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Topic: Quit India Movement

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QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

The Quit India Movement also known as India August Movement or Bharat Chodo Andolan was launched at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) by Mahatma Gandhi on August 8, 1942. The protest was initiated to demand an end to the British rule in India. Since the movement was held in August it is also known as August Kranti or August Movement. The movement was started on August 9, 1942, and since then the day is celebrated as August Kranti Day/Diwas. The day is celebrated by paying tribute to freedom fighters with national integration speeches and other events.

About Quit India Movement:

- Mumbai's Gowalia Tank Maidan also known as August Kranti Maidan is the place where Mahatma Gandhi delivered his speech marking the beginning of the Quit India Movement. Mahatma along with other leaders gathered here on August 8 and 9, 1942. The maidan also houses a monument as a tribute to the historical event.

- In his speech at Mumbai's Gowalia Tank, Gandhiji called the nation to 'Do or Die' in his speech. Within hours of the speech, almost the entire INC was imprisoned without trial.
- Several national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Abdul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were arrested.
- The Congress was declared an unlawful association, leaders were arrested and its offices all over the country were raided and their funds were frozen.
- The first half of the movement was peaceful with demonstrations and processions. The peaceful protest was carried till Mahatma Gandhi's release.
- The second half of the movement was violent with raids and setting fire at post offices, government buildings and railway stations. Lord Linlithgow adopted the policy of violence.
- The Viceroy's Council of Muslims, Communist Party and Americans supported Britishers.
- After the arrest of major leaders, young Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the AICC session. Despite several police warnings and government notices for banning public processions and assemblies, a large crowd gathered at Mumbai's Gowalia Tank Maidan where Aruna Asaf Ali hoisted the flag.
- The final phase of the movement was marked on September 1942 where mobs getting together and bombings in government places of Mumbai and Madhya Pradesh.

- The British refused to grant immediate independence and stated that it could only be granted after the war ended. Finally, India got independence in 1947.

The British swiftly responded with mass detentions. Over 100,000 arrests were made, mass fines were levied and demonstrators were subjected to public flogging. Hundreds of resisters and innocent people were killed in police and army shootings. Many national leaders went underground and continued their struggle by broadcasting messages over clandestine radio stations, distributing pamphlets and establishing parallel governments. The British sense of crisis was strong enough that a battleship was specifically set aside to take Gandhi and the Congress leaders out of India, possibly to South Africa or Yemen but ultimately did not take that step out of fear of intensifying the revolt.

The 'Quit India' movement, more than anything, united the Indian people against British rule. Although most demonstrations had been suppressed by 1944, upon his release in 1944 Gandhi continued his resistance and went on a 21-day fast. By the end of the Second World War, Britain's place in the world had changed dramatically and the demand for independence could no longer be ignored.