

8th – India After Independence II



INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES: Independent India entered into a world that was changing fast—new were being born, and old ones losing their power and prestige. There were new alignments and realignments of power. Friendly neighbours suddenly turned not so friendly, misunderstandings cropped up, and India tasted both success and defeat in war.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN: Pakistan as a nation was created in 1947. At the time of independence, Pakistan consisted of West Pakistan (the current Pakistan) and East Pakistan (the current Bangladesh). India and Pakistan have shared a strained relationship ever since the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. Pakistan tried to liberate Kashmir, and it ended in armed conflict between the two countries. The UN ordered a ceasefire on 1 January 1948 and Pakistan had to withdraw its troops from Indian land. However, it continues to hold part of Jammu and Kashmir. This territory is now called Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) by India and Azad Kashmir by Pakistan. In July 1972, the Simla Accord was signed between India and Pakistan. Both countries agreed to settle their differences peacefully through negotiation, and trade and diplomatic relation were re-established between two nations.

INDIA AND BANGLADESH: After Partition, East Bengal was renamed East Pakistan. The population consisted mainly of Bengali Muslims. Soon there was rising discontent among the people. They felt that they were being exploited like a colony by west Pakistan. They were also upset by the introduction of Urdu as the sole official language, through the mother tongue of most people in East Pakistan was Bengali. The relations between India and Bangladesh have remained largely friendly, though there are several issues that need storing out. There was conflict over the sharing of the Ganga's waters, and illegal immigration of Chakma refugees from Bangladesh into India. Two countries are trying to solve these problems peacefully.

INDIA AND CHINA: India and China have enjoyed cultural and economy ties for more than 2000 years. With the passage time, and changes in the political climate in big countries, the old friendship also changed. India was one of first countries in the world to recognize the national communist government. In 1954, India and China signed the Panchsheel Agreement, and both accepted the five principles of friendly co-existent however, trouble soon arose with China published a map which showed over one lakh square kilometer of Indian territory in the Himalayas as part of china. Relations with China worsen the 1960s and 1970s. However, since then, there has been an effort on both sides to improved relation.

INDIA AND NEPAL: India has maintained friendly relations with Nepal the Himalayan nation to its north. India helped Nepal in the construction of bridges, hospitals and railway lines. Nepal is a land-locked country and has no ports for overseas trade. Both countries have, therefore, signed a Treaty of Trade and Transit for manual cooperation. For Indians, travelling to and from Nepal is easy, with no restrictions.

INDIA AND BHUTAN: Bhutan is a small land-locked mountainous station between India and China. India has always had a friendly relationship with Bhutan. India has led a helping hand in several of Bhutan's development activities like the construction of hospital, hydroelectric projects and communications.

8th – India After Independence II



INDIA AND MYANMAR: India shares a long border on the east with Myanmar (originally called Bhutan). Like India, Myanmar was also under British rule, from which it became independent in January 1948. Relations between the nations became strained. Incidents like smuggling and people crossing over to India created further tension. The then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Myanmar in 1987. In 1994, an India—Myanmar border trade agreement was signed to improve the economic ties between the two countries.

INDIA AND SRI LANKA: As with its other neighbours, India has shared a historic relationship with Sri Lanka.

THE POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT: India always had friendly ties with the USSR. They cooperated in trade, and economic, technical, cultural and other fields. India and the USSR had similar views on many international matters. The USSR supported India on issues like Kashmir. It also supplied arms for the Indian forces at a time when the USA was supplying arms to Pakistan.

INDIA AND THE USA: By the turn of the 20th century, USA had become one of the strongest powers of the world, and played a key role in international affairs. When India was struggling for independence, it sympathized with and supported the struggle. However, since then Indo-US relations have fluctuated. During the Sino-Indian conflict, the USA sided with and supplied arms to India. But the USA also gave military aid to Pakistan. Of late, the relationship has become warmer. A civilian nuclear deal was struck with the USA in 2008.

THE POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT: India always had friendly ties with the USSR. They cooperated in trade, and economic, technical, cultural and other fields. India and the USSR had similar views on many international matters. The USSR supported India on issues like Kashmir. It also supplied arms for the Indian forces at a time when the USA was supplying arms to Pakistan.

THE NATION, SIXTY YEARS ON: On 15 August 2007, India celebrated sixty years of its existence as a free nation. That India is still united, and it is still democratic, are achievements that we might justly be proud of. Many foreign observers had felt that India could not survive as a single country, that it would break up into many parts, with each region or linguistic group seeking to form a nation of its own. Others believed that it would come under military rule. However, as many as thirteen general elections have been held since independence, as well as hundreds of state and local elections. There is a free press, as well as an independent judiciary, finally, the fact that people speak different languages or practice different faiths has not come in the way of national unity.

On the other hand, deep divisions persist. Despite constitutional guarantees, the Untouchables or, as they are now referred to, the dalits, face violence and discrimination. In many parts of rural India they are not allowed access to water sources, temples, parks and other public places. And despite the secular ideals enshrined in the constitution, there have been clashes between different religious groups in many states.

The constitution recognizes equality before the law, but in real life some Indians are more equal than others. Judged by the standards it set itself at independence, the republic of India has not been a great success. But it has not been a failure either.

