Emergency @ 50 Years Shaping India's Constitutional Journey



Context:

• On the **50th anniversary of the Emergency**, the **Union Cabinet** led by the **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** passed a resolution, vowing to commemorate and honour the sacrifices of those who fought against the **suspension of democratic rights**, and the **Constitution**.

• The Union Cabinet observed a two-minute silence as a tribute to the victims of the Emergency, which was declared on June 25, 1975.



1. What is a National Emergency?

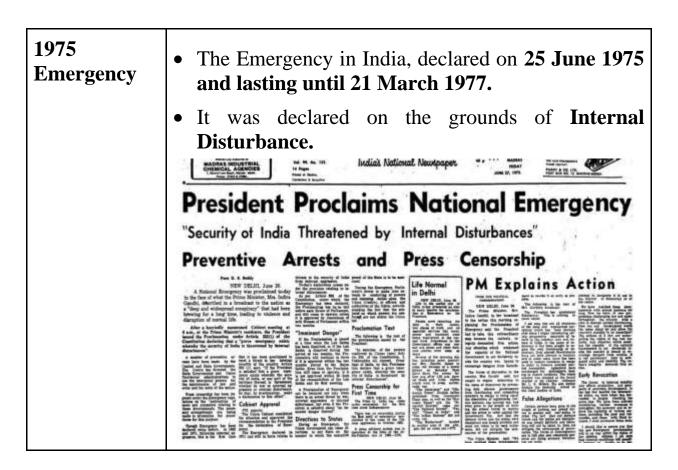
• The Article 352 of the Indian Constitution proclaims that the President of India can declare a National Emergency if the security of the country is at stake and is threatened by either war, external aggression, or armed rebellion.

2. How many times has a national emergency been imposed in India?

• The National Emergency has been declared 3 times in India.

National Emergency	Description
1962 Emergency	• The 1962 Emergency in India was declared on October 26, 1962, during the Sino-Indian War, and lasted until January 10, 1968
	• Declared during the Sino-Indian War , it represented a genuine external threat .
	Though it lasted until 1968, democratic norms were largely preserved with minimal restrictions on civil liberties. President proclains emergency National Volunteer Rifles formed: Home Guard strengthened PARLIAMENT TO MEET AHEAD OF SCHEDULE Figure Nature Processing of the Control of the Co
1971 Emergency	• It was proclaimed during the Bangladesh Liberation War, it initially responded to external aggression .
	• However, it continued long after military success , normalizing emergency rule even in the absence of immediate threat.





3. What are the types of Emergency in the Indian Constitution?

Туре	Explanation
National Emergency	• In India, a National Emergency (Article 352) refers to a period when the security of the nation is severely threatened.
	• It is a period when the constitutional rights and freedoms of individuals may be curtailed, and the powers of the central government are significantly enhanced to address perceived threats to the nation.
	• The expression 'Proclamation of Emergency' is used in the Indian Constitution to denote the National Emergency.



	• A National Emergency empowers the Central government to take swift and decisive action to safeguard the security, integrity, and sovereignty of the country.
President Rule in a State	• The President's Rule (Article 356) , also known as the Governor's Rule, refers to a period when the constitutional machinery in a State has failed , and the State government is unable to function in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
	• It is a period when the autonomy of the State Government is temporarily suspended, and the Central government assumes direct control over the State's administration.
	• The President's Rule is also known as 'Constitutional Emergency' or 'State Emergency'.
	• However, the Indian Constitution does not use the word "Emergency" for this situation.
	• The imposition of the President's Rule empowers the Central government to suspend the State Legislature and govern the State through the office of the Governor .
	• This centralization of authority is intended to restore constitutional order, ensure the continuity of governance, and protect the interests of the citizens when the regular State machinery is unable to function.
Financial Emergency	• In India, a Financial Emergency (Article 360) refers to a period when the financial stability or credit of the country or any part of its territory is threatened.



• It is a time when the fiscal autonomy of the States may be temporarily curtailed , and the financial powers of the Central government are significantly enhanced to address the perceived economic crisis .
• A Financial Emergency empowers the Central government to take swift and decisive action to safeguard the country's financial security, fiscal stability, and overall economic interests.

4. Enlist Constitutional Provisions related to Emergency

- Articles **352 to 360 in Part XVIII** of the Indian Constitution deal with the Emergency Provisions.
- The articles and their subject matters are listed in the table below.

Articles	Subject-Matter
Article 352	Proclamation of Emergency.
Article 353	Effect of Proclamation of Emergency.
Article 354	• Application of provisions relating to the distribution of revenues while a Proclamation of Emergency is in operation.
Article 355	• Duty of the Union to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance.
Article 356	• Provisions in case of failure of constitutional machinery in States.
Article 357	• Exercise of legislative powers under proclamation issued under Article 356.



Article 358	• Suspension of provisions of Article 19 during Emergencies.
Article 359	Suspension of the enforcement of the rights conferred by Part III during Emergencies.
Article 360	Provisions as to Financial Emergency.

5. Mention provisions related to National Emergency?

Provisions	Description
Ground for declaration	• The President can declare a National Emergency in India under Article 352 when the security of India or a part of it is threatened by war, external aggression, or armed rebellion .
	• Originally, the Constitution mentioned 'Internal Disturbance' as the third ground for the proclamation of a National Emergency.
	• However, because of the vagueness and ambiguity of the phrase 'Internal Disturbance', it was replaced by the phrase 'Armed Rebellion' by the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978.
	• The President can declare a National Emergency even before the actual occurrence of war or external aggression or armed rebellion if he is satisfied that there is an imminent danger to the country.
	• The President can also issue different proclamations, whether or not there is a proclamation already issued by him and such proclamation is in operation.



	 This provision was added by the 38th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1975. Based on the grounds of the declaration, the National Emergency is called by any one of the following 2 names: External Emergency refers to a National Emergency that is declared on the grounds of War or External Aggression. Internal Emergency refers to a National Emergency that is declared on the grounds of
Applicability	 Armed Rebellion. A proclamation of National Emergency may apply to the entire country or only a part of it. The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976 enabled the President to limit the operation of a National Emergency to a specific part of India.
Parliamentary Approval	 The proclamation of a National Emergency must be approved by both Houses of Parliament within one month from the date of its issue. Originally, the period allowed for approval of a National Emergency by the Parliament was two months. It was reduced to one month by the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978. If the proclamation of National Emergency is issued at a time when the Lok Sabha had been dissolved or the dissolution of Lok Sabha takes place during one month without approving the proclamation, then the proclamation survives until



	30 days from the first sitting of new constituted Lok Sabha, provided the Rajya Sabha has in the meantime approved it.
Duration	• If approved by both Houses of Parliament, the National Emergency continues for six months.
	• It can be extended to an indefinite period with the approval of Parliament every six months.
	• This provision of periodic approval (every six months) was added by the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978.
	• Prior to this amendment, National Emergency, once approved by the Parliament, could remain in operation as long as the Executive desired.
	• If the dissolution of the Lok Sabha takes place during the period of six months without approving the further continuation of the emergency, then the proclamation survives until 30 days from the first sitting of the newly constituted Lok Sabha, provided the Rajya Sabha in the meantime approves its continuation.
Revocation	A Proclamation of Emergency can be revoked by the President at any time by a subsequent proclamation.
	• Such a proclamation does not require parliamentary approval.
	• The 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978 mandated that the President must revoke a proclamation of National Emergency if the Lok Sabha passes a resolution disapproving its continuation.



	• Prior to that, a proclamation could be revoked by the President on his own and Lok Sabha had no control in this regard.
	• The 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978 also provided that if 1/10th of the total members of Lok Sabha give written notice to the Speaker or to the President (if the House is not in session), a special sitting of the House should be held to consider a resolution disapproving the continuation of the proclamation of National Emergency.
	• A resolution of disapproval of continuation is different from a resolution approving the continuation.
Effects	 Executive Impact (Centre-State Relations) Centre's Executive Power Enhanced, Centre can give directions to States on any matter, not just specified subjects. State Governments Not Suspended: State governments continue but under complete Centre control. 42nd Amendment (1976): These provisions apply to all states, even where Emergency is not operational. Legislative Impact (Parliament vs State Legislatures) Parliament's Overriding Power, Parliament
	 Parliament's Overriding Power, Parliament can legislate on any State List subject. State Legislatures Continue: But their laws are subject to Parliament's override.



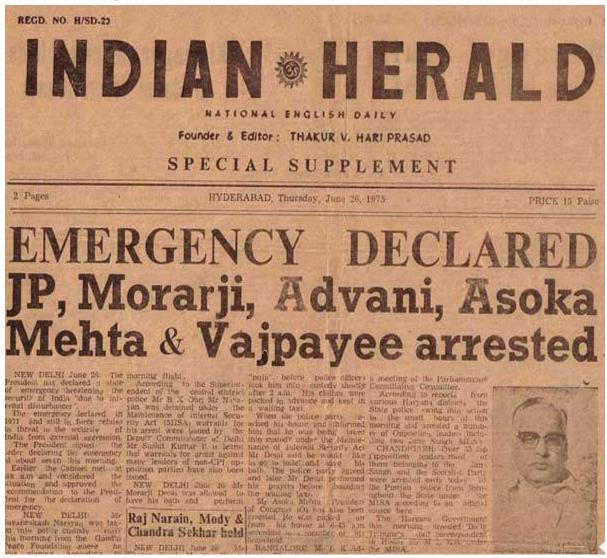
- **Post-Emergency**, Such Parliamentary laws on State List become inoperative 6 months after Emergency ends.
- President's Ordinance Power Expanded, Can issue ordinances on State List subjects when Parliament is not in session.
- 42nd Amendment Effect, Extended application to all States, not just affected ones.
- Financial Impact
 - President's Power to Modify Financial Distribution: Can reduce or cancel transfer of funds from Centre to States.
 - **Duration of Modification, Continues** till end of financial year in which Emergency ends.
 - Parliamentary Oversight, Every such order must be laid before both Houses of Parliament.
- Effect on Life of Lok Sabha & State Assemblies
 - Extension of Lok Sabha Term: By law, can be extended by 1 year at a time for any length of time during Emergency.
 - Maximum Limit, Cannot continue beyond 6 months after Emergency ends.
 - State Assemblies, Similar extension (1 year at a time) and 6-month post-emergency limit applies.
- Effect on Fundamental Rights
 - Article 358, Automatic Suspension of Article 19 Rights
 - It applies only during Emergency due to War/External Aggression (after 44th Amendment, 1978).



- Automatic Suspension of Article 19, No separate order needed.
- State Actions Cannot Be Challenged, Laws/executive actions violating Article 19 cannot be challenged during Emergency.
- **Post-Emergency Revival**, Article 19 revives after Emergency ends, but no remedy for past violations.
- Only Emergency-related Laws Protected (as per 44th Amendment).
- Article 359, Suspension of Court Enforcement of Specified Fundamental Right.
- President's Power can suspend the right to move court for enforcement of specified Fundamental Rights.
- Fundamental Rights Not Suspended, Only enforcement is suspended & Order must be placed before Parliament.
- After Emergency, such laws cease if inconsistent, but no remedy for actions taken during Emergency.
- 44th Amendment (1978) Changes, Rights under Article 20 & 21 cannot be suspended.
- Only Emergency-related laws and actions are protected, not all actions.

6. How was Emergency declared In 1975?

• On **June 26, 1975,** at **12:20 AM**, India's democracy entered its darkest chapter.



- President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed the Emergency proclamation, marking the beginning of the national emergency in India 1975.
- According to reports, the government allegedly cut the power supply of newspapers and media houses in Delhi so that no word gets out, and in the next morning Indira Gandhi, announced the Emergency on All India Radio.

• The Indira Gandhi government imposed Emergency citing breakdown of the law and order situation of the country owing to massive protests by the opposition parties alleging corruption by the Congress regime.





7. Enlist the timeline of 1975 Emergency?



8. What were the causes of the 1975 Emergency?

• Here are the **four major occurrences of the 1970s** following which **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared the Emergency.**

Causes	Explanation
Navnirman Andolan in Gujarat	• In December 1973 , students of L D College of Engineering in Ahmedabad went on a strike to protest against a hike in school fees.
	• A month later, students of Gujarat University erupted in protest , demanding the dismissal of the state government.
	• It called itself the 'Navnirman movement' or the movement for regeneration.
	• Gujarat at this point in time was governed by the Congress under chief minister Chimanbhai Patel.
	• The government was notorious for its corruption , and its head popularly referred to as chiman chor (thief).
	• The student protests against the government escalated and soon factory workers and people from other sectors of society joined in. Clashes with the police, burning of buses and government offices and attacks on ration shops became an everyday occurrence.
	• By February 1974, the central government was forced to act upon the protest. It suspended the Assembly and imposed President's rule upon the state.
	• "The last act of the Gujarat drama was played in March 1975 when, faced with continuing agitation



and fast unto death by Morarji Desai, Indira Gandhi dissolved the assembly and announced fresh elections to it in June," writes historian Bipin Chandra in his book, 'India since Independence.'

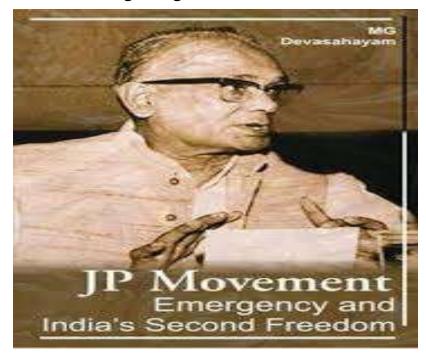


The JP movement

- Following in the footsteps of Gujarat or rather inspired by its success, a **similar movement** was launched in **Bihar**.
- A student protest erupted in Bihar in March 1974 to which opposition forces lent their strength. First, it was soon headed by 71-year-old freedom fighter **Jayaprakash Narayan**, popularly called JP. Second, in the case of Bihar, Indira Gandhi did not concede to the suspension of the Assembly. However, the JP movement was significant in determining her to declare Emergency.
- A hero of the freedom struggle, JP had been known for his **selfless activism** since the days of the nationalist movement.
- "His entry gave the struggle a great boost, and also changed its name; what was till then the 'Bihar movement' now became the 'JP movement'," writes Guha.



- He **motivated students to boycott classes** and work towards **raising the collective consciousness** of the society.
- There were a large number of clashes with the police, courts, and offices, schools and colleges were being shut down.
- In **June 1974**, JP led a large procession through the streets of Patna which culminated in a call for **'total revolution'**.
- He urged the dissenters to put pressure on the existing legislators to resign, so as to be able to pull down the Congress government.



- Further, **JP toured across large sections** of **North India**, drawing students, traders and sections of the intelligentsia towards his movement.
- Opposition parties who were crushed in 1971, saw in JP a popular leader best suited to stand up against Gandhi.



- JP too realised the necessity of the organisational capacity of these parties in order to be able to face Gandhi effectively.
- Gandhi denounced the JP movement as being extra-parliamentary and challenged him to face her in the general elections of March 1976.
- While JP accepted the challenge and formed the National Coordination Committee for the purpose, Gandhi soon imposed the Emergency.

The railways' protest



- Even as Bihar was burning in agitations, the country was paralysed by a **railways strike** led by socialist leader **George Fernandes**.
- Lasting for three weeks, in May 1974, the strike resulted in the halt of the movement of goods and people.
- Guha, in his book, notes that as many as a million railwaymen participated in the movement.
- "There were **militant demonstrations** in many towns and cities- in several places, the army was called out to maintain the peace," he writes.
- Gandhi's government came down heavily on the protesters.



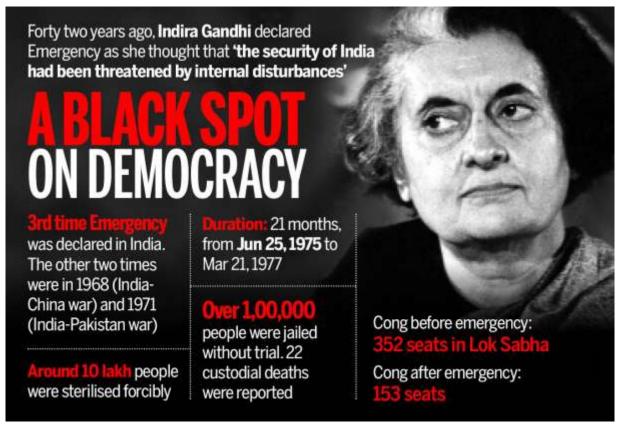
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	• Thousands of employees were arrested and their families were driven out of their quarters.
The Raj Narain verdict	• While opposition parties, trade unions, students and parts of the intelligentsia had occupied the streets in protest against Indira Gandhi's government, a new threat emerged before her in the form of a petition filed in the Allahabad High Court by socialist leader Raj Narain who had lost out to Gandhi in Raebareli parliamentary elections of 1971.
	• The petition accused the prime minister of having won the elections through corrupt practices .
	• It alleged that she spent more money than was allowed and further that her campaign was carried out by government officials.
	• On March 19, 1975, Gandhi became the first Indian prime minister to testify in court.
	• On June 12, 1975, Justice Sinha read out the judgment in the Allahabad High Court declaring Gandhi's election to Parliament as null and void , but she was given a span of 20 days to appeal to the Supreme Court.
	• On June 24, the Supreme Court put a conditional stay on the High Court order: Gandhi could attend Parliament, but would not be allowed to vote unless the court pronounced on her appeal.
	• The judgments gave the impetus to the JP movement, convincing them of their demand for the resignation of the prime minister. Further, by now even senior members of the Congress party were of the opinion that her resignation would be favourable to the party.



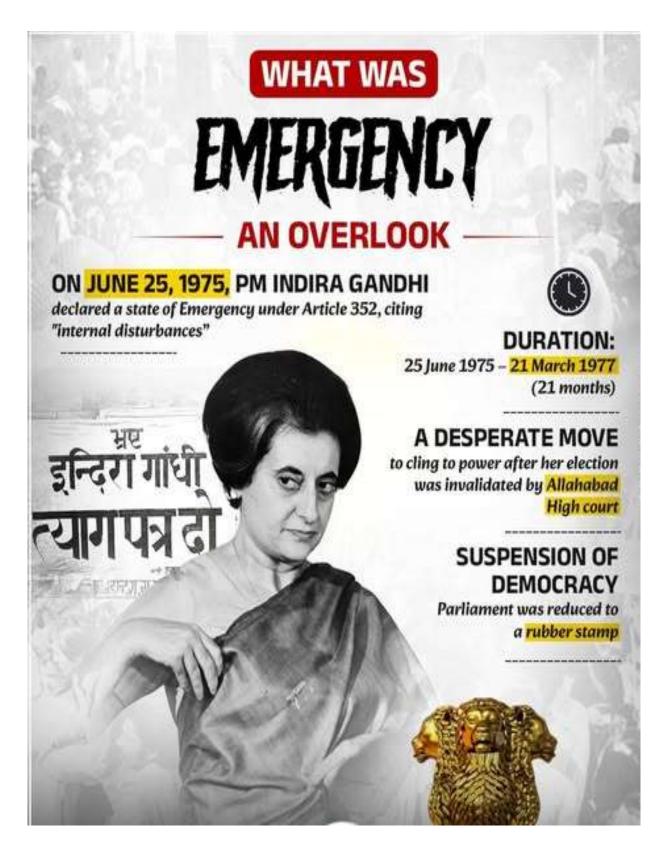
• However, Gandhi firmly held on to the prime ministerial position with the conviction that she alone could lead the country in the state that it was in.



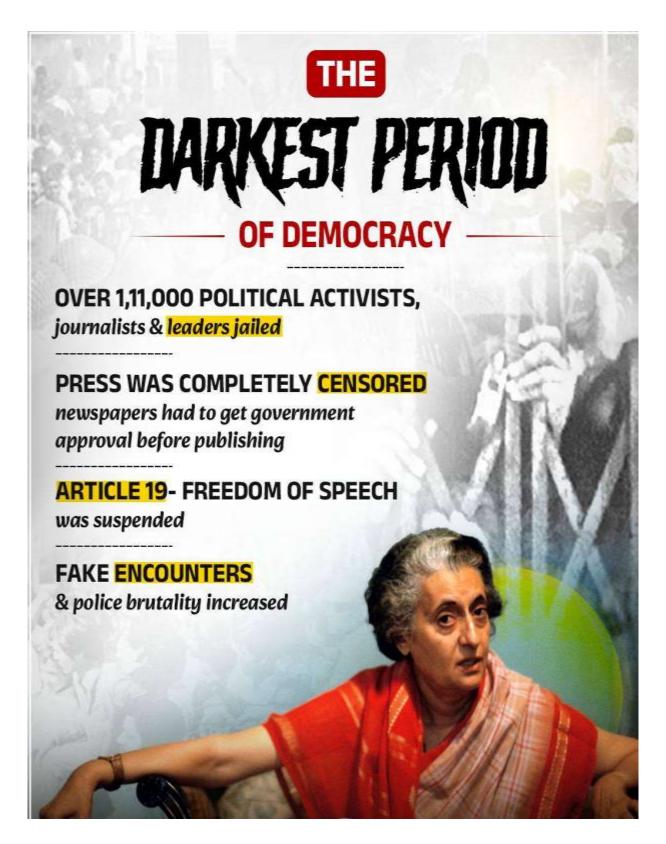
9. Enlist key events that took place during an Emergency?



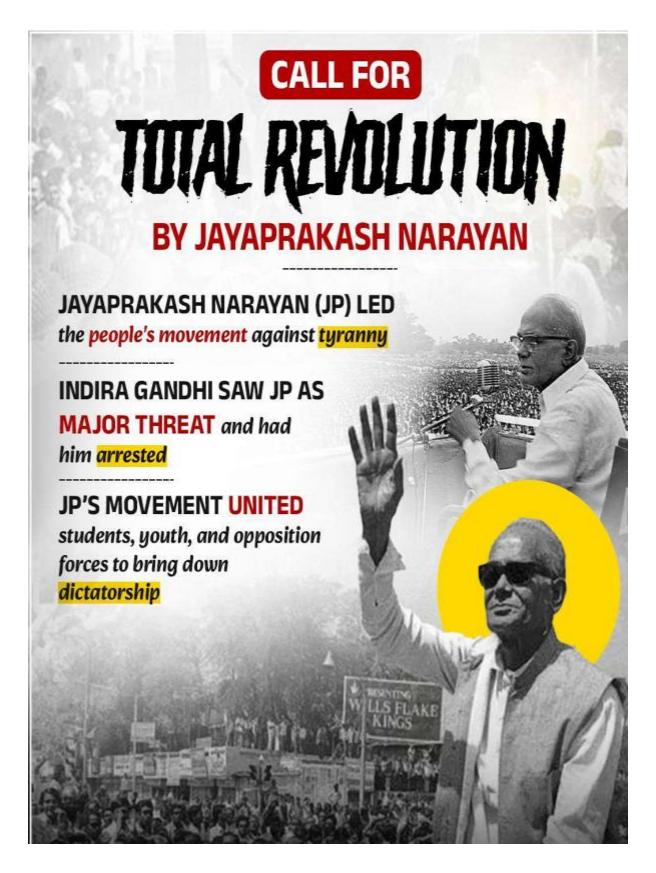




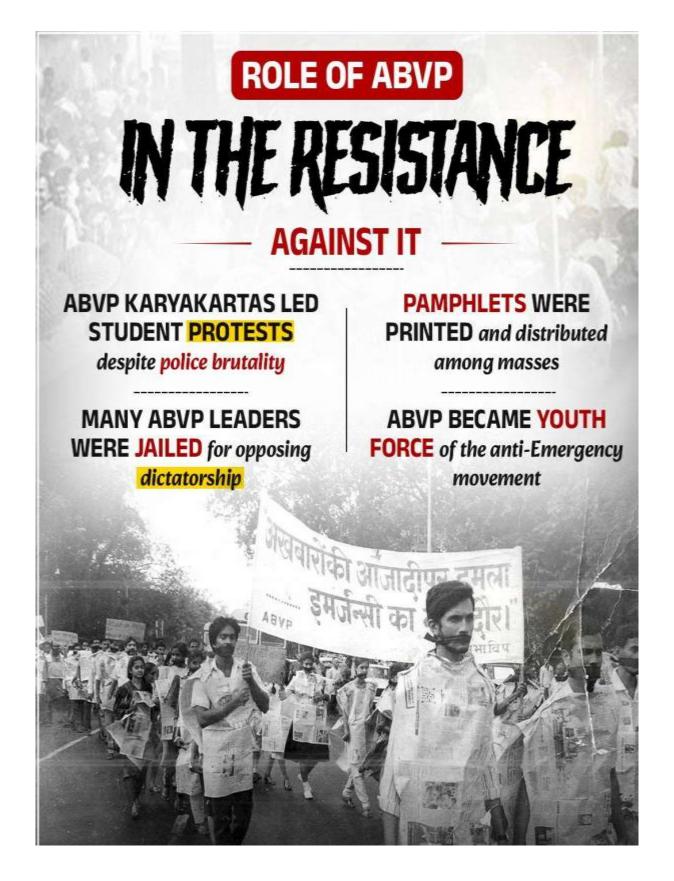










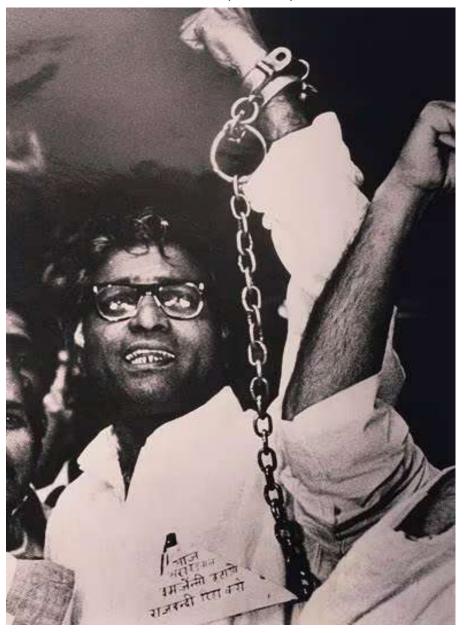




10. Why is the 1975 Emergency considered as black spot on Democracy?

Events	Analysis	
Detentions	• Over 100,000 individuals including political opponents including major opposition political figures such as Morarji Desai, Jyoti Basu and LK Advani were imprisoned without trial.	

• Leaders were detained under draconian laws like the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA), and Defence of India act and Defence of India rules (DISIR).



In this picture, Opposition leader George Fernandes is arrested and in shackles.

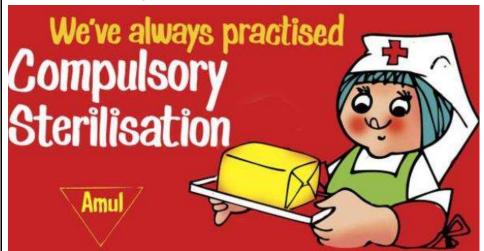


Sterilisation Drive

• Over **1.07 crore sterilisations** were conducted nationwide during the Emergency. These included **548 complaints involving unmarried individuals** and **1,774 reported deaths** linked to the procedures.



• Nasbandi (sterilisation) camps started mushrooming across India and intensified the drive.



Forced Retirement

• 25,962 government and public sector employees were retired prematurely during the period.



Press • Power supply to newspaper offices in Delhi was **Restrictions** cut off during the early days of censorship enforcement. • On the **night of June 25, 1975,** a sudden power cut fell upon Delhi's Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg which was home to most of the country's largest newspapers. • In other parts of the country, on the other hand, newspaper presses were raided and stopped and bundles of newspapers seized. Economic Notes Blocked option THE INDIAN EXPRESS Content • Parliamentary and judicial proceedings were Control censored. • Court judgements were edited or controlled in their published form. Media Newspapers were labelled as 'friendly', 'neutral' Classification or 'hostile' based on their editorial stance and coverage.



The 1975 Emergency

Censorship & Media Control

- From June 26, 1975, pre-censorship imposed on all newspapers
- Editors were required to get Government clearance before publishing news, editorials & photographs
- A national censor & regional censors appointed to monitor press content
- Radio-photo transmissions were also brought under Government clearance

The 1975 Emergency

Censorship & Media Control

- July 5, 1975: Telex messages by foreign correspondents restricted & subjected to prior screening
- July 20, 1975: Board of Film Censors restructured under Cinematograph Act to tighten control over cinema
- February 1, 1976. 4 major news agencies (PTI*, UNI*, Samachar Bharati & Hindustan Samachar) merged into a single entity—Samachar
- Press Council of India, a statutory watchdog, abolished

11. What is a 20 point program?

- The **20-point program** was launched by the **Indian government in 1975** during the **Emergency period.**
- It focused on various socio-economic aspects aimed at poverty alleviation, employment generation, education, and health.
- The program aimed to improve the living standards of the people through specific initiatives and schemes.

20 POINT PROGRAMME

- Steps to bring down prices of essential commodities. Stream-lined production, procurement and distribution of essential commodities.
- Implementation of agricultural ceilings and speedier distribution of surplus land and compilation of land records.
- Stepping up of provision of house sites for the landless and weaker sections.
- Bonded labour, wherever it exists, will be declared illegal.
- Plan for liquidation of rural indebtness. Legislation for moratorium on recovery of debt from landless labourer's, small farmers and artisans.
- Review of laws on minimum agricultural wages.
- Five million more hectares to be brought under irrigation. National programme for use of underground water.
- An accelerated power programme.
 Super thermal stations under Central control.
- New development plan for handloom section.

- Improvement in quality and supply of people's cloth.
- Socialization of urban, and urbanizable land. Ceiling on ownership and possession of vacant land.
- Special squads for valuation of conspicious constructions and prevention of tax evasion. Summary trials and deterrent punishment of economic offenders.
- Special legislation for confiscation of smuggler's properties.
- Liberalization of investment procedures. Action against misuse of import licences.
- New schemes for workers' association with industry.
- National permit scheme for road transport.
- Income-tax relief to middle class. Exemption limit raised from Rs 6,000 to 8,000.
- Essential commodities at controlled prices to students in hostels.
- Books and stationery at controlled prices.
- New apprenticeship scheme to enlarge employment and training, specially for weaker sections.

12. What were the consequences of the emergency 1975?

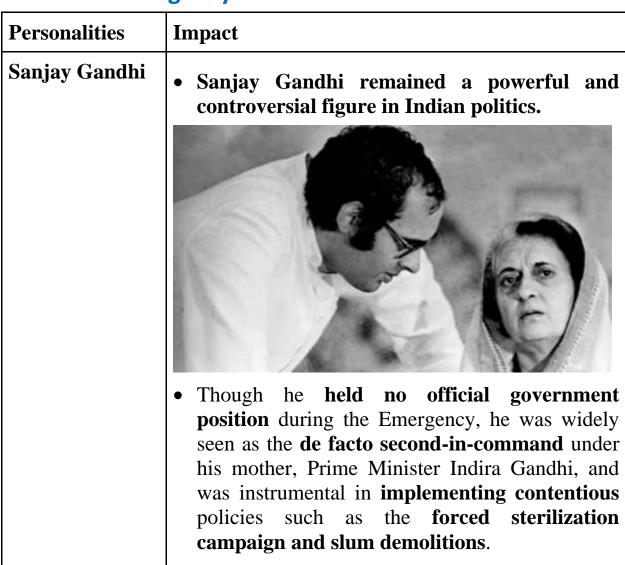
Dimension	Consequence
Democratic Rights & Civil Liberties	• Severe erosion of democratic rights and suspension of civil liberties (e.g., press censorship, restriction on protests, suspension of habeas corpus).
Blow to Federalism	• The federal structure was converted into a de facto unitary one.
	• State governments were not suspended, but they were effectively brought entirely under the Centre's control.
	• Parliament made laws on subjects in the State List, and the President, with parliamentary approval, modified constitutional provisions on the allocation of financial resources between the Union and states.
Mass Detentions	• Around 1,11,000 people were detained , including 13,000 political opponents, under preventive detention laws like MISA without trial or disclosure of charges.
Weaponization of Laws	• Laws like the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) were misused for political suppression; MISA was placed under the Ninth Schedule through the 39th Constitutional Amendment to avoid judicial review.



Judicial Independence Undermined	• Judicial appointments were manipulated to promote a "committed judiciary." Seniority principle was bypassed in CJI appointments (e.g., Justice M.H. Beg made CJI over senior Justice H.R. Khanna).
Rule of Law Eroded	• Selective and unequal application of laws. Courts were pressured to legitimize illegal arrests and state excesses.
Constitutional Amendments	• Major constitutional changes were pushed through Parliament when Opposition leaders were jailed (e.g., 39th Amendment shielding election of top office holders from judicial review).
Executive Aggrandisement (Centralization of Power)	 Excessive concentration of power in the Prime Minister's Office. The slogan "Indira is India and India is Indira" symbolized personality cult politics and undermining of institutional checks.
Subversion of Electoral Process	• State machinery was used to influence electoral processes, as highlighted by the Allahabad HC verdict on Indira Gandhi's election malpractices.
Suppression of Free Press	• Press censorship was imposed. Newspapers like The Indian Express symbolically protested (e.g., blank editorial spaces).
Institutional Breakdown	• Parliament, Judiciary, and civil administration became rubber stamps for executive decisions, leading to collapse of institutional checks and balances.

Impact on Opposition Parties	Mass arrests and dismantling of Opposition leadership structures.
Long-term Democratic Learning	• Post-Emergency period saw the restoration of democratic values, electoral defeat of the ruling party (1977 Lok Sabha Elections), and heightened public awareness about the dangers of authoritarianism.

13. Enlist role played by various personalities during 1975 emergency?





	• He was killed in a helicopter crash in 1980.
Jayprakash Narayan	• After the Emergency of 1975, Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) emerged as a central figure in the opposition movement against Indira Gandhi's government.
	• He called for her resignation and advocated for a "total revolution" (Sampoorna Kranti) aimed at social transformation and restoration of democracy.
	• During the Emergency, JP was arrested and detained, but his health deteriorated, leading to his release on parole in late 1975.
Morarji Desai	• Morarji Desai became a central figure in Indian politics as the leader who unseated Indira Gandhi.
	• Following his release from solitary confinement in January 1977, after being arrested during the Emergency, Desai led the Janata Party to a historic victory in the March 1977 general elections, becoming the first non-Congress Prime Minister of India on March 24, 1977.



George Fernandes	 George Fernandes emerged as a prominent opposition leader and trade unionist who had actively resisted Indira Gandhi's authoritarian rule. Just before the Emergency was declared, Fernandes went underground to avoid arrest, while his brother was tortured by the police in an attempt to locate him.
Charan Singh	 Charan Singh played a significant role in Indian politics, especially in the turbulent period following the Janata Party's rise and fall. He was a prominent leader of the farmers and rural constituencies and had been imprisoned during the Emergency for opposing Indira Gandhi's government.
RajNarain	• Raj Narain became a prominent opposition leader and a key figure in Indian politics.



He is best known for his historic legal victory against then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975, when the Allahabad High Court invalidated her 1971 election victory from Rae Bareli due to electoral malpractices, which directly triggered the imposition of the Emergency.

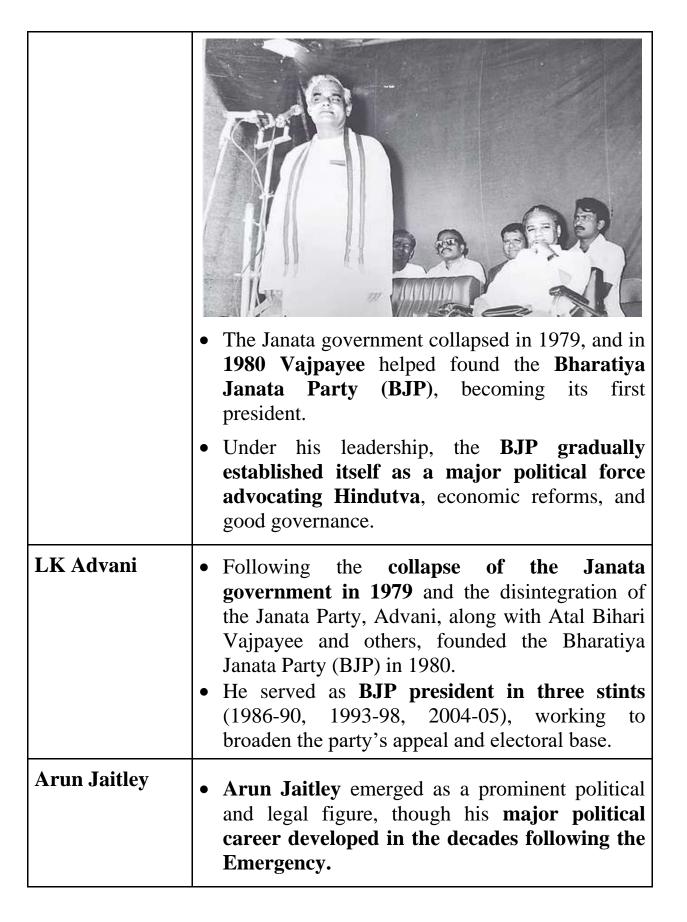


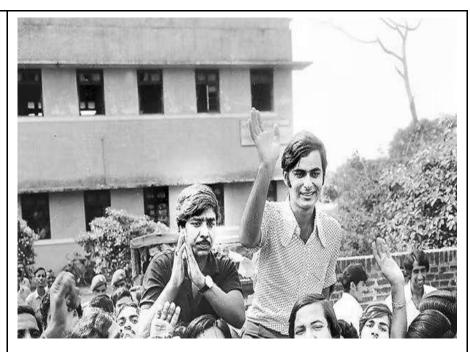
 Narain was arrested immediately after the Emergency was declared and spent 19 months in jail along with other opposition leaders.

A.B Vajpayee

- After the Emergency was lifted in 1977,
 Vajpayee's Bharatiya Jana Sangh merged with other parties to form the Janata Party, which won the 1977 general elections.
- Vajpayee served as **Minister of External Affairs** in **Morarji Desai's cabinet** and became the first person to address the United Nations General Assembly in Hindi.







- At the time the Emergency was declared, Jaitley was a student leader at Delhi University and president of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), actively involved in protests against the suspension of civil liberties.
- He spent the entire 19 months of the Emergency in jail, which he later described as a formative political experience that taught him that some compromises were unacceptable

V.C Shukla

- Vidya Charan Shukla (V.C. Shukla) remained a controversial and influential political figure, largely remembered for his role as the Information and Broadcasting Minister during the Emergency.
- He was Indira Gandhi's close ally and was instrumental in enforcing strict press censorship, controlling media narratives, and suppressing dissent.
- His ministry cut electric supply to presses,



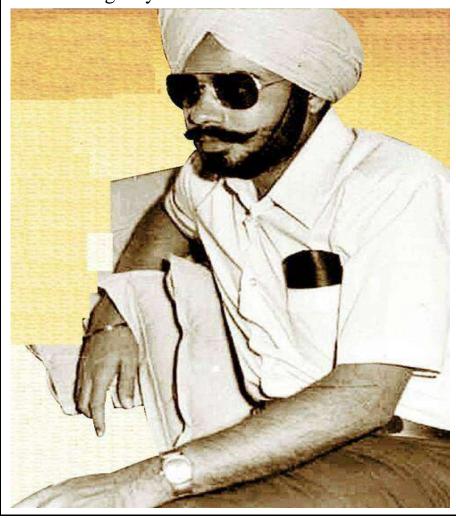
	monitored every story printed, and famously banned songs by Kishore Kumar from All India Radio and Doordarshan because the singer refused to perform at a Congress rally.
Kishan Chand	• Kishan Chand, who served as the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi from October 1974 to March 1977, became a controversial figure due to his active role during the Emergency.
	• He was closely involved in implementing the Emergency's authoritarian measures in Delhi, including the infamous decision to cut electric supply to newspaper offices on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg , effectively stopping the printing of major newspapers on the night of June 25-26, 1975.
	• Kishan Chand himself testified before the Shah Commission that this decision was taken at a meeting held at Indira Gandhi's residence, where she was present, highlighting his close alignment with the Prime Minister's directives.
H.K.L Bhagat	• H.K.L. Bhagat remained a powerful and influential figure within the Congress Party, especially in Delhi politics.
	• Known as the "Uncrowned King of Delhi" and a loyalist to Indira Gandhi, Bhagat wielded significant influence throughout the 1970s and 1980s, serving as Deputy Mayor and Mayor of Delhi, Chief Whip of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, and a six-time Member of Parliament and Union Minister.



• During the Emergency, he held the portfolio of Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (December 1975 to March 1977), maintaining close ties with the Congress leadership.

Narendra Modi

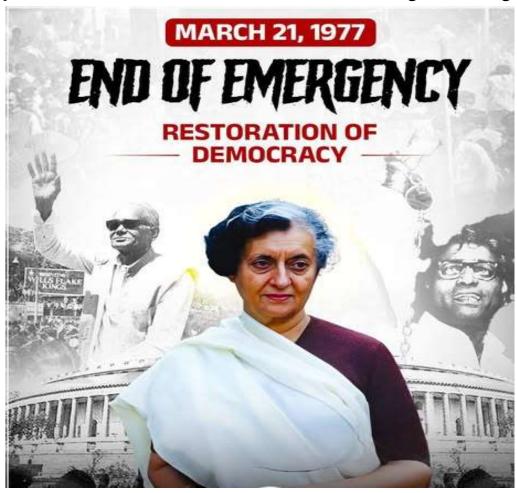
- Recently Home Minister Amit Shah recalled PM Modi's struggle during the emergency, noting that the PM visited the Maintenance of Internal Security Act arrestees and arranged for their medical treatment.
- Amit Shah also shared that the PM helped in the distribution of the secret newspapers resisting the emergency.



• Union Home Minister Amit Shah shared instances of PM Modi's covert operations while disguising himself as "sadhu, sardar, hippie incense stick seller and newspaper vendor" in his struggle against the emergency during 1975.

14. How did the emergency end?

- The Emergency ended on 21 March 1977. Lok Sabha elections were held between 16 and 20 March 1977, resulting in the defeat of the Congress party and the formation of the Janata Party government on 24 March 1977.
- Following this, the **Shah Commission of Inquiry was established in May 1977** to review the abuses that occurred during the Emergency.



15. Enlist key findings of Shah commission report?

- After the Emergency ended in **March 1977**, the **Janta party** government **appointed a commission** to examine its impact and the actions taken during the period.
 - The Shah Commission of Inquiry was established in May 1977, headed by Justice J.C. Shah, former Chief Justice of India.
 - Its mandate was to investigate excesses committed between 25 June 1975 and 21 March 1977.
 - The Commission examined the misuse of government power, preventive detentions, press censorship, and the sterilisation campaign.
 - It collected evidence through public hearings, testimonies, and official records.
 - The Commission submitted three reports between 1978 and 1979.

16. Enlist key supreme court judgements related to emergency?

Case	Analysis
ADM Jabalpur v. Shivkant Shukla (1976)	• This highly controversial judgment was delivered by the Supreme Court during the height of the 1975 Emergency.
	• In this case, the Court, by a 4:1 majority, upheld the government's argument that citizens do not have the right to approach courts to enforce the right to life and personal liberty (Article 21) during a National Emergency if those rights were suspended under Presidential orders.



	• Effectively this mant that are arbitrary agreets
	• Effectively, this meant that even arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, and custodial killings could not be legally challenged during the Emergency.
	• The only dissenting voice was that of Justice H.R. Khanna, who courageously argued that the right to life and liberty is inherent and cannot be suspended, even during extraordinary times.
	• Justice Khanna's dissent later became historic, symbolizing judicial independence and moral courage, especially since he was subsequently superseded for the post of Chief Justice of India as a consequence of his dissent.
	• This judgment is widely regarded as one of the lowest points in the Supreme Court's history with respect to protecting civil liberties and upholding the Constitution.
Minerva Mills Ltd. vs Union of India (1980)	 The Supreme Court held that the power of judicial review cannot be suspended even during an emergency. The basic structure of the Constitution, including the power of judicial review, cannot be abrogated.
S.R. Bommai vs Union of India (1994)	 The Supreme Court held that the imposition of President's Rule under Article 356 is subject to judicial review. The Court laid down guidelines and limitations on the use of Article 356.
Bhut Nath Mete vs State of West	• The Court held that the suspension of fundamental rights under Article 359 does not mean that all legal remedies are barred.



Bengal (1974)	• Writs can still be filed on grounds of non-compliance with statutory provisions.
Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd) v. Union of India (2017)	• In this landmark decision, a 9-judge constitutional bench of the Supreme Court unanimously overruled the ADM Jabalpur judgment.
	• Delivered over four decades after the Emergency, the Court ruled that the right to life and personal liberty is a pre-constitutional, inherent, and inalienable human right, which cannot be suspended even during a state of Emergency.
	• The judgment, which primarily established the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right , strongly criticized the majority opinion in ADM Jabalpur as "seriously flawed."
	• The Court held that constitutional rights like Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) continue to exist at all times, reaffirming the primacy of human dignity, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms even in times of crisis.
	• This judgment served as a judicial correction of the Emergency-era mistake and reasserted the Supreme Court's role as a protector of constitutional rights.

- These judgments highlight the Supreme Court's **evolving stance** on **balancing the need** for strong central authority **during emergencies** with the protection of **individual rights and the rule of law**.
- The Court has sought to limit the misuse of emergency powers while upholding their constitutional validity.

17. What lessons can be drawn from the emergency?

Lesson	Explanation
Avoiding Despotism & Executive	• Democracy must be based on people's participation , consensus, and constitutional compliance.
Overreach	• Despotism and authoritarian rule have no place in a constitutional democracy.
	• Elected leaders must act within the constitutional framework, avoiding personal aggrandizement and family rule
Respect for Judicial	• The Executive must not conflict with the Judiciary.
Independence	• Judgments like Golaknath, Kesavananda Bharati, and Allahabad HC verdicts were wrongly viewed through a narrow political lens by the government.
	• Judicial independence must be preserved to act as a check on executive excesses .
Protection of Fundamental Rights and Civil Liberties	 Fundamental Rights like freedom of speech and right to life must be protected at all times. Any infringement of rights invites popular backlash through the electoral process.
	 Suppression of dissent and civil liberties was a hallmark of the Emergency and must not be repeated.
Role of Media and Civil Society	Media must show courage and independence, especially during crises.



	 Noted criticism, "You were asked to bend, yet you crawled" L.K. Advani's famous remark on media conduct during Emergency. Civil society, writers, and intellectuals must stand against authoritarianism, not remain silent spectators. Vigilance is the price of liberty: Both media and civil society must act as watchdogs of democracy.
Dangers of Dynastic Politics	 Dynasty-driven political parties pose a serious threat to democracy. Emergency showcased how family control over parties (Indira-Sanjay model) set a dangerous precedent later followed by many other political dynasties (Thackerays, Stalins, Abdullahs, Yadavs, etc.). Dynastic politics weakens internal democracy and promotes birth-based discrimination, contrary to the spirit of the Constitution.
Need for Internal Democracy within Political Parties	 The Congress Party's inability to oppose Indira Gandhi stemmed from a lack of internal democracy and the rise of sycophancy. Party reforms are essential to prevent concentration of power in a few hands.
Moral Responsibility of Intellectuals, Writers, and Journalists	 The silence and complicity of writers, poets, intellectuals, and journalists during the Emergency was a moral failure. Few exceptions (Dharmaveer Bharati, Kamaleshwar, Durgabai Bhagwat, Vishnu Pandya) stood up.



	• Many famous figures endorsed or stayed silent during the Emergency, failing in their duty towards democracy.
Role of Mass Movements and Public Resistance	• The Satyagraha movement led by RSS and others played a crucial role in mobilizing opposition.
	• Even opponents of RSS ideology appreciated their contribution (e.g., Achyutrao Patwardhan, A.K. Gopalan).
	• Mass movements and public resistance can act as powerful checks against authoritarianism.
Electoral Verdict as the Ultimate Democratic Check	 The 1977 General Elections became the final democratic rejection of Emergency excesses. Electoral accountability remains a key pillar of democratic resilience.

18. What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

- For Prelims: Breakdown of constitutional machinery, National Emergency, Constitutional Emergency, Financial Emergency.
- For Mains: Indian Constitution, Emergency Provisions, Type of Emergencies

Some previous years prelims questions.

- Q1. Which of the following is/are the exclusive power(s) of Lok Sabha? (2022)
 - 1. To ratify the declaration of Emergency
 - 2. To pass a motion of no-confidence against the Council of Ministers

- 3. To impeach the President of India Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (b)

- Q2. With reference to the constitution of India, prohibition or limitations or provisions contained in ordinary laws cannot act as prohibitions or limitations on the constitutional powers under Article 142. It could mean which one of the following?(2019)
 - (a) The decisions taken by the Election Commission of India while discharging its duties can not be challenged in any court of law.
 - (b) The Supreme Court of India is not constrained in the exercise of its powers by laws made by the parliament.
 - (c) In the event of grave financial crises in the country, the President of India can declare a Financial Emergency without the counsel from the cabinet.
 - (d) State Legislatures can not make laws on certain matters without the concurrence of the Union legislature.

Ans: (b)

Some previous years mains questions.

Q1. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? (2018)

Some questions from this year and previous years interview transcripts.

Board Dinesh Dasa sir:

- Why is Bihar so underdeveloped?
- What will you do if you are chief secretary in case of president rule?

Board Suman Sharma mam:

• What is the impact of president rule in Manipur?

Board Suman Sharma mam:

• Will president rule be beneficial for the situation of Manipur?

Board Dinesh Dasa sir:

- What is the Difference between President rule and Governor Rule
- What is the Maximum duration for Governor rule

Some questions for QUIZ.

- Q1. Consider the following Statements regarding National Emergency.
 - 1. It can be declared only on the written advice of the Prime Minister.
 - 2. It has to be approved by both Houses of Parliament within two months.
 - 3. Fundamental Rights under Article 19 are automatically suspended.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Ans: (a)

Some questions for POLL.

- Q1. Do you think that the provision of emergency should be removed from the constitution?
 - (a) YES
 - (b) NO
 - (c) Can't say.
- Q2. Do you think that the 1975 emergency was more for a personal gain?
 - (a) YES
 - (b) NO
 - (c) Can't say.