

Chapter 17. Towards Partition of India (1944–1947)

Very Short Questions

Question 1: Name the members of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Answer: (i) Lord Patrick Lawrence (ii) Sir Stafford Cripps (iii) A. V. Alexander.

Question 2: What was the purpose of the Cabinet Mission?

Answer: The purpose of the Cabinet Mission was to hold consultations with the Indian leaders with the object of setting up complete self-government in India.

Question 3: In what way did the Cabinet Mission Plan try to preserve the unity of India?

Answer: The Cabinet Mission Plan tried to preserve the unity of India by providing the grouping of Muslim-majority provinces.

Question 4: What was finally accepted in the Cabinet Mission Plan by the Congress?

Answer: The Congress accepted the long-term plan but rejected the proposal for an Interim Government.

Question 5: What was finally accepted in the Cabinet Mission Plan by the Muslim League?

Answer: The Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan entirely and asked the Viceroy to constitute an Interim Government.

Question 6: Who refused to implement the Interim Government Plan as proposed in the Cabinet Mission Plan?

Answer: The Viceroy refused to implement the Interim Government Plan as proposed in the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Question 7: Which day was observed as the Direct Action Day by the League?

Answer: 16th August 1946.

Question 8: What is said about Princely States in Mountbatten Plan?

Answer: In the Mountbatten Plan it is stated that the Princely States would have the option to join either of the two dominions of India or Pakistan.

Question 9: What is stated about the Princely States in the Indian Independence Act 1947?

Answer: In the Independence Act 1947 the Princely States were given the choice to join either of the Dominions or to retain their independence.

Question 10: To whom was the power to be transferred according to the Mountbatten Plan?

Answer: According to the Mountbatten Plan the transfer of power in India could be on the basis of the partition of the country. Power would be transferred to one whole or more States.

Question 11: What last effort did Gandhiji make in order to prevent the partition of the country?

Answer: Gandhiji was against partition. He said, 'Even if the whole of India is in flames, it will not bring Pakistan, Pakistan would be over my dead body'. But, Jinnah was adamant.

Question 12: Who was elected as the President of the Constituent Assembly in 1946?

Answer: Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Question 13: Who replaced Lord Wavell as the Viceroy of India?

Or

Name the last British Viceroy of India.

Answer: Lord Mountbatten replaced Lord Wavell as the Viceroy of India.

Question 14: What were the views of the, Congress on partition of the country?

Answer: Congress was against the partition of the country.

Short Questions – I

Question 1: In what way did the outcome of the general elections in 1945-46 strengthen Jinnah's demand for partition?

Answer: Jinnah's demand for partition strengthened after the general elections in 1945-46 because the Muslim League could not form the Government in any province, inspite of its victories in the elections.

Question 2: Mention two proposals of the Wavell's Plan.

Answer: Two proposals of Wavell's Plan are:

(i) The Viceroy's Executive Council would have representatives from the two main communities i.e., the Hindus and the Muslims.

(ii) A British High Commissioner would live in India to represent Great Britain's Commercial and other interests.

Question 3: What was the reaction of Muslim League on the proposal of Lord Wavell.

Answer: The Muslim League accepted the proposal because the Hindus and the Muslims were to be equally represented in the Viceroy's Executive Council, but it insisted that the

right to appoint Muslims on the Executive Council of the Viceroy should entirely rest with the Muslim League.

Question 4: On what grounds did the Cabinet Mission reject Jinnah's demand for partition of India?

Answer: The Cabinet Mission rejected Jinnah's demand for partition of India on the ground that partition would involve dislocation of communication network and would involve division of armed force and service personnel.

Question 5: Give any two salient features of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Answer: (i) India would be a federation of British provinces and the Indian States.
(ii) The Federal Government would deal with defence, foreign affairs and communication. All other subjects would be under the control of the provinces.

Question 6: What was the view of the Congress and Muslim League on the grouping of the provinces as proposed in the Cabinet Mission Plan?

Answer: The Congress view on the grouping of the provinces was that it should have the option to join any group. The Muslim League were not prepared to compromise on the compulsory grouping of the provinces.

Question 7: What were the recommendations of the Cabinet Mission Plan regarding the Princely States?

Answer: The recommendations of the Cabinet Mission Plan regarding Princely States were that they would not be under the direct control of the Union and they would themselves decide as to what powers they were to surrender.

Question 8: What was mentioned in the Cabinet Mission Plan regarding provincial Autonomy?

Answer: The provinces would be free to form regional unions to which they would surrender some powers by mutual consent. There were to be 3 groups of provinces and each would have its separate Constitution and if any province wanted to opt out of the group after the first general election they could do so.

Question 9: What were the views of the Sikhs and Scheduled Castes on the proposals of the Cabinet Mission Plan?

Answer: The Sikhs found the proposals of the Cabinet Mission Plan unacceptable because they were included in the North-Western Muslim Bloc. The Scheduled Castes were of the opinion that these proposals were illusory because no seats were reserved for scheduled castes and also because only one seat was offered to them in the Interim Government.

Question 10: Why did the Congress reject the League's claim of having the exclusive right for nominating members of the Muslim quota in the Interim Government?

Answer: The Congress rejected the League's claim of having the exclusive right for nominating members of the Muslim Quota in the interim Government because it did not want to accept an artificial party with the Muslim League in the formation of a National Government.

Question 11: What is referred to as the 'Great Calcutta Killing'?

Answer: On the 'Direct Action Day' 16th August, 1946 a section of the people in Calcutta went on a rampage, arson, looting and murder. Nearly 5,000 people were killed and 15,000 injured. This violence continued for four days. The situation was encouraged by the Muslim League and the British administration remained paralyzed. This episode is known as the 'Great Calcutta Killing'.

Question 12: How did Jinnah justify his stand to resort to 'Direct Action'?

Answer: Jinnah justified his stand to resort to 'Direct Action' by stating that British had machine guns to enforce their will, the Congress had the weapon of civil resistance, therefore, the Muslims should also prepare for self-defence and self-preservation by 'Direct Action'.

Question 13: What were the two proposals related to the Princely states in the Mountbatten Plan.

Answer: The two proposals related to princely states in Mountbatten plan were:
(i) All treaties in agreements between the British Government and rulers of Indian States will lapse.
(ii) They would be free to associate themselves in either of the Dominions i.e., India or Pakistan or to remain Independent.

Question 14: How were the borders of the two new Dominions to be demarcated according to the Indian Independence Act of 1947?

Answer: According to Indian Independence Act, Pakistan was to comprise the territories of Sind, British Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, the West Punjab and the East Bengal. The exact boundaries were to be determined by a Boundary Commission.

Question 15: State any two reasons to justify why the Congress accepted the Mountbatten Plan?

Answer: The Congress accepted the Mountbatten Plan out of concern for integrity and unity of India. According to Sardar Patel if it (Congress) would not have done so, India would have fallen to bits and pieces and completely ruined. Further communal riots compelled the Congress to accept the plan to avoid further bloodshed.

Short Questions – II

Question 1: What was the reaction of the Congress to the Wavell's plan.

Answer: This plan of the-Muslim League was not acceptable to the Congress. It was the basic claim of the Congress that it represented both the Hindus and the Muslims Nationals

of India, even those living outside India in any part of the world as Indian Nationals. Although Jinnah said, 'a final examination and analysis of the Wavell Plan we found it was a snare', yet the Congress agreed to the proposals. Gandhiji remarked, 'The plan was sincere in spirit and contained the seeds of independence.'

Question 2: Give the reasons for the Muslim League's acceptance and later rejection of the Cabinet Mission plan.

Answer: The League accepted it in its entirety on June 6, 1946, because it felt that the grouping of Muslim majority provinces in a way meant the formation of Pakistan. The league asked Wavell, the Viceroy, to constitute an Interim Government. Election to the Constituent Assembly were held in July 1946, in which the Congress obtained two-third majority. The Congress had an overwhelming majority in the Constituent Assembly. The League feared that it would be out votes in the Assembly. It also feared that the British withdrawal from India would mean transfer of power to the Hindus, who were in a majority in India.

Question 3: Why did the Cabinet Mission Plan reject the demand for Pakistan?

Answer: The Cabinet Mission Plan rejected the demand for Pakistan because:
(i) The partition as claimed by the Muslim League would not solve the communal problem.
(ii) A small Pakistan would not be viable if it is in two halves: One in the East the other in the West.
(iii) Partition would involve dislocation of communications network as well as division of armed forces and service personal along communal lines.

Question 4: In terms of the Independence Act of 1947 Bengal and Punjab were also to be divided If the people so desired. In this connection explain what was done to determine the choice of the people.

Answer: According to the provisions of the partition, the Provincial Assemblies of Bengal and Punjab would meet representing the Hindu majority and the Muslim majority districts and decide through majority vote whether they wanted the division of the province or not. In Sylhet district of East Bengal a plebiscite would be held to determine the choice whether to join India or Pakistan.

Question 5: Why the Muslim League earlier rejected and later participated in Interim Government.

Answer: On 13th October, 1946 Jinnah wrote to the Viceroy informing him that the Muslim League had decided to join the Interim Government and changed its previous stand. Accordingly, on 25th October, 1946, the representative of the League were also inducted into the Government under Jawaharlal Nehru. But very soon there were arguments regarding the interpretations of the Cabinet Missions Plan. This resulted in the Muslim League creating an unpleasant situation. At this stage the Muslim League joined the Interim Government but did not join the Constituent Assembly.

Question 6: The Muslim League decided to observe the Direct Action Day on 16th August, 1946. In this context briefly discuss about its result.

Answer: The League fixed August 16, 1946 as the day for observing the Direct Action Day throughout the country. There were clashes and communal riots all over the country. Nearly 5,000 lives were lost, over 15,000 persons were injured and many became homeless. Property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. All these incidents widened the gap between the Muslim League and the Congress and even between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Question 7: By pursuing Direct Action Plan, the Muslim League resorted to violent activities. Discuss.

Answer: The communal violence that erupted as a result of 'Direct Action Day' was the worst of its kind ever seen in the history of India. Muslims organised demonstrations, strikes and processions. The city of Calcutta witnessed riots and scenes of barbarity of worst kind. Over 5000 people died in violence and three times this number were wounded besides loss of property. The communal violence later also spread to Noakhali, some parts of Bihar and even Punjab.

Question 8: What did congress leaders do when the Muslim League resorted to violent activities after pursuing Direct Action plan. How worst was the communal violence?

Answer: The Congress leaders like Gandhiji went on foot from place to place in Noakhali. He even undertook 24 hour fast on the very night when transfer of power took place. Jawaharlal Nehru even though busy in Delhi with transfer of power took time off and went to Bihar to personally supervise the actions of Congress ministry in Bihar. Other Congress leaders were also there but the Chief Minister Mr. Suhrawardy in Bengal did nothing to check communal violence. Some Government officials even supported the perpetrators of violence.

Question 9: Describe briefly the events that led to Mr. Clement Attlee's announcement of 20th February, 1947. With reference to this brief about the formation of Interim Government by the Congress on 2nd September, 1946.

Answer: In Calcutta, on 16th August, 1946, the Muslim League held demonstrations, hartals and also hoisted Muslim League's flag. But their activities soon took a violent shape. There were riots, looting and killing in and around Calcutta. The Muslim League ministry could not control the situation. There was extreme loss of life and property. Meanwhile, the Congress formed the Interim Government on 2nd September, 1946. The Muslim League observed it as a day of mourning. Most of the Muslims all over the country were asked to display black flags. The result was that violence broke out in Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and also in Punjab. Gandhiji said, 'we are not in midst of Civil War but we are nearing it.'

Question 10: Prime Minister Attlee's announcement on February 20, 1947, was attempted to end the deadlock in India and marked the last few months of British Rule. In this context write short notes on Attlee's announcement of 20th February, 1947.

Or

Mention any three salient features of the Atlee's announcement.

Answer: The Congress and the Muslim League could not work together for long. The Muslim League went on harping on its demand for division of India. Jinnah said, 'We shall resist anything that militates against the Pakistan demand'. The British Government watched the situation with utmost vigilance, was then compelled to change its policy of saving India from its division into two. The Prime Minister of England, Mr. Clement Attlee, announced on 20th February, 1947.

(i) Britain would withdraw from India and transfer power to responsible Indians by June 1948.

(ii) If no agreement was arrived, Britain would still withdraw and hand over power to one or more than one Government.

(iii) Lord Mountbatten was to replace Lord Wavell as the new Viceroy of India.

Question 11: What was the place of Princely States in Mountbatten Plan.

Answer: The Indian Independence Act 1947 stated that on the withdrawal of the British Empire, the Indian Princely States would become independent. Each Princely State shall be at liberty to join either India or Pakistan. His Majesty's Government and the rulers of Indian States or any authority in tribal areas shall lapse from 15th August, 1947. The words Emperor of India shall be omitted from the Royal Style and Titles.

Question 12: How were the people of Punjab and Bengal affected by the communal riots?

Answer: The people were badly affected by communal riots. Thousands of innocent people both in Punjab and Bengal started moving from one dominion to the other. Lakhs of people thus became refugees both in India and Pakistan. Fear and hatred gripped both the nations.

Question 13: In reference to the Indian Independence Act of 1947, discuss what happened to Princely States.

Answer: In terms of the Independence Act 1947 the Princely States became independent. All the powers which vested in British were terminated. Some Princely States on their own initiative joined Indian Union. In some cases there was some military intervention to make them agree to democratic aspirations of people.

Question 14: What was achieved by this 'Treaty of Peace without War'?

Answer: By this Treaty, India won its freedom. There was partition of the country and a new nation Pakistan was born. The British officers and British Army left India. As a result new problems arose. There was unprecedented communal violence. Though peace was achieved, several thousand people died and lakhs of refugees had to migrate to Indian side as a result of communal violence. Yet the Independence Act was a milestone in the history of India marking a new phase of 'Self Government' which India as a whole had never witnessed in its history.

Question 15: Lord Samuel described the Indian Independence Act as Treaty of Peace without War'. In this connection state why did Lord Samuel say so?

Answer: The Indian Independence Act was the only one of the many acts which both Congress and Muslim League signed with the British. Never in the history had Britain

voluntarily abdicated a Colonial territory without bloodshed or war. So the Indian Independence Act was described as 'unique' in history. It is this what Lord Samuel called 'Treaty of Peace without War'.

Picture Based Questions

Question 1: With reference to the picture given answer the following:



- (i) Identify the Viceroy in the picture.
- (ii) Why was he sent to India?

Answer: (i) Lord Mountbatten.

(ii) Lord Clement Atlee sent Lord Mountbatten as the Viceroy of India to resolve the communal violence in India. He was given powers to negotiate with the leaders of different communities and help the two major parties, that is, the Indian National Congress and The Muslim League, reach an agreement.

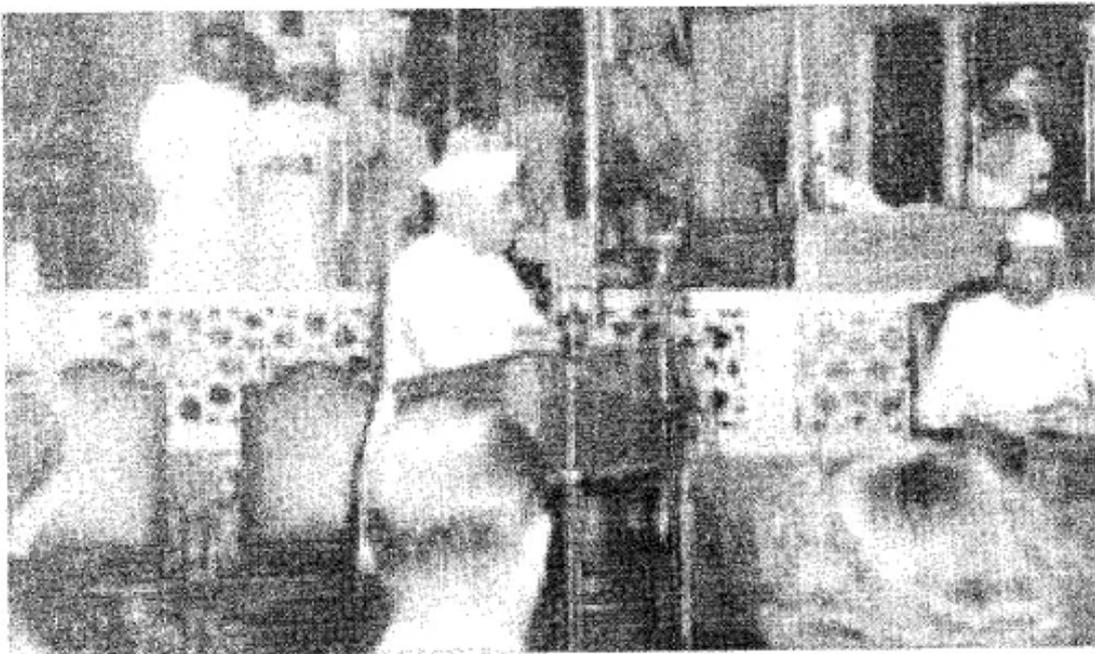
Question 2: With reference to the picture given answer the following:



- (i) Identify the event in the above picture. Name the lady seen in the given picture.
(ii) Mention the year when the event took place.

Answer: (i) The event in the given picture is the swearing ceremony of Jawahar Lal Nehru as the Prime Minister of Independent India. The lady seen in the picture is Lady Mountbatton, the wife of Lord Mountbatton the first Governor General of India.
(ii) The event took place in 1947.

Question 3: In the above historic photograph, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is seen giving his famous speech in the Constituent Assembly on August 14, 1947. In this context, mention the Provisions of the Indian Independence Act of 1947 regarding the Constituent Assemblies.



Answer: The Constituent Assembly which was set up under the Cabinet Mission according to which there would be 385 members, of whom 292 would be representatives from the provinces and 93 would represent Indian states. They would frame the provincial constitutions for their groups and then would finally meet to frame the Union Constitution. The Muslim League initially accepted the proposal but later rejected it. The government drafted the Indian Independence Act (1947). According to this India was to be divided into two dominions with their boundaries defined. The provisions of the Constituent Assemblies in the Indian Independence Act were:
(i) The Constituent Assemblies would draft the Constitutions of the two Dominions separately and decide whether to stay with the Commonwealth or not.
(ii) The Constituent Assembly of each dominion would exercise the power of Central Legislatures and would make laws for that dominion.