

**Jawaharlal Nehru**

Jawaharlal Nehru was born on **November 14, 1889, in Allahabad**, India. In 1919, he joined the Indian National Congress and joined Indian Nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi's independence movement. The British withdrew and Nehru became independent India's first prime minister. He died on **May 27, 1964, in New Delhi**, India.

A series of English governesses and tutors educated Nehru at home until he was 16. He continued his education in England, first at the **Harrow School** and then at **Trinity College, Cambridge**, where he earned an honors degree in natural science. He later studied **law at the Inner Temple in London** before returning home to India in **1912** and practicing law for several years. Four years later, Nehru married **Kamala Kaul**; their only child, **Indira Priyadarshini**, was born in 1917.

**Entering Politics**

In 1919, while traveling on a train, Nehru overheard British Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer gloating over the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre**. In 1928, after years of struggle on behalf of Indian emancipation, Jawaharlal Nehru was named president of the Indian National Congress. The next year, Nehru led the historic session at Lahore that proclaimed complete independence as India's political goal. November 1930 saw the start of the Round Table Conferences, which convened in London and hosted British and Indian officials working toward a plan of eventual independence.

The British withdrew and Nehru became independent India's **First prime minister**. The importance of Jawaharlal Nehru in the context of Indian history can be distilled to the following points: he imparted modern values and thought, stressed secularism, insisted upon the basic unity of India, and, in the face of ethnic and religious diversity, carried India into the modern age of scientific innovation and technological progress. He also prompted social concern for the marginalized and poor and respect for democratic values.

Nehru was especially proud to reform the antiquated Hindu civil code. Finally Hindu widows could enjoy equality with men in matters of inheritance and property. Nehru also changed Hindu law to criminalize caste discrimination.

Nehru's administration established many Indian institutions of higher learning, including the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, the Indian Institutes of Technology, and the National Institutes of Technology, and guaranteed in his **five-year plans** free and compulsory primary education to all of India's children.

His birthday, November 14, is celebrated in India as Baal Divas ("**Children's Day**") in recognition of his lifelong passion and work on behalf of children and young people. His autobiography was "**Toward Freedom**".

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