many, nearly impossible, tasks. State planning, backed up by large-scale private investment, resulted in a great expansion of industry. In foreign affairs, Pakistan was concerned with the containment of India, its unfriendly neighbor.

India Attempts to Modernize

Achievements, Assets, and Problems

When India became independent in 1947, its leaders recognized the urgent need to strengthen the economy. They were determined to raise their country's standard of living, which was among the lowest of the major nations in the world. The leaders of the new India agreed to establish a "mixed economy," which combines the use of private capital and public funds to develop industry, mining, and farming. The government prepared a master plan, set up in a series of five-year plans, for developing the nation's resources.

In the first Five-Year Plan of 1951, agricultural expansion was stressed. (See section headed "Agriculture," page 376.) As a result, the output of food was greatly increased. However, a serious complicating factor is India's great increase in population. This is due, not to a rise in the birth rate, but rather to the introduction of modern medicine, improved methods of fighting disease, and the development of an efficient system of famine relief. The seriousness of the population problem can be judged from the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>345 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>392 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>439 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>501 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>548 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>615 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>768 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>833 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.042 billion (projected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.225 billion (projected)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: *Encyclopedia Britannica; United Nations Statistical Yearbook.*

Even in a year free of droughts and floods, the population growth more than offsets agricultural gains.

India has also attempted to increase industrialization, but this has not been easy, because the nation lacks capital. In 1961, the government launched its third Five-Year Plan. The purpose was to make an all-out effort to strengthen and build industry. Unfortunately, India soon found itself at war with China, which had invaded disputed territory in North India. Fearing the worst, Indian leaders hurried to strengthen military defenses, a measure that necessitated scrapping plans for industrial development.

In 1965, India experienced the worst drought of the century. Faced with the threat of famine, money had to be used to buy food. By the time the third Five-Year Plan ended in 1966, India appeared to be little better off than when the plan began. The need to spend scarce capital for other purposes had prevented the government from expanding industry.

India is among the world's leading producers of bauxite, an ore used in the making of aluminum. Chromium and copper are also mined in great amounts. Much of the world's mica comes from India; mica is used in electrical equipment. Monazite is also mined. Uranium and thorium, two valuable sources of atomic energy, are obtained from Monazite.
Emeralds are mined in Pakistan, and gold is found near Mysore in South India. Land surveys are being made to learn what other minerals may be found in India.

From India's forests come such valuable woods as cedar and teak. Its rivers can produce large amounts of water power to make electricity.

Although some oil has been found in India, the amount is far from enough to satisfy the needs of the country. Therefore, India is almost completely dependent on the Middle East for its oil. India's other important shortages are in lead, tin, zinc, nickel, and tungsten.

India has very large amounts of such important minerals as coal, iron, and manganese, all of which are needed in the making of steel. In fact, it is estimated that India may have as much as 25 percent of the world's supply of iron. India mines about 70 million tons of coal per year, mostly in the Deccan Plateau. India ranks third in the world in the mining of manganese, which is used to harden steel.

The Tata steel plant in Jamshedpur in North India, west of Calcutta, is the largest in India. Although India produces more than 7 million tons of steel a year, the country needs more steel than it produces and must increase its production. The United States, Germany, and Russia have agreed to help build additional modern steel mills in India.

At present, as in 1947, the manufacture of textiles is the single largest industry in India. India has contributed to the fashion world such important materials as calico, muslin, cashmere, and madras. Also, India has the world's largest jute manufacturing industry. (Jute is a plant that can be used in making rope, carpets, and burlap bags.) Other large-scale industries include sugar processing, motion-picture making, and cement, leather, glass, rubber, and paper production.

Cottage industries are those in which goods are produced in the home. Hand looms are used in place of power-driven machines. The Indian government believes that cottage industries offer a good use for Indian labor. At present, handicrafts, silk goods, and khadi (homespun) are the major products of the cottage industry. In addition, very skilled artisans make artistic brass, copper, silver, and gold objects for export.

In May 1974, India's scientists set off an underground nuclear explosion in the Rajasthan Desert. This nuclear blast was widely criticized by many countries. Critics said that India, a poor nation that could barely feed its people, had wasted valuable resources by developing an atomic bomb. Also, the blast had added to the arms race and opened the way for other nations to become nuclear powers.

The Indian government answered its critics by saying that it had a right to do as it saw fit with its resources. With nuclear power available, India would be less dependent on oil as a source of energy. The Indian government felt that in the future the Indian people would benefit greatly from this advance.

The Indians also launched a space satellite, with the assistance of the former Soviet Union. The Russians supplied materials, and the launch took place from Soviet soil. The purpose of this satellite shot was to look for X rays in space and to detect ultraviolet radiation in the night sky. An unstated purpose was to show that India is a great nation and can do what major nations have done.

India's social needs have been, and remain, tremendous. Education is a prime problem that the government has not yet been able to solve. There are not enough schools, books and other materials, or trained teachers. The dropout rate is very high. On the other hand, competition for admission to university programs is fierce.
The housing situation has become increasingly serious. Particularly with the growth of cities, the government has not come up with solutions to this pressing problem.

The promotion of good health has become an important function of the Indian government. Campaigns have been launched to get villages to avoid polluting water supplies. The government has subsidized the education of doctors and nurses, built hospitals and clinics, and sponsored medical research. Also, India recognizes the need to limit population growth and has initiated educational programs in birth control to achieve this.

The government has acted to improve the lives of India's millions of untouchables. Untouchability is now illegal and all professions and trades are open to these people. Penalties for discrimination were set up, and laws were passed giving untouchables specific government jobs. Also, since their living conditions were even worse than those of other
citizens, the government furnished financial aid to raise their standard of living. Seats in the national and state legislatures are reserved for representatives of their own choice.

Although the condition of India's untouchables has improved slightly since 1948, it has not been easy to change deep-rooted attitudes and customs. Legislation to help is one thing; the acceptance of change by Hindus is another.

An adult education class in Calcutta. The Indian government has tried to increase educational opportunities for all Indians.

**Indira Gandhi Rules India (1966–1977)**

On June 25, 1975, the prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi, announced that secret groups were planning a revolution. (It has never been proved that a revolt was actually being plotted.) She announced the temporary suspension (ending) of civil liberties and arrested the leaders of all the opposition parties. None of those put in jail were allowed to appeal to the courts for release. In addition, for the first time since India won its independence from Great Britain in 1947, all Indian newspapers and all news articles written by foreign reporters were censored.

**Proposed Reforms**

What brought about this historic act that ended democracy in India, at least for a time, Indira Gandhi, the daughter of the first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, became prime minister in 1966. She was not expected to be a strong leader. However, she introduced a
sweeping ten-point program for remaking India into a socialist democracy. After she had ordered that 14 private Indian banks be nationalized, she was thrown out of the Congress Party. She then formed her own party—the New Congress Party (NCP). In 1971, she called for a national election. The NCP used the Hindi slogan Garibi hatao (“Abolish poverty”). The results of the election gave the NCP two-thirds of the seats in the Lok Sabha, the Indian Parliament.

**Growth of Problems**

But Garibi hatao came back to cause problems for the government. Poor crops, poor management of the economy, and the rise of world prices for fertilizers and oil created seemingly unsolvable economic problems. Corruption spread in the government, and Indira Gandhi seemed to ignore it. Java Prakash Narayan, a leader of the opposition and follower of Mohandas Gandhi, accused her of wanting to become a dictator.

A judge in her home city of Allahabad discovered that she had won election to the Lok Sabha (“House of the People”) illegally in 1971. The judge said she would have to leave Parliament if a higher court upheld his decision. Since the prime minister of India must be a member of Parliament, Indira Gandhi would be forced out of that office too.

Narayan and other leaders called for Indira Gandhi to resign. When she refused, Narayan announced that a massive satyagraha (civil disobedience) campaign would begin. Narayan and other leaders called for the army and police force to mutiny. Then, in 1975, Indira Gandhi decided to act, and at her order the president of India proclaimed a state of emergency. Civil liberties were suspended, and the opposition leaders were arrested.

**“Limited Democracy”**

In March 1977, Prime Minister Gandhi eased the state of emergency that had existed for 19 months and called for national elections to be held then. She hoped that the people of India would show their approval for her program and the state of emergency that she had declared. She said that with this “limited democracy” she could attack poverty more forcefully. She promised that the peasants’ great burden would be lessened and that rural lands would be redivided more fairly. Finally, she promised to attack the problem of India’s massive inflation (over 30 percent in 1974).

All of this, however, would be achieved at a price. Although Indira Gandhi had said she was acting to protect India’s democracy, the facts showed that democracy had been greatly limited. Leaders of opposition groups were put in jail. Newspapers that criticized the government were censored or closed down. Also, charges of corruption and bribe-taking were made against Prime Minister Gandhi’s son Sanjay and other members of the government.

**Opposition and Defeat**

The leader of the opposition was Morarji Desai, head of the Janata Party. He told the Indian people that, if Indira Gandhi was reelected, she would again take away all rights from the people and set up a dictatorship.

Another important issue was sterilization and birth control. Thousands of Muslims who opposed the government’s forced sterilization of men voted against Prime Minister Gandhi and her Congress Party.

The results of the election were a great surprise—Indira Gandhi was defeated. For the first time since independence was gained in 1947, India would not be ruled by the leaders of the Congress Party. The Indian people had spoken as a democratic people speak—by the vote. A peaceful revolution had taken place. The Indian people wanted changes and did not trust Indira Gandhi to make these changes; therefore, they voted for candidates of the Janata Party, led by Desai.

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Morarji Desai was 81 years old when he became prime minister of India in March 1977. He told the Indian people, “You must not fear the government as you have feared it all these past months. We are your servants, not your masters.”

With these words Desai began his rule of India. He released almost all the people who had been put in jail during the state of emergency. He removed most censorship rules and allowed many newspapers to reopen. All constitutional civil rights were returned to the Indian people.

Desai announced that the birth control and sterilization program would now be entirely voluntary. However, he hoped that the program would be continued and that India’s population growth could be controlled. Desai also hoped that laws would be passed to give the untouchables greater civil rights and greater legal protection. Land reforms were to be continued to ensure all the Indian people a greater share of the nation’s wealth. In short, full democracy was returned to India under the Janata government.

Indira Gandhi Returns to Power and Is Assassinated (1980–1984)

In spite of its good intentions, the Janata government finally collapsed through its own incompetence, and Indira Gandhi was returned to power in 1980. She faced a number of serious problems, the first of which was the beginning of a widespread drought. Grain production fell, and the government was forced to buy grain to meet the needs of the Indian people.

The most serious problem, however, was the desire of the Sikhs to have an autonomous state in the Punjab. Only in the 20th century did local political competition begin between Hindus and Sikhs. Early in the century, the British rulers began to set up local democratic elections. In the 1920s, the Sikhs demanded control over their temples, which had been under the control of the local Hindu governments. A specially elected committee set up in 1935 to manage all Sikh shrines, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prickhndhak Committee (SGPC), became the center of all Sikh nationalist action. The Akali Dal, the major Sikh political party, demanded Sikh separateness and political and economic reforms to improve the lives of Sikhs.

By the 1960s, the SGPC and the Akali Dal had forced the Indian government to set up the separate, Sikh-controlled state of Punjab. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, Sikhs started to demand the creation of an independent Sikh nation, Khalistan.

In 1984, the Sikhs threatened to withhold the vast food and energy resources of the Punjab from the rest of India. On June 6, 1984, Indira Gandhi ordered the Indian army to storm the Sikh Golden Temple, the holiest shrine to all Sikhs, at Amritsar. The prime minister suspected that the Sikhs were plotting terrorist acts and storing large amounts of guns and ammunition in the temple.

The attack on the Golden Temple resulted in many dead and wounded. The leaders of the suspected terrorists were killed, and large stores of ammunition were found. The Sikhs vowed revenge.

On October 31, 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards as she walked to her office in New Delhi. The Hindu majority of India then began a series of riots against the Sikh minority. More than 1,000 Sikhs were murdered, and large amounts of Sikh property were stolen or destroyed.
Domestic Policies

Indira Gandhi’s son, Rajiv Gandhi, became prime minister of India on October 31, 1984, just after the assassination of his mother. In the year that followed, he quickly gained control of the government. In his earliest action he freed many of the Sikh leaders who had been arrested by his mother. Solving the Sikh problem became his most important task.

Gandhi hoped to gain the support of the Sikhs by allowing them to continue to control the government of the Punjab State. He also returned control of the administration of the Golden Temple to the Sikhs and opened meetings with the Sikh moderates (people who did not hold extreme views). However, the Sikh extremists were not satisfied, and many acts of terrorism were carried out throughout 1986, including the murder of defenseless Hindus.

For India’s troubled economy Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian government adopted a new Five-Year Plan. Major attention was given to the modernization and improvement of agriculture, as well as to industrial modernization, trade development, and programs giving direct assistance to the poor.

Foreign Relations

In the area of foreign policy, Rajiv Gandhi led a conference, held in New Delhi, to consider limiting armaments. The conference asked all nuclear powers to halt tests, stop adding to atomic stockpiles, and engage in talks for the future control of weapons of all kind.
When Rajiv Gandhi became prime minister, he said that he wished to improve relations with the United States. He visited the United States and met with President Reagan and leaders of Congress. He told the president and the American people that a new era in Indian-American relations was about to begin. However, his actions did not match his words. When Soviet Premier Gorbachev visited India in late 1986, Gandhi gave the impression that he was following the Soviet leader on almost all issues. After Gorbachev’s visit, the Soviets promised over $1 billion in aid to India, and pledged to continue to support India in its policies in regard to Pakistan.


In 1987, V. P. Singh, a former minister of finance and later defense minister in Congress Party governments, began an investigation of suspected wrongdoing by Rajiv Gandhi. He discovered corruption and bribery in the awarding of government contracts to the largest companies and to groups in which Gandhi’s relatives held important jobs.

In November 1989, an election was held. The Gandhi Congress government, which had enjoyed the largest majority in the Indian Parliament—the Lok Sabha—in Indian history, was upset by a loose coalition (united group) of parties called Janata Dal and led by Singh.

Although V. P. Singh became prime minister, he was forced to rely on the help of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Communist Party. Both of these parties had their own ideas about how to reform India.

The constitution of India provides safeguards for the “scheduled castes” (groups earlier considered “untouchables”). Some 22.5 percent of jobs in government and public works are to be reserved for them. Other low-ranking castes had long asked for similar treatment. In 1980, a commission that had been set up in 1979 under B. P. Mandal to look into the matter presented its report. It recommended that an additional 27 percent of jobs be reserved for other “backward classes.”

In late 1990, the government, led by V. P. Singh, announced that the Mandal reforms would at last be enforced. This decision sparked riots that continued for several weeks, during which over 150 young men and women set themselves on fire in protest. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had been a member of the Singh coalition government, objected and left the government. The BJP, which had already protested government action in the Ayodhya temple situation (see page 415), now felt further threatened. Its main supporters are upper caste, privileged Hindu Indians who would lose the most from government enforcement of the Mandal recommendations.

Opposition to Singh’s actions led to the collapse of the coalition in November 1990. In elections held in November 1990, Singh’s party lost control of the government. An interim caretaker government ruled for four months, and new elections were scheduled for 1991.

**India in the 1990s**

**Threats to India’s Unity as the 1990s Began**

Ever since India gained its independence in 1947, the country had been torn by internal strife.