



When a Nation was Torn

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the country
placed.

A train full of evacuees. From the Archives.

In 2021, the government decided to observe 14 August as Partition Horror Remembrance Day. It is important to understand why it is necessary to never forget this day. The Viceroy Lord Mountbatten

announced the Mountbatten Plan on 3 July, under which the British government was going to divide British India into two separate countries – India and Pakistan.

Communal violence had already spread in the country, and upon hearing this decision, it flared up even more. More than 14 million people, who until a day before called that land their home, had to leave it and move to some new land. The deaths were so many that we still do not have the exact numbers. According to the Government of India, more than 500,000 people died, while some historians believe that 1,000,000–2,000,000 people lost their lives, and about 15 million people became homeless.



A convoy of evacuees of India from West Pakistan, 1947. From the Archives.

Here is an excerpt from an interview with a partition survivor, Taj Begum. Taj Begum remembers the train ride to Lahore. –*The berth was stuffed with people, and the windows were sealed shut. My baby cousin’s mouth was stuffed with a cloth so that he may not make a sound. Our uncle told us insurgents are sharpening swords on the platform; if we make a sound, they would massacre the entire*

train,â?• she shared. Taj Begum was born in 1937 in Delhi to an Urdu-speaking literary family. She is one among millions to be displaced.

The scars of such a deep wound will forever remain, not just on the nation, but on all of South Asia. The Partition, in a way, halted the development of the region. Due to strained relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh from the very beginning, many problems have arisen. However, we can heal these scars by coming together and standing united for the sake of humanity and development. But the current situation and our relationships with neighboring countries significantly diminish these possibilities. Our shared future depends on our ability to rise above old conflicts and unite for progress and peace.

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