



National Flag of India

Why in News

India will celebrate its **74th Independence Day in 2020**, and like every year the Prime Minister of India will **hoist the National Flag at the Red Fort** to commemorate the day.

Key Points

- **Design:** The design of the **Indian tricolour** is largely attributed to **Pingali Venkayya**, an Indian freedom fighter.
 - He proposed a basic design of the flag, consisting of **two red and green bands** to symbolise the **two major communities, Hindus and Muslims**.
 - Mahatma Gandhi arguably suggested adding a **white band to represent peace and the rest of the communities** living in India, and a **spinning wheel** to symbolise the progress of the country.
 - He passed away in 1963 and was posthumously **honoured with a postage stamp in 2009** for his contribution towards Indian freedom struggle. In 2014, his name was also proposed for the Bharat Ratna.
- **History:**
 - **1906:** Arguably the **first national flag of India** is said to have been hoisted on **7th August 1906, in Kolkata** at the Parsee Bagan Square (Green Park).
 - It comprised **three horizontal strips of red, yellow and green, with Vande Mataram** written in the middle. The red strip on the flag had symbols of the sun and a crescent moon, and the green strip had eight half-open lotuses.
 - **1907: Madame Cama** and her group of exiled revolutionaries hoisted an Indian flag in **Germany in 1907** — this was the **first Indian flag to be hoisted in a foreign land**.
 - **1917: Dr Annie Besant and Lokmanya Tilak** adopted a new flag as part of the **Home Rule Movement**. It had five alternate red and four green horizontal stripes, and seven stars in the saptarishi configuration. A white crescent and star occupied one top corner, and the other had Union Jack.
 - **1931:** The **Congress Committee met in Karachi** and adopted the tricolour (that of **Pingali Venkayya**) as India's national flag. **Red was replaced with saffron** and the order of the colours was changed. The flag was to have **no religious interpretation**.
 - Saffron on top symbolises **“strength and courage”**, **white** in the middle represents **“peace and truth”** and green at the bottom stands for **“fertility, growth and auspiciousness of the land”**.
 - **The Ashok Chakra** with 24 spokes replaced the spinning wheel as the emblem on the flag. It is intended **“to show that there is life in movement and death in stagnation”**.
 - The National Flag should be rectangular in shape with a **length to width ratio of 3:2**.
- **Constitutional and Legal Aspect:**

- The Constituent Assembly adopted the motion of national flag on 22nd July 1947.
 - The motion proposed that “the National Flag of India shall be horizontal tricolour of **deep saffron (kesari), white and dark green in equal proportion.**” The white band was to have a wheel in navy blue (the charkha being replaced by the chakra), which appears on the abacus of the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka
- One of the minor committees of the Constituent Assembly, the **Ad-hoc Committee on the National Flag** was headed by **Dr. Rajendra Prasad**.
- The **Part IV-A of the Constitution (which consists of only one Article 51-A)** specifies the **eleven Fundamental Duties**. According to **Article 51A (a)**, it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.
- A person who is convicted for the following offences under the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act of 1971** is disqualified to contest in the elections to the Parliament and state legislature for 6 years.
 - Offence of insulting the National Flag,
 - Offence of insulting the Constitution of India,
 - Offence of preventing the singing of the National Anthem.

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