Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Indian National Flag

A Journey Through India's Struggle for Freedom

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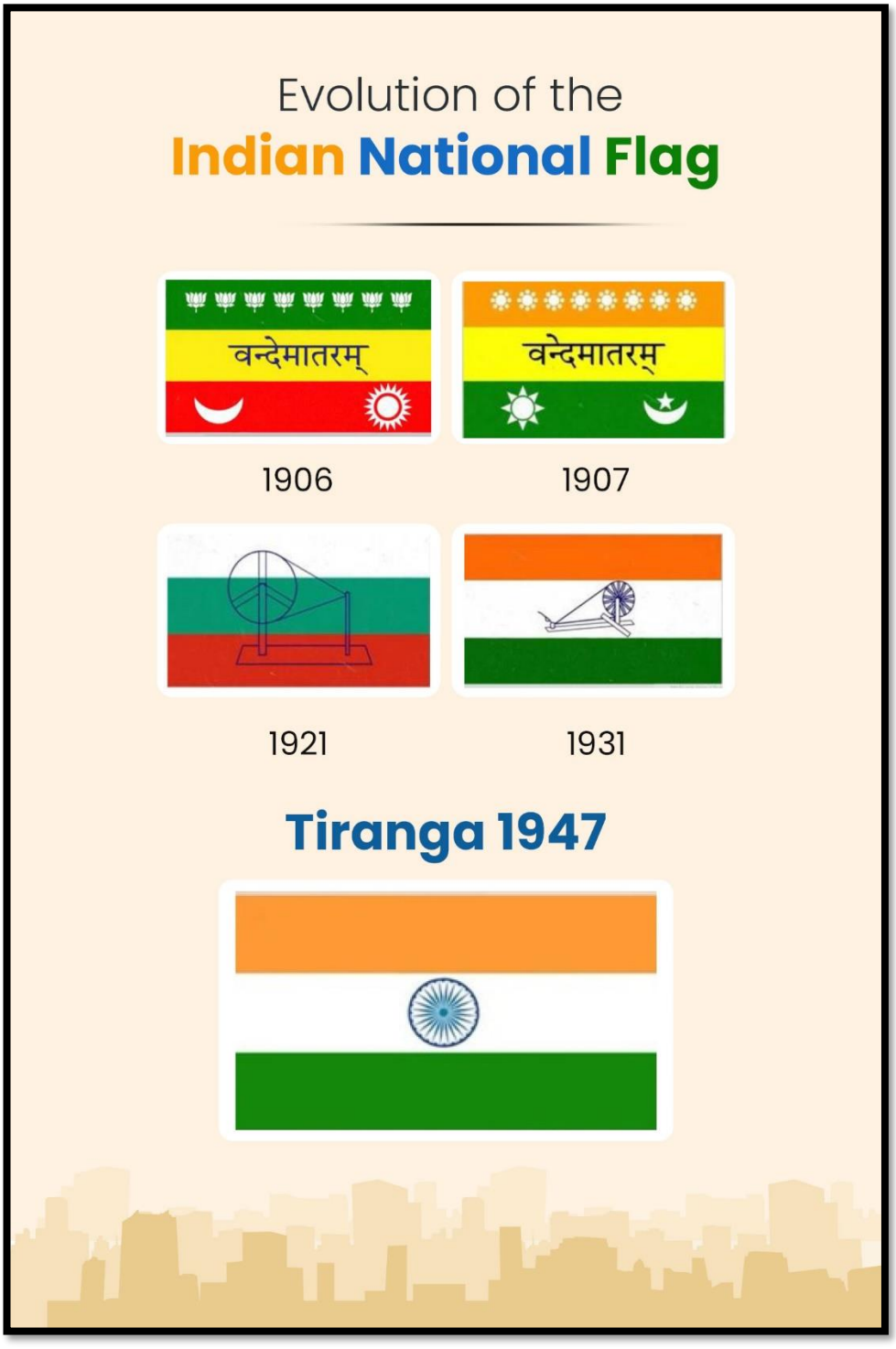
The Fort St. George in Chennai holds a piece of history that reflects the story of our entire nation. It is a **12-foot long, 8-foot wide piece of pure silk, gently hanging in the Indian Independence Gallery of the Fort St. George Museum**. This flag is one of the first flags ever hoisted in independent India on **August 15, 1947.** It is the **only surviving flag** from that momentous day, a silent yet powerful testament to the sacrifices, struggles, and hopes of millions who fought for India's freedom.



The flag, hoisted at the early hour of **5:30 AM on 15 August 1947**, stood tall as the dawn of a new era broke over the horizon. It was a moment of overwhelming joy, pride, and relief for a nation that had endured centuries of colonial rule. The journey to that triumphant morning was long and arduous, marked by various iterations of what would become the national flag of India.

The evolution of the Indian National Flag is not just the story of a symbol but a chronicle of India's journey towards self-determination. It all began in **1906 during the Swadeshi and Boycott movement,** when a flag was first hoisted in Calcutta. This flag, different from the one we know today, represented the burgeoning spirit of resistance against British rule. The following year, in **1907, Madam Bhikaji Cama** raised a similar flag in Paris, carrying the message of India's struggle to the global stage.

As the years passed, the flag evolved alongside the nation's fight for independence. In **1917**, during the Home Rule Movement led by **Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak**, another flag was hoisted, signaling the demand for self-governance. It wasn't until **1921** that the flag took on a more familiar form, designed by **Pingali Venkayya**. His design, with its three stripes representing the various communities of India, was a call for unity in diversity. The spinning wheel at the centre symbolised India's economic self-reliance.



[1]

The **final transformation came in 1931**, when the flag's colors were finalized: **Saffron was for courage, white for peace, and green for fertility and growth.** The Dharma Chakra replaced the spinning wheel**,** symbolizing the eternal wheel of law and progress. This flag, formally adopted by the Constituent Assembly on **July 22, 1947,** became the **Tiranga** we revere today.

The flag in the Fort St. George Museum, with its bold **saffron, white, and green stripes**, and the **deep blue Ashoka Chakra** embodies the collective aspirations of a nation that longed for freedom. It has witnessed the birth of a free India, felt the winds of change, and stood as a silent observer to the country's growth and challenges.

[1] file:///C:/Users/DELL/Downloads/doc202272975301.pdf

The Indian National Flag is not just a symbol of independence but a reminder of the responsibility that comes with freedom. **The Flag Code of India, 2002**, encapsulates the respect and dignity that Tiranga deserves. It governs the display of the flag by **private, public, and government institutions, ensuring that it is treated with the reverence it commands.** Whether hand-spun in Khadi or machine-made in polyester, the flag is to be treated as the nation's pride. The code emphasizes the correct way to display the flag, ensuring it is always accorded the highest honour, never allowed to touch the ground or trail in the **water, and disposed of respectfully when damaged.**

For those who visit the Fort St. George Museum, standing in front of this flag is a humbling experience. It's a moment to reflect on the sacrifices of those who came before, to honour the legacy they left behind, and to recognise the ongoing journey towards the ideals that this flag represents.

In an ever-changing world, the Indian National Flag remains a constant, a beacon of hope and resilience. It reminds us of the struggles endured, the victories achieved, and the unyielding spirit of a nation that, despite all odds, stood up and claimed its place in the world. With its 12-foot length and 8-foot width, the flag is not just a relic of the past but a living symbol of the dreams and aspirations that continue to drive India forward!

References

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