of any abuses.

Legacy

The Emergency lasted 21 months, and its legacy remains intensely controversial. A few days after the Emergency was imposed, the Bombay edition of *The Times of India* carried an obituary that read

Democracy, beloved husband of Truth, loving father of Liberty, brother of Faith, Hope and Justice, expired on June 26.

A few days later censorship was imposed on newspapers. The Delhi edition of the *Indian Express* on 28 June, carried a blank editorial, while the *Financial Express* reproduced in large type Rabindranath Tagore's poem "Where the mind is without fear".

However, the Emergency also received support from several sections. It was endorsed by social reformer Vinoba Bhave (who called it *Anushasan Parva*, a time for discipline), industrialist J. R. D. Tata, writer Khushwant Singh, and Indira Gandhi's close friend and Orissa Chief Minister Nandini Satpathy. However, Tata and Satpathy later regretted that they spoke in favour of the Emergency.

In the book *JP Movement and the Emergency*, historian, Bipan Chandra wrote, "Sanjay Gandhi and his cronies like Bansi Lal, Minister of Defence at the time, were keen on postponing elections and prolonging the emergency by several years. In October – November 1976, an effort was made to change the basic civil libertarian structure of the Indian Constitution through the 42nd amendment to it. ... The most important changes were designed to strengthen the executive at the cost of the judiciary, and thus disturb the carefully crafted system of Constitutional checks and balance between the three organs of the government."

Chapter 54

1984 Anti-Sikh Riots

The **1984 anti-Sikh riots**, also known as the **1984 Sikh Massacre**, was a series of organised pogroms against Sikhs in India following the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. The ruling Indian National Congress had been in active complicity with the mob, as to the organisation of the riots. Government estimates project that about 2,800 Sikhs were killed in Delhi and 3,350 nationwide, whilst independent sources estimate the number of deaths at about 8,000–17,000.

The assassination of Indira Gandhi was in retaliation to her order to the Indian Army to attack the Harmandir Sahib complex in Amritsar, Punjab, in June 1984. The attack had resulted in a deadly battle with armed Sikh groups who were demanding greater rights and autonomy for Punjab. Sikhs worldwide had criticized the army action and many saw it as an assault on their religion and identity.

In the aftermath of the pogroms, the government reported that 20,000 had fled the city; the People's Union for Civil Liberties reported "at least" 1,000 displaced persons. The most-affected regions were the Sikh neighbourhoods of Delhi. Human rights organisations and newspapers across India believed that the massacre was organised. The collusion of political officials in the violence and judicial failure to penalise the perpetrators alienated Sikhs and increased support for the Khalistan movement. The Akal Takht, Sikhism's governing body, considers the killings genocide.

In 2011, Human Rights Watch reported that the Government of India had "yet to prosecute those responsible for the mass killings". According to the 2011 WikiLeaks cable leaks, the United States was convinced of Indian National Congress' complicity in the riots and called it "opportunism" and "hatred" by the Congress government, of Sikhs. Although the U.S. has not identified the riots as genocide, it acknowledged that "grave human rights violations" occurred. In 2011, a new group of mass graves was discovered in Haryana and Human Rights Watch reported that "widespread anti-Sikh attacks in Haryana were part of broader revenge attacks" in India. The Central Bureau of Investigation, the main Indian investigative agency, believes that the violence was organised with support from the Delhi police and some central-government officials.

Background

In 1972 Punjab state elections, Congress won and Akali Dal was defeated. In 1973, Akali Dal put forward the Anandpur Sahib Resolution to demand more autonomy to Punjab. It demanded that power be generally devolved from the Central to state governments. The Congress government considered the resolution a secessionist document and rejected it. Bhindranwale then joined the Akali Dal to launch the Dharam Yudh Morcha in 1982 to implement the Anandpur Sahib resolution. Bhindranwale had risen to prominence in the Sikh political circle with his policy of getting the Anandpur Resolution passed. Others demanded an autonomous state in India, based on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

As high-handed police methods normally used on common criminals were used on protesters during the Dharam Yudh

Morcha, creating state repression affecting a very large segment of Punjab's population, retaliatory violence came from a section of the Sikh population, widening the scope of the conflict by the use of violence of the state on its own people, creating fresh motives for Sikh youth to turn to insurgency. The concept of Khalistan was still vague even while the complex was fortified under the influence of former Sikh army officials alienated by government actions who now advised Bhindranwale, Major General Shabeg Singh and retired Major General and Brigadier Mohinder Singh, and at that point the concept was still not directly connected with the movement he headed. In other parts of Punjab, a "state of chaos and repressive police methods" combined to create "a mood of overwhelming anger and resentment in the Sikh masses against the authorities," making Bhindranwale even more popular, and demands of independence gain currency, even amongst moderates and Sikh intellectuals. Meanwhile, out of 220 deaths during the first 19 months of the Dharam Yudh Morcha protests, 190 had been Sikhs.

By 1983, the situation in Punjab was volatile. In October, Sikh militants stopped a bus and shot six Hindu passengers. On the same day, another group killed two officials on a train. The Congress-led central government dismissed the Punjab state government (led by their party), invoking the president's rule. During the five months before Operation Blue Star, from 1 January to 3 June 1984, 298 people were killed in violent incidents across Punjab. In the five days preceding the operation, 48 people were killed by violence. According to government estimates, the number of civilians, police, and militants killed was 27 in 1981, 22 in 1982, and 99 in 1983.

By June 1984, the total number of deaths was 410 in violent incidents and riots while 1,180 people were injured.

On 1 June, Operation Blue Star was launched to remove him and the armed militants from the Golden Temple complex. On 6 June Bhindranwale died in the operation. Casualty figures for the Army were 83 dead and 249 injured. According to the official estimate presented by the Indian government, 1592 were apprehended and there were 493 combined militant and civilian casualties. Later operations by Indian paramilitary forces were conducted to clear the separatists from the state of Punjab.

The operation carried out in the temple caused outrage among the Sikhs and increased the support for Khalistan Movement. Four months after the operation, on 31 October 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated in vengeance by her two Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh. One of the assassins was fatally shot by Gandhi's other bodyguards while the other was convicted of Gandhi's murder and then executed. Public outcry over Gandhi's death led to the killings of Sikhs in the ensuing 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Violence

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984 by two of her Sikh bodyguards, anti-Sikh riots erupted the following day. They continued in some areas for several days, killing more than 3,000 Sikhs in New Delhi and an estimated 8,000 – 17,000 or more Sikhs were killed in 40 cities across India. At least 50,000 Sikhs were displaced. Sultanpuri, Mangolpuri, Trilokpuri, and other Trans-Yamuna areas of Delhi

were the worst affected. Perpetrators carried iron rods, knives, clubs, and combustible material (including kerosene and petrol). They entered Sikh neighbourhoods, killing Sikhs indiscriminately and destroying shops and houses. Armed mobs stopped buses and trains in and near Delhi, pulling off Sikh passengers for lynching; some were burnt alive. Others were dragged from their homes and hacked to death, and Sikh women were reportedly gang-raped and Sikhs also had acid thrown on them.

Such wide-scale violence cannot take place without police help. Delhi Police, whose paramount duty was to upkeep law and order situation and protect innocent lives, gave full help to rioters who were in fact working under able guidance of sycophant leaders like Jagdish Tytler and H K L Bhagat. It is a known fact that many jails, sub-jails and lock-ups were opened for three days and prisoners, for the most part hardened criminals, were provided fullest provisions, means and instruction to "teach the Sikhs a lesson". But it will be wrong to say that Delhi Police did nothing, for it took full and keen action against Sikhs who tried to defend themselves. The Sikhs who opened fire to save their lives and property had to spend months dragging heels in courts after-wards.

- —□ *Jagmohan Singh Khurmi, The Tribune*

The riots have also been described as pogroms, massacres or genocide.

Meetings and weapons distribution

On 31 October, a crowd around the All India Institute of Medical Sciences began shouting vengeance slogans such as

"Blood for blood!" and became an unruly mob. At 17:20, President Zail Singh arrived at the hospital and the mob stoned his car. It began assaulting Sikhs, stopping cars and buses to pull Sikhs out and burn them. The violence on 31 October, restricted to the area around the AIIMS, resulted in many Sikh deaths. Residents of other parts of Delhi reported that their neighbourhoods were peaceful.

During the night of 31 October and the morning of 1 November, Congress Party leaders met with local supporters to distribute money and weapons. Congress MP Sajjan Kumar and trade-union leader Lalit Maken handed out ₹100 notes and bottles of liquor to the assailants. On the morning of 1 November, Sajjan Kumar was observed holding rallies in the Delhi neighbourhoods of Palam Colony (from 06:30 to 07:00), Kiran Gardens (08:00 to 08:30), and Sultanpuri (about 08:30 to 09:00). In Kiran Gardens at 8:00 am, Kumar was observed distributing iron rods from a parked truck to a group of 120 people and ordering them to "attack Sikhs, kill them, and loot and burn their properties". During the morning he led a mob along the Palam railway road to Mangolpuri, where the crowd chanted: "Kill the Sardars" and "Indira Gandhi is our mother and these people have killed her". In Sultanpuri, Moti Singh (a Sikh Congress Party member for 20 years) heard Kumar make the following speech:

Whoever kills the sons of the snakes, I will reward them. Whoever kills Roshan Singh and Bagh Singh will get 5,000 rupees each and 1,000 rupees each for killing any other Sikhs. You can collect these prizes on November 3 from my personal assistant Jai Chand Jamadar.

The Central Bureau of Investigation told the court that during the riot, Kumar said that "not a single Sikh should survive". The bureau accused Delhi police of keeping its "eyes closed" during the riot, which was planned.

In the Shakarpur neighbourhood, Congress Party leader Shyam Tyagi's home was used as a meeting place for an undetermined number of people. Minister of Information and Broadcasting H. K. L. Bhagat gave money to Boop Tyagi (Tyagi's brother), saying: "Keep these two thousand rupees for liquor and do as I have told you ... You need not worry at all. I will look after everything."

During the night of 31 October, Balwan Khokhar (a local Congress Party leader who was implicated in the massacre) held a meeting at Pandit Harkesh's ration shop in Palam. Congress Party supporter Shankar Lal Sharma held a meeting, where he assembled a mob which swore to kill Sikhs, in his shop at 08:30 on 1 November.

Kerosene, the primary mob weapon, was supplied by a group of Congress Party leaders who owned filling stations. In Sultanpuri, Congress Party A-4 block president Brahmanand Gupta distributed oil while Sajjan Kumar "instructed the crowd to kill Sikhs, and to loot and burn their properties" (as he had done at other meetings throughout New Delhi). Similar meetings were held at locations such as Cooperative Colony in Bokaro, where local Congress president and gas-station owner P. K. Tripathi distributed kerosene to mobs. Aseem Shrivastava, a graduate student at the Delhi School of Economics, described the mobs' organised nature in an affidavit submitted to the Misra Commission:

The attack on Sikhs and their property in our locality appeared to be an extremely organized affair ... There were also some young men on motorcycles, who were instructing the mobs and supplying them with kerosene oil from time to time. On more than a few occasions we saw auto-rickshaw arriving with several tins of kerosene oil and other inflammable material, such as jute sacks.

A senior official at the Ministry of Home Affairs told journalist Ivan Fera that an arson investigation of several businesses burned in the riots had found an unnamed combustible chemical "whose provision required large-scale coordination". Eyewitness reports confirmed the use of a combustible chemical in addition to kerosene. The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee later cited 70 affidavits noting the use of a highly-flammable chemical in its written reports to the Misra Commission.

Congress Party voter-list use

On 31 October, Congress Party officials provided assailants with voter lists, school registration forms, and ration lists. The lists were used to find Sikh homes and business, an otherwise-impossible task because they were in unmarked, diverse neighbourhoods. During the night of 31 October, before the massacres began, assailants used the lists to mark Sikh houses with an "S". Because most mob members were illiterate, Congress Party officials provided help reading the lists and leading the mobs to Sikh homes and businesses in other neighbourhoods. With the lists, the mobs could pinpoint the location of Sikhs they otherwise would have missed.

Sikh men not at home were easily identified by their turbans and beards, and Sikh women were identified by their dress. In some cases, the mobs returned to locations where they knew Sikhs were hiding because of the lists. Amar Singh escaped the initial attack on his house by having a Hindu neighbour drag him into the neighbour's house and announce that he was dead. A group of 18 assailants later came looking for his body; when his neighbour said that his body had been taken away, an assailant showed him a list and said: "Look, Amar Singh's name has not been struck off from the list, so his body has not been taken away."

Timeline

31 October

- 09:20: Indira Gandhi is shot by two of her Sikh security guards at her residence, and is rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).
- 10:50: Gandhi dies.
- 11:00: All India Radio reports that the guards who shot Gandhi were Sikhs.
- 16:00: Rajiv Gandhi returns from West Bengal to the AIIMS, where isolated attacks occur.
- 17:30: The motorcade of President Zail Singh, returning from a foreign visit, is stoned as it approaches the AIIMS.

Evening and night

- Organized, equipped gangs fan out from the AIIMS.

- Violence towards Sikhs and destruction of Sikh property spreads.
- Rajiv Gandhi is sworn in as Prime Minister.
- Senior advocate and BJP leader Ram Jethmalani meets Home Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao and urges him to take immediate steps to protect Sikhs from further attacks.
- Delhi lieutenant governor P. G. Gavai and police commissioner S. C. Tandon visit affected areas.

1 November

- The first Sikh is killed in East Delhi.
- 09:00: Armed mobs take over the streets in Delhi. Gurdwaras are among the first targets. The worst-affected areas are low-income neighbourhoods such as Trilokpuri, Shahdara, Geeta, Mongolpuri, Sultanpuri and Palam Colony. Areas with prompt police intervention, such as Farsh Bazar and Karol Bagh, see few killings and little major violence.

2 November

A curfew is announced in Delhi, but is not enforced. Although the army is deployed throughout the city, the police did not cooperate with soldiers (who are forbidden to fire without the consent of senior police officers and executive magistrates).

3 November

By late evening, army and local police units work together to subdue the violence. After law-enforcement intervention,

violence is comparatively mild and sporadic. In Delhi, the bodies of riot victims are brought to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Civil Hospital mortuary in Delhi.

Aftermath

The Delhi High Court, delivering its verdict on a riot-related case in 2009, said:

Though we boast of being the world's largest democracy and the Delhi being its national capital, the sheer mention of the incidents of 1984 anti-Sikh riots in general and the role played by Delhi Police and state machinery in particular makes our heads hang in shame in the eyes of the world polity.

The government allegedly destroyed evidence and shielded the guilty. *Asian Age*, an Indian daily newspaper, ran a front-page story calling the government actions "the mother of all cover-ups".

From 31 October 1984 to 10 November 1984 the People's Union for Democratic Rights and the People's Union for Civil Liberties conducted an inquiry into the riots, interviewing victims, police officers, neighbours of the victims, army personnel and political leaders. In their joint report, "Who Are The Guilty", the groups concluded:

The attacks on members of the Sikh Community in Delhi and its suburbs during the period, far from being a spontaneous expression of "madness" and of popular "grief and anger" at Mrs. Gandhi's assassination as made out to be by the authorities, were the outcome of a well organised plan marked

by acts of both deliberate commissions and omissions by important politicians of the Congress (I) at the top and by authorities in the administration.

According to eyewitness accounts obtained by *Time* magazine, Delhi police looked on as "rioters murdered and raped, having gotten access to voter records that allowed them to mark Sikh homes with large Xs, and large mobs being bused in to large Sikh settlements". *Time* reported that the riots led to only minor arrests, with no major politicians or police officers convicted. The magazine quoted Ensaaf, an Indian human-rights organisation, as saying that the government attempted to destroy evidence of its involvement by refusing to record First Information Reports.

A 1991 Human Rights Watch report on violence between Sikh separatists and the Government of India traced part of the problem to government response to the violence:

Despite numerous credible eye-witness accounts that identified many of those involved in the violence, including police and politicians, in the months following the killings, the government sought no prosecutions or indictments of any persons, including officials, accused in any case of murder, rape or arson.

The violence was allegedly led (and often perpetrated) by Indian National Congress activists and sympathizers. The Congress-led government was widely criticised for doing little at the time and possibly conspiring in the riots, since voter lists were used to identify Sikh families.

A few days after the massacre, many surviving Sikh youths in Delhi had joined or created Sikh militant groups. This led to more violence in Punjab, including the assassination of several senior Congress Party members. The Khalistan Commando Force and Khalistan Liberation Force claimed responsibility for the retaliation, and an underground network was established.

On 31 July 1985, Harjinder Singh Jinda, Sukhdev Singh Sukha and Ranjit Singh Gill of the Khalistan Commando Force assassinated Congress Party leader and MP Lalit Maken in retaliation for the riots. The 31-page report, "Who Are The Guilty?", listed 227 people who led the mobs; Maken was third on the list.

Harjinder Singh Jinda and Sukhdev Singh Sukha assassinated Congress Party leader Arjan Dass because of his involvement in the riots. Dass' name appeared in affidavits submitted by Sikh victims to the Nanavati Commission, headed by retired Supreme Court of India judge G. T. Nanavati.

Convictions

In Delhi, 442 rioters were convicted. Forty-nine were sentenced to the life imprisonment, and another three to more than 10 years' imprisonment. Six Delhi police officers were sanctioned for negligence during the riots. In April 2013, the Supreme Court of India dismissed the appeal of three people who had challenged their life sentences. That month, the Karkardooma district court in Delhi convicted five people – Balwan Khokkar (former councillor), Mahender Yadav (former MLA), Kishan Khokkar, Girdhari Lal and Captain Bhagmal – for inciting a

mob against Sikhs in Delhi Cantonment. The court acquitted Congress leader Sajjan Kumar, which led to protests.

In the first ever case of capital punishment in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots case death sentence was awarded to Yashpal Singh convicted for murdering two persons, 24-year-old Hardev Singh and 26-year-old Avtar Singh, in Mahipal Pur area of Delhi on 1 November 1984. Additional Sessions Judge Ajay Pandey pronounced the Judgement on 20 November 34 years after the crime was committed. The second convict in the case, Naresh Sehrawat was awarded life imprisonment. The Court considered the failing health of 68-year-old Sehrawat while giving him a lighter sentence. The conviction followed a complaint by the deceased Hardev Singh's elder brother Santokh Singh. Though an FIR was filed on the same day of the crime nothing came of the case as a Congress leader, JP Singh, who led the mob was acquitted in the case. A fresh FIR was filed on 29 April 1993, following recommendations of the Ranganath Commission of inquiry. The police closed the matter as untraced despite witness testimonies of the deceased's four brothers who were witness to the crime. The case was reopened by the Special Investigation Team constituted by the BJP-led NDA government on 12 February 2015. The SIT completed the investigation in record time. The first conviction resulting from the formation of the SIT came on 15 November 2018, by the conviction of Naresh Sehrawat and Yashpal Singh. Subsequently, one of the first high-profile conviction of Sajjan Kumar by Delhi High Court who was earlier acquitted by the lower court on 17 December 2018

Investigations

Ten commissions or committees have been formed to investigate the riots. The most recent, headed by Justice G. T. Nanavati, submitted its 185-page report to Home Minister Shivraj Patil on 9 February 2005; the report was tabled in Parliament on 8 August of that year. The commissions below are listed in chronological order. Many of the accused were acquitted or never formally charged.

Marwah Commission

The Marwah Commission was appointed in November 1984. Ved Marwah, Additional Commissioner of Police, was tasked with enquiring into the role of the police during the riots. Many of the accused Delhi Police officers were tried in the Delhi High Court. As Marwah was completing his inquiry in mid-1985, he was abruptly directed by the Home Ministry not to proceed further. The Marwah Commission records were appropriated by the government, and most (except for Marwah's handwritten notes) were later given to the Misra Commission.

Misra Commission

The Misra Commission was appointed in May 1985; Justice Rangnath Misra was a judge on the Supreme Court of India. Misra submitted his report in August 1986, and the report was made public in February 1987. In his report, he said that it was not part of his terms of reference to identify any individual and recommended the formation of three committees.

The commission and its report was criticised as biased by the People's Union for Civil Liberties and Human Rights Watch. According to a Human Rights Watch report on the commission:

It recommended no criminal prosecution of any individual, and it cleared all high-level officials of directing the pogroms. In its findings, the commission did acknowledge that many of the victims testifying before it had received threats from local police. While the commission noted that there had been "widespread lapses" on the part of the police, it concluded that "the allegations before the commission about the conduct of the police are more of indifference and negligence during the riots than of any wrongful overt act."

The People's Union for Civil Liberties criticised the Misra Commission for concealing information on the accused while disclosing the names and addresses of victims.

Kapur Mittal Committee

The Kapur Mittal Committee was appointed in February 1987 at the recommendation of the Misra Commission to enquire into the role of the police; the Marwah Commission had almost completed a police inquiry in 1985 when the government asked that committee not to continue. This committee consisted of Justice Dalip Kapur and Kusum Mittal, retired Secretary of Uttar Pradesh. It submitted its report in 1990, and 72 police officers were cited for conspiracy or gross negligence. Although the committee recommended the dismissal of 30 of the 72 officers, none have been punished.

Jain Banerjee Committee

The Jain Banerjee Committee was recommended by the Misra Commission for the registration of cases. The committee consisted of former Delhi High Court judge M. L. Jain and retired Inspector General of Police A. K. Banerjee.

In its report, the Misra Commission stated that many cases (particularly those involving political leaders or police officers) had not been registered. Although the Jain Banerjee Committee recommended the registration of cases against Sajjan Kumar in August 1987, no case was registered.

In November 1987, press reports criticised the government for not registering cases despite the committee's recommendation. The following month, Brahmanand Gupta (accused with Sajjan Kumar) filed a writ petition in the Delhi High Court and obtained a stay of proceedings against the committee which was not opposed by the government. The Citizen's Justice Committee filed an application to vacate the stay. The writ petition was decided in August 1989 and the high court abolished the committee. An appeal was filed by the Citizen's Justice Committee in the Supreme Court of India.

Potti Rosha Committee

The Potti Rosha Committee was appointed in March 1990 by the V. P. Singh government as a successor to the Jain Banerjee Committee. In August 1990, the committee issued recommendations for filing cases based on affidavits submitted by victims of the violence; there was one against Sajjan Kumar. When a CBI team went to Kumar's home to file the charges, his

supporters held and threatened them if they persisted in pursuing Kumar. When the committee's term expired in September 1990, Potti and Rosha decided to end their inquiry.

Jain Aggarwal Committee

The Jain Aggarwal Committee was appointed in December 1990 as a successor to the Potti Rosha Committee. It consisted of Justice J. D. Jain and retired Uttar Pradesh director general of police D. K. Aggarwal. The committee recommended the registration of cases against H. K. L. Bhagat, Sajjan Kumar, Dharamdas Shastri and Jagdish Tytler.

It suggested establishing two or three special investigating teams in the Delhi Police under a deputy commissioner of police, supervised by an additional commissioner of police answerable to the CID, and a review of the work-load of the three special courts set up to deal with the riot cases. The appointment of special prosecutors to deal the cases was also discussed. The committee was wound up in August 1993, but the cases it recommended were not registered by the police.

Ahuja Committee

The Ahuja Committee was the third committee recommended by the Misra Commission to determine the total number of deaths in Delhi. According to the committee, which submitted its report in August 1987, 2,733 Sikhs were killed in the city.

Dhillon Committee

The Dhillon Committee, headed by Gurdial Singh Dhillon, was appointed in 1985 to recommend measures for the rehabilitation of victims. The committee submitted its report by the end of the year. One major recommendation was that businesses with insurance coverage whose claims were denied should receive compensation as directed by the government. Although the committee recommended ordering the (nationalised) insurance companies to pay the claims, the government did not accept its recommendation and the claims were not paid.

Narula Committee

The Narula Committee was appointed in December 1993 by the Madan Lal Khurana-led BJP government in Delhi. One recommendation of the committee was to convince the central government to impose sanctions.

Khurana took up the matter with the central government, which in the middle of 1994, the Central Government decided that the matter did not fall within its purview and sent the case to the lieutenant governor of Delhi. It took two years for the P. V. Narasimha Rao government to decide that it did not fall within its purview.

The Narasimha Rao Government further delayed the case. The committee submitted its report in January 1994, recommending the registration of cases against H. K. L. Bhagat and Sajjan Kumar. Despite the central-government delay, the CBI filed the charge sheet in December 1994.

The Nanavati Commission

The Nanavati Commission was established in 2000 after some dissatisfaction was expressed with previous reports. The Nanavati Commission was appointed by a unanimous resolution passed in the Rajya Sabha. This commission was headed by Justice G.T. Nanavati, retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India. The commission submitted its report in February 2004. The commission reported that recorded accounts from victims and witnesses "indicate that local Congress leaders and workers had either incited or helped the mobs in attacking the Sikhs". Its report also found evidence against Jagdish Tytler "to the effect that very probably he had a hand in organising attacks on Sikhs". It also recommended that Sajjan Kumar's involvement in the rioting required a closer look. The commission's report also cleared Rajiv Gandhi and other high ranking Congress (I) party members of any involvement in organising riots against Sikhs. It did find, however, that the Delhi Police fired about 392 rounds of bullets, arrested approximately 372 persons, and "remained passive and did not provide protection to the people" throughout the rioting.

Role of Jagdish Tytler

The Central Bureau of Investigation closed all cases against Jagdish Tytler in November 2007 for his alleged criminal conspiracy to engineer riots against Sikhs in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination. The bureau submitted a report to the Delhi court that no evidence or witness was found to corroborate allegations that Tytler led murderous mobs during 1984. It was alleged in court that Tytler – then an MP –

complained to his supporters about the relatively-"small" number of Sikhs killed in his constituency (Delhi Sadar), which he thought had undermined his position in the Congress Party.

In December 2007 a witness, Dushyant Singh (then living in California), appeared on several private television news channels in India saying that he was never contacted by the CBI. The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) demanded an explanation in Parliament from Minister of State for Personnel Suresh Pachouri, who was in charge of the CBI. Pachouri, who was present, refused to make a statement. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of the Delhi Court Sanjeev Jain, who had dismissed the case against Tytler after the CBI submitted a misleading report, ordered the CBI to reopen cases against Tytler related to the riots on 18 December 2007.

In December 2008 a two-member CBI team went to New York to record statements from Jasbir Singh and Surinder Singh, two eyewitnesses. The witnesses said that they saw Tytler lead a mob during the riot, but did not want to return to India because they feared for their safety. They blamed the CBI for not conducting a fair trial, accusing the bureau of protecting Tytler.

In March 2009, the CBI cleared Tytler amidst protests from Sikhs and the opposition parties. On 7 April, Sikh *Dainik Jagran* reporter Jarnail Singh threw his shoe at Home Minister P. Chidambaram to protest the clearing of Tytler and Sajjan Kumar. Because of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, Chidambaram did not press charges.

Two days later, over 500 protesters from Sikh organisations throughout India gathered outside the court which was

scheduled to hear the CBI's plea to close the case against Tytler. Later in the day, Tytler announced that he was withdrawing from the Lok Sabha elections to avoid embarrassing his party. This forced the Congress Party to cut the Tytler and Sajjan Kumar Lok Sabha tickets.

On 10 April 2013, the Delhi court ordered the CBI to reopen the 1984 case against Tytler. The court ordered the bureau to investigate the killing of three people in the riot case, of which Tytler had been cleared.

New York civil case

Sikhs for Justice, a U.S.-based NGO, filed a civil suit in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York on 14 March 2011 accusing the Indian government of complicity in the riots. The court issued a summons to the Congress Party and Kamal Nath, who was accused by the Nanavati commission of encouraging rioters. The complaint against Nath was dismissed in March 2012 by Judge Robert W. Sweet, who ruled that the court lacked jurisdiction in the case. The 22-page order granted Nath's motion to dismiss the claim, with Sweet noting that Sikhs for Justice failed to "serve the summons and its complaints to Nath in an appropriate and desired manner". On 3 September 2013, a federal court in New York issued a summons to Sonia Gandhi for her alleged role in protecting participants in the riots. A U.S. court dismissed the lawsuit against Gandhi on 11 July 2014.

Cobrapost operation

According to an April 2014 *Cobrapost* sting operation, the government muzzled the Delhi Police during the riots. Messages were broadcast directing the police not to act against rioters, and the fire brigade would not go to areas where cases of arson were reported.

Special Investigation Team (Supreme Court)

In January 2018, the Supreme Court of India decided to form a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) of its own to probe 186 cases related to 1984 anti-Sikh riots that were not further investigated by Union Government formed SIT. This SIT would consists of a former High court judge, a former IPS officer whose rank is not less than or equivalent to Inspector general and a serving IPS Officer.

Impact and legacy

On 12 August 2005, Manmohan Singh apologised in the Lok Sabha for the riots. The riots are cited as a reason to support the creation of a Sikh homeland in India, often called Khalistan.

Many Indians of different religions made significant efforts to hide and help Sikh families during the rioting. The Sikh Jathedar of Akal Takht declared the events following the death of Indira Gandhi a Sikh "genocide", replacing "anti-Sikh riots" widely used by the Indian government, the media and writers, on 15 July 2010. The decision came soon after a similar motion was raised in the Canadian Parliament by a Sikh MP.

Although several political parties and governments have promised compensation for the families of riot victims, compensation has not yet been paid.

On 16 April 2015, Assembly Concurrent Resolution 34 (ACR 34) was passed by the California State Assembly. Co-authored by Sacramento-area assembly members Jim Cooper, Kevin McCarty, Jim Gallagher and Ken Cooley, the resolution criticized the Government for participating in and failing to prevent the killings. The assembly called the killings a "genocide", as it "resulted in the intentional destruction of many Sikh families, communities, homes and businesses." In April 2017, the Ontario Legislature passed a motion condemning the anti-Sikh riots as "genocide". The Indian government lobbied against the motion and condemned it upon its adoption. In February 2018, American state of Connecticut, passed a bill stating, 30 November of each year to be "Sikh Genocide" Remembrance Day to remember the lives lost on 30 November 1984, during the Sikh Genocide.

On 15 January 2017, the Wall of Truth was inaugurated in Lutyens' Delhi, New Delhi, as a memorial for Sikhs killed during the 1984 riots (and other hate crimes across the world).

Chapter 55

Rajiv Gandhi is Assassinated by a Suicide Bomber

- **Rajiv Ratna Gandhi** (20 August 1944 – 21 May 1991) was an Indian politician who served as the 6th prime minister of India from 1984 to 1989. He took office after the 1984 assassination of his mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, to become the youngest Indian prime minister at the age of 40.

Gandhi was from the politically powerful Nehru–Gandhi family, which had been associated with the Indian National Congress party. For much of his childhood, his maternal grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru was prime minister. Gandhi attended college in the United Kingdom. He returned to India in 1966 and became a professional pilot for the state-owned Indian Airlines. In 1968, he married Sonia Gandhi; the couple settled in Delhi to a domestic life with their children Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. For much of the 1970s, his mother Indira Gandhi was prime minister and his brother Sanjay Gandhi an MP; despite this, Rajiv Gandhi remained apolitical. After Sanjay's death in a plane crash in 1980, Gandhi reluctantly entered politics at the behest of Indira. The following year he won his brother's Parliamentary seat of Amethi and became a member of the Lok Sabha—the lower house of India's Parliament. As part of his political grooming, Rajiv was made general secretary of the Congress party and given significant responsibility in organising the 1982 Asian Games.

On the morning of 31 October 1984, his mother was assassinated by one of her bodyguards; later that day, Gandhi was appointed prime minister. His leadership was tested over the next few days as organised mobs of congress supporters rioted against the Sikh community, resulting in anti-Sikh massacres in Delhi with sources estimate the number of Sikh deaths at about 8,000–17,000. That December, Congress party won the largest Lok Sabha majority to date, 411 seats out of 542. Rajiv Gandhi's period in office was mired in controversies; perhaps the greatest crises were the Bhopal disaster, Bofors scandal and *Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum*. In 1988, he reversed the coup in Maldives, antagonising militant Tamil groups such as PLOTE, intervening and then sending peacekeeping troops to Sri Lanka in 1987, leading to open conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In mid-1987, the Bofors scandal damaged his corruption-free image and resulted in a major defeat for his party in the 1989 election.

Gandhi remained Congress President until the elections in 1991. While campaigning for the elections, he was assassinated by a suicide bomber from the LTTE. His widow Sonia became the president of the Congress party in 1998 and led the party to victory in the 2004 and 2009 parliamentary elections. His son Rahul Gandhi is a Member of Parliament and was the President of the Indian National Congress till 2019. In 1991, the Indian government posthumously awarded Gandhi the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian award. At the India Leadership Conclave in 2009, the *Revolutionary Leader of Modern India* award was conferred posthumously on Gandhi.

Early life and career

Rajiv Gandhi was born in Bombay on 20 August 1944 to Indira and Feroze Gandhi. In 1951, Rajiv and Sanjay were admitted to Shiv Niketan school, where the teachers said Rajiv was shy and introverted, and "greatly enjoyed painting and drawing".

He was admitted to the Welham Boys' School, Dehradun and Doon School, Dehradun in 1954, where Sanjay joined him two years later. Rajiv was sent to London in 1961 to study A-levels. Rajiv was also educated at the Ecole D'Humanité, an international boarding school in Switzerland. From 1962 to 1965 he studied engineering at Trinity College, Cambridge, but did not obtain a degree. In 1966 he began a course in mechanical engineering at Imperial College London, but did not complete it either. Gandhi really was not studious enough, as he went on to admit later.

Gandhi returned to India in 1966, the year his mother became prime minister. He went to Delhi and became a member of the Flying Club, where he was trained as a pilot. In 1970, he was employed as a pilot by Indian Airlines; unlike Sanjay, he did not exhibit any interest of joining politics. In 1968, after three years of courtship, he married Edvige Antonia Albina Màino, who changed her name to Sonia Gandhi and made India her home. Their first child, a son, Rahul Gandhi was born in 1970. In 1972, the couple had a daughter, Priyanka Gandhi, who married Robert Vadra.

Entry into politics

On 23 June 1980, Rajiv's younger brother Sanjay Gandhi died unexpectedly in an aeroplane crash. At that time, Rajiv Gandhi was in London as part of his foreign tour. Hearing the news, he returned to Delhi and cremated Sanjay's body. As per Agarwal, in the week following Sanjay's death, Shankaracharya Swami Shri Swaroopanand, a saint from Badrinath, visited the family's house to offer his condolences. He advised Rajiv not to fly aeroplanes and instead "dedicate himself to the service of the nation". 70 members of the Congress party signed a proposal and went to Indira, urging Rajiv to enter politics. Indira told them it was Rajiv's decision whether to enter politics. When he was questioned about it, he replied, "If my mother gets help from it, then I will enter politics". Rajiv entered politics on 16 February 1981, when he addressed a national farmers' rally in Delhi. During this time, he was still an employee of Air India.

Participation in active politics

On 4 May 1981, Indira Gandhi presided over a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. Vasantdada Patil proposed Rajiv as a candidate for the Amethi constituency, which was accepted by all members at the meeting. A week later, the party officially announced his candidacy for the constituency. He then paid the party membership fees of the party and flew to Sultanpur to file his nomination papers and completed other formalities. He won the seat, defeating Lok Dal candidate Sharad Yadav by a margin of 237,000 votes. He took his oath on 17 August as Member of Parliament.

Rajiv Gandhi's first political tour was to England, where he attended the wedding ceremony of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer on 29 July 1981. In December the same year, he was put in charge of the Indian Youth Congress. He first showed his organisational ability by "working round the clock" on the 1982 Asian Games. He was one of 33 members of the Indian parliament who were part of the Games' organising committee; sports historian Boria Majumdar writes that being "son of the prime minister he had a moral and unofficial authority" over the others. The report submitted by the Asian Games committee mentions Gandhi's "drive, zeal and initiative" for the "outstanding success" of the games.

1984 anti-Sikh riots post Indira Gandhi's death

On 31 October 1984, the prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi's mother, Indira Gandhi, was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, which led to violent riots against Sikhs. At a Boat Club rally 19 days after the assassination, Gandhi said, "Some riots took place in the country following the murder of Indiraji. We know the people were very angry and for a few days it seemed that India had been shaken. But, when a mighty tree falls, it is only natural that the earth around it does shake a little".

According to Verinder Grover, the statement made by Gandhi was a "virtual justification" of the riots. Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar wrote, "Did it constitute an incitement to mass murder?" He also criticised Gandhi for his reluctance to bring the army from Meerut to handle the mob.

Prime Minister of India

- Rajiv Gandhi was in West Bengal on 31 October 1984 when his mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, to avenge the military attack on the Golden Temple during Operation Blue Star. Sardar Buta Singh and President Zail Singh pressed Rajiv to succeed his mother as prime minister within hours of her murder. Commenting on the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, Rajiv Gandhi said, "When a giant tree falls, the earth below shakes"; a statement for which he was widely criticised. Many Congress politicians were accused of orchestrating the violence.

Soon after assuming office, Gandhi asked President Singh to dissolve Parliament and hold fresh elections, as the Lok Sabha had completed its five-year term. Gandhi officially became the President of the Congress party, which won a landslide victory with the largest majority in history of the Indian Parliament, giving Gandhi absolute control of government. He benefited from his youth and a general perception of being free of a background in corrupt politics. Gandhi took his oath on 31 December 1984; at 40, he was the youngest Prime Minister of India. Historian Meena Agarwal writes that even after taking the Prime Ministerial oath, he was a relatively unknown figure, "novice in politics" as he assumed the post after being an MP for three years.

Cabinet ministers

After his swearing-in as prime minister, Gandhi appointed his fourteen-member cabinet. He said he would monitor their performance and would "fire ministers who do not come to the mark". From the Third Indira Gandhi ministry, he removed two powerful figures; Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Railway Minister A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury. Mohsina Kidwai became the Minister of Railways; she was the only female figure in the cabinet. Former Home Minister PV Narasimha Rao was put in charge of defence. V.P. Singh who was initially appointed as the Finance Minister, was given the Defence Ministry in 1987. During his tenure as Prime Minister, Gandhi frequently shuffled his cabinet ministers, drawing criticism from the magazine *India Today*, which called it a "wheel of confusion". The West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu said, "The Cabinet change reflects the instability of the Congress (I) Government at the Centre".

Anti-defection law

Gandhi's first action as Prime Minister was passing the anti-defection law in January 1985. According to this law, an elected Member of Parliament or legislative assembly could not join an opposition party until the next election. Historian Manish Telikicherla Chary calls it a measure of curbing corruption and bribery of ministers by switching parties so they could gain majority. Many such defections occurred during the 1980s as elected leaders of the Congress party joined opposition parties.

Shah Bano case

In 1985, the Supreme Court of India ruled in favour of Muslim divorcee Shah Bano, declaring that her husband should give her alimony. Some Indian Muslims treated it as an encroachment upon Muslim Personal Law and protested against it. Gandhi agreed to their demands. In 1986, the Parliament of India passed The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986, which nullified the Supreme Court's judgment in the Shah Bano case. The Act diluted the Supreme Court judgment and allowed maintenance payments to divorced women only during the period of Iddah, or until 90 days after the divorce, according to the provisions of Islamic law. This was in contrast to Section 125 of the Code. Indian magazine *Business and Economics* called it a minority appeasement by Gandhi. Lawyer and former Law Minister of India, Ram Jethmalani, called the Act "retrogressive obscurantism for short-term minority populism". Gandhi's colleague Arif Mohammad Khan, who was then a Member of Parliament, resigned in protest.

Economic policy

In his election manifesto for the 1984 general election, he did not mention any economic reforms, but after assuming office he tried to liberalise the country's economy. He did so by providing incentives to make private production profitable. Subsidies were given to corporate companies to increase industrial production, especially of durable goods. It was hoped this would increase economic growth and improve the quality of investment. But according to Professor Atul Kohli of Princeton University in a book published by Cambridge

University, Gandhi faced stiff opposition from Congress leadership who thought "it would open the economy to external economic influences". Rural and tribal people protested because they saw them as "pro-rich" and "pro-city" reforms.

Gandhi increased government support for science, technology and associated industries, and reduced import quotas, taxes and tariffs on technology-based industries, especially computers, airlines, defence and telecommunications. In 1986, he announced a National Policy on Education to modernise and expand higher education programs across India. In 1986, he founded the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya System, which is a Central government-based education institution that provides rural populations with free residential education from grades six to twelve. His efforts created MTNL in 1986, and his public call offices—better known as PCOs—helped develop the telephone network in rural areas. He introduced measures to significantly reduce the *Licence Raj* after 1990, allowing businesses and individuals to purchase capital, consumer goods and import without bureaucratic restrictions.

Foreign policy

According to Rejaul Karim Laskar, a scholar of Indian foreign policy and an ideologue of Congress party, Rajiv Gandhi's vision for a new world order was premised on India's place in its front rank. According to Laskar, the "whole gamut" of Rajiv Gandhi's foreign policy was "geared towards" making India "strong, independent, self-reliant and in the front rank of the nations of the world." According to Laskar, Rajiv Gandhi's diplomacy was "properly calibrated" so as to be "conciliatory

and accommodating when required" and "assertive when the occasion demanded."

In 1986, by request of the President of Seychelles France-Albert René, Gandhi sent India's navy to Seychelles to oppose an attempted coup against René. The intervention of India averted the coup. This mission was codenamed as Operation Flowers are Blooming. In 1987, India re-occupied the Quaid Post in the disputed Siachen region of the Indo-Pakistani border after winning what was termed Operation Rajiv. In the 1988 Maldives coup d'état, the Maldives president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom asked for help from Gandhi. He dispatched 1500 soldiers and the coup was suppressed.

On Thursday, 9 June 1988, at the fifteenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly, held at Headquarters, New York, Gandhi made vocal his views on a world free of nuclear weapons, to be realised through an, 'Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear-Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order.'

He said:

Alas, nuclear weapons are not the only weapons of mass destruction. New knowledge is being generated in the life sciences. Military applications of these developments could rapidly undermine the existing convention against the military use of biological weapons. The ambit of our concern must extend to all means of mass annihilation.

This was based on his prior historic speech before the Japanese National Diet on 29 November 1985, in which he said:

Let us remove the mental partitions which obstruct the ennobling vision of the human family linked together in peace and prosperity. The Buddha's message of compassion is the very condition of human survival in our age.

The foiled bid of India recently to enter the Nuclear Suppliers Group, echoed his policy of non-proliferation to be linked to universal disarmament, which the World Nuclear Association refuses to recognise; non-proliferation being seen by India as essentially a weapon of the arms control regime, of the big nuclear powers as United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and China.

Pakistan

In February 1987, the Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq visited Delhi, where he met Gandhi to discuss "routine military exercises of the Indian army" on the borders of Rajasthan and Punjab. Gandhi reciprocated, in December 1988, by visiting Islamabad and meeting the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, to reaffirm the 1972 Shimla agreement.

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan Civil War broke out with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which was demanding an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka. Gandhi discussed the matter with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa at the SAARC meeting in 1986. In that year, the Sri Lankan army blockaded the Tamil majority district of Jaffna; Gandhi ordered relief supplies to be dropped into the area by parachute because the Sri Lankan navy did not allow the Indian Navy to

enter. Gandhi signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987. The accord "envisaged a devolution of power to the Tamil-majority areas", dissolved the LTTE, and designated Tamil as an official language of Sri Lanka. Gandhi said:

The Government of India believe that, despite some problems and delays, many of which were foreseen but unavoidable in the resolution of an issue of this magnitude and complexity, this Agreement represents the only way of safeguarding legitimate Tamil interests and ensuring a durable peace in Sri Lanka. Some have chosen to criticise the Agreement. None has shown a better way of meeting the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, restoring peace in that country and of meeting our own security concern in the region. We have accepted a role which is difficult, but which is in our national interests to discharge. We shall not shrink our obligations and commitments. This is a national endeavour.

Chanderasekar withdrew the IPKF in 1989.

Assault by Sri Lankan guard

On 30 July 1987, a day after Gandhi went to Sri Lanka and signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, an honour guard named Vijitha Rohana hit him on his shoulder with his rifle; Gandhi's quick reflexes saved him from injury. The guard was then dragged off by his security personnel. The guard said his intention was to kill Gandhi because of "the damage he had caused" to Sri Lanka. Wijemuni was imprisoned for two-and-a-half years for the assault. Gandhi later said about the incident:

When I was inspecting the guard of honour and as I walked past one person, I saw through the corner of my eye some movement. I ducked down a little bit in a reflex action. By my ducking, he missed my head and the brunt of the blow came on my shoulder below the left ear.

Regional issues

Punjab

Soon after assuming office, Gandhi released the leaders of the Akali Dal who had been imprisoned since 1984's Operation Blue Star during Indira Gandhi's prime ministership. He lifted the ban on All India Sikh Students Federation and filed an inquiry into the 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots. He also held a closed-door meeting with senior Akali Dal leaders to find a solution to the Punjab problem. Despite Akali opposition, in January 1985, Gandhi signed the Rajiv-Longowal Accord with Akali leader HS Longowal. Punjab's state assembly election was scheduled in September 1985, but Longowal died and was replaced by Surjit Singh Barnala, who formed the government. After two years, in 1987, Barnala resigned his office because of a breakdown of law and order, leading to the implementation of President's rule in the state.

In May 1988, Gandhi launched the Operation Black Thunder to clear the Golden Temple in Amritsar of arms and gunmen. Two groups called National Security Guard and Special Action Group were created; they surrounded the temple in a 10-day siege during which the extremists' weapons were confiscated. Congress leader Anand Sharma said, "Operation Black Thunder

effectively demonstrated the will of Rajiv Gandhi's government to take firm action to bring peace to Punjab".

Northeast India

Gandhi's prime-ministership marked an increase of insurgency in northeast India. Mizo National Front demanded independence for Mizoram. In 1987, Gandhi addressed this problem; Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were given the status of states that were earlier union territories. Gandhi also ended the Assam Movement, which was launched by Assamese people to protest against the alleged illegal migration of Bangladeshi Muslims and immigration of other Bengalis to their state, which had reduced the Assamese to a minority there. He signed the Assam Accord on 15 August 1985. According to the accord, foreigners who came to the state between 1951 and 1961 were given full citizenship but those who arrived there between 1961 and 1971 did not get right to vote for the next ten years.

Technology

Gandhi employed former Rockwell International executive Sam Pitroda as his adviser on public information infrastructure and innovation. During Gandhi's time in office, public sector telecom companies MTNL and VSNL was developed. According to Pitroda, Gandhi's ability to resist pressure from multinational companies to abandon his plan to spread telecommunication services has been an important factor in India's development. According to news website Oneindia, "About 20 years ago telephones were considered to be a thing for the use of the rich, but credit goes to Rajiv Gandhi for

taking them to the rural masses". Pitroda also said their plan to expand India's telephone network succeeded because of Gandhi's political support. According to Pitroda, by 2007 they were "adding six million phones every month". Gandhi's government also allowed the import of fully assembled motherboards, which led to the price of computers being reduced. According to some commentators, the seed for the information technology (IT) revolution was also planted during Rajiv Gandhi's time.

Bofors scandal, HDW scandal and 1989 elections defeat

Rajiv Gandhi's finance minister, V. P. Singh, uncovered compromising details about government and political corruption, to the consternation of Congress leaders. Transferred to the Defence Ministry, Singh uncovered what became known as the Bofors scandal, which involved millions of US dollars and concerned alleged payoffs by the Swedish arms company Bofors through Italian businessman and Gandhi family associate Ottavio Quattrocchi, in return for Indian contracts. Upon discovering the scandal, Singh was dismissed from office and later resigned his Congress membership. Gandhi was later personally implicated in the scandal when the investigation was continued by Narasimhan Ram and Chitra Subramaniam of *The Hindu* newspaper, damaging his image as an honest politician. In 2004, he was posthumously cleared of this allegation.

In an interview in July 2005, V.P.Singh explained that his fall out with Rajiv Gandhi was not due to the Bofors deal, but rather due to the HDW deal. Courtesy a contract signed with the Germany company HDW in 1981, the Indian government

had agreed to purchase two ready submarines built in Germany by HDW and two submarines in CKD form to be assembled in Mazagaon docks. V.P.Singh had received a telegram from the Indian ambassador in Germany, stating that an Indian agents had received commissions in the HDW submarine deal. He told Rajiv Gandhi about this and instituted an enquiry. This led to differences and V.P.Singh resigned from the cabinet.

In his book, *Unknown Facets of Rajiv Gandhi*, Jyoti Basu and Indrajit Gupta, released in November 2013, former CBI director Dr. A P Mukherjee wrote that Gandhi wanted commission paid by defence suppliers to be used exclusively for meeting running expenses of the Congress party. Mukherjee said Gandhi explained his position in a meeting between the two at the Prime Minister's residence on 19 June 1989. In May 2015, Indian president Pranab Mukherjee said the scandal was a "media trial" as "no Indian court has as yet established it as a scandal".

Opposition parties Lok Dal, Indian National Congress (Socialist) and Jan Morcha united under Singh to form the Janata Dal. Singh led the National Front coalition to victory in 1989 elections and he was sworn in as Prime Minister. Though the coalition won 143 seats compared to Congress's 197, it gained majority in the lower house of the parliament through outside support from the Bharatiya Janta Party under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani and the left parties such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India. Eminent lawyer and politician, former Law Minister of India Ram Jethmalani said that as Prime Minister, Gandhi was "lacklustre and mediocre".

Later years

Allegations of black money

In November 1991, *Schweizer Illustrierte* magazine published an article on black money held in secret accounts by Imelda Marcos and 14 other rulers of Third World countries. Citing McKinsey as a source, the article stated that Rajiv Gandhi held 2.5 billion Swiss francs in secret Indian accounts in Switzerland. Several leaders of opposition parties in India raised the issue, citing the *Schweizer Illustrierte* article. In December 1991, Amal Datta raised the issue in the Indian Parliament; the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Shivraj Patil, expunged Rajiv Gandhi's name from the proceedings. In December 2011, Subramanian Swamy wrote to the director of the Central Bureau of Investigation, citing the article and asking him to take action on black money accounts of the Nehru-Gandhi family. On 29 December 2011, Ram Jethmalani made an indirect reference to the issue in the Rajya Sabha, calling it a shame that one of India's former Prime Ministers was named by a Swiss magazine. This was met by an uproar and a demand for withdrawal of the remark by the ruling Congress party members.

Funding from KGB

In 1992, the Indian newspapers *Times of India* and *The Hindu* published reports alleging that Rajiv Gandhi had received funds from the KGB. The Russian government confirmed this disclosure and defended the payments as necessary for Soviet ideological interest. In their 1994 book *The State Within a*

State, journalists Yevgenia Albats and Catherine Fitzpatrick quoted a letter signed by Viktor Chebrikov, head of the KGB, in the 1980s. The letter says the KGB maintained contact with Gandhi, who expressed his gratitude to the KGB for benefits accruing to his family from commercial dealings of a controlled firm. A considerable portion of funds obtained from this channel were used to support his party. Albats later said that in December 1985, Chebrikov had asked for authorisation from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to make payments to family members of Rajiv Gandhi, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. The payments were authorised by a resolution and endorsed by the USSR Council of Ministers, and had been paid since 1971. In December 2001, Subramanian Swamy filed a writ petition in the Delhi High Court; the Court ordered CBI to ascertain the truth of the allegations in May 2002. After two years, the CBI told the Court Russia would not entertain such queries without a registered FIR.

Assassination

The **assassination of Rajiv Gandhi**, former Prime Minister of India, occurred as a result of a suicide bombing in Sriperumbudur, Chennai, in Tamil Nadu, India on 21 May 1991. At least 14 others, in addition to Rajiv Gandhi, were killed. It was carried out by Thenmozhi Rajaratnam (also known as Kalaivani Rajaratnam or Dhanu), a member of the Sri Lankan separatist organization Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). At the time, India had just ended its involvement, through the Indian Peace Keeping Force, in the Sri Lankan Civil War. Subsequent accusations of conspiracy

have been addressed by two commissions of inquiry and have brought down at least one national government.

Rajiv Gandhi was busy campaigning for the upcoming elections along with G.K. Moopanar in southern states of India. On 21 May, after campaigning in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, his next stop was Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu. About two hours after arriving in Madras (now Chennai), Gandhi was driven by motorcade in a white Ambassador car to Sriperumbudur, stopping along the way at a few other election campaigning venues. When he reached a campaign rally in Sriperumbudur, he left his car and began walking towards the dais where he was to deliver a speech. Along the way, he was garlanded by many well-wishers, Congress party workers and school children. The assassin, Dhanu (Thenmozhi Rajaratnam), approached and greeted him. She then bent down to touch his feet and detonated an RDX explosive-laden belt tucked below her dress at exactly 10:10 PM. Gandhi, his assassin and 14 others were killed in the explosion that followed, along with 43 others who were grievously injured. The assassination was caught on film by a local photographer, Haribabu, whose camera and film was found intact at the site despite him also dying in the blast.

Victims

Apart from the suicide bomber Thenmozhi Rajaratnam, several people were killed in the blast on 21 May 1991:

- Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India
- Dharman, police constable
- Santhani Begum, Mahila Congress Leader

- Rajguru, police inspector
- Chandra, police constable
- Edward Joseph, police inspector
- K.S Mohammed Iqbal, police superintendent
- Latha Kannan, Mahila Congress worker, who was with her daughter Kokilavani
- Kokilavani, ten-year-old daughter of Latha Kannan, who sang a poem to Gandhi immediately prior to the blast
- Darryl Jude Peters, attendee and observer
- Munuswamy, former member of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council
- Saroja Devi, seventeen-year old college student
- Pradeep K Gupta, personal security officer of Rajiv Gandhi
- Ethiraju
- Murugan, police constable
- Ravichandran, Black Cat commando

Around forty-three bystanders including police sub-inspector Anushiya Daisy were also injured in the explosion.

Security lapses

The Supreme Court held that the decision to eliminate Gandhi was premeditated by his interview to *Sunday* magazine (21–28 August 1990), where he stated that he would send the IPKF to disarm the LTTE if he returned to power. Gandhi also defended the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord in the same interview. The LTTE decision to kill him was perhaps aimed at preventing him from coming to power again. Thereafter, the Justice J S

Verma Commission was formed to look into the security lapses that contributed to the killing.

The final report, submitted in June 1992, concluded that the security arrangements for the former PM were adequate but that the local Congress party leaders disrupted and broke these arrangements.

The Narasimha Rao government initially rejected Verma's findings but later accepted it under pressure. However, no action was taken on the recommendations of the commission.

Despite no action, the findings raised vital questions that have previously been consistently raised by political analysts. Sources have indicated that Gandhi was repeatedly informed that there was a threat to his life and that he should not travel to Tamil Nadu. In fact, the then governor of Tamil Nadu Bhisim Narayan Singh, broke official protocol and twice warned Gandhi about the threat to his life if he visited the state.

Dr Subramanian Swamy said in his book, *Sri Lanka in Crisis: India's Options (2007)*, that an LTTE delegation had met Rajiv Gandhi on 5 March 1991. Another delegation met him around 14 March 1991 in New Delhi.

Journalist Ram Bahadur Rai wrote that:

The message conveyed to Rajiv Gandhi by both these delegations was that there was no threat to his life and that he can travel to Tamil Nadu without fearing for his life. I did a series of articles after his assassination that pointed out how, after these meetings, Rajiv became complacent about his security and broke security rules in more than 40 rallies.

Funeral

Following his assassination, Rajiv Gandhi's mutilated body was airlifted to New Delhi. From the Indira Gandhi International Airport, his body was sent to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi for an autopsy, reconstruction and embalming.

A state funeral was held for Rajiv Gandhi on 24 May 1991. His funeral was broadcast live nationally and internationally, and was attended by dignitaries from over 60 countries. He was cremated on the banks of the river Yamuna, near the cremation spot of his mother, brother and grandfather. Today, the site where he was cremated is known as Veerbhumi.

Investigation

Immediately after the assassination, the Chandrasekhar government handed the investigation over to the CBI on 22 May 1991. The agency created a special investigation team under D. R. Karthikeyan to determine who was responsible for the assassination. The SIT probe confirmed the role of the LTTE in the assassination, which was upheld by the Supreme Court of India.

The interim report of Justice Milap Chand Jain, looking into the conspiracy angle to the assassination, indicted the DMK for colluding with the LTTE. The report concluded that the DMK had provided sanctuary to the LTTE, which made it easier for the rebels to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi.

The Commission report stated that the year 1989 signified "the perpetuation of the general political trend of indulging the Tamil militants on Indian soil and tolerance of their wide-ranging criminal and anti-national activities". The report also alleged that LTTE leaders in Jaffna were in possession of sensitive coded messages exchanged between the Union government and the state government of DMK. "There is evidence to show that, during this period, some of the most vital wireless messages were passed between the LTTE operatives based in Tamil Nadu and Jaffna. These messages, which were decoded later, are directly related to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi", the report stated. The Congress subsequently brought down the United Front (UF) government of I K Gujral after the report was leaked in November 1998. The party also demanded the removal of DMK from the UF government, arguing that it had played a key role in the death of Rajiv Gandhi.

The assassin

- The assassination was carried out by Thenmozhi Rajarathnam, also known as Gayathri Rajarathnam, Dhanu or Gayathri. Born on 1 January 1974 in Batticaloa in the eastern province of the Sri Lanka, she was inspired by the Tamil militant group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) at a young age, and joined the Black Tigers (suicide bombers). The main reason why Dhanu became a Tiger is that her brother was a well-known cadre who had died and she was carrying on the family tradition. Thenmozhi was the daughter of a Sri

Lankan Tamil man named A.Rajaratnam and his second wife. He allegedly was described as Prabhakaran's mentor; and he played a vital role in moulding the LTTE chief's thinking during the movement's formative years between 1972 and 1975. Thenmozhi was survived by her mother, brother Sivavarman and two sisters, one of whom moved to France. Thenmozhi was 17 years old when she carried out the assassination.

The court convicted and sentenced the seven persons who facilitated the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi to life imprisonment. They are currently undergoing life imprisonment in prisons in India. They are:

- Murugan alias Sriharan - A LTTE operative from Sri Lanka
- Nalini - Wife of Murugan. Nalini is a citizen of India.
- Santhan alias T. Suthenthiraraja - A Sri Lankan national.
- Robert Pious - A Sri Lankan national.
- Jayakumar - The brother in law of Robert Pious.
- Ravichandran - A Sri Lankan national.
- A. G. Perarivalan - An Indian citizen who was arrested for supplying a 9-volt battery for the explosive device.

Supreme Court judgment

As per the Supreme Court of India judgment, by Judge K. T. Thomas, the killing was carried out due to personal animosity of the LTTE chief Prabhakaran towards Rajiv Gandhi.

Additionally, the Rajiv Gandhi administration had antagonised other Tamil militant organisations like PLOTE for reversing the military coup in Maldives back in 1988.

The judgment further cited the death of Thileepan in a hunger strike and the suicide by 12 LTTE cadres in a vessel in October 1987. While convicting the accused, four of them to death and others to various jail terms, the judgment stated that no evidence existed that any one of the conspirators ever desired the death of any Indian other than Rajiv Gandhi, though several others were killed. Judge Wadhwa further stated there was nothing on record to show that the intention to kill Rajiv Gandhi was to overawe the government. Hence it was held that it was not a terrorist act under TADA (Act). Judge Thomas further stated that conspiracy was hatched in stages commencing from 1987 and that it spanned several years. The special investigation team of India's premier special investigation agency Central Bureau of Investigation was not able to pinpoint when the decision to kill Rajiv Gandhi was taken.

Trial

The trial was conducted under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act. On 28 January 1998, the designated TADA court in Chennai gave death sentences to all the 26 accused. This created a storm in India. Legal experts were divided. Human rights groups protested that the trial did not meet the standards of a free trial. The trial was held behind closed doors, *in camera*, and the identity of witnesses was not disclosed. Ms A. Athirai, an accused, was 17 years old when she was arrested.

Under the TADA an accused can appeal only to the Supreme Court. Appeal to the High Court is not allowed as in normal law. Confessions given by the accused to the Superintendent of Police are taken as evidence against the accused under TADA. Under TADA the accused could be convicted on the basis of evidence that would have been insufficient for conviction by an ordinary court under normal Indian law. In the Rajiv Gandhi case, confessions by the accused formed a major part of the evidence in the judgment against them which they later claimed was taken under duress.

On appeal to the Supreme Court, only four of the accused were sentenced to death and the others to various jail terms. S Nalini Sriharan is the lone surviving member of the five-member squad behind the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and is serving life imprisonment. Arrested on 14 June 1991, she was sentenced to death, along with the other 25 accused. However, the court confirmed that the death sentence was given to only four of the convicts, including Nalini, on 11 May 1999. Nalini, who is the wife of an LTTE operative known as V Sriharan alias Murugan, another convict in the case who had been sentenced to death, later gave birth to a girl, Harithra Murugan in prison. Upon the intervention of Rajiv Gandhi's widow and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who petitioned for clemency for the sake of Nalini's daughter in 2000, the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Nalini was treated as a class 'A' convict from 10 September 1999 till the privilege was withdrawn in May 2010 after a mobile phone was allegedly recovered from her cell during a surprise check. She "regrets" the killing of the former Prime Minister and claims that the real conspirators have not been booked yet. The President of India rejected the clemency pleas of Murugan and two others

on death row, T Suthendraraja alias Santhan and A G Perarivalan alias Arivu in August 2011. The execution of the three convicts was scheduled for 9 September 2011. However, the Madras High Court intervened and stayed their execution for eight weeks based on their petitions. Nalini was shifted back to Vellore prison from Puzhal prison amidst tight security on 7 September 2011. In 2010, Nalini had moved the Madras High Court seeking release as she had served more than 20 years in prison. She argued that even life convicts were released after 14 years. However, the state government rejected her request. Murugan, Santhan and Perarivalan, the three convicts condemned to death, claimed that they were not ordinary criminals but political prisoners.

Controversies

In a report published on 30 October 2012 in DNA, K Ragothaman, former chief investigator of the CBI, talks about his new book *Conspiracy to Kill Rajiv Gandhi: From the CBI Files* and tells the reporter that while the CBI had started a preliminary inquiry in which MK Narayanan, former West Bengal Governor and former Intelligence Bureau director, was named a suspect in hiding evidence, the case was buried by the CBI SIT Chief, D.R. Karthikeyan.

In an interview in 2017, Justice K.T. Thomas had said that "there were serious flaws" in the CBI's investigation in case, particularly related to the seizure of Rs 40 lakh in cash from the convicts, which led him to believe that the probe exposed "an unpardonable flaw" in the "Indian criminal justice system".

Jain Commission and other reports

In the Jain report, various people and agencies are named as suspected of having been involved in the murder of Rajiv Gandhi. Among them, the cleric Chandraswami was suspected of involvement, including financing the assassination. One of the accused, Ranganath, said Chandraswami was the godfather who financed the killing. Sikh Militants were also suspected. The interim report of the Jain Commission created a storm when it accused M. Karunanidhi the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu of a role in the assassination, leading to Congress withdrawing its support for the I. K. Gujral government and fresh elections in 1998. Also other strong LTTE sympathizers Vaiko with MDMK and Thol. Thirumavalavan with VCK have supported Congress under Sonia Gandhi in the past. Vaiko left the UPA alliance before the 2009 election, partly due to the Sri Lankan issue. In the 2001 Norway peace talks, Prabhakaran told the press that the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was a sorrowful event. In 2006, LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham told the Indian television channel NDTV that the killing was a "great tragedy, a monumental historical tragedy which we deeply regret".

Chapter 56

Demolition of the Babri Masjid

The **demolition of the Babri Masjid** was illegally carried out on 6 December 1992 by a large group of activists of the Vishva Hindu Parishad and allied organisations. The 16th-century Babri Mosque in the city of Ayodhya, in Uttar Pradesh, had been the subject of a lengthy socio-political dispute, and was targeted after a political rally organised by Hindu nationalist organisations turned violent.

In Hindu tradition, the city of Ayodhya is the birthplace of Rama. In the 16th century a Mughal general, Mir Baqi, had built a mosque, known as the Babri Masjid at a site identified by some Hindus as *Ram Janmabhoomi*, or the birthplace of Rama. The Archaeological Survey of India states that the mosque was built on land where a non-Islamic structure had previously existed. In the 1980s, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) began a campaign for the construction of a temple dedicated to Rama at the site, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as its political voice. Several rallies and marches were held as a part of this movement, including the *Ram Rath Yatra* led by L. K. Advani.

On 6 December 1992 the VHP and the BJP organised a rally at the site involving 150,000 volunteers, known as *kar sevaks*. The rally turned violent, and the crowd overwhelmed security forces and tore down the mosque. A subsequent inquiry into the incident found 68 people responsible, including several leaders of the BJP and the VHP. The demolition resulted in several months of intercommunal rioting between India's Hindu

and Muslim communities, causing the death of at least 2,000 people. Retaliatory violence against Hindus also occurred in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Background

In Hinduism the birthplace of the deity Rama, known as "Ram Janmabhoomi", is considered a holy site. This site is often believed to be at the place where the Babri Masjid stood in the city of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh: historical evidence to support this belief is scarce. There is a rough scholarly consensus that in 1528, following the Mughal conquest of the region, a mosque was built at the site by the Mughal general Mir Baqi, and named the "Babri Masjid" after the Mughal emperor Babur. Popular belief holds that Baqi demolished a temple of Rama to build the mosque; historical basis for the belief is debated. Archaeological evidence has been found of a structure pre-dating the mosque. This structure has been variously identified as a Hindu temple and a Buddhist structure.

For at least four centuries, the site was used for religious purposes by both Hindus and Muslims. The claim that the mosque stood on the site of a temple was first made in 1822, by an official of the Faizabad court. The Nirmohi Akhara sect cited this statement in laying claim to the site later in the 19th century, leading to the first recorded incidents of religious violence at the site in 1855. In 1859 the British colonial administration set up a railing to separate the outer courtyard of the mosque to avoid disputes. The status quo remained in place until 1949, when idols of Rama were surreptitiously placed inside the mosque, allegedly by volunteers of the Hindu Mahasabha. This led to an uproar, with both parties filing civil

suits laying claim to the land. The placement of the idols was seen as a desecration by the users of the Masjid. The site was declared to be in dispute, and the gates to the Masjid were locked.

In the 1980s, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) began a campaign for the construction of a temple dedicated to Rama at the site, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as its political voice. The movement was bolstered by the decision of a district judge, who ruled in 1986 that the gates would be reopened and Hindus permitted to worship there. This decision was endorsed by Indian National Congress politician Rajiv Gandhi, then the Prime Minister of India, who sought to regain support from Hindus he had lost over the Shah Bano controversy. Nonetheless, the Congress lost the 1989 general election, and the BJP's strength in parliament grew from 2 members to 88, making its support crucial to the new government of V. P. Singh.

In September 1990, BJP leader L. K. Advani began a *Rath Yatra*, a political rally travelling across much of north India to Ayodhya.

The *yatra* sought to generate support for the proposed temple, and also sought to unite Hindu votes by mobilizing anti-Muslim sentiment. Advani was arrested by the government of Bihar before he could reach Ayodhya. Despite this, a large body of kar sevaks or Sangh Parivar activists reached Ayodhya and attempted to attack the mosque. This resulted in a pitched battle with the paramilitary forces that ended with the death of several kar sevaks. The BJP withdrew its support to the V. P. Singh ministry, necessitating fresh elections. The BJP

substantially increased its tally in the union parliament, as well as winning a majority in the Uttar Pradesh assembly.

Demolition

On 6 December 1992, the RSS and its affiliates organised a rally involving 150,000 VHP and BJP *kar sevaks* at the site of the disputed structure. The ceremonies included speeches by BJP leaders such as Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti. During the first few hours of the rally, the crowd grew gradually more restless, and began raising slogans. A police cordon had been placed around the structure in preparation for attack. However, around noon, a young man managed to slip past the cordon and climb the structure itself, brandishing a saffron flag. This was seen as a signal by the mob, who then stormed the structure. The police cordon, vastly outnumbered and unprepared for the size of the attack, fled. The mob set upon the building with axes, hammers, and grappling hooks, and within a few hours, the entire structure, made from mud and chalk, was levelled.

A 2009 report, authored by Justice Manmohan Singh Liberhan, found 68 people to be responsible for the demolition of the Masjid, mostly leaders from the BJP. Among those named were Vajpayee, Advani, Joshi and Vijay Raje Scindia. Kalyan Singh, who was then the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, also faced severe criticism in the report. Liberhan wrote that he posted bureaucrats and police officers to Ayodhya, whose record indicated that they would stay silent during the mosque's demolition. Anju Gupta, a police officer who had been in charge of Advani's security on that day, stated that Advani and Joshi made speeches that contributed to provoking the

behaviour of the mob. The report notes that at this time several BJP leaders made "feeble requests to the kar sevaks to come down... either in earnest or for the media's benefit". No appeal was made to the Kar Sevaks not to enter the sanctum sanctorum or not to demolish the structure. It further noted: "This selected act of the leaders itself speaks of the hidden intentions of one and all being to accomplish demolition of the disputed structure." The report holds that the "icons of the movement present [that day]... could just as easily have... prevented the demolition."

Conspiracy allegations

In a March 2005 book, former Intelligence Bureau head Maloy Krishna Dhar claimed that Babri mosque demolition was planned 10 months in advance by top leaders of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), BJP and VHP, and criticised the manner in which the then Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao handled the issue. Dhar claimed that he was directed to arrange security for a meeting between individuals from the BJP and other constituents of the Sangh Parivar, and that the meeting "proved beyond doubt that they (RSS, BJP, VHP) had drawn up the blueprint of the Hindutva assault in the coming months and choreographed the *pralaya nritya* (dance of destruction) at Ayodhya in December 1992. The RSS, BJP, VHP and the Bajrang Dal leaders present in the meeting amply agreed to work in a well-orchestrated manner." Claiming that the tapes of the meeting were personally handed over by him to his boss, he asserts that he has no doubts that his boss had shared the contents with the Prime Minister (Rao) and the Home Minister (Shankarrao Chavan). The author claimed that there was silent agreement that Ayodhya offered "a unique

opportunity to take the Hindutva wave to the peak for deriving political benefit." In April 2014, a sting operation by Cobrapost claimed that the demolition was not an act of frenzied mobs but an act of sabotage planned with so much secrecy that no government agency got wind of it. It further said that the sabotage was planned several months in advance by Vishva Hindu Parishad and Shiv Sena, but not jointly.

Aftermath

Communal violence

The destruction of the Babri Mosque sparked Muslim outrage around the country, provoking several months of inter-communal rioting in which Hindus and Muslims attacked one another, burning and looting homes, shops and places of worship. Several of the BJP leaders were taken into custody, and the VHP was briefly banned by the government. Despite this, the ensuing riots spread to cities like Mumbai, Surat, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Delhi, Bhopal and several others, eventually resulting in over 2000 deaths, mainly Muslim. The Mumbai Riots alone, which occurred in December 1992 and January 1993 and which the Shiv Sena played a big part in organising, caused the death of around 900 people, and estimated property damage of around ₹ 9,000 crore (\$3.6 billion). The demolition and the ensuing riots were among the major factors behind the 1993 Mumbai bombings and many successive riots in the coming decade. Jihadi groups including the Indian Mujahideen cited the demolition of the Babri Mosque as a reason for their terrorist attacks.

Investigation

On 16 December 1992, the Union home ministry set up the Liberhan Commission to investigate the destruction of the Mosque, headed by retired High Court Judge M. S. Liberhan. After 399 sittings over sixteen years, the Commission submitted its 1,029-page report to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 30 June 2009. According to the report, the events of 6 December 1992, in Ayodhya were "neither spontaneous nor unplanned". In March 2015, the Supreme Court of India admitted a petition alleging that, with a BJP government in power, the CBI would not pursue conspiracy charges against senior BJP leaders including L. K. Advani and Rajnath Singh. The Court asked the CBI to explain its delay in filing an appeal. In April 2017, a special Central Bureau of Investigation court framed criminal conspiracy charges against Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti, Vinay Katiyar, and several others. On 30 September 2020, the court acquitted all the 32 accused including L.K Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti, Vinay Katiyar and several others in the case on account of inconclusive evidence. The special court judge said, "The demolition was not pre-planned."

International reactions

Pakistan

In Pakistan, the government closed offices and schools on 7 December to protest against the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The Pakistani Foreign Ministry summoned the Indian ambassador to lodge a formal complaint, and promised to

appeal to the United Nations and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to pressure India to protect the rights of Muslims. Strikes were held across the country, while Muslim mobs attacked and destroyed as many as 30 temples in one day by means of fire and bulldozers, and stormed the office of Air India, India's national airline, in Lahore. The retaliatory attacks included rhetoric from mobs calling for the destruction of India and of Hinduism. Students from the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad burned an effigy of the then-Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao, and called for "Jihad" against Hindus. In subsequent years, thousands of Pakistani Hindus visiting India sought longer visas, and in some cases citizenship of India, citing increased harassment and discrimination in the aftermath of the demolition.

Bangladesh

Following the demolition, Muslim mobs in Bangladesh attacked and burned down Hindu temples, shops and houses across the country. An India-Bangladesh cricket match was disrupted when a mob of an estimated 5,000 men tried to storm the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the national capital of Dhaka. The Dhaka office of Air India was stormed and destroyed. 10 people were reportedly killed, 11 Hindu temples and several homes destroyed. The aftermath of the violence forced the Bangladeshi Hindu community to curtail the celebrations of Durga Puja in 1993 while calling for the destroyed temples to be repaired and investigations be held into the atrocities.

Middle East

At its summit meeting in Abu Dhabi, the Gulf Cooperation Council strongly condemned the Babri Masjid demolition. It adopted a resolution which described the act as a "crime against Muslim holy places." Among its member states, Saudi Arabia severely condemned the act. The United Arab Emirates, home to large expatriate communities of Indians and Pakistanis, conveyed a more moderate reaction. In response, the Indian government criticised the GCC for what it regarded as interference in its internal affairs. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei condemned the demolition, and called upon India to do more to protect its Muslim population. Although its government condemned the events, the UAE experienced severe public disturbances due to the demolition of the Babri Mosque. Street protests broke out, and protesters threw stones at a Hindu temple and the Indian Consulate in Dubai. In Al-Ain, 250 km east of Abu Dhabi, angry mobs set fire to the girls wing of an Indian school. In response to the violence, UAE police arrested and deported many expatriate Pakistanis and Indians who had participated in the violence. The Commander-in-Chief of the Dubai police force, Dhahi Khalfan, condemned the violence by foreign nationals in his country.

In popular culture

Malayalam author N. S. Madhavan's short story *Thiruthu* is based on the Babri Masjid demolition. The Ayodhya dispute and the riots following the demolition form part of the backdrop to Antara Ganguly's 2016 novel, *Tanya Tania. Lajja* (Shame), a 1993 novel by Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasrin,

was partially inspired by the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh that intensified after the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

The documentary *Ram ke Naam* (In the name of Ram) by Anand Patwardhan examines the events preceding the demolition. The Bollywood film *Mausam* (2011) is based on the events surrounding the demolition. The riots that followed the demolition are an important part of the plot of several films, including *Bombay* (1995) set in the Bombay riots. *Daivanamathil* (2005) explores the repercussions of the demolition on Muslims in Kerala. Both *Bombay* and *Daivanamathi* won the Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration at the respective National Film Awards. The 2007 film *Black Friday* was based upon the 1993 Bombay bombings which were considered to be the after effect of the demolition of the mosque.

Chapter 57

Bombay Riots

The **Bombay riots** usually refers to the riots in Mumbai, in December 1992 and January 1993, in which an estimated 900 people died. The riots were mainly due to escalations of hostilities after large scale protests by Muslims in reaction to the 1992 Babri Masjid Demolition by Hindu Karsevaks in Ayodhya.

The violence was widely reported as having been orchestrated by D-Company and their associates with the help of local Muslims. Later the Shiv Sena, a Hindu-nationalist political party in Maharashtra also participated in riots to respond the violence against them. A high-ranking member of the special branch later stated that the police were fully aware of the Shiv Sena's capabilities to commit acts of violence, and that they had incited hate against the minority communities. Historian Barbara Metcalf has described the riots as an anti-Muslim pogrom, where the official death toll was of 275 Hindus, 575 Muslims and 50 others.

The riots were followed by the retaliatory 12 March 1993 Bombay Bombings.

Background-Communalism in India

The Bombay riots can be considered a result of larger communal tensions throughout India. The British colonial policy of Divide and Rule allegedly included administrative and political activities such as communalized census taking, and

the Morley Minto reforms, that relied on communal segregation, and in particular Hindu-Muslim divisions. Post-Independence, the after-effects of the Partition of India along communal lines, the resurgence of 'Hindu Muslim Economic competition', the growth of right-wing communalist movements such as the RSS, and political strategies of 'appeasement' towards communal political influences by secular political authorities (see Shah Bano case), reinforced communalist ideologies in the country. The Babri Mosque demolition on 6 December 1992, an act of communal violence by Hindu extremist, is considered to be the immediate cause of the riots.

Overview of the Riot

As determined by the government's Srikrishna commission; the riots started as a result of communal tension prevailing in the city after the Babri Mosque demolition on 6 December 1992. The Commission identified **two phases** to the riots. **The first** was mainly a Muslim instigation as a result of the Babri Masjid demolition in the week immediately succeeding 7 December 1992 led by political leaders representing Hindutva in the city of Ayodhya. **The second phase** was a Hindu backlash occurring as a result of the killings of Hindu Mathadi Kamgar (workers) by Muslim fanatics in Dongri (an area of South Bombay), stabbing of Hindus in Muslim majority areas and burning of six Hindus, including a disabled girl in Radhabai Chawl. This phase occurred in January 1993, with most incidents reported between 6 and 20 January.

The Report asserted that the communal passions of the Hindus were aroused to fever pitch by the inciting writings in print

media, particularly Saamna and Navaakal which gave exaggerated accounts of the Mathadi murders and the Radhabai Chawl incident. From 8 January 1993, many riots occurred between Hindus led by the Shiv Sena and Muslims potentially funded by the Bombay underworld at that time. An estimated 575 Muslims and 275 Hindus were killed at the end of the riot. The communal violence and rioting triggered off by the burning at Dongri and Radhabhai Chawl, and the following retaliatory violence by Shiv Sena was hijacked by local criminal elements who potential opportunity to make quick gains. By the time the right wing Hindu organization Shiv Sena realised that enough had been done by way of "retaliation", the violence and rioting was beyond the control of its leaders who had to issue an appeal to put an end to it.

Role of the Shiv Sena

The violence was widely reported as having been orchestrated by the Shiv Sena, a Hindu-nationalist political party in Maharashtra. A high-ranking member of the special branch later stated that the police were fully aware of the Shiv Sena's capabilities to commit acts of violence, and that they had incited hate against the minority communities. Historian Barbara Metcalf has stated that the riots were anti-Muslim pogrom. Bal Thackeray, the then-leader of the Shiv Sena, was arrested in July 2000 for his complicity in the riots and for 'inflammatory writings' that may have helped propagate the riots. The case was later dismissed.

Justice B.N. Srikrishna Commission

Justice Srikrishna, then a relatively junior Judge of the Bombay High Court, accepted the task of investigating the causes of the riots, something that many of his colleagues had turned down. For five years until 1998, he examined victims, witnesses and alleged perpetrators. Detractors came initially from left quarters who were wary of a judge who was a devout and practising Hindu. The commission was disbanded by the Shiv Sena led government in January 1996 and on public opposition was later reconstituted on 28 May 1996; though when it was reconstituted its terms of reference were extended to include the Bombay bomb blasts that followed in March 1993.

The report of the commission stated that the tolerant and secular foundations of the city were holding even if a little shakily. Justice Srikrishna indicted those he alleged as largely responsible for the second phase of the bloodshed and to some extent the first, the Shiv Sena.

The report was criticised as "politically motivated". For a while, its contents were a closely guarded secret and no copies were available. The Shiv Sena government rejected its recommendations. Since under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, an Inquiry is not a court of law (even if it conducts proceedings like a court of law) and the report of an inquiry is not binding on Governments, Srikrishna's recommendations cannot be directly enforced. To date, the recommendations of the Commission have neither been accepted nor acted upon by the Maharashtra Government. Many indicted policemen were

promoted by the government and indicted politicians continue to hold high political office even today.

According to the commission report, the causes of these riots were listed as

- Class Conflict
- Economic Competition
- Decline of employment
- Population density
- changing political discourse.

The immediate causes were listed as

- the demolition of Babri Masjid
- the aggravation of Muslim sentiments by the Hindus with their celebration rallies
- the insensitive and harsh approach of the police while handling the protesting mobs which initially were not violent.

Arrests, convictions and verdict

Only 3 convictions happened in the 1992-93 Bombay riots cases. On 10 July 2008, a Mumbai court sentenced former Shiv Sena MP Madhukar Sarpotdar and two other party activists to a year's rigorous imprisonment in connection with the riots. However, he was immediately granted bail. He died on 20 February 2010 without serving his sentence.

Chapter 58

Prime Minister Atal Bihari

Vajpayee

- **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** (25 December 1924 – 16 August 2018) was an Indian statesman who served three terms as the prime minister of India, first for a term of 13 days in 1996, then for a period of 13 months from 1998 to 1999, followed by a full term from 1999 to 2004. Vajpayee was one of the co-founders and a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He was a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Hindu nationalist volunteer organisation. He was the first Indian prime minister not of the Indian National Congress to serve a full term in office. He was also noted as a poet and a writer.

He was a member of the Indian Parliament for over five decades, having been elected ten times to the Lok Sabha, the lower house, and twice to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house. He served as the Member of Parliament for Lucknow, retiring from active politics in 2009 due to health concerns. He was among the founding members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), of which he was president from 1968 to 1972. The BJS merged with several other parties to form the Janata Party, which won the 1977 general election. In March 1977, Vajpayee became the minister of external affairs in the cabinet of Prime Minister Morarji Desai. He resigned in 1979, and the Janata

alliance collapsed soon after. Former members of the BJS formed the BJP in 1980, with Vajpayee its first president.

During his tenure as prime minister, India carried out the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. Vajpayee sought to improve diplomatic relations with Pakistan, travelling to Lahore by bus to meet with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. After the 1999 Kargil War with Pakistan, he sought to restore relations through engagement with President Pervez Musharraf, inviting him to India for a summit at Agra.

The administration of Narendra Modi declared in 2014 that Vajpayee's birthday, 25 December, would be marked as Good Governance Day. In 2015, he was conferred India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, by the president of India, Pranab Mukherjee. He died on 16 August 2018 of age-related illness.

Early life and education

Vajpayee was born into a Hindu Brahmin family on 25 December 1924 in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. His mother and father were Krishna Devi and Krishna Bihari Vajpayee. His father was a school teacher in their home town. His grandfather, Shyam Lal Vajpayee, had migrated to Morena near Gwalior from his ancestral village of Bateshwar in the Agra district of Uttar Pradesh.

Vajpayee did his schooling at the Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Gwalior. In 1934, he was admitted to the Anglo-Vernacular Middle (AVM) School in Barnagar, Ujjain district, after his father joined as headmaster. He subsequently attended

Gwalior's Victoria College (now Maharani Laxmi Bai Govt. College of Excellence) to study for a BA in Hindi, English and Sanskrit. He completed his post-graduation with an MA in Political Science from DAV College, Kanpur.

Independence Movement

His activism started in Gwalior with Arya Kumar Sabha, the youth wing of the Arya Samaj movement, of which he became the general secretary in 1944. He also joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1939 as a *swayamsevak*, or volunteer. Influenced by Babasaheb Apte, he attended the Officers Training Camp of the RSS during 1940 to 1944, becoming a *pracharak* (RSS terminology for a full-time worker) in 1947. He gave up studying law due to the partition riots. He was sent to Uttar Pradesh as a *vistararak* (a probationary *pracharak*) and soon began working for the newspapers of Deendayal Upadhyaya: *Rashtradharma* (a Hindi monthly), *Panchjanya* (a Hindi weekly), and the dailies *Swadesh* and *Veer Arjun*.

By 1942, at the age of 16 years, Vajpayee became an active member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Although the RSS had chosen not to participate in the Quit India Movement, in August 1942, Vajpayee and his elder brother Prem were arrested for 24 days during the Quit India Movement. He was released after giving a written statement that while he was a part of the crowd, he did not participate in the militant events in Bateshwar on 27 August 1942. Throughout his life, including after he became prime minister, Vajpayee has labelled the allegation a false rumour.

Early political career (1947–1975)

In 1951, Vajpayee was seconded by the RSS, along with Deendayal Upadhyaya, to work for the newly formed Bharatiya Jana Sangh, a Hindu right-wing political party associated with the RSS. He was appointed as a national secretary of the party in charge of the Northern region, based in Delhi. He soon became a follower and aide of party leader Syama Prasad Mukherjee. In the 1957 Indian general election, Vajpayee contested elections to the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament. He lost to Raja Mahendra Pratap in Mathura, but was elected from Balrampur. In the Lok Sabha his oratorical skills so impressed Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that he predicted that Vajpayee would someday become the prime minister of India.

Vajpayee's oratorical skills won him the reputation of being the most eloquent defender of the Jana Sangh's policies. After the death of Deendayal Upadhyaya, the leadership of the Jana Sangh passed to Vajpayee. He became the national president of the Jana Sangh in 1968, running the party along with Nanaji Deshmukh, Balraj Madhok, and L. K. Advani.

Janata and the BJP (1975–1995)

Vajpayee was arrested along with several other opposition leaders during the Internal Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975. Initially interned in Bangalore, Vajpayee appealed his imprisonment on the grounds of bad health, and was moved to a hospital in Delhi. Gandhi ended the state of emergency in 1977. A coalition of parties,

including the BJS, came together to form the Janata Party, which won the 1977 general elections. Morarji Desai, the chosen leader of the alliance, became the prime minister. Vajpayee served as the minister of external affairs, or foreign minister, in Desai's cabinet. As foreign minister, Vajpayee became the first person in 1977 to deliver a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in Hindi.

In 1979, Desai and Vajpayee resigned, triggering the collapse of the Janata Party. The erstwhile members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh came together to form the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980, with Vajpayee as its first President.

The 1984 general elections were held in the wake of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards. While he had won the 1977 and the 1980 elections from New Delhi, Vajpayee shifted to his home town Gwalior for the election. Vidya Razdan was initially tipped to be the Congress (I) candidate. Instead, Madhavrao Scindia, scion of the Gwalior royal family, was brought in on the last day of filing nominations. Vajpayee lost to Scindia, managing to secure only 29% of the votes.

Under Vajpayee, the BJP moderated the Hindu-nationalist position of the Jana Sangh, emphasising its connection to the Janata Party and expressing support for Gandhian Socialism. The ideological shift did not bring it success: Indira Gandhi's assassination generated sympathy for the Congress, leading to a massive victory at the polls. The BJP won only two seats in parliament. Vajpayee offered to quit as party president following BJP's dismal performance in the election, but stayed in the post until 1986. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in

1986 from Madhya Pradesh, and was briefly the leader of the BJP in Parliament.

In 1986, L. K. Advani took office as president of the BJP. Under him, the BJP returned to a policy of hardline Hindu nationalism. It became the political voice of the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir Movement, which sought to build a temple dedicated to the Hindu deity Rama in Ayodhya. The temple would be built at a site believed to be the birthplace of Rama after demolishing a 16th-century mosque, called the Babri Masjid, which then stood there. The strategy paid off for the BJP; it won 86 seats in the Lok Sabha in the 1989 general election, making its support crucial to the government of V. P. Singh. In December 1992, a group of religious volunteers led by members of the BJP, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), tore down the mosque.

He served as Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, for various terms starting at Balrampur from 1957–1962. He served again from Balrampur from 1967–1971, then from Gwalior from 1971–1977, and then from New Delhi from 1977–1984. Finally, he served from Lucknow from 1991–2009.

Terms as prime minister (1996–2004)

First term: May 1996

During a BJP conference in Mumbai in November 1995, BJP President Advani declared that Vajpayee would be the party's

prime ministerial candidate in the forthcoming elections. Vajpayee himself was reported to be unhappy with the announcement, responding by saying that the party needed to win the election first. The BJP became the single largest party in Parliament in the 1996 general election, helped by religious polarisation across the country as a result of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Indian president Shankar Dayal Sharma invited Vajpayee to form the government. Vajpayee was sworn in as the 10th prime minister of India, but the BJP failed to muster a majority among members of the Lok Sabha. Vajpayee resigned after 16 days, when it became clear that he did not have enough support to form a government.

Second term: 1998–1999

After the fall of the two United Front governments between 1996 and 1998, the Lok Sabha was dissolved and fresh elections were held. The 1998 general elections again put the BJP ahead of others. A number of political parties joined the BJP to form the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and Vajpayee was sworn in as the prime minister. The coalition was an uneasy one, as apart from the Shiv Sena, none of the other parties espoused the BJP's Hindu-nationalist ideology. Vajpayee has been credited for managing this coalition successfully, while facing ideological pressure from the hardline wing of the party and from the RSS. Vajpayee's government lasted 13 months until mid-1999 when the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) under J. Jayalalithaa withdrew its support. The government lost the ensuing vote of confidence motion in the Lok Sabha by a single vote on 17 April 1999. As the opposition was unable to come

up with the numbers to form the new government, the Lok Sabha was again dissolved and fresh elections were held.

Nuclear tests

In May 1998, India conducted five underground nuclear tests in the Pokhran desert in Rajasthan, 24 years after its first nuclear test (Smiling Buddha) in 1974. Two weeks later, Pakistan responded with its own nuclear tests making it the newest nation with declared nuclear capability. While some nations, such as France, endorsed India's right to defensive nuclear power, others including the United States, Canada, Japan, Britain and the European Union imposed sanctions on information, resources and technology to India. In spite of intense international criticism and steady decline in foreign investment and trade, the nuclear tests were popular domestically. In effect, the international sanctions imposed failed to sway India from weaponising its nuclear capability. US sanctions against India and Pakistan were eventually lifted after just six months.

Lahore summit

In late 1998 and early 1999, Vajpayee began a push for a full-scale diplomatic peace process with Pakistan. With the historic inauguration of the Delhi-Lahore bus service in February 1999, Vajpayee initiated a new peace process aimed towards permanently resolving the Kashmir dispute and other conflicts with Pakistan. The resultant Lahore Declaration espoused a commitment to dialogue, expanded trade relations and mutual friendship and envisaged a goal of denuclearised South Asia. This eased the tension created by the 1998 nuclear tests, not

only within the two nations but also in South Asia and the rest of the world.

AIADMK's withdrawal from coalition

The AIADMK had continually threatened to withdraw from the coalition and national leaders repeatedly flew down from Delhi to Chennai to pacify the AIADMK general secretary J. Jayalalithaa. However, in May 1999, the AIADMK did pull the plug on the NDA, and the Vajpayee administration was reduced to a caretaker status pending fresh elections scheduled for October 1999.

Kargil War

In May 1999 some Kashmiri shepherds discovered the presence of militants and non-uniformed Pakistani soldiers (many with official identifications and Pakistan Army's custom weaponry) in the Kashmir Valley, where they had taken control of border hilltops and unmanned border posts. The incursion was centred around the town of Kargil, but also included the Batalik and Akhnoor sectors and artillery exchanges at the Siachen Glacier.

The Indian army responded with Operation Vijay, which launched on 26 May 1999. This saw the Indian military fighting thousands of militants and soldiers in the midst of heavy artillery shelling and while facing extremely cold weather, snow and treacherous terrain at the high altitude. Over 500 Indian soldiers were killed in the three-month-long Kargil War, and it is estimated around 600–4,000 Pakistani militants and soldiers died as well. India pushed back the

Pakistani militants and Northern Light Infantry soldiers. Almost 70% of the territory was recaptured by India. Vajpayee sent a "secret letter" to U.S. President Bill Clinton that if Pakistani infiltrators did not withdraw from the Indian territory, "we will get them out, one way or the other" - meaning he did not rule out crossing the Line of Control (LoC), or was the use of nuclear weapons.

After Pakistan suffered heavy losses, and with both the United States and China refusing to condone the incursion or threaten India to stop its military operations, General Pervez Musharraf was recalcitrant and Nawaz Sharif asked the remaining militants to stop and withdraw to positions along the LoC. The militants were not willing to accept orders from Sharif but the NLI soldiers withdrew. The militants were killed by the Indian army or forced to withdraw in skirmishes which continued even after the announcement of withdrawal by Pakistan.

Third term: 1999–2004

1999–2002

The 1999 general elections were held in the aftermath of the Kargil operations. The BJP-led NDA won 303 seats out of the 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, securing a comfortable and stable majority. On 13 October 1999, Vajpayee took oath as the prime minister of India for the third time.

A national crisis emerged in December 1999, when Indian Airlines flight IC 814 from Kathmandu to New Delhi was hijacked by five terrorists and flown to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. The hijackers made several demands including

the release of certain terrorists like Masood Azhar from prison. Under pressure, the government ultimately caved in. Jaswant Singh, the minister of external affairs at the time, flew with the terrorists to Afghanistan and exchanged them for the passengers.

In March 2000, Bill Clinton, the President of the United States, paid a state visit to India. This was the first state visit to India by a U.S. president in 22 years, since President Jimmy Carter's visit in 1978. President Clinton's visit was hailed as a significant milestone in relations between the two nations. Vajpayee and Clinton had wide-ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and international developments. The visit led to expansion in trade and economic ties between India and the United States. A vision document on the future course of Indo-U.S. relations was signed during the visit.

Domestically, the BJP-led government was influenced by the RSS, but owing to its dependence on coalition support, it was impossible for the BJP to push items like building the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, repealing Article 370 which gave a special status to the state of Kashmir, or enacting a uniform civil code applicable to adherents of all religions. On 17 January 2000, there were reports of the RSS and some BJP hard-liners threatening to restart the Jan Sangh, the precursor to the BJP, because of their discontent over Vajpayee's rule. Former president of the Jan Sangh Balraj Madhok had written a letter to the then-RSS chief Rajendra Singh for support. The BJP was, however, accused of "saffronising" the official state education curriculum and apparatus, saffron being the colour of the RSS flag of the RSS, and a symbol of the Hindu nationalism movement. Home Minister L. K. Advani and the

Human Resource Development Minister (now called Education Minister) Murli Manohar Joshi were indicted in the 1992 Babri Mosque demolition case for inciting a mob of activists. Vajpayee himself came under public scrutiny owing to his controversial speech one day prior to the mosque demolition.

These years were accompanied by infighting in the administration and confusion regarding the direction of government. Vajpayee's weakening health was also a subject of public interest, and he underwent a major knee-replacement surgery at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai to relieve intense pressure upon his legs.

In March 2001, the Tehelka group released a sting operation video named Operation West End which showed BJP president Bangaru Laxman, senior army officers and NDA members accepting bribes from journalists posing as agents and businessmen. The Defence Minister George Fernandes was forced to resign following the Barak Missile scandal involving the botched supplies of coffins for the soldiers killed in Kargil, and the findings of an inquiry commission that the government could have prevented the Kargil invasion.

Vajpayee initiated talks with Pakistan, and invited Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf to Agra for a joint summit. President Musharraf was believed to be the principal architect of the Kargil War in India. By accepting him as the President of Pakistan, Vajpayee chose to move forward leaving behind the Kargil War. But after three days of much fanfare, which included Musharraf visiting his birthplace in Delhi, the summit failed to achieve a breakthrough as President Musharraf declined to leave aside the issue of Kashmir.

2001 attack on Parliament

On 13 December 2001, a group of masked, armed men with fake IDs stormed Parliament House in Delhi. The terrorists managed to kill several security guards, but the building was sealed off swiftly and security forces cornered and killed the men who were later proven to be Pakistan nationals. Vajpayee ordered Indian troops to mobilise for war, leading to an estimated 500,000 to 750,000 Indian soldiers positioned along the international border between India and Pakistan. Pakistan responded by mobilising its own troops along the border. A terrorist attack on an army garrison in Kashmir in May 2002 further escalated the situation. As the threat of war between two nuclear capable countries and the consequent possibility of a nuclear exchange loomed large, international diplomatic mediation focused on defusing the situation. In October 2002, both India and Pakistan announced that they would withdraw their troops from the border.

The Vajpayee administration brought in the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 2002. The act was aimed at curbing terrorist threats by strengthening powers of government authorities to investigate and act against suspects. It was passed in a joint session of the parliament, amidst concerns that the law would be misused.

Another political disaster hit his government between December 2001 and March 2002: the VHP held the Government hostage in a major standoff in Ayodhya over the Ram temple. On the 10th anniversary of the destruction of the Babri mosque, the VHP wanted to perform a *shila daan*, or a ceremony laying the foundation stone of the cherished temple

at the disputed site. Thousands of VHP activists amassed and threatened to overrun the site and forcibly perform the ceremony. A grave threat of not only communal violence, but an outright breakdown of law and order owing to the defiance of the government by a religious organisation hung over the nation. The incident, however, ended peacefully with a symbolic handover of a stone at a different location 1 km away from the disputed site.

2002 Gujarat violence

In February 2002, a train filled with Hindu pilgrims returning to Gujarat from Ayodhya stopped in the town of Godhra. A scuffle broke out between Hindu activists and Muslim residents, and the train was set on fire, leading to the deaths of 59 people. The charred bodies of the victims were displayed in public in the city of Ahmedabad, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad called for a statewide strike in Gujarat. These decisions stoked anti-Muslim sentiments. Blaming Muslims for the deaths, rampaging Hindu mobs killed thousands of Muslim men and women, destroying Muslim homes and places of worship. The violence raged for more than two months, and more than 1,000 people died. Gujarat was being ruled by a BJP government, with Narendra Modi as the chief minister. The state government was criticised for mishandling the situation. It was accused of doing little to stop the violence, and even being complicit in encouraging it.

Vajpayee reportedly wanted to remove Modi, but was eventually prevailed upon by party members to not act against him. He travelled to Gujarat, visiting Godhra, and Ahmedabad, the site of the most violent riots. He announced financial aid for

victims, and urged an end to the violence. While he condemned the violence, he did not chastise Modi directly in public. When asked as to what would be his message to the chief minister in the event of the riots having taking place, Vajpayee responded that Modi must follow *raj dharma*, Hindi for ethical governance.

At the meeting of the BJP national executive in Goa in April 2002, Vajpayee's speech generated controversy for its contents which included him saying: "Wherever Muslims live, they don't like to live in co-existence with others." The Prime Minister's Office stated that these remarks had been taken out of context. Vajpayee was accused of doing nothing to stop the violence, and later admitted mistakes in handling the events. K. R. Narayanan, then president of India, also blamed Vajpayee's government for failing to quell the violence. After the BJP's defeat in the 2004 general elections, Vajpayee admitted that not removing Modi had been a mistake.

2002–2004

In late 2002 and 2003 the government pushed through economic reforms. The country's GDP growth exceeded 7% every year from 2003 to 2007, following three years of sub-5% growth. Increasing foreign investment, modernisation of public and industrial infrastructure, the creation of jobs, a rising high-tech and IT industry and urban modernisation and expansion improved the nation's international image. Good crop harvests and strong industrial expansion also helped the economy.

In May 2003, he announced before the parliament that he would make one last effort to achieve peace with Pakistan. The announcement ended a period of 16 months, following the 2001 attack on the Indian parliament, during which India had severed diplomatic ties with Pakistan. Although diplomatic relations did not pick up immediately, visits were exchanged by high-level officials and the military standoff ended. The Pakistani President and Pakistani politicians, civil and religious leaders hailed this initiative as did the leaders of the United States, Europe and much of the world. In July 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee visited China, and met with various Chinese leaders. He recognised Tibet as a part of China, which was welcomed by the Chinese leadership, and which, in the following year, recognised Sikkim as part of India. China–India relations improved greatly in the following years.

Policies

Vajpayee's government introduced many domestic economic and infrastructural reforms, including encouraging the private sector and foreign investments, reducing governmental waste, encouraging research and development and privatisation of some government owned corporations. Among Vajpayee's projects were the National Highways Development Project and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. In 2001, the Vajpayee government launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan campaign, aimed at improving the quality of education in primary and secondary schools.

2004 general election

In 2003, news reports suggested a tussle within the BJP with regard to sharing of leadership between Vajpayee and Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani. BJP president Venkaiah Naidu had suggested that Advani must lead the party politically at the 2004 general elections, referring to Vajpayee as *vikas purush*, Hindi for development man, and Advani as *loh purush*, iron man. When Vajpayee subsequently threatened retirement, Naidu backtracked, announcing that the party would contest the elections under the twin leadership of Vajpayee and Advani.

The NDA was widely expected to retain power after the 2004 general election. It announced elections six months ahead of schedule, hoping to capitalise on economic growth, and Vajpayee's peace initiative with Pakistan. The 13th Lok Sabha was dissolved before the completion of its term. The BJP hoped to capitalise on a perceived 'feel-good factor' and BJP's recent successes in the Assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Under the "India Shining" campaign, it released ads proclaiming the economic growth of the nation under the government.

However, the BJP could only win 138 seats in the 543-seat parliament, with several prominent cabinet ministers being defeated. The NDA coalition won 185 seats. The Indian National Congress, led by Sonia Gandhi, emerged as the single largest party, winning 145 seats in the election. The Congress and its allies, comprising many smaller parties, formed the United Progressive Alliance, accounting for 220 seats in the parliament. Vajpayee resigned as prime minister. The UPA,

with the outside support of communist parties, formed the next government with Manmohan Singh as the prime minister.

Post-premiership

In December 2005, Vajpayee announced his retirement from active politics, declaring that he would not contest in the next general election. In a famous statement at the BJP's silver jubilee rally at Mumbai's Shivaji Park, Vajpayee announced that "Henceforth, Lal Krishna Advani and Pramod Mahajan will be the Ram-Lakshman [the two godly brothers much revered and worshipped by Hindus] of the BJP."

Vajpayee was referred to as the *Bhishma Pitamah* of Indian politics by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during a speech in the Rajya Sabha, a reference to the character in the Hindu epic Mahabharata who was held in respect by two warring sides.

Vajpayee was hospitalised at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi (AIIMS) for a chest infection and fever on 6 February 2009. He was put on ventilator support as his condition worsened but he eventually recuperated and was later discharged. Unable to participate in the campaign for the 2009 general election due to his poor health, he wrote a letter urging voters to back the BJP. His protege Lalji Tandon was able to retain the Lucknow seat in that election even though the NDA suffered electoral reverses all over the country. It was speculated that Vajpayee's non-partisan appeal contributed to Lalji's success in Lucknow in contrast to that BJP's poor performance elsewhere in Uttar Pradesh.

Personal life

Vajpayee remained a bachelor for his entire life. He adopted and raised Namita Bhattacharya as his own child, the daughter of longtime friend Rajkumari Kaul and her husband Professor B N Kaul. His adopted family lived with him.

Unlike purist Brahmins who shun meat and alcohol, Vajpayee was known to be fond of whisky and meat. He was a noted poet, writing in Hindi. His published works include *Kaidi Kaviraj Ki Kundalian*, a collection of poems written when he was imprisoned during the 1975–77 emergency, and *Amar aag hai*. With regard to his poetry he wrote, "My poetry is a declaration of war, not an exordium to defeat. It is not the defeated soldier's drumbeat of despair, but the fighting warrior's will to win. It is not the despirited voice of dejection but the stirring shout of victory."

Death



Vajpayee suffered a stroke in 2009 which impaired his speech. His health had been a major source of concern; reports said he was confined to a wheelchair and failed to recognise people. He also suffered from dementia and long-term diabetes. For many years, he had not attended any public engagements and rarely ventured out of the house, except for checkups at the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences.

On 11 June 2018, Vajpayee was admitted to AIIMS in critical condition following a kidney infection. He was officially declared dead there at 5:05 pm IST on 16 August 2018 at the





age of 93. Some sources claim that he had died on the previous day. On the morning of 17 August, Vajpayee's body, draped with the Indian flag, was taken to the Bharatiya Janata Party headquarters where party workers paid their tributes until 1 pm. Later that afternoon at 4 pm, Vajpayee was cremated with full state honours at Rashtriya Smriti Sthal near Raj Ghat, and his pyre was lit by his foster daughter Namita Kaul Bhattacharya. Thousands of people and many dignitaries attended his funeral procession, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Ram Nath Kovind. On 19 August, his ashes were immersed in Ganga river at Haridwar by Kaul.

Reactions and tributes on his death




India reacted to Vajpayee's death with grief and thousands of tributes poured in through social media platforms. Thousands of people paid their respects during his funeral procession. A seven-day state mourning was announced by the central government throughout India. The national flag flew half-mast during this period.

-  Afghanistan: Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai was among several foreign dignitaries present at former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's funeral in New Delhi. He recalled that the departed leader was "the first to offer us civilian planes, Airbuses at the time we were starting out".
-  Bangladesh: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed "deep shock" at the demise of former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and said it is a day of great sadness for the people of Bangladesh. Paying tribute to Vajpayee, Hasina


termed him as "one of the most famous sons of India" and a highly respected person in Bangladesh.

-  Bhutan: Bhutan king Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck attended the funeral ceremony in New Delhi.
-  China: In a statement, the ministry of foreign affairs said the Indian leader was an "outstanding Indian statesman and had made outstanding contributions to the development of Sino-Indian relations"."China expresses its deep condolences on his death and sincere condolences to the Indian government and people and the relatives of Mr Vajpayee. Premier Li Keqiang has sent a condolence message to the leaders of India," the statement said.
-  Japan: Remembering Vajpayee's visit to Japan in 2001, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe said, "On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I would like to convey my sincerest condolences to the Government and people of India and the bereaved family. His Excellency Vajpayee visited Japan in 2001 as the then-Prime Minister and made significant contributions to the friendship between our two countries as a good friend of Japan. It is him who established the cornerstone of Japan-India relations today". Terming Vajpayee as an eminent leader of India, Abe added, "I pray from the bottom of my heart that his soul may rest in peace".
-  Mauritius: On 17 August, the government of Mauritius announced that both Mauritian and Indian flags would fly at half mast in the honour of Vajpayee. During the World Hindi Conference in Mauritius, PM Pravind Jugnauth announced that the

cyber tower towards which Vajpayee contributed to be set up in Mauritius would be henceforth named as Atal Bihari Vajpayee tower.

-  Pakistan: Pakistan's interim Minister for Law and Information Syed Ali Zafar met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and extended Pakistan's condolence on the death of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Zafar was among the foreign dignitaries who attended Vajpayee's funeral in New Delhi. Former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf mourned the demise of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, calling him a great man. He said that Vajpayee's demise was a great loss for both India as well as Pakistan.
-  Russia: Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a message of condolences to President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the demise of Vajpayee. Putin termed the former prime minister as "outstanding statesman". "Atal Bihari Vajpayee rightly commanded great respect around the world. He will be remembered as a politician who made a major personal contribution to the friendly relations and privileged strategic partnership between our countries. The President of Russia conveyed words of sincere sympathy and support to the family of the deceased, the Government and the people of India", the message read.
-  Sri Lanka: Various Sri Lankan leaders paid rich tribute to the three-time PM, hailing him as a "friend of Sri Lanka". In a tweet President Maithripala Sirisena said: "Today, we have lost a great humanist and a true friend of Sri Lanka. Former Prime


Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a visionary leader and an ardent defender of democracy. My condolences to his family and millions of his admirers around the world". Leader of Opposition R. Sampanthan said that India has lost one of its "most regarded intellectual[s] and [statesmen]". "He served the great country of India with humility and honesty, and he was much loved and respected by millions of people across the world. Former three-time Prime Minister Vajpayee is also an exceptional orator and a leader with a great sense of humour, his speeches within the Indian parliament and outside will always be remembered", he said in a statement, extending his condolences on behalf of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

-  United States: U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said Vajpayee recognised early on that the US-India partnership would contribute to the world's economic prosperity and security and the two democracies would continue to benefit from his vision. "On behalf of the people of the United States of America, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the people of India on the recent passing of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee", Pompeo said in a statement yesterday. He recalled Vajpayee's address to the Congress in 2000, when he had famously characterised US-India ties as a "natural partnership of shared endeavours". "Today, our two countries and our bilateral relationship continue to benefit from Prime Minister Vajpayee vision, which helped promote expanded cooperation", Pompeo said. He said the American people stand with the people of



India "as we mourn Prime Minister Vajpayee's passing".

Honours

National honours

-  India:
- Bharat Ratna (2015)
- Padma Vibhushan (1992)

Foreign honours

-  Bangladesh:
- Recipient of the Bangladesh Liberation War Honour (2016)
-  Morocco:
- Grand Cordon of the Order of Ouissam Alaouite (13 February 1999)

Other achievements

- In 2012, Vajpayee was ranked number 9 in *Outlook* magazine's poll of *The Greatest Indian*.
- In August 2018, Naya Raipur was renamed as Atal Nagar.
- In October 2018, four Himalayan peaks near Gangotri glacier named after his name.

Awards

- 1992, Padma Vibhushan
- 1993, D. Lit. from Kanpur University
- 1994, Lokmanya Tilak Award
- 1994, Outstanding Parliamentarian Award
- 1994, Bharat Ratna Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant Award
- 2015, Bharat Ratna
- 2015, Bangladesh Liberation War Honour (Bangladesh Muktiyuddho Sanmanona)