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# 48 Years Of Emergency - PM Modi Refers It As India's Darkest Period In Mann Ki Baat

## Why In The News?

- Recently PM Narendra Modi Addressed The **102<sup>nd</sup> Edition** Of His Monthly Radio Show '**Mann Ki Baat**'. He Recalled The Emergency, Calling It "**A Dark Period**" In India's History.

 **Hindustan Times**

Mann Ki Baat updates: Emergency was 'black day' for India's history, says PM Modi



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## What Was Emergency Declared By Indira Gandhi?

- The Emergency Was A **21 Month Long Period, Between 1975 And 1977**, When Civil Liberties Were Suspended, The Press Was Censored, Indira Gandhi's Political Opponents Were Persecuted, And Numerous Human Rights Violations Were Carried Out - **A Period When India Ceased To Function As A Democracy.**
- The Emergency Remained In Effect From **June 25, 1975, To March 21, 1977**, And Is, To This Date, One Of The Highly debated Chapters In Academic And Political Circles When Talking About Modern Indian History.

## Why Was It Declared?

- The Proclamation Came Shortly After The **Raj Narain Verdict**, In Which The **Allahabad High Court Found Indira Guilty Of Electoral Malpractices**, Invalidated

Her Election From Rae Bareilly And Barred Her From Holding Elected Office For Six Years.

- The Prevailing Politico-economic Situation - Including The Recently Concluded **War With Pakistan, The 1973 Oil Crisis, A Drought, And Strikes And Protests Across The Country** - Provided A Perfect Situation For Gandhi To Justify The Imposition Of The Emergency.
- Even Before The Declaration Of Emergency, **Indira Had Faced Allegations Of Trying To Impose Total Control** During Her Stint As Congress Party President, And Subsequently, As Prime Minister. The Emergency Was Indira's **Strongest Attempt To Shut Out Every Democratic Voice** And Tighten Her Grip On Power.



## What Happened During The Emergency?

- The Emergency Allowed Gandhi To **Arrest Political Opponents** On A Large Scale. Thousands Of Leaders And Protestors Were Put Under **Preventive Detention. Those Who Escaped Arrest Went Underground.**
- This Period Also Saw The Govt Exercise **Complete Control Over The Media.** Pre-censorship - Meaning That Newspapers And Other Publications Had To Submit Their Content To Government Authorities For Approval Before Publication - Was Instituted.
- **Opposition Voices Were Silenced** While Government Propaganda Flooded The Country. Among Various **Human Rights Violations** Were **Forced Sterilization Campaigns** And **Slum Clearance Programs** Carried Out Under The Leadership Of Indira Gandhi's Son, **Sanjay.**



## A Timeline Of Indira Gandhi's Tenure

- **January 1966:** Indira Gandhi Elected Prime Minister.
- **November 1969:** The Congress Splits After Gandhi Is Expelled For Violating Party Discipline.
- **1973-75:** Surge In Political Unrest And Demonstrations Against The Indira Gandhi-led Government.
- **1971:** Political Opponent Raj Narain Lodges Complaint Of Electoral Fraud Against Indira Gandhi.
- **June 12, 1975:** Allahabad High Court Finds Gandhi Guilty Over Discrepancies In The Electoral Campaign.
- **June 24, 1975:** Supreme Court Rules That MP Privileges No Longer Apply To Gandhi. She Is Barred From Voting. However, She Is Allowed To Continue As Prime Minister.
- **June 25, 1975:** Declaration Of Emergency By President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed On The Advice Of Indira Gandhi.
- **June 26, 1975:** Indira Gandhi Addresses The Nation On All India Radio.
- **September 1976:** Sanjay Gandhi Initiates Mass Forced Sterilization Program In Delhi.
- **January 18, 1977:** Indira Gandhi Calls For Fresh Elections And Releases All Political Prisoners.
- **March 23, 1977:** Emergency Officially Comes To An End.

## What Is The Legacy Of The Emergency?

- **Emergency Was Lifted In 1977**, Amidst Rising Internal Discontent And International Criticism. This Was Followed By General Elections, Held In March 1977, Which Would Change India's Political Landscape Forever. The Congress Party, In Power Since Independence, **Suffered A Humiliating Defeat**.
- The Newly Formed **Janata Party**, A Coalition Of Disparate Opposition Parties, Emerged Victorious And Formed The **Govt With Morarji Desai As The PM**. While This Govt Did Not Last Long, With **Congress Returning To Power In 1980**, It Mark The Beginning Of The End For The Previously All-Powerful Congress.
- The Emergency Was Also Followed By The **Rise Of Judicial Activism In India**. While Major Emergency Provisions Were Almost Immediately Repealed, The Period Acted As A Warning, Pointing To The **Fragility Of Indian Democracy**.



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