

Indian National Congress

Introduction

- The Indian National Congress was founded at Bombay in December 1885.
- The early leadership – Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, W.C. Bonnerji, Surendranath Banerji, Romesh Chandra Dutt, S. Subramania Iyer, among others – was largely from Bombay and Calcutta.
- A retired British official, A.O. Hume, also played a part in bringing Indians from the various regions together.
- Formation of Indian National Congress was an effort in the direction of promoting the process of nation building.
- In an effort to reach all regions, it was decided to rotate the Congress session among different parts of the country.
- The President belonged to a region other than where the Congress session was being held.

Aims of INC

- The **aims** of the National Congress were declared to be –
 - Promotion of friendly relations among nationalist political workers residing in different parts of the country;
 - Development and consolidation of the feeling of national unity irrespective of caste, religion, or province;
 - Formulation of popular demands and their presentation before the Government; and
 - Training and organization of public opinion in the country.
- One of the main aims of Hume in helping to found the National Congress was to provide an outlet i.e. 'a **safety valve**'—to the increasing popular discontent against British rule.
- In 1879, Wasudeo Balwant Phadke, a clerk in the commissariat department, had gathered a band of **Ramoshi** peasants and started an armed uprising in Maharashtra. Though this crude and an ill-prepared attempt was easily crushed, it was a portent of events to come.
- Hume as well as other English officials and statesmen were afraid that the educated Indians might provide leadership to the masses and organize a powerful rebellion against the foreign government. As Hume put it: "*A safety valve for the escape of great and growing forces generated by our own action was urgently needed.*"
- Hume believed that the National Congress would provide a peaceful and constitutional outlet to the discontent among the educated Indians and would thus help to avoid the outbreak of a popular revolt.

- The National Congress represented the urge of the politically conscious Indians to set up a national organization to work for their political and economic advancement.
- In any case, the Indian leaders, who cooperated with Hume in starting this National Congress, were patriotic men of high character who willingly accepted Hume's help as they did not want to arouse official hostility towards their efforts at so early stage of political activity.
- Surendranath Banerjea and many other leaders of Bengal had not attended the first session of the National Congress as they were busy with the Second National Conference at Calcutta.
- In 1886, Surendranath Banerjea and other leaders of Bengal merged their forces with those of the National Congress whose second session met in Calcutta in December 1886 under the president-ship of Dadabhai Naoroji.
- From the Calcutta session, the National Congress became 'the whole country's Congress'. Its delegates, numbering 436, were elected by different local organizations and groups.
- The National Congress met every year in December, in a different part of the country.
- The number of its delegates soon increased to thousands. Its delegates consisted mostly of lawyers, journalists, traders, industrialists, teachers, and landlords.
- In 1890, **Kadambini Ganguli**, the first woman graduate of Calcutta University addressed the Congress session.
- This was symbolic of the fact that India's straggle for freedom would raise Indian women from the degraded position to which they had been reduced for centuries past.
- Some of the great presidents of the National Congress during its early years were Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, P. Ananda Charlu, Surendranath Banerjea, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Ananda Mohan Bose, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Indian National Congress Sessions

The list of Indian National Congress sessions with their Presidents are given in the table below:

Year	Location	President	Importance
1885	Bombay	W C Bonnerjee	1st session attended by 72 delegates
1886	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	National Congress and National Conference
1887	Madras	Syed Badruddin Tyabji	Appeal made to Muslims to join hands with other national leaders
1888	Allahabad	George Yule	First English president
1889	Bombay	Sir William Wedderburn	–
1890	Calcutta	Feroz Shah Mehta	–
1891	Nagpur	P. Ananda Charlu	–
1892	Allahabad	W C Bonnerjee	–
1893	Lahore	Dadabhai Naoroji	–

1894	Madras	Alfred Webb	–
1895	Poona	Surendranath Banerjee	–
1896	Calcutta	Rahimtullah M. Sayani	National song ‘Vande Mataram’ sung for the first time
1897	Amravati	C. Sankaran Nair	–
1898	Madras	Ananda Mohan Bose	–
1899	Lucknow	Romesh Chandra Dutt	–
1900	Lahore	N G Chandavarkar	–
1901	Calcutta	Dinshaw E. Wacha	–
1902	Ahmedabad	Surendranath Banerjee	–
1903	Madras	Lal Mohan Ghosh	–
1904	Bombay	Sir Henry Cotton	–
1905	Benares	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	Expressed resentment against the partition of Bengal
1906	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	The word ‘Swaraj’ was mentioned for the first time
1907	Surat	Rash Behari Ghosh	Party splits into extremists and moderates
1908	Madras	Rash Behari Ghosh	Previous session continued
1909	Lahore	Madan Mohan Malaviya	Indian Councils Act, 1909
1910	Allahabad	Sir William Wedderburn	–
1911	Calcutta	Bishan Narayan Dhar	‘Jana Gana Mana’ sung for the first time
1912	Bankipore (Patna)	Raghunath Narasinha Mudholkar	–
1913	Karachi	Syed Mohammed	–
1914	Madras	Bhupendra Nath Basu	–
1915	Bombay	Satyendra Prasanna Sinha	–
1916	Lucknow	Ambica Charan Mazumdar	Lucknow Pact – joint session with the Muslim League
1917	Calcutta	Annie Besant	First woman president of the INC
1918	Bombay And Delhi	Syed Hasan Imam (Bombay) And Madan Mohan Malaviya (Delhi)	Two sessions were held. First in Bombay in August/September Second in Delhi in December
1919	Amritsar	Motilal Nehru	Jallianwala Bagh massacre strongly condemned
1920	Nagpur	C Vijayaraghavachariar	–
1921	Ahmedabad	Hakim Ajmal Khan (acting President For C R Das)	–
1922	Gaya	C R Das	–
1923	Kakinada	Maulana Mohammad Ali,	–
1924	Belgaum	M K Gandhi	–
1925	Kanpur	Sarojini Naidu	First Indian woman president
1926	Guwahati	S Srinivasa Iyengar	–
1927	Madras	M A Ansari	–
1928	Calcutta	Motilal Nehru	All India Youth Congress formed
1929	Lahore	Jawaharlal Nehru	Resolution for ‘Poorna Swaraj.’ Civil Disobedience movement for complete independence to be launched, 26 January to be observed as ‘Independence Day’.

1930	No Session	–	–
1931	Karachi	Vallabhbhai Patel	Resolution on fundamental rights and national economic progress. Gandhi-Irwin pact endorsed. Gandhi nominated to represent INC in the second round table conference
1932	Delhi	Amrit Ranchhorddas Seth	–
1933	Calcutta	Malaviya Was Elected But Mrs Nellie Sengupta Presided	–
1934	Bombay	Rajendra Prasad	–
1936	Lucknow	Jawaharlal Nehru	–
1936	Faizpur	Jawaharlal Nehru	First rural session/first session to be held in a village
1938	Haripura	Subhas Chandra Bose	National planning committee set up under Nehru
1939	Tripuri	Subhas Chandra Bose	Bose was elected but had to resign since Gandhi supported Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Instead, Rajendra Prasad was appointed
1940	Ramgarh	Abul Kalam Azad	–
1941-45	–	–	No session because of arrest
1946	Meerut	Acharya Kripalani	Last session before independence
1948	Jaipur	Pattabhi Sitaramayya	First session after independence
1950	Nashik	Purushottam Das Tandon	Resigned in 1951; Nehru became President