

Partition Horrors Remembrance Day

Why in news?

PM has declared that **August 14** will be observed as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' to acknowledge the pain undergone by Indians due to the partition of India in 1947.

What are the recorded horrors of partition?

- About 2 million people killed in the most brutal ways.
- An estimated 1,00,000 women kidnapped and raped.
- More than 15 million men, women and children displaced.
- Loss of territory and people to the west and the east
- Worst of the horrors seen in Punjab and Bengal (colonial insensitivity in the thoughtless partition)

What was the Socio-psychological impact?

- Violence-induced hatred by Hindus and Sikhs against Muslims in India (Indians against Indians) and by Muslims in Pakistan.
- Painful events marring much of the joy felt in gaining Independence.
- Indelible mark in the public memory and consciousness
- Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah strongly advocated the two-nation theory based on religion alone for India's partition.
- But ironically, the theory failed with the creation of Bangladesh (with the same religious identity) in 1971.

Is it needed?

- A nation cannot know itself without knowing its past.
- So, the horrors of Partition must be acknowledged, archived, mourned and commemorated.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" - Spanish philosopher George Santayana

What are the concerns?

- **Timing** - The naming of the day at this point forces the nation to look back on its traumatic time rather than looking ahead.
- **Inclusiveness** - An attempt to **mark the day across the subcontinent** (involving Pakistan and Bangladesh) might have been more inclusive and progressive as all three countries felt the traumatic impact.
- This is the need of the hour, as there is a rise of an ethnocentric nationalism that views minorities with suspicion.

What should be done?

- Social harmony and a sense of oneness are to be nurtured and practiced in the long term, and not just one day in the year.
- Educating successive generations about the fact that the arbitrary map-making and sowing religious divides by imperialists as the root causes for the violence.

What are the similar ideas in History?

- **January 27** is observed as International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemorating the anniversary of the liberation of people (mostly Jewish) from Auschwitz Concentration Camp
- The memories and recordings of survivors of the [Holocaust](#) have been crucial in preventing European societies from 'antisemitism' (hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people).
- **Counter-monuments** - They are erected in the vicinity of already existing monuments, that are insensitive and misrepresentative.
- E.g., A sculpture of dying concentration camp victims placed next to the warrior memorial erected in honour of 76th Infantry Regiment unveiled by Hitler.

Source: The Hindu, The Guardian

