

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT (1947)

The Bill containing the provisions of the Mountbatten Plan of 3 June 1947, was introduced by British Prime Minister Clement Attlee in the House of Commons on 14 July 1947, and passed as the Indian Independence Act, 1947. The Act made India and Pakistan independent dominions and the princely states were left to accede to either of the two. The Act laid down detailed measures for the partition of India and speedy transfer of political power to the new governments of India and Pakistan. The simple Act, containing 20 sections and 3 schedules, constituted two independent dominions of India and Pakistan with effect from 15 August 1947.

The salient features of the act were as follows:

1. Creation of India and Pakistan, two independent dominions with effect from 15 August 1947.
2. Setting up of a Boundary Commission for demarcating the international boundaries, in the states of Punjab and Bengal, under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe.
3. The respective Constituent Assemblies of India and Pakistan would be fully sovereign bodies but with a choice to sever their link from the British Commonwealth of Nations.
4. The Governor-General, appointed by the British throne, would become constitutional head.
5. The Act of 1935 would be used as the governing constitution till the formation of a new constitution.
6. The Indian States would be free to join either India or Pakistan, without any pressure from the British crown, or to declare themselves as independent nations.
7. The Secretary of State of India would conclude his activities from 15 August 1947 onwards.
8. The provisions of 'Statute of Westminster of 1931 to remain applicable to both India and Pakistan.

Jivanram Bhagwandas Kriplani (J. B. Kriplani)

J. B. Kriplani was born on 11 November 1888 in Hyderabad Sindh. He was an Indian politician who was the President of the Indian National Congress in 1947 when India got Independence. He was a Gandhian socialist and independence activist. He was a close aide of Gandhiji who had seen the time period from the Non-Cooperation Movements of 1920s to the Emergency of the 1970s. After Independence, he became an MP in 1952, 1957, 1963 and 1963 as a member of Praja Socialist Party. He remained a critic of Nehru's policies and administration while working for social and environmental causes. He died on 19 March 1982 at the age of 94. A postal stamp was issued in his name in the year 1989 on his birth centenary.

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