

The

FIRST YEAR



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General view of the Indian Independence Day celebrations at Lake Success. Dr. Padmanabha Pillai, India's Permanent Representative (back to camera) addressing the distinguished gathering on the 15th August 1947. India's new national flag takes its place among colours of other member states.

—Photo: UNITED NATIONS

THE FIRST YEAR

(August 15, 1947 — August 15, 1948)

INDEPENDENCE DAY SOUVENIR

Issued by the
Publications Division,

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
DELHI

Rs. 3/8/-

Printed by
DECCAN BOOK DEPOT,
POONA 4.

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MISTY MORNING (TRAVANCORE)

PREFACE

Independence tries and strengthens the fibre of a people. It helps the growth of the nation even as freedom helps the full development of the individual. Internationally, Indian independence is the biggest single contribution to world-peace which British statesmen have made.

We need not regret the conditions under which we have attained independence, for the thing itself is so essentially good, whatever difficulties we have to face, we are determined to overcome them.

Indian independence has removed an incubus from the whole of Asia. We are therefore commemorating the event as one of world importance.

C. Rajagopalachari

"WE DEDICATE OURSELVES ANEW"

THE 15th of August came and we rejoiced at our achievement in spite of the pain of partition. We looked forward to the sun of freedom and the opportunity that freedom brings. But though the sun rose it was hidden from us by dark clouds, and for us it remained a twilight hour. It has been a long twilight and the brightness of the day is still to come. For freedom is not a mere matter of political decision or new Constitutions, not even a matter of what is more important, that is, economic policy. It is of the mind and heart and if the mind narrows itself and is befogged and the heart is full of bitterness and hatred, then freedom is absent.

Another 15th of August has come and it is a solemn day for us in spite of all that has happened. The year has considerable achievement to its credit and we have gone forward some distance along our long journey. But the year is also full of unhappiness and humiliation and of a betrayal of the spirit that has been the redeeming feature of India. This year has seen the triumph of evil in the assassination of the Father of the Nation, and what greater shame and sorrow could there have been for anyone of us than this.

We celebrate this solemn day as we should, but our celebration cannot be one of vainglory and pious platitudes. It must be one of heart-searching and a fresh dedication to our cause. Let us think not so much of what we have done but of what we have left undone and what we have done wrongly. Let us think of the millions of refugees who, deprived of all they possessed, are still homeless wanderers. Let us think of the masses of India who continue to suffer and who have looked to us with hope and waited patiently for a betterment of their unhappy lot. Let us think also of the mighty resources of India which, if harnessed and utilized for the common good, can change the face of India and make her great and prosperous. To this great task let us address ourselves with all the strength in us. But above all let us remember the great lessons that Mahatma Gandhi taught us and the ideals that he held aloft for us. If we forget those lessons and ideals we betray our cause and our country.

So on this anniversary of our Independence we dedicate ourselves anew to the great cause of free India and her people. May we prove worthy. — JAI HIND.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.

* * * * *

"LET NO WEAK THOUGHT DISTURB US"

THE 15th of August, 1947, will always remain a memorable day not only in the history of India, but also in that of Britain, the Commonwealth and the World. Never before, on any single day, did so many millions of people achieve their liberation. For Britain it was a day of pride and glory — pride in assisting a people to fulfil their destiny and glory in the voluntary transfer of dominion over a large Empire. The Commonwealth acquired a member which was at one time characterized "a lost dominion". The world secured by its Council a voice at once unique and free — uninfluenced by power politics, prompted by lofty ideals and urged by a new philosophy.

What we have achieved, what we have avoided, and what we have failed to secure — all these are matters of recent history on which the public can come to its own judgment. If some hopes have proved dupes, many fears have proved liars. We have survived disasters and shocks — the greatest of them which cost us the Father of the Nation. Our Government, our administration, our finances and our people — all reeled under many a blow, but we miraculously revived and stood up to face the whirligig of time in all its revenges. We stand today firm and determined, ready to utilize every opportunity that may come our way to enhance our prestige, uphold our honour and safeguard our welfare.

Let no one feel that we are not alive to the dangers and the seriousness of the problems that face us. Let them reflect on the difficult legacies we received, the handicaps under which we laboured, the dangers we had to face, the disasters we had to surmount and the embarrassments we had to avoid. Surely, if in spite of them we are still on our feet and are able to look the whole world in the face, it is a testimony to our vitality, our courage, and our faith. On this, the first anniversary of our freedom, let no weak thought disturb us; instead, let us resolve to labour for our country and our cause with redoubled vigour and courage and renewed faith in our destiny. It is only thus that we can successfully guard the priceless possession we have secured after years of blood and toil and suffering — the Freedom of the Motherland.

Vallabhbhai Patel

Greetings

Telephone: Holborn 7087.
Telegrams: "Pethlawro-Holb. London."

FROM THE RT. HON. LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE OF PEASLAKE,

11 Old Square,

Lincoln's Inn, W.O.2.

June 25, 1948.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to wish India many happy returns of the day on this first anniversary of her life as an independent nation. May her renown increase from year to year and may her name be honoured throughout the world as a defender of justice freedom and peace.

Pethick Lawrence

* * * * *

On the first anniversary of Indian National freedom and sovereign independence I write as a friend and well-wisher of India to congratulate her people and to express my heart-felt desire for their happiness and prosperity.

The last year has been a difficult one, and many of the difficulties were inevitable; indeed, it is remarkable that there has not been more trouble and disorder. In this respect the more gloomy of the prophets of disaster have been confounded.

There are still many difficulties and complications ahead. These are both economic and political and are in part due to the general disorganization in the world, and especially in Asia, following on the upheaval of the second World War. Yet, taking a long view and looking well ahead, India has a tremendous opportunity. Her long association with Britain has given India some valuable assets. Apart from technical and material progress India is the only country in all Asia that has had the opportunity to develop democratic forms of government as well as having had the opportunity to prepare for these forms of government.

In the true sense of the words, India is thus the most progressive nation in Asia and has the opportunity, and, indeed, the responsibility, for assuming the political leadership of Asia. This leadership can combine the best spiritual forces both of the East and the West and can play a great part in the future peace and progress not only of the peoples of Asia but of all the world.

Strabulgi

Greetings

I send my greetings and good wishes to the people of India on this great anniversary, and I am sure that the vast majority of the people of Great Britain join with me in this expression of our renewed congratulations to India on the attainment of her freedom.

A year ago, and what a short time that is in the agelong history of India, amid scenes of great rejoicing wherever Indian people were gathered together throughout the world, India celebrated the achievement of her Independence.

All her friends, of whom I claim the privilege to count myself one, have watched with intense interest and sympathy those first and difficult steps which she has taken along her path of freedom. We have admired the courage of her leaders and the constancy of her people and we have sorrowed with them over the tragic loss of their great and inspired Mahatma Gandhi — a loss which the whole world shares.

But though that great human spirit has gone from us, the ideals and teachings, to which he gave his life, live on as a sure guide to his people through all their difficulties.

The generous affection shown to Lord and Lady Mountbatten on their departure from India, whom they have served so well, is, I am sure, a token of the friendship and good feeling which exists between our two equal nations. We shall do our utmost to deserve the continuance of the close friendship which they fostered between our two countries with such outstanding success.

There is much that we can do in this vexed and troubled world to help one another to build up a better and happier life for our peoples and in that common effort we shall, I am sure, find the most certain pledge of our continuing friendly relations.

We greet the great Indian people on the first Anniversary of their independence and wish them God's speed on their journey.

Stafford Cripps

* * * * *

In this one year of India's independence the people of the United States have learned more about India than they have ever known before. In all the previous centuries, which were the years of our brief national life, India's people were shrouded in colonialism. Now, thanks to visitors from India and information sent from India, we are beginning to hear the real India speak. Americans are realizing with dawning interest and wonder that just over our horizon, within a few winged days, there lies a great country, hitherto unknown.

Let there be all possible communications between us. For with all due humility we Americans are beginning to find that Indians are congenial to us. More Indians than any other Asian citizens speak our language. The Indian temperament is forthright and articulate, like ours. Whatever barriers there are can be surmounted. India and the United States can face boldly our differences, for we are basically enough alike to be friends.

Pearl S. Buck

Pearl S. Buck

MESSAGES

FEW chapters in the rich and varied chronicle of the struggle for freedom of nations through the ages excel the thrilling story of India's bloodless revolution, which, under the inspiration of our Leader, Mahatma Gandhi, won her Independence just one year ago. It was a magnificent initial achievement magnificently sustained despite the stupendous and almost simultaneous internal calamities that might well have crushed a people less courageous and less dedicated to the ideal of liberty. Now our immediate need and our urgent task is to fulfill the manifold implications of real freedom in every sphere of national life so that India might resume her due and natural place in the leadership of the world.

SAROJINI NAIDU

(Governor of the United Provinces.)

* * * * *

Today we have completed one full year since we attained our Independence on the 15th of August last. As we look back, we find that it has been a year of great expectations and great tribulations. On the morrow of our independence, our joy was marred by the tragic happenings which followed the partition of the country. Gandhiji, who had led us to freedom and who provided the unfailing source of moral sustenance to the nation in its darkest hours, was snatched away from our midst. Millions were uprooted from their homes and the administrative problems created became stupendous. Many of these hapless refugees have been already settled, and others are being rehabilitated within the limits of our means, but we are facing bigger problems of national economic reconstruction. Our productive machinery has slowed down so seriously that we face an economic crisis. Unless we can translate our plans into action in terms of increasing standards of living of the masses, they will remain mere aspirations. At this crucial period in our nation's history, we need unity above all, for without unity, the task of national reconstruction will remain unfulfilled and national defence will be jeopardised. We must rise above local and sectional interests and avoid disruptive tendencies which may weaken national strength and solidarity.

SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

*(Minister for Industry and Supply,
Government of India.)*

I am glad to know that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is bringing out a Souvenir to commemorate the first year of India's freedom. I write to wish the enterprise all success. Although it has been a year of unprecedented difficulties for both Government and the people, we have reason to congratulate ourselves on the success with which the more serious of these difficulties have been surmounted. We still have trying problems ahead of us, but I am convinced that if we remain united and apply ourselves with renewed energy and wisdom, we shall in time solve them. Freedom can neither be achieved nor preserved except at a price, and we as a people must be prepared to pay the price in unremitting effort, discipline and sacrifice.

JOHN MATTHAI

(Minister for Transport, Government of India.)

* * * * *

A year has rolled into eternity. In this short space this country has moved so fast that old land-marks have completely disappeared. Problems of a type which have never faced any country in known times had to be tackled. I often wonder from where this great capacity, this great patience to see through what we have seen, could have come. The Hindu civilization is undoubtedly very sticky and in spite of our inclination to be fatalistic in this particular respect, this country has shown the triumph of endeavour over destiny. On the 15th August, 1947, there were 600 and odd Indian States, all claiming sovereignty. Stabilising freedom was a job. However, the States question has been solved to the satisfaction of all concerned and this has enabled this country to stabilise freedom. The internal difficulties were and are undoubtedly there, but I should say the Government has got now a firm grip over the situation. The seeds of future greatness and progress will soon begin to sprout. Freedom is only a means to an end, the end being full opportunity to every individual, to realize whatever is best and noblest in him: Conditions, both moral and material, have to be created to achieve this end and these conditions will flow from suitable action — legislative and executive — taken at an appropriate moment by the Government. I have no doubt that this will happen. Looking back, there is no reason to regret — every reason to rejoice. The performance may seem meagre to some, but there is more in promise

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and that is really magnificent. The future will respond not to slogans but to hard work quietly done. New political habits have got to be developed to sustain this inheritance of freedom. It will take time, but a sense of responsibility is a condition requisite. Let us hope that the second year of our Freedom will witness distinct progress and will be moving rapidly towards what we have laid before us as our ideals.

N. V. GADGIL

(Minister for Works, Mines and Power,
Government of India.)

* * * * *

The 15th of August 1947 has passed into history as the day of the attainment of our cherished goal. Let us again rejoice on this day, which is our greatest national festival. But let us not forget in the thrill of joy that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. We have yet to build up the edifice of our national character and to train and discipline ourselves in a manner that each one of us becomes a sentry standing guard to the country's honour. There could be no more appropriate occasion than this for us to dedicate ourselves anew to the services of the country and to renew the solemn pledge to spare no endeavours to make Mother India great and glorious. Complacency in any shape or form will be fatal at this juncture when every ounce of our energy is needed for the preservation of our freedom and when the tender plant of our independence needs tending with our sweat and blood. Greed and narrowness sometimes threaten to overshadow our noble virtues and much loose and irresponsible talk is abroad. We have many enemies to face, and are yet to convince the watching world that we have developed full strength, both moral and material, to maintain our independence. This is no small danger: it is a challenge to us as a nation—a threat to our very existence.

JAGJIWAN RAM

(Minister for Labour, Government of India.)

* * * * *

India won its long-sought freedom on the memorable 15th of August last year. Ever since then, we have tried to bring that freedom to the doors of those who

reside within the millions of India's cottages. Unless freedom lights up their homes and brings comfort and cheer into their lives, the 15th of August may cease to live in the memories of our people. May we, therefore, strive for this great and inspiring ideal!

JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM

(Minister for Food and Agriculture,
Government of India.)

* * * * *

A year ago to-day, we celebrated our Independence Day. An era had come to its end. Another, the era of our dreams, had begun. We were free. We had come to our own. We heralded the day with legitimate joy.

A year has gone by today. It has been a year of great anguish and deep sorrow for hardly had we started, when we found ourselves overwhelmed by an unparalleled unleashing of sinful strife and beastly passion. Millions of our people found themselves carried away in the storm. Hundreds-of thousands were uprooted. Innumerable innocent lives were lost. So often during those anxious months, when gloom hung low and heavy, some even wondered if Destiny would cheat India of her hard-won freedom—if we would survive the cataclysm.

But those surely were moments of momentary weakness. The world knows how resolutely and with what great faith the evil was arrested. We have indeed much to be thankful for. Never perhaps in history has a Government had to face such tremendous odds in so short a period. We cannot yet say that our trials have ended. But no one doubts that the worst is over.

Today, as we celebrate the first anniversary of our Independence Day, it is our bounden duty to re-pledge our loyalty to our Government. Let this faith be the symbol of our unity. We have much to do yet to rid ourselves of the evil of the past year. Let us do it with resolution and remember that the measure of our success and the speed with which we can forge ahead depends upon the measure of our co-operation with

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every element of our national life and the loyalty we give to our national Government.

BALDEV SINGH

(Minister for Defence, Government of India.)

* * * * *

Twelve months have gone by since the liberation of our country from foreign domination. After the advent of political freedom we had naturally hoped to devote all our time and attention, as well as our unlimited energy and abundant resources, to the building of a New India — the India of which we, in the Congress, have dreamt, and worked for, and for which thousands have laid down their lives and millions suffered. But to our great misfortune and discomfiture we were confronted with a situation for which we were not at all prepared. The barbarous scenes which India witnessed before and after the partition have made us hang our heads in shame before God and Man. History tells us that even in the remote past, when Europe and Asia were scenes of religious wars and crusades, in the name of God and Religion, people in India, belonging to different creeds, were tolerant towards each other and lived amicably. It will again be for History to record its verdict on the 'divide and rule' policy of British Imperialism which has been principally responsible for the communal venom that has engulfed India. It has been responsible for the brutal murders of thousands of innocent women and children and the rape and abduction of a still larger number. Millions of our countrymen have been uprooted from their hearths and homes involving incalculable hardship and misery and loss of property.

Our Leader and Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, spared no pains to stave off the mounting tide of communal fanaticism, rapine and murder. And he did succeed in his efforts to a large extent. His tragic end in the great cause was his biggest triumph. What he failed to achieve by his post-prayer speeches and fasts was accomplished by his glorious death. His death has cast a shadow of gloom over the land; but his shining example and teachings still beckon us to the path he has shown. The first Anniversary of the achievement of freedom cannot, therefore, be an occasion of unmixed rejoicing.

Sons of Israel, after their deliverance, had to go through wilderness, suffering, untold hardships for a long time, and even decimation, before reaching the promised land. It is said that God revealed to Moses that it was not without ordeal that Man could be Free and worthy of the citizenship of the Holy Land. May be, India too is passing through a similar ordeal before complete political, economic and social freedom is achieved. We have to shed our false pride and petty prejudices, short-sighted communalism and narrow provincialism before we can enjoy the full fruits of freedom. Let us, therefore, hope and pray on this solemn occasion that necessary far-sightedness, strength and courage be vouchsafed to us during the ensuing year to work for the high ideals for which our Beloved Father, Mahatma Gandhi, lived and worked.

MOHAN LAL SAKSENA

(Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation,
Government of India.)

* * * * *

When I was a young man, I remember Dr. Annie Besant saying in one of her speeches, "Oh! the joy of being a free man in a free country!" Yes, Freedom is an inestimable gain, but, as there is no rose without a thorn, freedom has its responsibilities as well as its rights. The Indian Union came into being at a time of very great stress. We must never forget the extraordinary difficulties, the aftermath of war and partition, which faced the Central and Provincial Governments in India. We cannot expect these worldwide difficulties, to be overcome in a short period of time. That would be to expect the impossible. I feel that not only should we be grateful for the sacrifices of those great persons which have led to our freedom but we should give to them ample time to surmount existing obstacles. It is sad to think that while we have achieved our freedom we have lost during the months that followed that venerable world figure who more than any one brought freedom within our reach. Let us do our utmost to follow in all humility his ideals of peace and unity.

MAHARAJ SINGH
(Governor of Bombay.)

(MESSAGES)

Twelve months ago India achieved her long-desired goal of Independence after a struggle ranging over many years. These twelve months have been of immense strain and stress, especially to those at the helm of affairs. Seldom has any Government been called upon to face problems of such difficulty and complexity as the Government of India during the past one year. It is important, I think, to realise this and those who voice their impatience that progress has not been quicker would do well to realise that one year is by comparison a very short period in any nation's history. They should rather consider the fact that even during this short space we have a number of great achievements to our credit of which we may well be proud. At the same time it is equally important to guard against any feeling of complacency. Solid work and co-operation amongst all are necessary to build up the future of this country and by solid work I mean whole-hearted endeavour and not the mere shouting of slogans. Let us remember the anniversary of the birth of our independence should not be merely an excuse for celebrations — it should be an occasion for each one of us to dedicate ourselves afresh to the service of India.

ARCHIBALD NYE

(Governor of Madras.)

* * * * *

The people of India came into their heritage a year ago after centuries of heart-rending vicissitudes. We have now a whole year of political freedom for which we had been struggling for 28 years and longer under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance. This was only the first step towards the fuller realization of our life-long dream. Unprecedented misfortunes have taken a heavy toll during the intervening months and, worst of all, we have been witnesses of the greatest tragedy in India's history in the violent end of the greatest apostle of peace our age has known. The Central Government has had to face unparalleled difficulties which it has been able to control with considerable measure of success. The administrative structure which it inherited after much mutilation offered a problem of no mean magnitude. Had it not been for the confidence which Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and other national leaders commanded among the people, this structure would have collapsed after the hard knocks which fell to India's lot. We should thank our stars that we have gone a long way towards full recovery.

Our immediate task is to produce an atmosphere of confidence and security, congenial to stable progress and general prosperity. India's colossal resources await steady mobilization and, in whichever province they may be, their fruits are for all alike. If only the era of productive plenty is allowed to be heralded, there will be more work for all than they can handle and greater abundance of essential and other commodities than the people have so far been able to dream of. Those confident hopes, however, cannot materialise in a day nor can harvests be ripe overnight. Cottage and heavy industries will take time to arise, and it is for the people themselves to proceed in a disciplined manner to organise their activities in such a way that there should not be any slackness or loss of working hours. Let us all unite in the common effort not merely to give all our people what they urgently need but also to make our country really great.

ASAF ALI

(Governor of Orissa.)

* * * * *

Twelve months ago India became free. Much has happened since to rejoice over and much too, to regret. Freedom has been won but the main Architect of Freedom has been lost. Suspicion and lust for power and wealth stalk the world and frustration and greed find many strange bedfellows, with the result that the international situation is becoming more ominous and less hopeful for the establishment of universal peace. If only Mahatma Gandhi had been with us at this very critical stage of human progress! His preachings are, however, there to remind us of the high ideal which, according to him, should be the aim of every man or woman to attain by all peaceful means. To my mind it is necessary that putting aside desire for wealth, fame or power we should dedicate ourselves to combat ignorance, poverty and disease and to promote a strong sense of Indian citizenship, free from vulgarity, sordidness or bigotry in any form. If our minds be moulded in patterns of noblest nationalism that is entirely free from the faintest taint of communal, racial, linguistic or territorial bias, and our hearts be full of "the milk of human kindness", we shall be able to preserve our independence, grow and prosper, and also to play our proper role in the evolution of the human race.

M. S. ANEY

(Governor of Bihar.)

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Many grave and difficult problems face us today. If they are to be solved satisfactorily and happily, we must fulfil certain requisites, viz., internal peace and complete harmony amongst the various sections of the people, work in co-operative spirit and self-less devotion to the cause of raising the standard of living of the millions who live in villages.

MANGALDAS PAKVASA
(Governor of the C.P. and Berar.)

* * * * *

This is the first anniversary of Indian Independence. It was realised that it would require skill and fortitude on our part to overcome its attendant perils — the skill of people in positions of authority and trust, and the fortitude of the people in general. During the last twelve months the difficulties and dangers encountered have been even greater than was at first imagined they would be; and yet we have lived through them. This is evidence of the inherent strength of the Indian Union. Battered we are but undaunted, and if the

people of India show the same discipline as they have done during the first year of our Freedom, we may look to the future with confidence and hope.

A. HYDARI
(Governor of Assam.)

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It is indeed in the fitness of things that a Souvenir should be brought out on the 15th August to commemorate the first year of Freedom. This, our first year, has been none too easy for us. In fact, our Governments and our people, including those in the new Province of the East Punjab, have had to face most difficult and complex problems. Nevertheless, throughout the year we have been making rapid strides towards the stability and consolidation of our Indian Union, and our freedom is now firmly rooted. Many questions still stare us in the face, but I am sure that, given hard work, discipline, spirit of service and goodwill on the part of our citizens, we will solve them successfully.

C. M. TRIVEDI
(Governor of the East Punjab.)

"There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does."

—Mahatma Gandhi.

