

## CHRONOLOGY (1875-1950)

- 1875 Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel born on 31 October at Nadiad Town in Kheda district of Gujarat. Mother: Ladba, Father: Jhaverbhai, a peasant holding 10 to 12 acres of land; follower of the Swaminarayan Sect; believed to have participated in the Great Revolt of 1857. Spent childhood in Karamsad. Had his primary education upto third standard in the village school.
- 1891 Studied fourth and fifth standards in Petlad school which was at a distance of about 15 km from Karamsad. Rented a room in Petlad. He used to trek from Petlad to Karamsad and from Karamsad to Petlad.
- 1892 Married Jhaverba of village Gana, about six km from Karamsad, at the age of 17 years.
- 1897 Passed the Matriculation Examination from Government High School, Nadiad, at the age of 22.
- 1900 Staying at Nadiad, he studied at home and passed district pleader's examination. Started practice in Godhra, district of Panchmahal.
- 1902 Left Godhra and started legal practice in Borsad. Won laurels as an accomplished criminal lawyer.
- 1904 Daughter Maniben born at Gana village in April.
- 1905 Got admission to Middle Temple Inn, London for bar but stayed back on brother Vithalbai's persuasion who himself wanted to go to London for bar. Undertook to run his brother's household during his absence. Son Dahyabhai was born on 28 November.
- 1909 Wife Jhaverba died after an operation in Bombay on 11 January. He was arguing a case in the court when he received the telegram conveying the news of her demise. Argued out his case patiently. Broke the sad news only after the hearing was over.

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*Source:* The information has been documented from various authentic sources. One of the major sources being the Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chief Editor P. N. Chopra, Konark Publishers, 1997.

In spite of young age, sound financial status, great insistence of friends and relatives, he refused to remarry and remained a widower throughout his life.

- 1910 Went to England for qualifying as a barrister. He took admission in the well-known Middle Temple Inn. Living thriftily he seriously attended to his studies. He was awarded a scholarship for three years.
- 1911 Got himself operated in a Nursing Home in England for a foot disease without anaesthesia but there was no expression of pain on his face.
- 1912 In the final examination for the degree of Bar-at-Law which he completed in 10 years instead of 12 years, he topped the list of successful candidates and got a prize of \$ 50. Next day after the degree was awarded he sailed for India in a steamer.
- 1913 Landed in Bombay on 13 February. Government offered him the post of judge and later on Professorship in Bombay Law College. He declined the offer and settled at Ahmedabad and established flourishing practice as an eminent lawyer soon.
- 1914 Father Jhaverbhai died in Karamsad at the age of 85.
- 1915 Became a member of well-known institution known as Gujarat Sabha (Gujarat Club) and began public life.
- 1916 For the first time he came in the contact with Gandhiji. He was attracted towards the public welfare programme at Lucknow as a delegate of Gujarat Sabha.
- 1917 Was elected a member of Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Was re-elected unopposed, his first election having been declared void. As Chairman of the Health Committee undertook relief work in connection with fighting the scourge of plague then raging in the city. Started an agitation against the appointment of an English I.C.S. officer as a Commissioner of Ahmedabad Municipality and got it revoked. Came in direct contact with Gandhiji for the first time when the first Gujarat Political Conference was held at Godhra under Gandhiji's Presidentship. Was impressed by Gandhiji's readiness to court imprisonment for his espousal of the cause of poor peasants of Champaran (Bihar). Started a movement against Government compelling people to do work for which they were not paid.
- 1918 Arranged relief works in drought-affected areas of Ahmedabad district. In the dispute between millowners and labourers in Ahmedabad, presented the case of labourers before the tribunal. Established a special hospital in Bhaghubai Vanda and arranged to distribute medicines at the homes of the affected patients from influenza in Ahmedabad.

With Gandhiji successfully conducted a no-tax campaign against the forcible collection of land revenue from farmers in spite of drought conditions in Kaira district.

- 1919 Was elected President of the Executive Committee of Ahmedabad Municipality.  
 Started a struggle against Rowlatt Act which was promulgated with the intention of suppressing Swaraj Movement.  
 Started publication of Sarvodaya Patrika in Gujarati without the permission of the Government.  
 Disturbances broke out in Ahmedabad on receipt of news of Gandhiji's arrest. Martial Law was declared. Extended support to the authorities in quelling disturbances and restoring peace. In spite of this riot cess recovered from him by auctioning his sofa. Government tried to cancel his Sanaa on grounds of his support to the anti-Rowlatt Act Satyagraha. But the judge did not approve the charge in view of his faith in truth and non-violence. This decision set an important precedent for lawyers and barristers to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- 1920 Organised campaign of Congress Party in elections to Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Congress captured all the open seats in election. Following the declaration of non-cooperation and the five-point programme, gave up legal practice and adopted simple mode of life. During this period gave up wearing foreign clothes and wore Khadi Dhoti, Kurta and Chappals.  
 Collected a fund of Rs. 10 lakhs from Gujarat for the Tilak Swaraj Fund in pursuance of the Nagpur Congress Resolution. He also fulfilled the targets of enrolling three lakh members of the Congress and introducing spinning-wheel on mass scale in Gujarat within three months.  
 In collaboration with Gandhiji decided to establish Gujarat Vidyapith for imparting national education. 1921 Elected President of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee in January.  
 Elected Chairman of the Reception Committee of the 36th session of the Indian National Congress which was to be held at Ahmedabad. Took great pains and made hurricane efforts to make the session a great success. Arranged Indian style of sitting for the delegates on the floor for the first time. Congress decided to start Civil Disobedience. Vallabhbhai and Gandhiji toured the two talukas of Anand and Bardoli, met the peasants and advised them to withhold payment of land revenue even at the risk of forfeiture of their lands, attachment of their cattle and movables and even imprisonment.
- 1922 Government of Bombay suspended the Municipality of Ahmedabad after a sharp tussle over supervision of Municipal schools. Organised

schools under People's Primary Education Board with public contributions; founded People's Primary School Committee and started schools under its auspices. Went to Rangoon (Burma) for collection of funds for establishment of Gujarat Vidyapith, brain-child of Gandhiji, and collected ten lakh of rupees.

Gandhiji suspended Non-cooperation Movement in February due to Chauri-Chaura incident and was arrested on 10 March.

Appealed to Gujaratis to donate a million rupees for a suitable building for the Gujarat Vidyapith. Exhorted people to remove untouchability at the Kathiawad Political Conference in November.

At Gaya Congress in December opposed 'Council Entry' and laid stress on constructive work.

1923 British Government had prohibited the unfurling of national flag in Cantonment areas. Congress selected him for launching satyagraha as a protest against the ban. As a result, Flag Satyagraha was launched at Nagpur in September and upheld the right to honour the National Flag.

Along with Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Hakim Ajmal Khan and others appealed for Hindu-Muslim Unity and religious harmony in October.

Bombay Government imposed unjust punitive tax on the people of Borsad taluka who were charged with harbouring criminals. Started satyagraha in protest. Government withdrew orders. Vallabhbhai received the title of "Commander of Borsad". Gandhiji called him "King of Borsad".

1924 In the Ahmedabad Municipality, which was revived, fresh elections were held and Congress party under his leadership won decisive majority. Was elected President of the Municipality. During the three years of Presidentship, he concerned himself with several activities for people's welfare.

1925 Dahyabhai (Sardar's son) marries Yashoda in February without any feasts and celebrations and without any dowry.

1925-26 Remained busy with the activities of the Ahmedabad Municipality and toured various parts of Gujarat propagating constructive work, social reforms and removal of untouchability.

1926 Resigned from the Presidentship of the Ahmedabad Municipality feeling that his colleagues were not taking their responsibilities seriously but withdrew it later on under pressure.

1927 Presided over the First Conference on the Local Bodies of Gujarat on 17 July.

Gujarat was faced with unprecedented floods. Vallabhbhai Patel organised extensive relief for the flood-affected people and saved

Gujarat from a great calamity. Got Rs. one crore sanctioned by the Government for flood-relief work.

Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, also personally visited flood-affected areas in December and appreciated the relief measures undertaken by Vallabhbhai Patel.

1928 Resigned from the Presidentship of Ahmedabad Municipality following differences with the Government over the appointment of the Chief Officer on 28 April.

Galvanised the peasants of Bardoli to protest against an arbitrary increase in land revenue, launched a satyagraha. Planned the satyagraha meticulously step by step, organised the people to sand the might of British Empire, electrified the whole country by leading the poor dumb peasants of Bardoli to an epic struggle popularly known as the “Bardoli Satyagraha”. All communities-Hindus, Muslims, Parsis- whole-heartedly backed the movement. The peasants did not yield even though government confiscated their land, property, crops and cattle. Government had to yield to the demand for appointment of an Inquiry Committee to review the enhancement of land revenue. Government agreed to restore all unsold confiscated land, release satyagrahis, reinsure dismissed village officers, and reduce land tax. The success of the ‘Bardoli Satyagraha’ infused confidence in launching a nation-wide non-violent movement for independence. Hailed as the ‘Victor of Bardoli’ at the Calcutta Session of the Congress. Honoured with the title of ‘Sardar’ by the nation.

1929 Presided over the 5th Kathiawar Political Conference held at Morvi in March.

Presided over the Seventh Raniparaj Conference held at Unai in Surat District on 25 April.

Presided over the Maharashtra Political Conference held at Poona in May.

Toured Maharashtra to rouse public opinion against increased land revenue and untouchability. Organised flood relief in Gujarat. At the request of C. Rajagopalachari toured the Tamil areas of the Madras Presidency. Presided over the Tamil Nadu Political Conference at Vadamryam in August.

A Land League was established under his Presidentship to organise agitation against furrier increases on the land revenue assessment in the Bombay Presidensy.

Toured Bihar for 15 days in December and addressed four district Conference at Champaran, Sitamarhi, Gaya and Monghyr which were flocked by thousands of peasants. Exhorted the peasants to develop strength, unity and fearlessness and to fight unitedly against the unjust

zamindari system. Appealed to women to shun superstition and old customs and to break the custom of purdah.

1930 Gandhiji announced the programme of Dandi March to defy the salt law through a letter addressed to Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India on 2 March.

Prior to that Sardar toured various villages of Gujarat for preparing the masses for the coming struggle. Was arrested on 7 March at village Ras in the Borsad taluka in the first leg of his tour which was undertaken with a view to rouse the conscience of people in favour of the historic struggle that was to follow Gandhiji's Dandi March.

Imprisoned at Sabarmati Jail (7 March to 26 June). Started at insisting that he be provided with 'C' class diet like other prisoners rejecting 'A' class diet to which he was entitled. Released from jail on 26 June.

Following his arrest, Motilal Nehru, who was officiating as Congress President in absence of Jawaharlal Nehru, who was imprisoned, Sardar was nominated as the Acting President of the Congress on 30 June. Addressed a huge public meeting at Azad Maidan, Bombay, on 20 July and characterised the Governor of Bombay's address in the Legislative Council as a gross libel on India and Gujarat in particular. Arrested on 1 August while leading a procession in Bombay on the occasion of the death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Released from prison in Bombay on 5 November.

Arrested at Ahmedabad on 6 December in connection with a speech delivered at Bombay a month earlier while opening Soorji Vallabhdas Khadi Bhandar in Mandvi, Bombay, and convicted and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

For the first time in life he wrote his diary in jail from 7 March to 22 April. Accepts the Presidentship of the War Council of All India Congress Committee. Elected President of the B.B. & C.I. Railway Employees Association with a membership of 5,000 men. Government by a special ordinance declared the Congress Working Committee and its allied bodies unlawful and sealed their offices.

Sardar declared that each and every house in the country should be the office of Congress Committee and each and every person should become the Congress organisation.

1931 Released from jail on 25 January. Gandhi-Irwin Pact signed on 5 March. Explained at a public meeting at Ahmedabad on 8 March that the basis of the Pact was that India would be treated as indivisible consisting of 'British India' and 'Indian States' and responsible government would be a condition in the discussion of any future scheme. Presided over the 46th Session of the Congress held at Karachi on 29 March. Praised the patriotism, courage and sacrifices

of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. AICC Session held on 6-8 August. Sardar insisted upon the entire discussion being conducted in Hindi instead of English as earlier. While repression was let loose in the whole country, cabled to Gandhiji attending Round Table Conference in London that his further participation in the Conference was unnecessary. In Bombay, in November, the Working Committee of the Congress, under the Presidentship of Sardar Patel, accepted a resolution ensuring Fundamental Rights for Indian citizens.

- 1932 Along with Gandhiji and other members of the Congress Working Committee arrested in Bombay on 4 January. Detained at Yervada Central Prison with Gandhiji (January 1932 to May 1933). Government lets loose repression on the peasants of Gujarat in the absence of Patel (in jail). Two months after the arrest of Gandhiji and Sardar, Mahadev Desai also is arrested and joins them in the Yervada Jail. Mahadev keeps a diary of day-to-day activities of the Sardar from 11 March 1932 to 7 May 1933. Mother Ladba expired at Karamsad in November. Refused to be released on conditional parole.
- 1933 Removed to Nasik Jail on 1st August. Gandhiji released from Yervada Jail on 8 May; issued a statement expressing his joy to have stayed with Sardar Patel; praised his extraordinary courage and brilliant patriotism. Elder brother Vithalbhai died in Switzerland on 22 October; his body was brought to Bombay; refused to be released on conditional parole to be able to participate in his brother's funeral; instead asked his son Dahyabhai to perform the last rites of his deceased brother.
- 1934 On the advice of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel the Congress workers of Gujarat had collected lakhs of rupees for helping the peasants in May. Released unconditionally from the prison on 14 July on account of a nose ailment. Attended Congress session in October in Bombay. Congress decided to contest the elections to the Central Legislature. Sardar was entrusted with the task of collecting money for the purpose. His reputation of integrity and habit of thrift inspired confidence among the donors and money flowed in. Also toured several provinces to help in the election campaign. Opposed Socialists' attempt to persuade Congress to adopt their economic programme. Supported the rejection of the scheme of constitutional reforms offered by the British Government. Organised right-wing elements and rejected their proposals. Disappointed leaders like Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan left the Congress and formed the Congress Socialist Party (CSP).
- Was appointed Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board. Resigned from the Presidentship of the Gujarat Provincial Congress

Committee on 9 January. Successfully organised Plague Relief Work in Borsad and other parts of Gujarat. Presided over the Third Local Self-Government Conference held at Broach in November.

Elected Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to select party candidates for provincial elections under Government of India Act 1935. Maulana Azad and Dr Rajendra Prasad were the other members.

Attends convocation of the Gurukul Kangri, Hardwar, and the Kanya Gurukul, Dehradun, in March.

Suffered from pneumonia on 22 March; both lungs affected.

Attends Congress Session at Lucknow under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru and nominated member of the Congress Working Committee.

Took a prolonged rest with Gandhiji at Nandi Hills near Bangalore for about a month in April-May.

Accepts the Presidentship of a provincial conference of peasants in the United Provinces.

1937 Organised election campaigns for the Provincial Legislative Assemblies.

Congress Ministries were formed in several Provinces. Handled the Mysore situation and conducted negotiations with the authorities of the Mysore State for a responsible government in Mysore in May and made it clear that Congress would insist on introduction of responsible governments in Princely States.

Supervised an agitation in Rajkot State and attended the Rajkot Peoples' Conference on 3-4 September and demanded responsible government.

Held talks with the Thakore (Dewan) of Rajkot and a settlement of Rajkot problem was arrived at in December.

Involved in a controversy with Nariman, President of Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, over selection of premier for Bombay Presidency. Got elected B.G. Kher as Premier of Bombay against Nariman.

1938 As Chairman of Parliamentary Board took strong action against Dr N.B. Khare, Premier, Central Provinces for violating the Congress discipline, which culminated in his ouster as the Premier and from the Congress.

On Sardar's initiative his pledge to the valiant peasants of Gujarat to return their confiscated lands was redeemed by an Act of the Bombay Government.

Addressed a meeting of the Rajkot State Peoples' Conference in September and urged the State authorities to introduce reforms.



Became President of the Bhavnagar Session of the Kathiawar Political Conferences.

Visited Rajkot on 26 December and reached a settlement with the Thakore for the appointment of a Committee to carry out reforms in the State being demanded by the State Praja Parishad.

1939 Rebutts the accusations of the Muslim League as contained in the Pirpur Committee Report that the Congress ministries were depriving Muslims of government jobs and trying to Hinduize Muslims.

Alongwith other followers of Gandhiji, such as Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and others, supported the candidature of Pattabhi Sitaramayya against Subhas Bose for the Presidentship of the Congress.

On Subhas's re-election as Congress President resigned from the Congress Working Committee alongwith twelve other members.

Reached Bhavnagar on 14 May to preside over the Bhavnagar Prajamandal Inference. While moving in a procession in Bhavnagar, was attacked by an armed crowd of Muhammedans, when the procession reached near Nagina Masjid. Sardar had a providential escape; however two of the processionists were killed.

Congress appointed a War Sub-Committee of three including Sardar Patel in August. Warned the Provincial Congress organisations not to force a political crisis by hasty actions.

Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September. India, too, was declared to be at war with Germany without consulting its leaders.

Congress Working Committee meets at Wardha on 9-15 September; becomes a member of the Congress Sub-Committee to take decision in regard to extending help to the British in the Second World War, on 13 September. Other members of this Committee were Jawaharlal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad. Working Committee asks Britain to declare her war aims and state how they would apply to India. Gandhiji was ready to offer moral support to Britain. Sardar was of the view that "friendship between India and England is possible but only on equal terms". Congress Ministries in the Provinces were directed to resign by 31 October and they did so promptly.

1940 Patel-Bose differences over extending support to the British War efforts.

Congress Session held at Ramgarh in March. Gandhiji not in favour of embarrassing the Government in the prosecution of War.

At the Congress Working Committee Meeting in Wardha in June, Sardar expressed his views that Britain might accept and welcome the offer of active assistance of the Congress in the War. A resolution was passed at the Congress Working Committee Meeting held at Delhi

from 3-7 July demanding the unequivocal declaration by the British that complete independence was the goal for India.

Patel in favour of disciplined disobedience by carefully chosen individuals.

Britain turns down” the proposal for a National Government. Viceroy made an offer on 8 August suggesting the enlargement of the Viceroy’s Executive Council by the inclusion of Indian representatives of major political parties and the setting up of a War Council which included representatives of Indian States. Congress denounced the declaration and decided to launch Civil Disobedience Movement; Nehru and Patel chalked out details how the movement be carried out. Ruled out any likelihood of Congress looking favourably either towards office or towards the Muslim League till the Congress demand was conceded.

Arrested at Ahmedabad on 17 November under the Defence of India Act in the individual Satyagraha launched to protest against the British War aims and uphold the freedom of speech. Sent to Yervada Jail.

1941 Sardar’s intestinal trouble becomes acute; a doctor examining him suspected cancer of the rectum. In jail loses twenty pounds of weight.

Released from the Yervada Central Prison following an ailment of intestines on 20 August.

1942 Along with Gandhiji, Jawaharlal and Azad participated in talks with Sir Stafford Cripps in Delhi in March which ultimately failed. Opposed C.R.’s interpretation of self-determination as acceptance of the principle of Pakistan in April and remonstrates him.

Refused to be led in by the Japanese propaganda that they do not want to conquer any part of India. Eager to get the “Quit India” resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee held at Wardha in July in spite of Nehru’s opposition; Socialists support Patel.

Helps Yusuf Meherally to become the Mayor of Bombay.

“Quit India” resolution passed at the Bombay Session of the All India Congress Committee on 8 August.

Arrested under the Defence of India Rules on 9 August. Detained without trial along with his other Congress Working Committee members in the Ahmednagar Fort.

Mahadev Desai dies in jail on 15 August. However Sardar got the news in jail only on 28 August. He fasted for the night and did not touch the food.

1942 9 August 1942 to 15 June 1945 in jail.

1945 Released from the Prison (Yervada Jail) after 1040 days of imprisonment on 15 June. Participated in Simla talks by Indian leaders with Viceroy Lord Wavell which failed due to Jinnah’s insistence to accept Muslim representatives nominated by the Muslim League only. Convinced that

the British were sincere in their desire to quit India; was of the opinion that instead of fighting the British, the time had come to help them to roll up their bedding and depart. Labour Party forms Government in England in July. Japan surrendered on 14 August. Attlee, Prime Minister of England, announced that a Constituent Assembly would be set up to frame India's future Constitution, elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures would be held and provincial autonomy would be restored. Took over responsibility for elections to Central and Provincial Legislatures and ran the election campaign from a small room in Bombay's Congress House. In the elections Congress secured 91% of the General Seats in the Central Assembly and clear majorities in eight provinces. Serving as President of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee resigned the post and asked Kanjibhai Desai to take over. Heads a committee set up by the Congress to assist relatives of Indian National Army soldiers killed in action against the Allies. Secured G.V. Mavlankar's election as Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly in December.

- 1946 Issued call to Ministers in Congress Governments to work for eradication of untouchability. Persuaded revolting men of Royal Indian Navy to call off agitation in February as "the dawn of freedom is breaking and the sun will rise in a few months." On his advice the mutineers surrendered on 23 February. Condemned suggestion that sterling balances should be scaled down. "Sterling credit is the economic foundation of India and this country's future progress largely depends upon it." Held talks with the Cabinet Mission at Simla in May; specially invited for further talks with the members of the Cabinet Mission in Delhi on 25 June. Suggested the appointment of a tribunal to settle the dispute between the Muslim League and the Congress; asked the British Government to "hand over power either to the Congress or to the Muslim League and get out of India". Advised withdrawal of trial of leaders of Indian National Army in Delhi. Pleaded for fuller freedom to legislatures in Princely States and to Praja Mandals to select representatives to Constituent Assembly. Congress resolved to join the Viceroy's Executive Council and form the Interim Government. Elections to the Constituent Assembly held in July. Out of 296 seats, the Congress won 212, the Muslim League 73, and Independents 11. Jawaharlal Nehru invited to form an Interim Government by Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, on 12 August. Muslim League declares 16 August as the 'Direct Action Day Great Calcutta Killings; riots in Noakhali, Tipperah and other places in East Bengal and Bihar. Interim Government formed on 2 September. Sardar joins as Minister of Home Affairs and Information

and Broadcasting. Accepted the principle of state control of industry, told Central Legislative Assembly that it was not desirable to go fast on nationalisation. Five nominees of the Muslim League join the Interim Government on 26 October. Spurned Jinnah's proposal for an exchange of population. Urged Muslim League to join Constituent Assembly and abandon its Pakistan policy.

- 1947 Prime Minister Attlee announces on 20 February the transfer of power to Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. Lord Mountbatten takes over as Viceroy of India in March. Sardar disgusted with the functioning of the Muslim League members who instead of cooperating were creating hurdles in the day-to-day administration of the country; was convinced that it was impossible to work with the Muslim League and veered round to the idea to part company with the Muslim League and to accept the partition of the country, including the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Congress Working Committee endorses the views of the Sardar on partition of the country and of the two provinces of Punjab and Bengal on 8 March. To meet the challenge of the Communist-run trade union associations, Sardar set up the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUQ, a trade union body of the Congress in May. Lord Mountbatten announces on 3 June his Partition Plan of transfer of power on August 15. All India Congress Committee approves the partition resolution by 153 votes to 29 against and endorses the decision to divide Punjab and Bengal. A separate Ministry of States was formed under Sardar's charge (and V.P. Menon as Secretary) on 5 July. On the same day issues a beautifully worded, highly statesman like statement addressed to the Princes to remove all misapprehensions and misunderstandings and assured the Princes that Congress harboured neither prejudice nor enmity towards them but wished them and their subjects all happiness and prosperity. He also appealed to their sense of patriotism for the accession of their states into the Indian Union. Member Partition Council. Was in favour of the Princely States to sign the Standstill Agreement and Instrument of Accession within a short period of six weeks. Due to the tactful handling of the Princely States, almost all the states, excepting Hyderabad, Kashmir, Junagadh signed the Instrument of Accession and Standstill Agreements before 15 August. India achieves independence on 15 August. Sardar sworn in as India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs and Information and Broadcasting. Communal riots broke out throughout Punjab resulting in migration of millions of people from one Dominion to another. Visited Jalandhar on 31 August in a bid to protect and evacuate East Punjab's Muslims. Visited Lahore on 3 September, and along with Nehru discussed migration problem with the Pakistan leaders. Serious

communal riots broke out in Delhi. A local committee, with C.H. Bhabha as Chairman, was formed to work directly under Sardar and to coordinate the work of various law and order and other agencies, so as to control the situation and to bring peace. Sardar's firm and timely action brought turbulent elements under control and peace restored. Goes to Amritsar on 30 September and makes a passionate plea to the Punjabis, especially the Sikhs, for a guarantee of safe transit to Muslim refugees crossing over to Pakistan. Visited Patiala in October and appeals to the Sikhs not to dishonour their sacred swords by spilling innocent blood. Aggression of tribal invaders of Pakistan on Kashmir on 20 October. On Sardar's specific instructions, Indian forces were sent to Kashmir to clear the Pakistani raiders on 27 October. Ignored Lord Mountbatten's advice to refer the Junagadh issue to the United Nations Organisation and asked the Indian Army to handle it. Nawab and his Diwan fled to Pakistan. The process of merger of Native States commenced with the merger of Ajaygadh and other Eastern States into Orissa. Agreement signed to merge Chattisgarh and other States into Central Provinces. Against separate electorates and favoured the system of joint electorates. Sardar Patel visits Somnath Temple on 13 November and decides to reconstruct the same. Hyderabad signs the Standstill Agreement with the Government of India on 29 November. Visits Kashmir on 2 December second time to bring rapprochement between Maharaja Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdullah. Sardar against referring Kashmir issue to the United Nations.

- 1948      Speech at Calcutta Maidan on 3 January opposing the idea of India being a Hindu State. At Lucknow in his speech on 6 January warned the Indian Muslims not to ride two horses and advises them that "It is your duty now to sail in the same boat and sink or swim together", others were free to leave the country and go to Pakistan. On Patel's advice and on technical grounds, Government withholds payment of Rs. 55 crore to Pakistan as it was feared that the amount would be converted by Pakistan into sinew of war against India. Gandhiji undertakes a fast on 13 January against communal riots and to maintain harmony and peace in the country. On Gandhiji's insistence Cabinet decides to release Rs 55 crores to Pakistan. Appeals to Gandhiji to give up his fast. Gandhiji breaks fast six days after its undertaking. Sardar meets Gandhiji just one hour before he (Gandhiji) was shot dead on 30 January. In a broadcast to the nation on the same day Sardar describes it as a "day of sorrow, shame and agony for India". RSS banned in February. Sardar's health breaks down and had an attack of thrombosis in the first week of March. Tells Devdas that the heart attack was caused by the grief he had "bottled up in the heart." Sardar inaugurates the

United States of Kathiawar on 15 February. Thus began the process of the formation of Unions of Princely States. Inaugurating Rajasthan Union on 7 April said that only by coming together could smaller States save themselves from anarchy and confusion. An agreement was signed to form a Union of Gwalior, Indore and other 23 States of Central India known as Madhya Bharat on 22 April. Inauguration of Vindhya Pradesh comprising Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand in April Kutch becomes a centrally-administered State on June 1. Under the advice of the doctors moves to Dehradun for rest and returns to Delhi on 5 July. The Union of PEPSU comprising Patiala and East Punjab States was formed on 15 July. Informed Parliament that “action would be taken against Hyderabad for breach of the Standstill Agreement”. Police Action called ‘Operation Polo’ launched against Hyderabad on 13 September under the command of Major General J.N. Chaudhari following the outbreak of violence and eventual threat to the security of the country. Major El Edroos, Chief of Army Staff of the Hyderabad State, surrenders before the Indian Army on 17 September and Government of India takes control of the State the same day. Major-General J.N. Chaudhari becomes the ‘SAINIK GOVERNOR’ of Hyderabad on 18 September. Kasim Rizvi, leader of the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Musselmin and a staunch opponent of accession of Hyderabad to India, arrested on 19 September. Congratulates Defence Services on their remarkable success in the “Police Action” in Hyderabad. Awarded the Degree of Doctor of Law by the University of Nagpur on 3 November. Again awarded the Degree of Doctor of Law by the Benaras Hindu University on 25 November and by the University of Allahabad on 27 November. Was presented ‘Patel Abhinandan Granth’ at Allahabad by Pandit Gobind Ballabh Pant on 26 November. Congress session was held at Jaipur in December under the Presidentship of Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Sardar declared at the session that the Government were determined “to make India a truly secular state.” On the communal riots in Bengal and large-scale migration of Hindus from there, Sardar warned Pakistan “either to take back and resettle the refugees or cede sufficient territory, contiguous to West Bengal, to India to resettle them”.

1949 Junagadh merges with Saurashtra Union on 20 January. Had the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh arrested in February though it gave him great pain and sorrow but he felt that his policies were suicidal to the nation. The Nizam of Hyderabad receives the Sardar with Folded hands at the Begumpet Airport during the latter’s first visit to Hyderabad on 24 February. Awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Law by the Osmania University, Hyderabad, on 26 February.

Decision taken on 28 February to merge the Baroda State with the Bombay State. Announced merger of five Princely States of Bikaner, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur to form Rajasthan Union on 19 March and hailed it as a momentous development. Had providential escape on 29 March while on his way from Delhi to Jaipur by a Dove Aircraft of the RIAF which developed some mechanical defect and had to forceland in a river-bed at Shahpur near Jaipur. The whole nation heaved a sigh of relief. Was received with thundering ovation by the Members of Parliament with the shouts of “Sardar Patel Zindabad”; “Long Live Sardar Patel” on 31 March. Decision taken to form a Union of Travancore and Cochin States on 13 April. Favoured India’s continuance to be a member of the Commonwealth in spite of Nehru’s opposition in April; Mountbatten applauds Patel’s stand. Merger of Baroda State with Bombay on May 1. Nawab of Rampur signed the agreement to merge the State with Uttar Pradesh on 15 May. By the end of May the Nawab of Bhopal signed the Instrument of Accession and Bhopal became a centrally-administered State on June 1. Warns Nehru in June about the growing Communist menace in China. Differs with Nehru in December over India’s recognition of China’s new Communist regime. Went to Bombay for a six-day rest early in August. Becomes the Acting Prime Minister of India from 7 October to 15 November during Jawaharlal Nehru’s absence abroad. Opposed demand for linguistic states because consolidation of country must precede revision of boundaries. Advised South Indians to learn Hindi. Appealed for public contributions to rebuild Somnath Temple in Junagadh. Advised RSS to concentrate on regenerating Hindu Society through constitutional and constructive methods. Appealed them to join the Congress. Received an honorary degree of Doctor of Law from the Nagpur University in November.

- 1950 India becomes a Republic on 26 January 1950; Dr Rajendra Prasad takes over as the first President of the Indian Republic. Sardar wholeheartedly supported the Nehru-Liaquat Pact signed on 8 April; undertook a special tour to Bengal and stayed in Calcutta for ten days urging the people to give the Pact a fair trial.’ On 19 May visited Kanya Kumari at the extreme southern end of India and performed worship in the famous temple there. Citizens of Ahmedabad present him a purse of Rs. 15 lakhs on his 76th birthday on 31 October; donates the amount to the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee to be spent for the benefit of the people. Wrote a historic letter to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on 7 November giving prophetic warning on Chinese expansionist intentions and feared that India would now have to reckon with Communist China in the north and

north-east. On November 9, during his speech on the occasion of the death anniversary of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati in Delhi-this was his last public speech-condemned the Chinese intervention in Tibet and warned the country against the possible threat of invasion of China. On November 15, fell ill in Delhi. In spite of the best medical treatment his illness became more and more acute. On 12 December was taken to Bombay for treatment and change of climate. On Friday December 15, he breathed his last at 9.37 a.m. On December 15, Indian Parliament passed a condolence resolution. On December 15, he was cremated at Bombay Sonapur Crematorium at 7.30 p.m. in the presence of the President Dr Rajendra Prasad, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Governors and Chief Ministers of various States and other dignitaries and lakhs of mourners. His last rites were performed by his son Dahyabhai Patel. On December 20, his ashes were immersed in the holy confluence of Ganga-Yamuna-Saraswati at Prayag (Allahabad).