

Mutiny of Royal Indian Navy

The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny (RIN) or also called as Royal Indian Navy Revolt began at Bombay harbour on 18 February 1946 by Ratings (non-commissioned officers and sailors) against the British. RIN soon spread to other parts of British India. Between 10000 – 20000 sailors came to be involved in the mutiny which was suppressed by the British using force. The topic comes under Modern Indian History of [IAS Exam](#).

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Royal Indian Navy Mutiny Background

- The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny started as a strike by ratings (a designation for a sailor subordinate to officers) demanding better food and accommodation.
- The Indian sailors were treated badly by their British commanders and there were stark differences in the pay, living conditions and basic amenities of Indians and British sailors in the navy.
- The strike started in Bombay harbour where a contingent of ratings had arrived. The ratings of HMIS Talwar, a shore establishment also had seething discontent against their seniors for similar reasons.
- On 19 February a Naval Central Strike committee was formed with Leading Signaller Lieutenant M.S. Khan and Petty Officer Telegraphist Madan Singh elected as president and vice-president respectively.
- The strikers were inspired by the INA trials and the persona of Subhas Chandra Bose. Soon, the strike evolved into open revolt with many cities joining the Bombay sailors. Sailors from Karachi, Calcutta, Poona, Vizag, Cochin, Madras, Mandapam and the Andaman Islands joined involving 66 ships and shore establishments.
- Ratings were not obeying their officers and they conducted demonstrations in the city of Bombay leaving their posts.
- The city of Bombay particularly was tense. Hundreds of protestors targeted the British residents and officers of the city. They even took control of Butcher Island where the entire ammunition of the Bombay Presidency was stored.
- The rebels also found support from the Royal Indian Air Force men from Bombay and from the Gurkhas in Karachi who, known for their loyalty, refused to fire at the strikers.

- The open revolt struck at the heart of the British establishment who now realised that the armed forces, which was one of their key tools in maintaining their mastery over the subcontinent, could no longer be relied upon.
- The sailors displayed a strong unity cutting across lines of religion and region despite the impending partition of the country on communal lines.
- The revolt, however, failed to see support from the Indian leadership who perhaps saw a mutiny, so close to independence, as a danger. Only the Communist Party of India and the INC's Aruna Asaf Ali openly supported the sailors.
- The mutiny came to an end with the intervention of [Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel](#). The mutineers surrendered on 23 February 1946.
- A total of 7 sailors and 1 officer were killed. 476 sailors were discharged as a result of the mutiny. They were not taken into the Indian or Pakistani navies after independence.
- It is noteworthy to point out that there was massive public support for the mutineers. During the violence in Bombay that ensued because of the strike, over 200 civilians had died.

Aspirants reading the topic 'RIN' can also read the articles linked in the table below:

Subhas Chandra Bose	Provisional Government of Free India established
Rash Behari Bose	The Indian Territorial Army was inaugurated

Demands

- Immediate trigger – demand for better food and working conditions; racial discrimination by British officers.
- Later, the agitation soon turned into an upsurge of nationalism and demand for independence from British rule.
- The protesting sailors demanded:
 - Release of Indian National Army (INA) personnel and other political prisoners
 - Withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia
 - Revision or appraisal of pay and allowances for RIN employees on par with their British counterparts.

Significance of the Revolt

- This event, even more, strengthened the determination of all the Indian people to witness the end of British rule.
- Another remarkable feature of this mutiny was the massive out rush of public support for the mutineers.
- After the mutiny, the British realised that it could no longer hold on to India under them.

