

## Lok Sabha

17-21 minutes

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### **FIRST DAY IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY**

The Constituent Assembly met for the first time in New Delhi on 9 December, 1946 in the Constitution Hall which is now known as the Central Hall of Parliament House. Decorated elegantly for the occasion, the Chamber wore a new look on that day with a constellation of bright lamps hanging from the high ceilings and also from the brackets on its walls.

Overwhelmed and jubilant as they were, the hon'ble members sat in semi-circular rows facing the Presidential dias. The desks which could be warmed electrically were placed on sloping green-carpeted terraces. Those who adorned the front row were Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Smt. Sarojini Naidu, Shri Hare-Krushna Mahatab, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Shri Sarat Chandra Bose, Shri C. Rajagopalachari and Shri M. Asaf Ali. Two hundred and seven representatives, including nine women were present.

The inaugural session began at 11 a.m. with the introduction of Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, the temporary Chairman of the Assembly, by Acharya Kripalani. While welcoming Dr. Sinha and others, Acharyaji said: "As we begin every work with Divine blessings, we request Dr. Sinha to invoke these blessings so that our work may

proceed smoothly. Now, I once more, on your behalf, call upon Dr. Sinha to take the Chair."

Occupying the Chair amidst acclamation, Dr. Sinha read out the goodwill messages received from different countries. After the Chairman's inaugural address and the nomination of a Deputy Chairman, the members were formally requested to present their credentials. The First Day's proceedings ended after all the 207 members present submitted their credentials and signed the Register.

Seated in the galleries, some thirty feet above the floor of the Chamber, the representatives of the Press and the visitors witnessed this memorable event. The All India Radio, Delhi broadcast a composite sound picture of the entire proceedings.

## **SOME FACTS**

The Constituent Assembly took almost three years (two years, eleven months and seventeen days to be precise) to complete its historic task of drafting the Constitution for Independent India. During this period, it held eleven sessions covering a total of 165 days. Of these, 114 days were spent on the consideration of the Draft Constitution.

As to its composition, members were chosen by indirect election by the members of the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, according to the scheme recommended by the Cabinet Mission. The arrangement was: (i) 292 members were elected through the Provincial Legislative Assemblies; (ii) 93 members represented the Indian Princely States; and (iii) 4 members represented the Chief Commissioners' Provinces. The total membership of the Assembly thus was to be 389. However, as a result of the partition under the Mountbatten Plan of 3

June, 1947, a separate Constituent Assembly was set up for Pakistan and representatives of some Provinces ceased to be members of the Assembly. As a result, the membership of the Assembly was reduced to 299.

On 13 December, 1946, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru moved the Objectives Resolution

1.This Constituent Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India as an Independent Sovereign Republic and to draw up for her future governance a Constitution;

2.WHEREIN the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the Independent Sovereign India, shall be a Union of them all; and

3.WHEREIN the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the law of the Constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous Units, together with residuary powers and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom; and

4.WHEREIN all power and authority of the Sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people; and

5.WHEREIN shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social economic and political :

equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality; and

6. WHEREIN adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes; and

7. WHEREBY shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea, and air according to justice and the law of civilized nations; and

8. this ancient land attains its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.

This Resolution was unanimously adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 22 January 1947.

Late in the evening of 14 August, 1947 the Assembly met in the Constitution Hall and at the stroke of midnight, took over as the Legislative Assembly of an Independent India.

On 29 August, 1947, the Constituent Assembly set up a Drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to prepare a Draft Constitution for India. While deliberating upon the draft Constitution, the Assembly moved, discussed and disposed of as many as 2,473 amendments out of a total of 7,635 tabled.

The Constitution of India was adopted on 26 November, 1949 and the hon'ble members appended their signatures to it on 24 January, 1950. In all, 284 members

actually signed the Constitution. On that day when the Constitution was being signed, it was drizzling outside and it was interpreted as a sign of a good omen.

The Constitution of India came into force on 26 January, 1950. On that day, the Assembly ceased to exist, transforming itself into the Provisional Parliament of India until a new Parliament was constituted in 1952

### **Sessions of the Constituent Assembly**

First Session:	9-23 December, 1946
Second Session:	20-25 January, 1947
Third Session:	28 April - 2 May, 1947
Fourth Session:	14-31 July, 1947
Fifth Session:	14-30 August, 1947
Sixth Session:	27 January, 1948
Seventh Session:	4 November, 1948 - 8 January, 1949
Eighth Session:	16 May - 16 June, 1949
Ninth Session:	30 July - 18 September, 1949
Tenth Session:	6-17 October, 1949
Eleventh Session:	14-26 November, 1949

[The Assembly met once again on 24 January, 1950, when the members appended their signatures to the Constitution of India]

### **IMPORTANT COMMITTEES OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THEIR CHAIRMEN**

Name of the Committee	Chairman
Committee on the Rules of Procedure	Rajendra Prasad
Steering Committee	Rajendra Prasad
Finance and Staff Committee	Rajendra Prasad
Credential Committee	Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar
House Committee	B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
Order of Business Committee	K.M. Munsi
Ad hoc Committee on the National Flag	Rajendra Prasad
Committee on the Functions of the Constituent Assembly	G.V. Mavalankar
States Committee	Jawaharlal Nehru
Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas	Vallabhbhai Patel
Minorities Sub-Committee	H.C. Mookherjee
Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee	J.B. Kripalani
North-East Frontier Tribal Areas and Assam Excluded & Partially	Gopinath Bardoloi

Excluded Areas Sub-Committee	
Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas (Other than those in Assam) Sub-Committee	A.V. Thakkar
Union Powers Committee	Jawaharlal Nehru
Union Constitution Committee	Jawaharlal Nehru
Drafting Committee	B.R. Ambedkar

**STATEWISE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA AS ON 31 DECEMBER, 1947**

**PROVINCES-229**

S.No	State	No. of Members
1.	Madras	49
2.	Bombay	21
3.	West Bengal	19
4.	United Provinces	55
5.	East Punjab	12
6.	Bihar	36
7.	C.P. and Berar	17
8.	Assam	8
9.	Orissa	9
10.	Delhi	1

11.	Ajmer-Merwara	1
12.	Coorg	1

### INDIAN STATES-70

1.	Alwar	1
2.	Baroda	3
3.	Bhopal	1
4.	Bikaner	1
5.	Cochin	1
6.	Gwalior	4
7.	Indore	1
8.	Jaipur	3
9.	Jodhpur	2
10.	Kolhapur	1
11.	Kotah	1
12.	Mayurbhanj	1
13.	Mysore	7
14.	Patiala	2
15.	Rewa	2
16.	Travancore	6
17.	Udaipur	2
18.	Sikkim and Cooch Behar Group	1
19.	Tripura, Manipur and Khasi States Group	1



20.	U.P. States Group	1
21.	Eastern Rajputana States Group	3
22.	Central India States Group (including Bundelkhand and Malwa)	3
23.	Western India States Group	4
24.	Gujarat States Group	2
25.	Deccan and Madras States Group	2
26.	Punjab States Group I	3
27.	Eastern States Group I	4
28.	Eastern States Group II	3
29	Residuary States Group	4
	Total	299