COLONIALISM AND NATIONALISM IN INDIA

Two-Nation Theory, Partition and Independence

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • November 18, 2026 • 20 min read



On **15 August 1947**, India became independent — but as two states, **India and Pakistan**. Freedom came with **Partition**: the division of British India along religious lines, the splitting of Punjab and Bengal, the displacement of perhaps **12–15 million** people and the deaths of somewhere between **two hundred thousand and two million** (estimates vary widely; around a million is often cited). The ideological basis of Partition was the **two-nation theory** — the claim that Hindus and Muslims of India were two separate nations, entitled to separate homelands.

This topic examines the origins and development of the two-nation theory, the political negotiations of 1945–47 that ended in Partition, the process by which power was transferred, the human cost of Partition, and the competing explanations historians have offered for why India was divided. It also briefly considers the earlier **Partition of Bengal (1905)** and the later **partition of 1971** that created Bangladesh, since the syllabus speaks of “partitions” in the plural.

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The Two-Nation Theory

Meaning

The two-nation theory holds that **Hindus and Muslims constitute two distinct nations** — with different religions, philosophies, social customs, literatures, histories and heroes — so that they cannot live together as one nation under a single majoritarian democratic state. In its political form, it demanded that Muslim-majority areas form a **separate sovereign state** (Pakistan).

Origins and evolution

- **Sir Syed Ahmad Khan** (1880s) spoke of Hindus and Muslims as two "nations" (using the word *qaum*, which could mean community or nation) whose interests would conflict under representative government. This is often seen as the intellectual seed of the theory, though Sir Syed did not demand a separate state.
- **Separate electorates (1909)** and the subsequent constitutional system institutionalised the idea of Muslims as a separate political community (Topic 3).
- **Muhammad Iqbal**, in his presidential address to the Muslim League at **Allahabad (December 1930)**, called for the amalgamation of Punjab, NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan into a single **Muslim state in the north-west**, "within the British Empire or without". He spoke of Indian Muslims as a distinct cultural unit but did not then demand complete separation from India.
- **Choudhry Rahmat Ali**, in his pamphlet ***Now or Never*** (Cambridge, **1933**), coined the word **"PAKSTAN"** (Punjab, Afghania [NWFP], Kashmir, Sind, Baluchis*tan*), and argued that Muslims of these areas formed a separate nation. League leaders at first dismissed it as a student's scheme.
- **V. D. Savarkar**, as president of the Hindu Mahasabha (**Ahmedabad, 1937**), declared that India could not be regarded as a unitary and homogeneous nation and that there were **two nations** in India, Hindus and Muslims. B. R. Ambedkar (*Thoughts on Pakistan*,

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1940) noted the striking agreement between Savarkar and Jinnah on this point, though they drew opposite conclusions.

- **Mohammad Ali Jinnah** turned the theory into a political programme after 1937. Once the "ambassador of Hindu–Muslim unity", he came to argue that the Congress represented only Hindus and that Muslims would be permanently dominated in a united India.

Jinnah's articulation (Lahore, March 1940)

In his presidential address at the **Lahore session (22 March 1940)**, Jinnah set out the theory clearly. He argued that Hindus and Muslims belong to **two different religious philosophies, social customs and literatures**, that they neither intermarry nor interdine, that they belong to two different civilisations based on conflicting ideas, and that their heroes and history are different — often one's hero is the other's foe. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, he argued, must lead to growing discontent and the final destruction of any fabric built for the government of such a state. He concluded that Muslims are a nation "according to any definition of a nation" and must have their homelands, their territory and their state.

The Lahore Resolution (23 March 1940)

Moved by **A. K. Fazlul Huq** and passed on **23 March 1940**, the resolution declared that no constitutional plan would be acceptable to Muslims unless it was based on the principle that **geographically contiguous units** be demarcated into regions, with such territorial readjustments as necessary, so that areas in which Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the **north-western and eastern zones** of India, be grouped to constitute **"Independent States"** in which the constituent units would be **autonomous and sovereign**. It also demanded safeguards for minorities in both regions.

Points to note:

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- The word **“Pakistan”** did not appear in the resolution; the Hindu press dubbed it the “Pakistan Resolution”, and the League soon adopted the name.
- The resolution spoke of “**States**” in the plural, which later fed debate on whether it envisaged one or two Muslim states (the **Delhi Convention of League legislators, April 1946**, amended it to “a sovereign independent state”).
- It was **vague about boundaries**: the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal had large non-Muslim populations, and the resolution did not say whether the provinces would be divided.

Critiques of the two-nation theory

- **Composite nationalism**: The Congress, and nationalist Muslims such as **Maulana Azad** , **Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan** and **Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani** of the **Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind** (in *Muttahida Qaumiyat aur Islam*, 1938), argued that nationhood is based on territory and shared history, not religion; that Hindus and Muslims shared a common culture of centuries.
- **Regional and linguistic diversity**: Muslims of Bengal, Punjab, Sind and the UP differed greatly in language and culture; religion alone could not make them one nation. The **creation of Bangladesh in 1971** is often cited as the clearest refutation of the theory.
- **Practical problems**: a third or more of the subcontinent’s Muslims would remain in India even after Partition, so the theory could not resolve the minority question.
- **Other Muslim opposition**: the **All-India Azad Muslim Conference (1940)**, the **Ahrars**, the **Momin Conference**, the **Khudai Khidmatgars** and Shia organisations opposed the Pakistan demand.
- Marxist and other historians see the theory as an **ideology of the Muslim elite** seeking to protect its interests rather than an expression of a pre-existing nation.

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The Road to Partition, 1940–1946

The League’s rise during the war

While the Congress was in opposition (1939) and then banned and jailed (1942–45), the League strengthened itself:

- It gained a **virtual veto** through the August Offer (1940) and the Cripps proposals’ provincial option (1942).
- League ministries were formed in **Assam, Sind, Bengal and the NWFP**; in Punjab, the Unionist Party ruled, but after **Sikandar Hayat Khan’s death (1942)** and the breakdown of the Jinnah–Sikandar arrangement, the League made inroads.
- The League built a **mass base** through the student federations, the ulema, pirs and sajjadanashins in Punjab and Sind, and the slogan of “Islam in danger”.
- Attempts at settlement failed: the **C. R. Formula** and **Gandhi–Jinnah talks (September 1944)**, the **Desai–Liaquat Pact (1945)** and the **Simla Conference (June–July 1945)**, where Jinnah insisted that the League alone could nominate Muslims to the Executive Council (Topic 6).

The elections of 1945–46

After the war, the new **Labour government** under **Clement Attlee** (July 1945) wished to settle the Indian question. Elections were held in **winter 1945–46**:

- **Central Legislative Assembly**: the Congress won about **91% of the non-Muslim (general) vote**; the League won **all 30 Muslim seats**.
- **Provincial assemblies**: the Congress won majorities in most provinces (including the **NWFP**); the League won about **439 of 494 Muslim seats** (around 87%), but formed governments only in **Bengal** and **Sind**. In **Punjab**, a coalition of Unionists, Congress and Akalis under **Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana** kept the League out of power despite its being the largest party.

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The results showed that the League had become the **dominant voice of Indian Muslims**, strengthening Jinnah's claim to be their "sole spokesman".

The Cabinet Mission Plan (16 May 1946)

Attlee sent a Cabinet Mission of three ministers — **Lord Pethick-Lawrence** (Secretary of State), **Sir Stafford Cripps** and **A. V. Alexander** — which arrived in March 1946. After the failure of the **Simla tripartite conference (May 1946)**, it announced its own plan:

- **Rejected the demand for a full sovereign Pakistan**: a Pakistan of six full provinces would include large non-Muslim minorities, while a smaller "truncated" Pakistan was unacceptable to the League and unviable.
- A **Union of India** comprising British India and the princely states, dealing only with **defence, foreign affairs and communications** (with powers to raise finances for these).
- All other subjects and **residuary powers** with the provinces.
- Provinces grouped into **three sections**:
  - **Section A**: Madras, Bombay, UP, Bihar, CP, Orissa (Hindu-majority);
  - **Section B**: Punjab, NWFP, Sind (and Baluchistan) (Muslim-majority, north-west);
  - **Section C**: Bengal and Assam (Muslim-majority, east).
- Each section could frame constitutions for its provinces and decide whether to form a **group**; a province could opt out of its group after the first general election under the new constitution, and any province could ask for reconsideration of the Union constitution after ten years.
- A **Constituent Assembly** of **389 members** (292 from provinces elected by provincial assemblies on a communal basis, 93 from princely states, 4 from Chief Commissioners' provinces).
- An **Interim Government** with the support of the major parties.

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Reactions: The **League accepted** the plan (6 June 1946), seeing compulsory grouping as the basis of a future Pakistan. The **Congress accepted** the long-term plan (25 June) but rejected the Interim Government proposals and insisted grouping was optional. On **10 July 1946**, **Nehru** stated in a press conference that the Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly "completely unfettered by agreements" and free to change the plan, and that grouping would probably not happen. The League treated this as a repudiation and **withdrew its acceptance (29 July 1946)**. Azad, in *India Wins Freedom*, later called Nehru's statement one of the "most unfortunate events" in Indian history; other historians argue that the plan's ambiguity about grouping made it unworkable in any case.

Direct Action Day (16 August 1946)

The League's Council (Bombay, 29 July 1946) resolved to resort to **"Direct Action"** to achieve Pakistan, and called for **16 August 1946** to be observed as **Direct Action Day**. In **Calcutta**, where the League ministry under **H. S. Suhrawardy** declared a public holiday, the day saw the **Great Calcutta Killings**: in about four days of rioting, around **4,000 people** were killed and over 100,000 left homeless. Violence spread to **Noakhali and Tippera** (East Bengal, October 1946) where Hindus were attacked; to **Bihar** (October–November 1946) in retaliation against Muslims; to **Garhmukteshwar** (UP); and in early 1947 to **Punjab** (Rawalpindi, March 1947). Gandhi walked through the villages of Noakhali (November 1946 – March 1947) to restore peace.

The Interim Government (2 September 1946)

- Viceroy **Lord Wavell** invited the Congress to form the **Interim Government**, which took office on **2 September 1946** with **Nehru** as Vice-President of the Executive Council (de facto Prime Minister).
- The League observed 2 September as a **Day of Mourning**, but joined the government on **26 October 1946** (Liaquat Ali Khan as Finance Member, with Jogendra Nath Mandal among its nominees) without accepting the Cabinet Mission's long-term plan, to "get a foothold to fight for Pakistan".

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- The government was paralysed by Congress–League conflict; **Liaquat's "poor man's budget" (1947)**, with heavy taxes on business, was seen by the Congress as an attack on its supporters.
- The **Constituent Assembly** met on **9 December 1946**, but the League **boycotted** it.

Independence and Partition, 1947

Attlee's Statement (20 February 1947)

Prime Minister Attlee announced in the House of Commons that:

- the British would **leave India not later than June 1948**;
- power would be handed over either to a central government or, if no agreement was reached, "in some areas to the existing provincial governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable";
- **Lord Mountbatten** would replace Wavell as Viceroy.

The statement's fixed date put pressure on all parties but also encouraged the League to seize as many provinces as possible, leading to agitation against the Unionist government in Punjab (Khizr resigned in March 1947) and violence.

The Mountbatten Plan (3 June 1947)

Mountbatten arrived in **March 1947**. He soon concluded that the Cabinet Mission plan was dead and that partition was the only way to a quick transfer of power. After an earlier "**Plan Balkan**" (giving power to the provinces separately) was rejected by Nehru, V. P. Menon helped prepare a new scheme. The **3 June Plan** (also called the **Mountbatten Plan** or **Partition Plan**) provided:

- The **Punjab and Bengal legislative assemblies** would meet in two parts — Muslim-majority districts and the rest — and if either part voted for partition, the province would be divided. (Both provinces voted for partition.)

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- **Sind** and **Baluchistan** would decide through their legislature and a jirga/Quetta municipality; both chose Pakistan.
- A **referendum in the NWFP** (July 1947) on joining India or Pakistan (Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's demand for a third option, Pakhtunistan, was rejected; the Congress–Khudai Khidmatgar boycotted the vote, and Pakistan won).
- A **referendum in the Sylhet district** of Assam (it chose East Bengal, except part of Karimganj).
- A **Boundary Commission** would demarcate the boundaries in Punjab and Bengal.
- **Dominion status** would be granted to the two successor states, which could later decide on Commonwealth membership.
- **Princely states** would be free to join either dominion or remain independent (paramountcy would lapse).
- The date of transfer was **advanced to 15 August 1947**.

The Congress Working Committee and the AICC (14–15 June 1947) accepted the plan; Gandhi, Ghaffar Khan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan and others were deeply unhappy. Patel and Nehru accepted it as the price of a strong, united Centre and an end to violence and the Interim Government's deadlock.

The Indian Independence Act, 1947

Passed by the British Parliament and given royal assent on **18 July 1947**:

- Two **independent dominions**, **India and Pakistan**, created from **15 August 1947**.
- Each dominion's **Constituent Assembly** would be sovereign and could frame its constitution and repeal any British law, including the Act itself.
- The office of **Secretary of State for India** was abolished; British suzerainty over the princely states lapsed.
- Each dominion would have a **Governor-General**: **Mountbatten** for India (at the Congress's request) and **Jinnah** for Pakistan.

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- Until new constitutions were made, the **Government of India Act, 1935**, as adapted, would serve as the provisional constitution.

Pakistan came into existence on **14 August 1947** (Karachi), India on **15 August 1947**, when Nehru delivered his "**Tryst with Destiny**" speech at midnight in the Constituent Assembly.

The Radcliffe Line

- **Sir Cyril Radcliffe**, a British lawyer who had never been to India, chaired both the **Punjab and Bengal Boundary Commissions** (each with two Congress and two League nominee judges).
- He was given about **five weeks** to draw the lines, using outdated maps and census data; the commissions divided on communal lines, so Radcliffe decided alone.
- The award was **announced only on 17 August 1947**, two days after independence, so millions did not know which country they were in on Independence Day.
- Controversies: the award of **Gurdaspur** district's tehsils (giving India a land link to Kashmir), the **Chittagong Hill Tracts** (Buddhist-majority, given to Pakistan), **Murshidabad** and **Khulna**, and the canal headworks in Punjab.

The princely states

About **562 princely states** had to decide their future. Under **Sardar Patel** (Ministry of States) and **V. P. Menon**, almost all acceded to India by **15 August 1947** through the **Instrument of Accession** (ceding defence, external affairs and communications) and later **Merger Agreements**. The exceptions were:

- **Junagadh**: the Nawab acceded to Pakistan; after popular protests and a plebiscite (February 1948), it joined India.
- **Hyderabad**: the Nizam sought independence; after a **Standstill Agreement** and Razakar violence, Indian troops entered in **Operation Polo** (September 1948).

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- **Jammu and Kashmir**: Maharaja Hari Singh delayed; after a tribal invasion from Pakistan (October 1947), he signed the **Instrument of Accession on 26 October 1947**, leading to the first India–Pakistan war.

The Human Cost of Partition

- **Migration**: about **12–15 million** people crossed the new borders, one of the largest mass migrations in history. Punjab saw a near-complete exchange of populations; in Bengal migration continued for years.
- **Violence**: massacres of Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab and of Muslims in East Punjab, Delhi and elsewhere; attacks on refugee trains and convoys; estimates of the dead range from **200,000 to 2 million**.
- **Women**: an estimated **75,000–100,000** women were abducted, raped or forced to convert; many were killed by their own families in the name of "honour". The **Inter-Dominion Agreement** and the Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act (1949) led to recovery operations which raised troubling questions about women's choice (see Urvashi Butalia; Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin).
- **Refugee rehabilitation**: India set up a Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation; refugees reshaped cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Lahore and Karachi.
- **Division of assets**: the army, civil services, treasury and records were divided (Pakistan's share of the cash balances was fixed at ₹75 crore, of which ₹20 crore was paid at once); India's withholding of the remaining ₹55 crore from Pakistan during the Kashmir war led to Gandhi's last fast (January 1948).
- **Gandhi's role**: Gandhi did not celebrate 15 August; he was in **Calcutta**, where he fasted to stop riots (the "one-man boundary force", in Mountbatten's words). He was assassinated on **30 January 1948**.
- **Long-term legacies**: Kashmir, India–Pakistan hostility, minority questions in both countries, and the partition of memory and identity.

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Why Was India Partitioned? Historiographical Debates

The British role: “divide and rule”

Nationalist historians (and Indian popular memory) argue that British policy — separate electorates (1909), the Communal Award (1932), the August Offer veto (1940), the Cripps provincial option (1942), and favour shown to the League during the war — created and nurtured Muslim separatism. Mountbatten’s haste (advancing the date from June 1948 to August 1947) worsened the violence.

Jinnah and the League: the “sole spokesman”

- The **Pakistani official view** sees Pakistan as the natural culmination of a Muslim nation’s struggle, led by **Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah**.
- **Ayesha Jalal** (*The Sole Spokesman*, 1985) argued that Jinnah did **not really want a sovereign Pakistan**; he used the demand as a **bargaining counter** to secure parity for Muslims in a loose federal India (as in the Cabinet Mission Plan). The Congress’s insistence on a strong Centre, and the logic of mass mobilisation he had unleashed, left him with a “moth-eaten” Pakistan he had not wanted.

The Congress’s responsibility

- Some historians (and Jinnah’s admirers) blame the Congress for refusing coalitions in the UP in 1937, for Nehru’s July 1946 statement, and for preferring a **strong Centre** over a loose federation. **H. M. Seervai** (*Partition of India: Legend and Reality*, 1989) argued that Congress leaders, especially Nehru and Patel, accepted Partition rather than share power.
- Others point to the Congress’s failure to build a mass base among Muslims and to counter Hindu communalism within its ranks.
- **Bipan Chandra** and others reply that the Congress fought communalism of all kinds and accepted Partition only as the lesser evil when communal violence had made a united India impossible.

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Communal mobilisation and “high politics” versus “low politics”

- The **Cambridge school** (Anil Seal, R. J. Moore) stressed high-level negotiations and the self-interest of elites and the British.
- Recent scholarship (**Gyanendra Pandey**, *Remembering Partition*, 2001; **Joya Chatterji**, *Bengal Divided*, 1994; **Yasmin Khan**, *The Great Partition*, 2007; **Neeti Nair**, *Changing Homelands*, 2011) shifts attention to provincial politics, local communal organisations, and popular violence. Joya Chatterji showed that **Bengali Hindu** leaders (including the Mahasabha and sections of the Congress) actively campaigned for the **partition of Bengal** in 1947.
- **Feminist and oral historians** (**Urvashi Butalia**, *The Other Side of Silence*, 1998; **Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin**, *Borders and Boundaries*, 1998) recovered the experiences of ordinary people, especially women.

Summing up the causes

Partition resulted from a combination of: the **colonial politics** of separate electorates; the **growth of communalism** among both Hindus and Muslims; the **League’s successful mobilisation** after 1937 and especially after 1940; the **failure of Congress–League negotiations** over the structure of the state (strong vs weak Centre); the **wartime advantages** the League gained; the **communal violence** of 1946–47, which made coexistence seem impossible; and the **British haste** to withdraw.

Partitions in Plural: 1905, 1947 and 1971

The syllabus speaks of “partitions”. Three are relevant to the history of the subcontinent:

Point	Partition of Bengal (1905)	Partition of India (1947)	Break-up of Pakistan (1971)
Authority	Lord Curzon (colonial administration)	British Parliament on the basis of Congress–League agreement	War of liberation; Indian intervention

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Basis	Administrative convenience (officially); in effect religious division to weaken Bengali nationalism	Two-nation theory; Muslim-majority areas	Bengali linguistic-cultural nationalism against West Pakistani domination
Outcome	Eastern Bengal and Assam created; **annulled in 1911** after the Swadeshi Movement	India and Pakistan (with East and West wings)	**Bangladesh** independent (16 December 1971)
Significance	Sparked Swadeshi; first experiment in religious division	Ended British rule; massive violence and migration	Showed the limits of religion as the basis of nationhood

The **Partition of Bengal (1905)** foreshadowed 1947: it was the first attempt to create a Muslim-majority province, it encouraged the formation of the Muslim League, and the Bengali Hindu nationalism it provoked is part of the story of the 1947 partition of Bengal. The **creation of Bangladesh (1971)** is frequently read as a refutation of the two-nation theory, since a shared religion could not hold together two regions divided by language, culture, economic exploitation and political exclusion. (The Bangladesh Liberation War is covered in detail in the South Asia units of the course.)

Conclusion

The two-nation theory grew from the political culture of colonial India — separate electorates, competition for jobs and power, religious revivalism on both sides, and the failure to build a shared secular nationalism that all communities trusted. Jinnah transformed it into a mass demand after 1937, and the League's success in the 1945–46 elections, the breakdown of the Cabinet Mission Plan, and the communal violence that followed Direct Action Day made Partition seem unavoidable to the Congress leadership and the British alike. Independence on 15 August 1947 was therefore both a triumph and a tragedy: the end of nearly two centuries of colonial rule, and the beginning of a division whose costs — in lives lost, families uprooted, and enduring hostility — continue to shape South Asia. For students of the national movement, Partition remains the clearest reminder that the struggle for freedom was also a struggle over what kind of nation India would be.

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Quick Revision

Date	Event
Dec 1930	Iqbal’s Allahabad address
1933	Rahmat Ali’s *Now or Never* (“Pakstan”)
1937	Savarkar’s “two nations” speech, Ahmedabad
23 Mar 1940	Lahore Resolution (moved by Fazlul Huq)
Sep 1944	Gandhi–Jinnah talks fail
Jun–Jul 1945	Simla Conference fails
Winter 1945–46	Elections; League wins most Muslim seats
16 May 1946	Cabinet Mission Plan
10 Jul 1946	Nehru’s press statement on grouping
29 Jul 1946	League withdraws acceptance; calls Direct Action
16 Aug 1946	Direct Action Day; Great Calcutta Killings
2 Sep 1946	Interim Government (Nehru)
9 Dec 1946	Constituent Assembly meets
20 Feb 1947	Attlee’s statement (June 1948 deadline)
3 Jun 1947	Mountbatten Plan
18 Jul 1947	Indian Independence Act
14/15 Aug 1947	Pakistan / India independent
17 Aug 1947	Radcliffe Award published
26 Oct 1947	Kashmir accedes to India
30 Jan 1948	Gandhi assassinated

Memory aids

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- Pakistan idea: **Sir Syed (seed) → Iqbal (1930, state in NW) → Rahmat Ali (1933, name) → Jinnah (1940, demand)**.
- PAKSTAN = **P**unjab, **A**fghania, **K**ashmir, **S**ind, Baluchis**tan**.
- Cabinet Mission groups: **A = Hindu-majority; B = NW Muslim; C = Bengal–Assam**.
- 1947 sequence: **Attlee (Feb) → Mountbatten (Mar) → 3 June Plan → Act (18 Jul) → Independence (15 Aug) → Radcliffe (17 Aug)**.

Exam Practice

Long-answer questions

- Trace the origin and development of the two-nation theory. How far was it a product of colonial policy?
- Critically examine the Lahore Resolution of 1940. Why is its language considered ambiguous?
- Discuss the main provisions of the Cabinet Mission Plan and explain why it failed.
- Examine the circumstances that led the Congress to accept Partition in June 1947.
- “Jinnah used the Pakistan demand as a bargaining counter.” Discuss with reference to Ayesha Jalal’s interpretation.
- Evaluate the main historiographical explanations of the Partition of India.
- Compare the Partition of Bengal (1905), the Partition of India (1947) and the creation of Bangladesh (1971).

Short-answer questions

- What is the two-nation theory?
- Who coined the word “Pakistan” and what did it stand for?
- What did Iqbal propose in his Allahabad address of 1930?
- What were the three groups under the Cabinet Mission Plan?

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- What was Direct Action Day?
- What were the main provisions of Attlee’s statement of February 1947?
- What was the Mountbatten Plan?
- State the main provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947.
- What was the Radcliffe Line, and why was it controversial?
- Why is the creation of Bangladesh seen as a challenge to the two-nation theory?

Multiple-choice questions

- **The Lahore Resolution of 1940 was moved by:** (a) M. A. Jinnah (b) Liaquat Ali Khan (c) A. K. Fazlul Huq (d) Sikandar Hayat Khan. *Answer: (c)*
- **The word “Pakistan” was coined by:** (a) Muhammad Iqbal (b) Choudhry Rahmat Ali (c) Jinnah (d) Aga Khan. *Answer: (b)*
- **The Cabinet Mission consisted of Pethick-Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and:** (a) Lord Wavell (b) A. V. Alexander (c) Clement Attlee (d) Lord Mountbatten. *Answer: (b)*
- **Direct Action Day was observed on:** (a) 16 August 1946 (b) 2 September 1946 (c) 15 August 1947 (d) 23 March 1940. *Answer: (a)*
- **Who was the chairman of the Punjab and Bengal Boundary Commissions?** (a) Lord Ismay (b) Sir Cyril Radcliffe (c) V. P. Menon (d) Lord Listowel. *Answer: (b)*
- **Match the following:** (A) Cabinet Mission Plan – (B) Mountbatten Plan – (C) Indian Independence Act – (D) Attlee’s statement. (1) 3 June 1947 (2) 18 July 1947 (3) 16 May 1946 (4) 20 February 1947. Correct code: (a) A-3, B-1, C-2, D-4 (b) A-1, B-3, C-2, D-4 (c) A-3, B-2, C-1, D-4 (d) A-4, B-1, C-2, D-3. *Answer: (a)*
- **In which province was a referendum held in July 1947 to decide whether to join India or Pakistan?** (a) Sind (b) NWFP (c) Baluchistan (d) Punjab. *Answer: (b)*
- **Assertion (A):** The Muslim League withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan in July 1946. **Reason (R):** Nehru declared that the Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly unfettered by agreements. (a) Both true, R explains A (b) Both true, R does not

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explain A (c) A true, R false (d) A false, R true. *Answer: (a)*

- **“The Sole Spokesman” (1985) was written by:** (a) Ayesha Jalal (b) Joya Chatterji (c) Yasmin Khan (d) Urvashi Butalia. *Answer: (a)*
- **Which leader defended composite nationalism in “Muttahida Qaumiyat aur Islam”?** (a) Maulana Azad (b) Husain Ahmad Madani (c) Ghaffar Khan (d) Hakim Ajmal Khan. *Answer: (b)*

Suggested Readings

- Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, 1985).
- Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (Yale, 2007).
- Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932–1947* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition* (Cambridge, 2001).
- Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Penguin, 1998).
- Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition* (Kali for Women, 1998).
- B. R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan* (1940; revised as *Pakistan or the Partition of India*, 1945).
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1959; complete edition 1988).
- V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (1957).
- Bipan Chandra et al., *India’s Struggle for Independence* (Penguin, 1989), chs. 38–39.
- Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition and After* (Orient BlackSwan, 2015), ch. 9.

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