

STATE TIMES

SUNDAY

Your Companion for a Funday

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: Story behind Independence Day



Independent India turns 75 on August 15, 2022. However, from 1930 till 1947, Indian freedom fighters had marked and were celebrating January 26 as India's Independence Day. Lord Mountbatten changed it to August 15 in 1947 for a particular reason. Do you know the reason why? We tell you here.

India will celebrate its 75th Independence Day on August 15, 2022. The government and citizens have been celebrating 'Azadi ka Amrit Mohatsav' with great aplomb. The theme of Independence Day is 'Nation First, Always First'.

Even as PM Modi sets to address the nation at Red Fort in line with the tradition set by the first PM - Jawaharlal Nehru - did you know that freedom fighters and leaders including PM Nehru were in favour of declaring January 26 as Independence Day, and not August 15?

This was along the lines of the Indian National Congress's resolution of 'Purna Swaraj' which was adopted in the Lahore session of the INC on December 19, 1929.

The Lahore session

Jawaharlal Nehru had just been appointed the president of the Congress party and was to take over from his father, Motilal Nehru. The father - Motilal Nehru - favoured a new dominion status constitution for India. However, the then 40-year-old Jawaharlal rejected his father's proposal and argued for a complete separation from British rule. He was supported by other Congress leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Subhas Chandra Bose, Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal. In the resolution, the INC shifted to its demand for complete independence which was a deviation from the erstwhile dominion status.

The resolution was passed and the Congress fixed the last Sunday of January 1930 for 'Purna Swaraj'. The date happened to be January 26. Based on this, the INC made a public declaration was made on January 26, 1930 - a day which the Congress Party urged the Indians to celebrate as 'Independence Day'.

Days after the resolution was adopted, Nehru hoisted the national flag on the banks of the Ravi in

Lahore on December 29, 1929. On the occasion, he reportedly said, "The Congress is holding its most momentous session and is going to take a great step forward in the fight for the country's freedom." From then, until 1947, India celebrated its "Independence Day" on January 26.

Mountbatten's assignment

When the Indians finally forced the British to give up their hold after years of struggle, the British Parliament gave the mandate to Lord Mountbatten. He was appointed the last British governor-general of India on February 12, 1947, and the mandate given to him was to transfer the power to India by June 30, 1948. However, this did not go down well with the Indian freedom fighters and INC leaders, who objected to the delay in granting India independence.

So in accordance with the wishes of the Indian leaders, Mountbatten decided to advance the date of Indian independence and justified it to the British Parliament by saying that he did not want bloodshed or riots on the account of delay.

Lord Mountbatten reportedly chose August 15 as the date of the Indian independence as it marked the second anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War 2. He is quoted in Freedom at Midnight as saying, "The date I chose came out of the blue. I chose it in reply to a question. I was determined to show I was the master of the whole event. When they asked if we had set a date, I knew it had to be soon. I hadn't worked it out exactly then - I thought it had to be about August or September, and I then went out to August 15. Why? Because it was the second anniversary of Japan's surrender."

After Mountbatten's decision, the British House of Commons passed the Indian Independence Bill on July 4, 1947. It was decided to establish two separate dominions of India and Pakistan.

Japanese surrender in World War II

Emperor Hirohito of Japan addressed his country on August 15, 1945, and announced the country's surrender - the last of the axis powers to surrender. Japan had been severely damaged by the nuclear bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, respectively.

Courtesy: Times Now

Azadi Ka Amrit

Mahotsav

Har Ghar Tiranga - 13th - 15th August 2022

