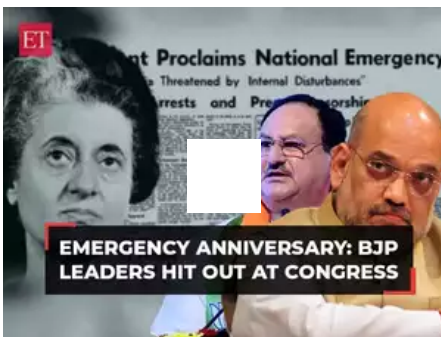


1975 Emergency explained: A look back at India's 'dark days of democracy'

ET Online | Last Updated: Jun 25, 2024, 12:11:00 PM IST

Synopsis

1975 Emergency: On June 25, 1975, then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of Emergency in India, citing a "deep and widespread conspiracy" against her government. This move followed a Supreme Court stay on a verdict nullifying her election and barring her from parliamentary proceedings. During the 21-month Emergency, civil liberties were suspended, and strict censorship was imposed. Gandhi's government faced criticism and protests, leading to its end in 1977 after general elections were called and political prisoners were released.



BJP attacks Congress on the 49th anniversary of Emergency

In a move that shook the nation, then-Prime Minister [Indira Gandhi](#) declared a [state of Emergency](#) on June 25, 1975, which lasted for 21 months. This decision, announced in a broadcast on [All India Radio](#), came shortly after the [Supreme Court](#) granted a conditional stay on the Allahabad High Court verdict, declaring Gandhi's [election](#) to the Lok Sabha null and void. The Supreme Court also asked Gandhi to stay away from parliamentary proceedings.

Imposition of Emergency

Gandhi justified the [Emergency](#) by citing a "deep and widespread conspiracy" against her government. During this period, civil liberties were suspended, and the government imposed strict censorship on the press. The Emergency also witnessed the centralization of power and the mass arrest of opposition leaders, including Jayaprakash Narayan, L K Advani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Morarji Desai. These actions were met with widespread criticism and protests, both domestically and internationally.

1975 Emergency: Timeline of Key Events

- 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 found 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 but 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.

The Political Landscape during Emergency in 1975

The Emergency period was marked by various political movements and events, including the Navnirman agitation in Gujarat, Jayaprakash Narayan's movement in Bihar, and the Railway strike led by George Fernandes. These events, along with the Allahabad High Court's judgment declaring Gandhi's election void, created an atmosphere of instability and unrest in the country.

1975 Emergency: Economic Development and Controversies

While Gandhi's government claimed that the Emergency was necessary for economic development and political stability, it was also marked by controversies. Forced sterilization drives, spearheaded by Gandhi's son Sanjay Gandhi, raised humanitarian concerns. The period also saw slum clearance programs and other initiatives that were criticized for their authoritarian nature.

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End of the Emergency

In a surprising turn of events, Gandhi called for elections on January 18, 1977, and released all political prisoners. The general elections were held between March 16 and March 20, and the Emergency was officially lifted on March 21, 1977. This marked the end of one of the darkest chapters in India's history post-independence.

“The President has proclaimed the Emergency. This is nothing to panic about. I am sure you are all aware of the deep and

widespread conspiracy, which has been brewing ever since I began to introduce certain progressive measures of benefit for the common man and woman in India," said Indira Gandhi in her address to the nation announcing the Emergency.

Leaders Reflect on Dark Days of Emergency

As India marks the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the Emergency on June 25, 1975, by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Union Ministers took to social media to share their thoughts on this dark chapter in Indian democracy.

The BJP announced a nationwide programme to mark the 21-month state of Emergency, pledging to remember and reflect on the events that unfolded during that period.

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PM Modi's Remarks

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the Emergency as a "dark chapter" in Indian democracy that cannot be forgotten. He emphasized the need to protect and preserve democracy, urging citizens to uphold democratic traditions.

Amit Shah's Criticism of Congress

Union Home Minister Amit Shah criticized the Congress, stating that the Emergency was the party's biggest example of "murdering democracy." He condemned the Congress for suspending citizens' rights, imposing censorship on the media, and altering the Constitution to consolidate power.

Rajnath Singh's Reflection

Union Minister Rajnath Singh recalled the misuse of power and dictatorship during the Emergency, highlighting the struggle of those who fought to restore democracy. He credited their efforts for keeping democracy alive in India.

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JP Nadda's Tribute

BJP President JP Nadda paid tribute to the heroes who resisted the Emergency and defended constitutional values. He criticized the Congress for attempting to trample over the Constitution and suppress voices of dissent.

Nitin Gadkari's Tribute

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari honored those who opposed the dictatorial Emergency and re-established democracy, highlighting the importance of their contributions.

(With inputs from agencies)

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