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Freedom Struggle

I. The Revolt of 1857

1. The Revolt of 1857 is an important landmark in the history of India which occurred during the governor-generalship of Lord Canning.

2. Causes of the Revolt : The revolt of 1857 was a combination of political, economic, socio-religious and military causes.

3. Political : Nana Sahib was refused pension, as he was the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II. Avadh was annexed in 1856, on charges of maladministration. Satara, Jhansi, Nagpur and Sambhalpur were annexed owing to the Doctrine of Lapse.

4. Economic : Heavy taxation, forcible evictions, discriminatory tariff policy against Indian products and destruction of traditional handicrafts that hit peasants and artisans.

5. Socio religious : British social reforms (abolition of sati, 1829; legalisation of widow remarriage, 1856 etc.) hurt the sentiments of orthodox and conservative people.

6. Military : Discrimination with Indian soldiers.

3. Immediate cause : The introduction of Enfield rifles whose cartridges were said to have a greased cover made of beef and pork sparked off the revolt.

4. The Beginning and Spread of the Revolt : On March 29, 1857, an Indian sepoy of 34th Native Infantry, Mangal Pandey, killed two British officers—Hughson and Baugh—on parade at Barrackpore (near Calcutta). The Indian soldiers present refused to obey orders to arrest Mangal Pandey. However, he was later arrested, put to death and hanged.

5. The mutiny really started at Meerut on 10th May 1857. The occasion was the punishment of some sepoys for their refusal to use the greased cartridges. The soldiers along with other groups of civilians, went on a rampage shouting 'Maro Firangi ko'. They broke open jails, murdered Europeans, burnt their houses and marched to Delhi after sunset.

6. The appearance of the marching soldiers next morning (i.e. 11th May) in Delhi was a signal to the local soldiers, who in turn revolted, seized the city and

proclaimed the 82-year old Bahadur Shah 'Zafar', as Shahenshah-i-Hindustan (i.e. Emperor of India).

7. Within a month of the capture of Delhi, the revolt spread to the different parts of India (esp. all over the North India, Central India and Western India). South remained quite and Punjab and Bengal were only marginally affected.

Note :

1. Bahadur Shah II: was Deported to Rangoon, where he died in 1862. His sons were dead; Nana Sahib (original name—Dhundhu Pant), Begum Hazrat Mahal and Khan Bahadur Khan : Escaped to Nepal; Tantiya Tope (Original name — Ramchandra Pandurang) : was captured and executed on 15th April, 1859; Rani Laxmi Bai : Died in the battle-field; Kuer Singh : was wounded and died on 26 April, 1858.

2. Sir Hume Rose described Laxmi Bai as 'the best and bravest military leader of the rebel'.

3. Other Important Leaders : Khan Bahadur Khan (Bareilly), Maulavi Ahmadullah (Faizabad), Azimullah Khan (Fatehpur), Devi Singh (Mathura), Kadam Singh (Merrut) etc.

4. English authority re-established in India during July-Dec. 1858.

Causes of Failure : The Revolt of 1857 was an unsuccessful but heroic effort to eliminate foreign rule. The main causes were : 1. Disunity of Indians and poor organisation 2. Lack of complete nationalism-Scindias, Holkars, Nizam and others actively helped the British 3. Lack of coordination between sepoys, peasants, zamindars and other classes 4. Many had different motives for participating in the revolt.

Significance : The important element in the revolt lay in Hindu-Muslim unity. People exhibited patriotic sentiment without any touch of communal feelings. It no doubt began as a mutiny of soldiers, but soon turned into a revolt against British rule in general.

Nature of the Revolt of 1857

There are two main views about the nature of the Revolt of 1857 :

1. Sepoy Mutiny : Syed Ahmed Khan, Munshi Jeevan Lal and Durgadas Bandyopadhyaya (Contemporary Historians); Stenley (Secretary of state for India), John Lowerence, John Seeley, Malleon, R.C. Mazumdar.

2. National Struggle/War of Independence : Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx, V.D. Savarkar, K.M. Pannikar, Ishwari Prasad, A.L. Shrivastva, Tarachand.

Other views : Racial Struggle / Black-White Struggle—Medley; Religious Struggle / Hindu-Muslim—Christian Struggle—Rees; Civilisation-Barbarism Conflict / English-Indian Conflict—T.R. Holmes; Hindu-Muslim Conspiracy against Christian—Outram and Taylor.

Select Opinions on 1857

"It was wholly unpatriotic and selfish Sepoy Mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support."

John Seeley

"The so-called First National War of Independence is neither 'First', nor 'National', nor 'a war of Independence.'"

R.C. Mazumdar

"A national revolt rooted in deep mistrust."

Benjamin Disraeli (Opposition Leader)

"The Revolt of 1857 was 'the First war of Independence.'"

V.D. Savarkar

"What began as a fight for religion ended as a war for independence."

S.N. Sen

Impact of the Revolt of 1857

1. In August 1858, the British parliament passed an act, which put an end to the rule of the Company. The control of the British government in India was transferred to The British Crown.

2. A minister of the British government, called the Secretary of state for India was made responsible for the governance of India.

3. The British Governor-General of India was now also given the title of Viceroy, who was also the representative of the monarch.

4. Marked the end of British Imperialism and Princely States were assured against annexation. Doctrine of Lapse was Withdrawn.

5. After the revolt, the British pursued the policy of 'divide and rule'.

6. Far-reaching changes were made in the administration and increase of white soldiers in the army.

7. Total expense of the suppression was thrown on the Indian people.

8. It has been said that Julius Caesar was more powerful than Julius Caesar alive. The same may be said about the Revolt of 1857. Whatever might have been its original character, it soon became a symbol of challenge to the mighty British empire in India and remained a shining star for the rise and growth of the Indian national movement.

Indian National Congress (I.N.C.) : Bombay, 1885, A.O. Hume

1. The Indian National Union was formed in 1884 by A.O. Hume, an Englishman and a retired civil servant, in association with various national leaders who called for a conference in Pune in December 1885.

2. The conference received the unanimous support of all Indian leaders, but the venue was shifted to Bombay for various reasons (esp. outbreak of cholera in Pune).

3. Further, the leaders decided to rename the Indian National Union as Indian National Congress.

4. The first session of the Indian National Congress was held at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay under the presidentship of W.C. Bannerji, a veteran lawyer of Calcutta.

5. It was attended by 72 delegates from all over India.

6. From 1885 onwards the INC met every year and its cause spread rapidly among middle class Indians.

7. With the foundation of INC in 1885, the struggle for India's independence was launched in a small, hesitant and mild but organized manner.

8. The first two decades of INC are described in history as those of moderate demands and a sense of confidence in British justice and generosity. Their aim was not to be aggressive for attaining independence lest the British should suppress this. This resulted in Indian Council Act in 1892 which allowed some members to be indirectly elected by Indians but keeping the official majority intact.

9. Moderate Leaders : Dada Bhai Naoroji, A.O. Hume, Badruddin Tayebji, M.G. Ranade, W.C. Bannerji, Ferozshah Mehta, Surendra Nath Bannerji, C. Shankaran Naiyar, Madan Mohan Malviya, V.S. Shrinivas Shastri, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Anand Mohan Bose, E. Dinesh Wacha, Ras Bihari Ghosh, Mohan Lal Ghosh, P. Anand Charlu, C.Y. Chintamani, R.C. Dutt, S. Subrahmanyam Aiyer, K.T. Tailang, Madhusudan Das, Rahimtulla M. Sayani.

Select Opinions about INC

'INC represents only a microscopic minorities.'

Lord Dufferin (1884-88) (Contemporary Viceroy)

'The congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions, while in India, is to assist it to a peaceful demise.'

Lord Curzon (1899-1905) (Viceroy)

'INC is a begging institute.'

Aurobindo Ghosh (Extremist Leader)

'INC should distinguished between begging and claiming the rights.'

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (Extremist Leader)

'INC playing with bubbles.'

Bipin Chandra pal (Extremist Leader)

17. III. Extremist Phase (1905-17)

Reasons for the Emergence of Extremists :

1. Realization that the true nature of British rule was exploitative 2. International influences and events which demolished the myth of White / European supremacy. These included-Abyssinia/Ethopia's victory over Italy (1896), Boer wars (1899-1902) in which the British faced reverse, Japan victory over Russia (1905) 3. Dissatisfaction with the achievements of Moderates 4. Reactionary policies of Curzon such as Calcutta Cooperation Act (1904), Indian Universities Act (1905) and Partition of Bengal (1905) 5. Existence of a militant school of thought and emergence of a trained leadership.

Prominent Extremist Leaders

1. Bal Gangadhar Tilak : 'Lokmanya' Tilak was the uncompromising leader of extremists. He was influenced by Agarkar, Ranade and Naoroji. He launched two newspapers the Kesari (in Marathi) and the Maratha (in English). He Organised Ganpati Festival (1893) and Shivaji Festival (1895). He was deported to Mandalay

Jail (Burma) for writing seditious articles. He started Home Rule League in 1916. He wrote Gita Rahasya. Tilak asserted : 'Swaij is my Birth Right and I will have it.'

2. Lala Lajpat Rai : Extremist from Punjab. Under the influence of Arya Samaj he founded National School at Lahore. He presided over the AITUC in 1920. Boycotted Simon Commission and demonstrated against it at Lahore during which he was brutally assaulted by the police and subsequently succumbed to his injuries.

3. Bipin Chandra Pal : Discarded orthodox Hinduism and entered Brahma Samaj and visited England and America. He founded English weekly New India. He led the Swadeshi movement. He carried gospels of Boycott, Swadeshi, National Education, Swaraj and the Passive Resistance. He founded Vande Matram.

4. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh : He Passed ICS exam with record marks in Greek and Latin. He had European upbringing. He worked for secret societies in Bengal and Maharashtra. He started Bengali daily Jugantar. He wrote seditious articles in Vande Matram. He was put to trial for Maniktalla (Calcutta) Bomb Conspiracy Case. He finally retired to the life of Yoga at Pondicherry.

Other Extremist Leaders : Chakravarthi Viji Raghvachariar, Aswini Kumar Dutta, Raj Narayan Bose, T. Prakasham, Chidambaram Pillai etc.

Methods of Extremists : 1. Passive Resistance i.e. non-cooperating with the British Government by boycotting government service, courts, schools and colleges.

2. Promotion of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods.

The Partition of Bengal (1905) and Boycott and Swadeshi Movement (1905-08)

1. The Partition of Bengal came into effect on Oct. 16, 1905, through a Royal Proclamation, reducing the old province of Bengal in size by creating a new province of East Bengal, which later on became East Pakistan and present day Bangladesh.

2. The government explained that it was done to stimulate growth of under-developed Eastern region of the Bengal. But, actually, the main objective was to 'Divide and Rule' the most advanced region of the country at that time. The main reason for partition of Bengal was to destroy the political influence of the educated middle class among whom the Bengali intelligentsia were the most

prominent. It also set up a communal gulf between Hindus and Muslims. The INC unanimously condemned the partition of Bengal.

3. The Boycott and Swadeshi movement had its genesis in the antipartition movement which was started to oppose the British decision to divide Bengal.

4. With the start of the Swadeshi movement at the turn of the century, the Indian National Movement took a major leap forward.

5. The INC took up the Swadeshi call in Benaras Session, 1905 presided over by G.K. Gokhale and supported the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement of Bengal. Militant nationalism spearheaded by Trio of Lal-Bal-Pal (Lala Lajpat Raj, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal) and Aurobindo Ghosh was however, in favour of extending the movement to the rest of India and carrying it beyond the programme of just Swadeshi and Boycott of goods to full-fledged political mass struggle.

6. On August 7, 1905, a resolution to boycott British goods were adopted at a meeting of the INC held in Calcutta. It was started as a purely economic measure for the development of Indian industry.

7. Bonfire of foreign goods was launched on a large scale in all the major cities. Tilak took the movement to different parts of India esp. in Pune and Mumbai. Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Ray spread the Swadeshi message in Punjab and other parts of Northern India. Syed Haidar Raza set up the agenda in Delhi. Rawalpindi, Kangra, Jammu, Multan and Hardwar witnessed active public participation in Swadeshi Movement. Chidambaram Pillai took the movement to Madras Presidency which was also galvanised by Bipin Chandra pal's extensive lecture tour.

Muslim League (1906) : In Dec., 1906, All India Muslim League was set up by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca (Dhaka) at Dacca (Dhaka). The League supported the partition of Bengal, opposed the Swadeshi movement, and demanded special safeguards for its community and a separate electorate of Muslims. This led to communal differences between Hindus and Muslims.

Calcutta session of INC (1906)-Swaraj : In Dec. 1906 at Calcutta, the INC under the leadership of Dada Bhai Naoroji adopted 'Swaraj' as the goal of Indian people. Naoroji in his presidential address declared that the goal of the INC was 'self government of Swaraj like that of United Kingdom'. The differences between the moderates and the extremists, esp. regarding the pace of the movement and the techniques of the struggle to be adopted, came to head in 1907 at the Surat

Session of the congress where the party split with serious consequences for the Swadeshi movement.

Surat Split (1907) : The INC split into two groups—the extremists and the moderates, at the Surat session in 1907 held on the banks of the river Tapi. The extremists were led by Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal and the moderates were led by Gopal Krishna Gokhle. At the Surat session, the moderate and extremist delegates of congress met in an atmosphere surcharged with excitement and anger.

The suddenness of the Surat fiasco took the extremist leaders by surprise and they offered their cooperation to the working committee of the congress by accepting presidentship of Ras Bihari Ghose. But the moderates would not relent as they found themselves on firm ground. The government observing the opportunity launched a massive attack on the extremists by suppressing the newspaper and arresting their main leader, Tilak, and sending him to Mandalay Jail (Burma) for 6 years. The extremists were not able to organise an effective alternative party or to sustain the movement. Aurobindo Ghosh gave up politics and left for Pondicherry. Bipin Chandra Pal also left politics temporarily. Lajpat Rai left for Britain. After 1908, the national movement as a whole declined.

Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) : Morley-Minto Reforms were introduced in 1909 during the period when Lord Minto was the Viceroy of India. The reforms envisaged a separate electorate for Muslims besides other constitutional measures. The government thereby sought to create a rift within the Congress by winning the support of the moderates on the one hand, and favour of Muslims against Hindus on the other. To achieve the latter objective, the reforms introduced the system of separate electorates under which Muslims could only vote for Muslim candidates. This was done to encourage the notion that the political, economic and cultural interests of Hindus and Muslims were separate and not common. Indian political leaders were however dissatisfied by these reforms.

Home Rule Movement (1915-16) : B.G. Tilak founded Indian Home Rule League at Pune on 28 April, 1916. Annie Besant, inspired by the Irish rebellion, started Home Rule Movement in India in September, 1916. The movement spread rapidly and branches of the Home Rule League were established all over India. B.G. Tilak wholeheartedly supported this movement. He joined forces with Annie Besant and persuaded the Muslim League to support this programme.

Lucknow Pact—Congress-League Pact (1916) : An important step forward in achieving Hindu-Muslim unity was the Lucknow pact (1916). Anti-British feelings were generated among the Muslims following a war between Britain and Turkey

which opened the way for the Congress and Muslim League unity. Both the Congress and the Muslim League held session at Lucknow in 1916 and concluded the famous Lucknow pact. The congress accepted the separate electorate and both organisations jointly demanded 'dominion status' for the country.

Hindu-Muslim unity alarmed the British and forced the government to announce its future policy. In 1916, a British policy was announced whereby association of Indians in government increased and there was to be a gradual development of local self-governing institutions.

Montagu Declaration/August Declaration of 1917 : The control over the Indian government would be transferred gradually to the Indian people. This was the result of Hindu-Muslim unity exhibited in Lucknow pact.

Note : Gandhi has suggested the winding up of Indian National Congress after India attained independence and converting it into Lok Sevak Samaj.

Facts about Gandhi

Date and Place of Birth : Oct. 2, 1869 and Porbandar, Gujarat.

Note : UNO declared Oct. 2 as 'International Non-violence Day' (Antarrashtriy Ahinsa Diwas)

Father : Karamachand Gandhi, **Mother :** Putali Bai, **Political Guru :** Gopal Krishna Gokhale, **Private Secretary :** Mahadev Desai.

Literary Influences on Gandhi : John Ruskin's Unto This Last Emerson, Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, the Bible and the Gita.

Literary Works : Hind Swaraj (1909), My Experiments with Truth (Autobiography, 1927)—reveals events of Gandhi's life upto 1922.

As an Editor : Indian Opinion : 1903-15 (in English and Gujarati, for a short period in Hindi and Tamil), Harijan : 1919-31 (in English, Gujarati and Hindi), Young India : 1933-42 (in English and Gujarati-named Navjeevan)

Other Names : Mahatma (Saint)—by Rabindranath Tagore, 1917; Malang Babal / Nanga Faqir (Naked Saint)—by Kabailis of North-West Frontier, 1930; Indian Faqir / Traitor Faqir—by Winston Churchill, 1931; Half-naked Saint (Ardha Nanga Faqir)—by Franq Mores, 1931; Rashtrapita (the Father of the Nation)—by Subhash Chandra Bose, 1944.

Main Events during the Gandhian Era

Rowlatt Act (1919) : During the viceroyalty of Lord Chelmsford, a sedition committee was appointed by the government in 1918 with Justice Rowlatt which made certain recommendations to curb seditious activities in India. The Rowlatt Act 1919, gave unbridled powers to the government to arrest and imprison suspects, without trial. The act caused a wave of anger among the people. Even before the act was passed, popular agitation began against it. Gandhiji decided to fight against this act and he gave a call for Satyagraha on April 6, 1919. He was arrested on April 8, 1919. This led to further intensification of the agitation in Delhi, Ahmedabad and Punjab.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (April 13, 1919) : The arrest of Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu and Dr. Sutypal on April 10, 1919, under the Rowlatt Act in connection with Satyagraha caused serious unrest in Punjab. A public meeting was held on April 13, 1919 in a park called Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar where thousands of people including women and children assembled. Before the meeting could start General O'Dyer ordered indiscriminate heavy firing on the crowd and the people had no way out to escape. As a result hundreds of men, women and children were killed and more than 1200 people wounded. The massacre was a turning point in Indo-British relations and inspired the people to provide a more unrelenting fight for freedom.

Note : Sardar Uddham Singh, an Indian patriot from Punjab, shot down Gen. O'Dyer in London in 1940.

Khilafat movement (1920-22) : The Caliph (or, Khalifa) Sultan of Turkey, was looked upon by the Muslims as their religious head. During the first World War, when the safety and welfare of Turkey were threatened by the British thereby weakening the Caliph's position, Indian Muslims adopted an aggressive anti-British attitude. The Ali Brothers—Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali—launched an anti-British movement in 1920—the Khilafat Movement for the restoration of the Khilafat. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also led the movement. It was supported by Gandhiji and INC which paved the way for Hindu-Muslim unity.

Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22) : At the Calcutta session in Sep. 1920, the Congress resolved in favour of the Non-cooperation Movement and defined Swaraj as its ultimate aim (according to Gandhi). The movement envisaged : (i) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated offices; (ii) Refusal to attend government darbars and official functions and boycott of British courts by the lawyers; (iii) Refusal of general public to offer themselves for military and other government jobs, and boycott of foreign goods etc. Gandhiji, along with the Ali Brothers (of Khilafat Movement fame) undertook a nationwide

tour during addressing of meetings. The educational boycott was specially successful in Bengal with Punjab too, responding under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai. Apart from educational boycott, there was boycott of law courts which saw major lawyers like Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, C. Rajagopalachari, Saifuddin Kitchlu, Vallabh Bhai Patel, Aruna Asaf Ali, etc. giving up their lucrative practices in their fields. The non-cooperation movement also saw picketings of shops selling foreign cloth and boycott of the foreign cloth by the followers of Gandhiji. Another dramatic event during this period was the visit of the prince of Wales. The day he landed in India (in Bombay on Nov. 17, 1921) he was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went.

The attack on a local police station by angry peasants at Chauri-Chaura, in Gorakhpur district of UP, on Feb. 5, 1922, changed the whole situation. Gandhi, shocked by Chauri-Chaura incident, withdrew the Non-Cooperation Movement on Feb. 12, 1922.

Swaraj Party (1923) : Gandhi's decision to call off the agitation caused frustration among masses. His decision came in for severe criticism from his colleagues like Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das and N.C. Kelkar, who organised the Swaraj Party. The foundations of the Swaraj party were laid on Jan. 1, 1923, as the 'Congress Khilafat-Swaraj Party'. It proposed then an alternative programme of diverting the movement from widespread civil disobedience programme to restrictive one which would encourage its member to enter into legislative councils (established under Mont-ford Reforms of 1919) by contesting elections in order to wreck the legislature from within and to use moral pressure to compel the authority to concede to the popular demand for self government. In the election held in 1923 the Swaraj Party captured 45 of the 145 seats. In provincial elections they secured few seats but in the Central Province they secured a clear majority. In Bengal, the Swaraj Party was the largest party. They followed the policy of undiluted opposition. The Swarajists demanded the release all the political prisoners, provincial autonomy, repealing of the repressive laws imposed by the government. However, after the death of C.R. Das in 1925 they drifted towards a policy of cooperation with the government. This led to dissension and the party broke up in 1926.

Simon Commission (1927) : The activities of the Swaraj Party had induced the British government to review the working of the dyarchy system introduced by the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 and to report as to what extent a representative government could be introduced in India. The British government appointed the Simon Commission in Nov., 1927 for the task. All members of this commission were Europeans (Whites). Indian political leaders felt insulted and decided to boycott the commission. Wherever the commission went there were cries of 'Simon Go Back'. It was while leading a demonstration against the Simon

Commission in Lahore that a fatal lathi-blow was dealt to Lala Lajpat Rai. It was his death Bhagat Singh and his comrades were seeking to avenge when they killed a white police officials, Saunders, in Dec. 1928.

Nehru Committee Report (1928) : The Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru to determine the principles of the constitution before actually drafting it. The chief architects of the report were Motilal Nehru and Tej Bahadur Sapru. The recommendation evoked a lively debate concerning the goal of India—Dominion Status or Complete Independence.

14 Points of Jinnah (March 9, 1929) : Jinnah, the leader of Muslim League, did not accept the Nehru Report. Jinnah thereafter drew up a list of demands, which was called '14 points of Jinnah'.

Lahore Session (Dec., 1929) : At its annual session held in Lahore in Dec. 1929, under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution declaring 'Poorna Swaraj' (Complete Independence) to be the goal of the national movement.

On Dec. 31, 1929, the newly adopted tricolour flag was unfurled and Jan. 26 was fixed as the Independence Day which was to be celebrated every year, pleading to the people not to submit to British rule any longer.

Dandi March/Salt Satyagraha (1930) : To achieve the goal of 'Complete Independence', Gandhi launched another civil disobedience movement. Alongwith 78 followers, Gandhi started his famous march from Sabarmati Ashram on March 12, 1930 for the small village Dandi (Navsari District) to break, the Salt Law. Gandhi covered a distance of 240 miles in 24 days (March 12 — April 5). On reaching the seashore on April 6, he broke the Salt Law by picking up salt from the seashore. By picking a handful of salt, Gandhi inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement, a movement that was to remain unsurpassed in the history of Indian National Movement for the countrywide mass participation it unleashed. The movement became so powerful that it sparked off patriotism even among the Indian soldiers in the army. The Garhwal soldiers refused to fire on the people at Peshwar. Gandhiji was arrested on May 5, 1930. This was followed by another round of boycott of foreign goods and it took the shape of a nationwide Civil Disobedience Movement in which ladies also participated. Soon thereafter followed repressive measures such as mass arrests, lathi-charge, police-firing etc. About 1,00,000 people went in jail.

The First Round Table Conference (1930) : It was held in London on Nov. 12, 1930, to discuss the Simon Commission, but was totally boycotted by the Indian National Congress. The Commission had proposed self-government in the

provinces and federation of British India and the princely states at the Centre. However, the representative of the Muslim League, Liberals and other parties had assembled for the discussion on the commission report. But in absence of the premier political party, the First Round Table Conference had to be adjourned to Jan. 2, 1931.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact/Delhi Pact (March 5, 1931) : Early in 1931 two moderate statesman, Sapru and Jayakar, initiated efforts to bring about rapprochement between Gandhi and the government. Six meeting with Viceroy Lord Irwin finally led to the signing of a pact between the two on March 5, 1931, whereby the congress called off the movement and agreed to join the Second Round Table Conference. Regarding Gandhi-Irwin Pact J.L. Nehru remarks, 'This is the way the worlds ends,/Not with a bang, but a whimper'.

The Second Round Table Conference (1931) : It was held in London during the viceroyalty of Lord Willingdon during Sep. - Dec. 1931 and Gandhiji attended it on behalf of Indian National Congress. Nothing much was expected from the Conference for the imperialist political forces, which ultimately controlled the British Government in London, were opposed to any political or economic concession being given to India which could lead to its independence. The Conference, however, failed as Gandhiji could not agree with British Prime Minister Ramsay Mac Donald on his policy of communal representation and refusal of the British government on the basic Indian demand for freedom. The conference closed on Dec. 1, 1931, without any concrete result.

The Communal Award/Mac Donald-Award (Aug. 16, 1932) : While Gandhi was arrested on his return from London after the Second Round Table Conference, British Prime Minister Ramsay Mac Donald announced his Award on communal representation in Aug. 16, 1932. Besides containing provisions for representation of Muslims, Sikhs and Europeans, it envisaged communal representation of Depressed Classes also. Gandhi was deeply grieved by this and underwent a fast in protest against this Award since it aimed to divide India on a communal basis. While many political Indians saw the fast as a diversion from the ongoing political movement, all were deeply concerned and emotionally shaken. Almost everywhere in India mass meetings took place, political leaders of different persuasions, like Madan Mohan Malviya, B. R. Ambedkar and M. C. Raja became active.



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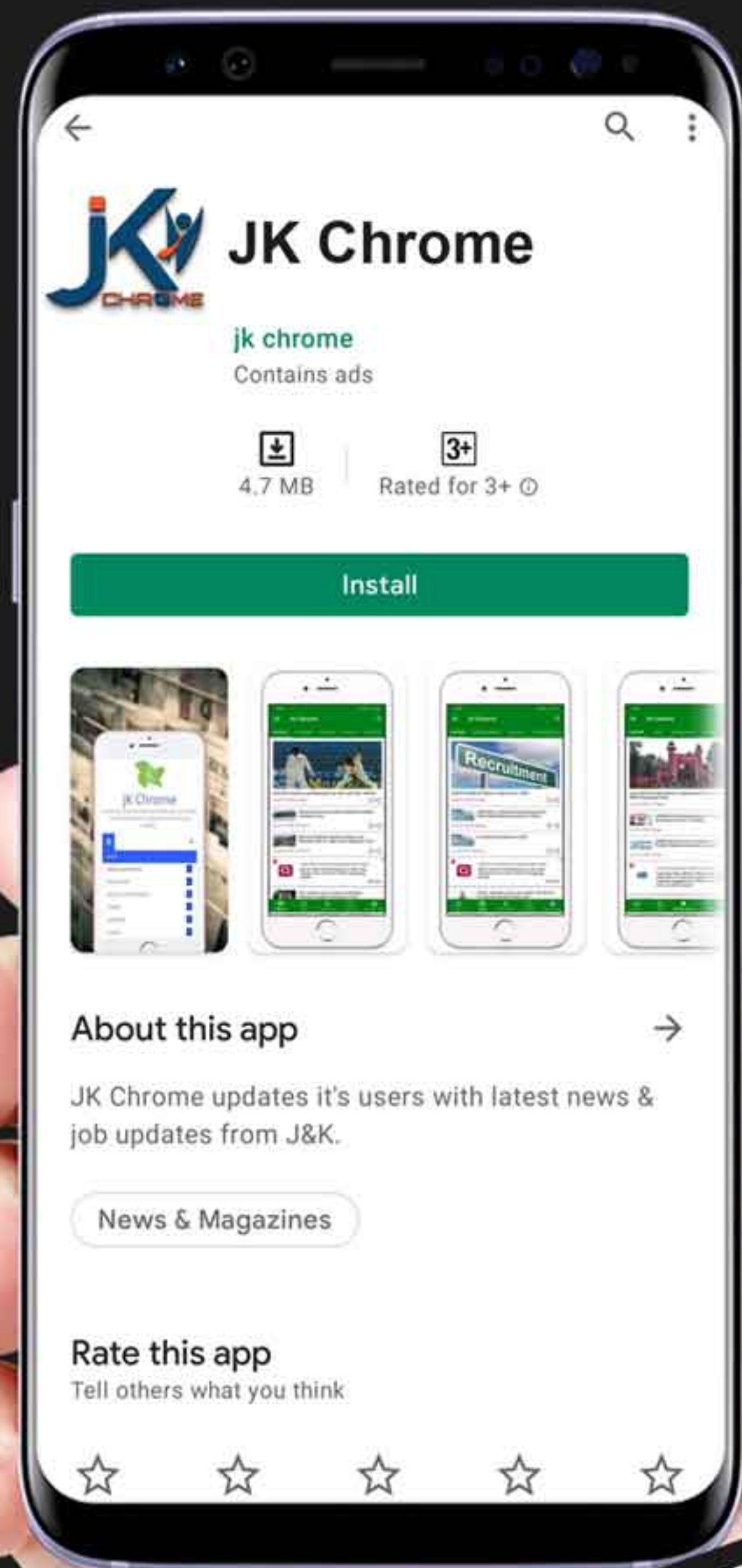
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