



82nd Anniversary of the QIM

For Prelims: [August Kranti Day](#), [Quit India Movement \(QIM\)](#), [Allied Powers](#), [Cripps Mission \(1942\)](#), [Quit India Resolution](#), [National Herald](#), [Viceroy Linlithgow](#), [AITUC](#), [CSP](#), [AIKS](#), [Forward Block](#), [Satyagraha](#), [Civil Disobedience Movement](#), [Simla Conference](#).

For Mains: Causes and Significance of Quit India Movement (QIM) in India's Struggle for Independence.

[Source: IE](#)

August Kranti Day (August Revolution Day) is observed on the **8th August** annually in India. In **2024**, India celebrates the **82nd anniversary** of the [Quit India Movement \(QIM\)](#).

- It commemorates the historic **launch** of the **QIM** in 1942, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

What was QIM?

- **About:** It was a pivotal moment in India's struggle for **independence** from British colonial rule, which called for the **immediate withdrawal** of British forces from India.
 - It aimed to **mobilise Indians** in a **non-violent civil disobedience** campaign against British colonialism.
 - Internationally, it drew **sympathetic voices** within the **British public** and pressure from [Allied powers](#) during [World War II](#).
- **Reasons for Starting QIM:**
 - **Failure of Cripps Mission (1942):** [Cripps Mission](#) exposed Britain's **unchanged attitude** on **constitutional advance** and made it clear that any more silence would be tantamount to accepting the British right to decide the fate of Indians without consulting them.
 - It offered **dominion status** instead of complete independence. It provided provinces the **right to secede** which went against the principle of **national unity**.
 - **Economic Impact of World War II:** There was popular discontent because of **rising prices** and shortage of **rice, salt etc.** While the higher food prices **hit the poor**, the **rich** were hurt by **excess profit tax**. It got aggravated by gross mismanagement and deliberate **profiteering**.
 - **Hasty British Evacuation from Southeast Asia:** Refugees returning from Malaya and Burma after the **Japanese invasion** reported the collapse of British power in **Southeast Asia** and how British authorities abandoned Indian refugees.
 - This led to fears that Britain might similarly abandon India if Japan invaded.
 - **Feeling of Imminent British Collapse:** The news of **Allied reverses** and British withdrawals from Southeast Asia and Burma **made people in India believe that British power was going to collapse soon**.
 - **Imminent Japanese invasion:** The leaders felt it was essential to initiate a struggle because they believed the people were **losing morale and might not resist if Japan invaded**.

▪ **Quit India Resolution:**

- The Congress **Working Committee** adopted the '**Quit India' Resolution** on **14th July 1942** at Wardha.
- The **All India Congress Committee** (AICC) accepted this resolution with some modifications, on **8th August 1942 at Gowalia Tank** in **Bombay** and **Gandhiji** was named the **leader** of the struggle.
 - The meeting also resolved to:
 - **demand an immediate end to British rule in India.**
 - **declare commitment of free India** to defend itself **against all types of Fascism and imperialism.**
 - form a **provisional Government of India** after the British withdrawal.
 - **sanction a civil disobedience movement against British** rule.
 - Gandhi was named the leader of the struggle
- On this occasion, Gandhi delivered his famous "**Do or Die**" **speech**, arguing that "**We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.**"

How did the Government Respond to the Spread of QIM?

▪ **Spread of the Movement:**

- **Public on Rampage:** The general public attacked **symbols of authority**. Satyagrahis offered themselves up to arrest, **bridges** were blown up, **railway tracks** were **removed**, and telegraph lines were cut.
- **Underground Activity:** The main personalities taking up underground activity were **Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta** and R.P. Goenka. Usha Mehta started an underground radio in Bombay.
 - Due to the arrest of major leaders, a **young** and till then relatively unknown **Aruna Asaf Ali** presided over the **AICC session** on 9th August and hoisted the flag, later the Congress party was banned.
- **Parallel Governments:** Parallel governments were established in **Ballia** (Uttar Pradesh), **Tamluk** (Bengal) and **Satara** (Maharashtra).
- **Extent of Mass Participation:** Youth, women, workers and peasants remained at the forefront.

▪ **British Government Response:**

- In the early hours of 9th August 1942, all the top leaders of the Congress were **arrested** and taken to **unknown destinations**.
 - It produced an **instantaneous reaction** among the people. There were **clashes** with authority, strikes, public demonstrations and **processions** in various parts of the country.
- The Government responded by **gagging** the press. The newspaper **National Herald** and weekly journal **Harijan** ceased publication for the entire duration of the struggle, others for shorter periods.
- **Agitating crowds were lathi-charged, tear-gassed,** and fired upon. The number of those killed is estimated at 10,000.
 - The military took over many cities; police and secret service reigned supreme.
- **Rebellious villages were fined heavily,** and in many villages, mass flogging was done.

Parallel Governments during QIM

- **Ballia, Uttar Pradesh:** It was formed by Chittu Pandey and provided healthcare, education, and other services to the people.
- **Satara, Maharashtra:** Known as "Prati Sarkar," it was organized by leaders including Y.B. Chavan, Nana Patil, and others. 'Gandhi marriages' were organized.
- **Tamluk, Bengal:** It was known as Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar and was set up by Ambika Chakrabarty.

Was QIM a Spontaneous Outburst, or an Organized Movement?

- **Spontaneous Nature of QIM:**
- **Viceroy Linlithgow** described it as "**by far the most serious rebellion since 1857**".
 - It was violent and **totally uncontrolled** as the entire upper echelon of the Congress leadership was **behind bars** even before it began.
 - And therefore, it is also characterised as a "**spontaneous revolution**", as "no preconceived plan could have produced such instantaneous and uniform results".
- **Organised Nature of QIM:**
 - **Radical Movements:** In the past two decades, the radical mass movements led by Congress-affiliated groups like the **AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress)**, **CSP (Congress Socialist Party)**, **AIKS (All India Kisan Sabha)**, and **Forward Block** had set **the stage for such a conflagration**.
 - **Twelve Point Programme:** Before 9th August 1942, Congress leaders drafted a **twelve-point program** that included **Gandhian satyagraha** methods, **industrial strikes**, railway and telegraph disruptions, **tax refusal**, and establishing a parallel government.
 - **Past Preparation:** In the **Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34)**, while Gandhi initiated the struggle with the **Dandi March** and **salt law violation**, local leaders and people decided whether to **stop land revenue payments**, defy forest laws, **picket liquor shops**, or pursue other aspects of the program.
 - These previous experiences of the masses enriched QIM.
 - **Mobilisation in Countryside: In East U.P. and Bihar**, the areas of the most intense activity in 1942 were precisely the ones in which considerable **mobilisation and organisational work** had been carried out from 1937 onwards.

What were the Lessons and Significance of the QIM?

- **Lessons from QIM:**
 - **For Indian Masses:** To the Indian masses in 1942, Gandhi and the Congress were **symbols of liberation**, not sources of ideological constraint.
 - **For Congress:** The suppression of QIM by the government **discredited** the **left-wingers (like followers of Forward Block)** within Congress who had been demanding violent action against the government.
 - Now dominated by moderates and **right-wing members**, Congress strongly opposed the popular militancy, favouring a return to **discipline** and order, and advocated for a **negotiated settlement** over confrontation.
 - **For the British:** They realised it was **difficult** to manage **militant mass movements** without wartime emergency powers.
 - After the war, maintaining control by force would be costly, leading to a greater willingness to accept a negotiated and orderly withdrawal.
- **Significance of QIM:**
 - It placed the demand for **independence** on the **immediate agenda** of the national movement. After Quit India there could be **no retreat**.
 - **Constructive work** became the main form of Congress activity, with a special emphasis on the **reorganisation** of the Congress machinery.
 - The **Congress** leaders were released to participate in the **Simla Conference** in June 1945. That marked the end of the phase of confrontation that had existed since August 1942.

Conclusion

The Quit India Movement (QIM) marked a crucial turning point in India's struggle for independence. Despite the repression by British authorities, the movement galvanised widespread public support, leading to mass protests and parallel governments. QIM intensified the demand for freedom, ultimately hastening the end of British colonial rule in India.

Drishti Mains Question:

How did the Quit India Movement (QIM) propel the Indian National Movement to a point of no return, making complete independence inevitable?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Years' Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. With reference to 8th August, 1942 in Indian history, which one of the following statements is correct? **(2021)**

- (a) The Quit India Resolution was adopted by the AICC.
- (b) The Viceroy's Executive Council was expanded to include more Indians.
- (c) The Congress ministries resigned in seven provinces.
- (d) Cripps proposed an Indian Union with full Dominion Status once the Second World War was over

Ans: (a)

Q. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, consider the following events: (2017)

1. Mutiny in Royal Indian Navy
2. Quit India Movement launched
3. Second Round Table Conference

What is the correct chronological sequence of the above events?

- (a) 1 - 2 - 3
- (b) 2 - 1 - 3
- (c) 3 - 2 - 1
- (d) 3 - 1 - 2

Ans: (c)

Q. Quit India Movement was launched in response to **(2013)**

- (a) Cabinet Mission Plan
- (b) Cripps Proposals
- (c) Simon Commission Report
- (d) Wavell Plan

Ans: (b)

Q. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, Usha Mehta is well-known for **(2011)**

- (a) Running the secret Congress Radio in the wake of Quit India Movement
- (b) Participating in the Second Round Table Conference
- (c) Leading a contingent of Indian National Army
- (d) Assisting in the formation of Interim Government under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Ans: (a)

Q. Which one of the following observations is not true about the Quit India Movement of 1942? (2011)

- (a) It was a nonviolent movement
- (b) It was led by Mahatma Gandhi
- (c) It was a spontaneous movement
- (d) It did not attract the labor class in general

Ans: (b)

Q. During the freedom struggle, Aruna Asaf Ali was a major woman organizer of underground activity in **(2009)**

- (a) Civil Disobedience Movement
- (b) Non-Cooperation Movement
- (c) Quit India Movement
- (d) Swadeshi Movement

Ans: (c)

Q. With which one of the following movements is the slogan “Do or Die” associated? **(2009)**

- (a) Swadeshi Movement
- (b) Non-Cooperation Movement
- (c) Civil Disobedience Movement
- (d) Quit India Movement

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Discuss the role of women in the freedom struggle, especially during the Gandhian phase. **(2016)**

Q. In what ways did the naval mutiny prove to be the last nail in the coffin of British colonial aspirations in India? **(2014)**

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