



National Institute of Advanced Studies

This Week in History

in collaboration with Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous)

NIAS-STIR Programme



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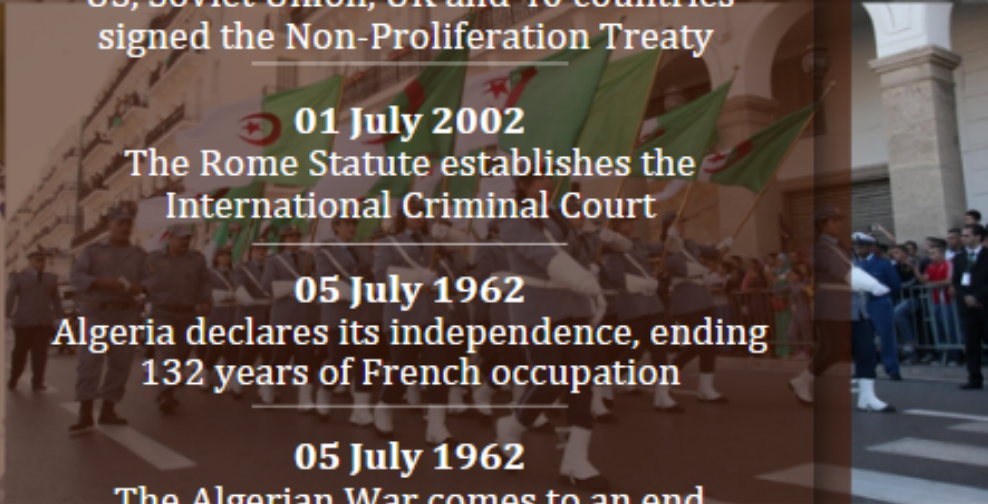
01 July 1968

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This Week in History #1 | Vol 01, No 01 | 03 July 2024



Kristu Jayanti College

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This Week In History # 01

Vol.1, No.1, 3 July 2024

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About This Week in History

This Week in History is the latest publication from NIAS Global Politics team at the Science, Technology, and International Relations (STIR) Programme at the National Institute of Advanced Studies.

The TWIH aims to examine major historical developments during the week, and their importance. It also aims to analyse the historic events in terms of their consequences/legacies, and their relevance to contemporary global politics, peace and conflict, and other relevant disciplines. We hope this will add value to two of our flagship publications - *Conflict Weekly* and *The World This Week*.

The TWIH is also a network and capacity-building initiative. It aims to build a network of academic institutions/departments teaching history. It also aims to build a network of young faculty and scholars, who will be interested in looking at history through contemporary global politics prism and vice-versa.

NIAS Global Politics join the Department of History at the Kristu Jayanti College in this initiative.

About the Department of History, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru

The Department of History, Kristu Jayanti

College [Autonomous], was established in 2006 to cultivate the historical learning, critical thinking, and research abilities of the students. The Department offers the latest in curriculum, workshops, training, field visits, projects, and experiential learning activities for the holistic development of students. The Department organises interactive programmes on themes of archaeology, culture and heritage, contemporary history, and global politics. The History Club organises quizzes, paper presentations, book reviews, and several other competitions to inspire students to reveal their talents and creativity.

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1 July 1968:

US, Soviet Union, UK and 40 countries sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty

Prajwal TV

Department of International Relations, Peace and Journalism, St Joseph's University, Bengaluru



Image Source: Britannica

The Road to NPT

On 08 December 1953, U.S President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered his acclaimed speech titled “Atoms for Peace” to the UN General Assembly meeting in New York in the initial years of the Cold-War between the United States and the Soviet Union and fears surrounding a possible use of atoms for war. His speech became the inspiration for the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1957, to promote peaceful nuclear technology.

In November 1959, Frank Aiken, Irish Minister for External Affairs initiated the Non- Proliferation Treaty discussions. NATO members saw Aiken’s proposal as undermining the NATO’s Multilateral Force concept of nuclear- sharing. It took four years for a universal consensus between nuclear and non-nuclear states which led to the Irish Resolution of 1961, the most ambitious of the three resolutions (1959, 1960 and 1961) that removed the use of terms such as “voluntary” and “temporary” requesting an international scrutiny into matters of nuclear threats and a pact between nuclear and non-nuclear states to avoid nuclear threats and escalation.

In 1961, John F. Kennedy became the US President, giving rise to the much needed political will for negotiations on concrete steps to curb the spread of nuclear weapons. The UN General Assembly unanimously approved Resolution 1665 (1961), calling for negotiations to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, the then existing nuclear states agreed not to transfer technology while the non-nuclear countries agreed to not acquire nuclear weapons. However, the disarmament question remained. For the

nuclear weapon states, more countries with nuclear weapons outside the recognised powers meant a more unstable and insecure world order, but opposition remained to disarm existing nuclear weapons. Therefore, the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee convened in 1962, co-chaired by the USA and the Soviet Union. After nine long years of deliberations and negotiations, the disarmament clause was accepted however, the time frame within which countries had to disarm themselves was left unspecified.

On 01 July 1968, the Non-Proliferation Treaty was first opened for signature with Frank Aiken on behalf of the Republic of Ireland, the critical figure who led the initiative became its first signatory alongside the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States alongside 40 states over the course of the next two years across London, Moscow and Washington.

The focus of the NPT

The NPT consists of a preamble and eleven articles, often interpreted as comprising three fundamental principles for all countries:

Non-Proliferation under Articles I and II, nuclear-weapon states pledge not to transfer nuclear weapons or assist non-nuclear-weapon states in acquiring them. The non-nuclear states agree to not pursue or develop nuclear weapons and to accept safeguards established by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify their compliance.

Disarmament under Article VI requires all countries to commit to pursuing negotiations in good faith towards nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the nuclear arms race which were carried out throughout the Cold-War

between 1945-1991.

Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy under Article IV acknowledges the right of all parties to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and encourages international cooperation in this field, provided they comply with non-proliferation obligations.

From 1968 to 2024

On 05 March 1970, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into effect, with over 40 countries ratifying the treaty along with the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom. It laid down the basic fundamental regulations governing non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy. The NPT was drafted at a time when the world faced a binary threat of destruction, fueled by the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. During that time, the superpowers struggled politically and intellectually, splitting the world into East and West, democracy and communism.

The NPT had been reviewed every five years in Review Conferences however, in 1995, the treaty was extended indefinitely by consensus during a Review Conference in New York City strengthening the commitment of the global community to the needs of the treaty's objectives. On 18 May 1974 India conducted "peaceful

nuclear explosion." The international community reacted strongly since India was not a signatory to the Treaty. India's test prompted stricter safeguards and procedures globally which led to the formation of the London Club establishing guidelines for nuclear exports and nuclear-related exports.

In response to the test conducted by India, the US introduced the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act (1978) furthering and strengthening the NPT.

As of 2024, a total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States. On the other hand, India, Israel, and Pakistan, all of whom are believed to have nuclear weapons, did not become signatories of the NPT. North Korea signed the NPT in 1985 but announced its departure in 2003 after breaking its basic agreements and conducting nuclear tests. The five major nuclear-weapon states still possess thousands of warheads collectively. Over half a century later, the NPT continues to remain in force, although, the East-West divide has changed into a multipolar world order in which non state actors pose a new security threat besides nuclear threats exacerbated by multiple conflicts around the world intertwined with the power struggle involving major powers for example Russia and Ukraine.

1 July 2002:

The Rome Statute establishes the International Criminal Court

Ronakk Tijoriwala

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Image Source: legal.un

On 01 July 2002, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established as a result of the adoption of the Rome Statute, a treaty that had been adopted by 120 countries on 17 July 1998. Created to prosecute cases that involve some of the most horrific human rights violations in the

international community, the ICC is tasked with the responsibility of prosecuting "individuals responsible for the most serious crimes under international law, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression." Also known as a "court of last resort,"

the ICC has a non-retroactive jurisdiction, and can only intervene when States are unwilling or unable to investigate perpetrators of crimes against humanity or war crimes.

From the Rome Statute to the ICC

Rome Statute can be pegged on the outcome of the Second World War and more particularly, the Nuremberg Trials which sought to punish war criminals. Such trials were general and failed to stop genocides. In subsequent conflicts for instance in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia international efforts to bring to book heinous criminals proved inadequate hence the need for a permanent international criminal tribunal. These two were the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda commonly referred to as ICTR and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, in short, ICTY and they revealed not only the need for the formulation of mechanisms of prosecution of war crimes, genocide and other mass atrocities but also the difficulties that were bound to be encountered along this course.

To meet these challenges, the International Law Commission that operates under the auspices of the United Nations was involved in the preparation of the text of the Rome Statute. The representatives from international community met in Rome to discuss and ratify the treaty intended to create a permanent court through which people could be charged for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crimes of aggression.

After 2002: Issues and Challenges for the ICC

Following are some of the major issues and challenges for the ICC since 2002.

Jurisdiction and Sovereignty Concerns

One of the major challenges, is the clash of interest between the goals of the court and the sovereignty of nations. The legal recourse of the court is confined to only those offenses committed within the territory of a state party or against a national of a state party, unless a situation is referred to by the UNSC.

Challenges of Enforcement

Due to primacy of the ICC the realization of the work of the court is heavily premised on the compliance of states in apprehension of suspects, execution of warrants, and details of evidence. This has been a big set-back especially when it comes to the arrest of fugitives as seen by Omar al-Bashir the former President of Sudan who has been staying away from the international criminal court.

Funding and Resource Constraints

The ICC is a state-funded organization, and its core finances have fluctuating budgets to face the

expenses constantly. These have adversely affected the Court's capacity to investigate, try cases, and, more importantly, assist the survivors.

Some Notable Cases and Trials

Some of the notable cases include the following: Thomas Lubanga Dyilo: Lubanga was convicted in the year 2012 for being the first individual that conscripted and enlisted children under fifteen years in Democratic Republic of the Congo. Jean-Pierre Bemba: The ex DR Congo's VP, Bemba was convicted in 2016 of crimes against humanity and war crimes by his militia in the CAR. However, this conviction was overruled in an appeal in 2018. Omar al-Bashir: The former president of Sudan together with his legal regime has been accused of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in the case of Darfur. One of the examples in this regard is that Bashir has not been extradited to the ICC even where there are international warrants of his arrest; this portrays some of the challenges of affecting some of the directives of the ICC.

What Next for the ICC?

During the last decade, the Court has stretched outside Africa looking at cases in Georgia and Afghanistan. The ICC has also been trying to improve its operations and functions, and stamps to do so are processes that have been mapped out and attempts at improving the communication system of the ICC towards affected communities.

The future of the Court depends on how it deals with the problems touching on its jurisdiction, enforcement of its decisions and the influence of politics besides embracing other challenges that characterize the changing posture on international justice. What is next depends on the ICC to consolidate on the achievements while grappling with the bloc's failures. Enhancing cooperation with other international organizations, binding more states to the ICC and making justice fairer and more impartial all over the world can be considered as the key to the accomplishment of the tasks.

The Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court opened a formal investigation into alleged Israeli forces and Hamas' crimes.

This has been quite polarizing in terms of reception, with Israel refusing to recognize ICC's authority on their territory, citing non-membership despite being associated with Palestine as a territory Palestine has welcomed the investigation as a step towards justice for what they view as war crimes committed during the conflict.

05 July 1962:

Algeria declares its independence, ending 132 years of French occupation

Deepika Seervi

Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), Bengaluru



Image Source: Al Jazeera

On 05 July 1962, after a protracted war with France that lasted around seven years, Algeria declared its independence. French rule began in 1830 after a successful invasion (1830-1848) to being a part of France. Under colonialism, the Algerian people endured prejudice, exclusion and exploitation leading towards a full-fledged movement.

In November 1954, the National Liberation Front (FLN) began a guerrilla war against France, and attacked military and civilian targets, and called on Muslims in Algeria to join a national struggle for the restoration of the Algerian state.

From an Ottoman Empire province to French Colony

Algeria was an independent province of the Ottoman Empire for more than three centuries, beginning in 1518 when the empire assisted in the overthrow of Algeria's Spanish captives. The US dispatched a navy to fight Algeria in 1815 across the Atlantic. The English and Dutch attempted to undermine Algeria's might the next year by sending a second joint fleet, but they were unable to overcome Algeria's tactical superiority. In 1830, the French invaded and successfully suppressed Algeria, capturing the capital port city of Algiers. In 1834, Algeria was annexed as a colony of France.

Under the French rule, Algerians could not leave their houses or even convene in public. French rule allowed only French citizens or other white people to hold specialized employment and positions in social institutions (from the government to the police), keeping Algerians at

the bottom of society as servants, unskilled workers, and peasants.

After the Russian Revolution, the Algerian Communist Ahmed Messali Hadj began underground struggles to build a revolutionary movement to overthrow French colonialism. By the Second World War, Ferhat Abbas, once a well-known Algerian social-democratic reformist, became a Communist and joined with Hadj to build a militant workers' party – Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty.

A group of charismatic and inspirational leaders spearheaded the independence movement, each bringing special talents and viewpoints to the cause.

- Ahmed Ben Bella, a founding member of the National Liberation Front (FLN), was instrumental in bringing the Algerian cause widespread public support and worldwide attention. Later, became the first president.
- The astute military tactician Houari Boumédiène, who planned sabotage and guerilla warfare against French forces, directed the armed wing of the FLN.
- French philosopher and revolutionary Frantz Fanon, the author of seminal works like "The Wretched of the Earth," contributed his moral and intellectual support to the Algerian struggle.
- French President Charles de Gaulle eventually awarded Algeria independence, but not before a violent and protracted conflict.

The Algerian War of Independence: Significant Milestones

The global campaign against colonialism saw a turning point during the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962). Throughout the battle, French forces carried out several atrocities, such as extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, and torture. In response, the FLN attacked French military and civilian objectives using guerilla warfare, ambushes, and urban terrorism. The UN and the global public began to denounce French activities more and more, showing support for Algeria.

Following are some key turning points in Algeria's struggle for independence.

1914–1918: During World War I, the formal independence movement commenced

1939–1945: Following World War II, the movement gained traction when France fell short of its pledge to provide Algeria with more autonomy.

1947: Laws were changed to allow Muslims to become French citizens with equal rights.

1954: The National Liberation Front (FLN) began a guerrilla war against France.

1955: The FLN carried out the Philippeville Massacre, killing 121 people—including women and children.

1956–1957: Fighters from the FLN carried out a series of brutal urban attacks during the "Battle of Algiers."

1958: Charles de Gaulle became president of

the newly established Fifth Republic in France after the collapse of the Fourth Republic. He granted Algerians the right to self-determination in 1959.

1960: Algiers and other cities hosted large-scale pro-independence demonstrations.

1962 saw the signing of the Évian Accords, which gave Algeria independence from France.

5 July 1962: Independence of Algeria

After 132 years of colonial domination, Algeria formally declared its independence from France on 5 July 1962. The eight-year independence struggle resulted in the execution of more than a million Algerian guerrillas and civilians, as well as the deaths of 100,000 French soldiers and settlers.

Ahmed Ben Bella became Algeria's first president, winning the backing of National Liberation Army chief of staff Colonel Houari Boumédiène. The FLN, Algeria's only political party, proclaimed Algeria an Arab-Islamic socialist state. Centralised economic planning, comprehensive land reforms and nationalisation of the private properties started at the same time. The revolution liberated women from their previous restrictions, granted freedom of religion to all, and acknowledged Islam and Arabic as the "essential spiritual force" (only Muslims could hold the office of president of the Republic). The president held an immense amount of influence, whereas grassroots democratic organisations were virtually non-existent. In 1963, a constitution was approved through an open referendum to achieve this goal.

05 July 1962:

The Algerian War comes to an end

Karthik Manoharan

PhD Scholar, Department of History, Loyola College, Chennai



Image Source: Middle East Monitor

On 5 July 1962, Algeria won independence from France, marking the culmination of an arduous and bloody struggle. The Algerian War, which lasted from 1954 to 1962, played a pivotal role in the broader decolonization process, shaking the foundations of European imperialism.

The Algerian War: A note on the Colonialism, FLN, War and Freedom

The context leading up to the Algerian War stretches back to 1830, when France invaded Algiers, firmly establishing colonial rule. Algeria was conquered and integrated into France, with European settlers numbering approximately one million compared to the Arabo-Berber population of nine million.

The settler community, comprising individuals from Italy, Malta, Spain, and France, faced economic hardships, leading to social insecurity, and strengthening racial and cultural prejudices. This reinforced discriminatory ideologies and perpetuated a system that marginalized the indigenous population.

The Algerian War sprouted as a response to the deep-seated racial inequality and socioeconomic disparities prevalent within colonial Algeria. The Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) emerged as the primary force leading the fight for Algerian independence, launching attacks against the French colonial regime from 1 November 1954 onwards. This struggle grew as a powerful vehicle for the Arabo-Berber population to assert their rights, reclaim their cultural identity, and seek an end to French colonial rule.

Responses from France

Withdrawal from Algeria presented daunting challenges for France. Algeria held immense strategic importance as the cornerstone of the French-ruled bloc, extending from Paris to the French Congo. This colonial presence was deemed vital for countering the influence of the Soviet Union and British and American imperialism.

Escalating violence and mounting tensions in Algeria led to the downfall of the French Fourth Republic in 1958, ultimately resulting in the return of Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle initially adopted a policy of repression and reform, attempting to quell the growing demands for Algerian independence. As the Algerian conflict

escalated, he recognised the inevitability and depth of Algerian nationalism. Additionally, the economic burdens imposed by Algeria began to outweigh any perceived strategic benefits. Acknowledging that Algeria was a drain on French resources, de Gaulle made the strategic, economic, and political decision to pursue a path toward Algerian independence.

End of the Algerian War: The Fallouts

The end of the Algerian War represented a turning point in global affairs, dramatically shaping the formal ending of European empires. The struggle for Algerian independence garnered international attention, prompting countless editorials in major publications across the globe.

Renowned media outlets, including The Times and the Daily Telegraph in Britain, The New York Times in the United States, Il Popolo in Italy, and Die Welt in West Germany, recognized the significance of the Algerian saga. The Algerian nation-state became a diplomatic reality with the global recognition of Algerian independence, followed by major powers such as the United States and Great Britain. The Algerian provisional government proclaimed 5 July as Algeria's National Independence Day, marking 132 years since the first French invasion of Algerian soil.

The Algerian War, with all its complexities and far-reaching implications, serves as an emblematic moment in the broader decolonization movement. The Algerian independence had a transformative impact on the African freedom movement. Algeria's support and solidarity with liberation movements across the continent bolstered their efforts and provided vital resources.

The Algerian National Liberation Front's methods and ideology influenced other African liberation movements, shaping their strategies and beliefs. Algeria's success accelerated the decolonisation momentum and pressured colonial powers to relinquish control. It also fostered greater Pan-African solidarity and unity, reinforcing the importance of collaboration among African nations. Algerian independence is a powerful example of resilience and determination, shaping African history and inspiring the continued fight for freedom across the continent.

5 July 1996:

Dolly becomes the first mammal to be cloned

Mayank Bharti

Department of Biotechnology and Genetics, Kristu Jayanti College, Autonomous, Bengaluru.



Image source: CBC

On 5 July 1996, Dolly, a female sheep, became the first mammal cloned from an adult somatic cell, marking a groundbreaking achievement in biotechnology. Associates in Scotland's Roslin Institute led by Keith Campbell and Ian Wilmut, used the process of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) to extract the nucleus from a mammary gland cell of an adult sheep and combine it with an enucleated egg cell from a donor ewe.

Dolly: A scientific milestone, and a new beginning

The process that brought Dolly into existence, known as somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), began with the extraction of the nucleus from a mammary gland cell of an adult sheep. This hybrid cell, now with its newly implanted nucleus, was coaxed into dividing and developing into an embryo, which was subsequently implanted into a surrogate mother. The result was Dolly, genetically identical to the sheep that donated the mammary cell nucleus. This experiment not only proved the feasibility of cloning from adult cells but also demonstrated the ability to reprogram a differentiated cell into a totipotent state, capable of developing into any type of cell.

The cloning ignited a wave of research and technological advancements in genetic engineering and biotechnology. One major achievement following Dolly was the refinement of SCNT procedures, which increased efficiency and reduced the occurrence of anomalies. Other animals were soon cloned, including cows, pigs, and even endangered species like the gaur. The principles underlying Dolly's creation also paved

the way for advancements in stem cell research, regenerative medicine, and synthetic biology.

Dr Robert Lanza of Advanced Cell Technology highlighted Dolly's impact, stating, "Dolly's cloning was the spark that ignited the stem cell revolution." The ability to reprogram somatic cells to an embryonic state laid the foundation for induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs), a discovery that earned Shinya Yamanaka a Nobel Prize in 2012.

The cloning of Dolly resonated globally, influencing scientific circles, public policy, and ethical debates. In agriculture, animal cloning offers the potential to preserve genetic lines of valuable livestock, increase food production, and ensure the propagation of animals with desirable traits. For instance, cloned cattle with higher milk yields or disease resistance could revolutionize the dairy and meat industries. Cloning technology also has significant implications for conservation biology. Cloning endangered species can help stabilize dwindling populations, providing a genetic lifeline to animals on the brink of extinction. However, the commercial cloning of pets, such as the well-known cloned cat "Cc," has created a niche market for cloning services, reflecting both technological advancements and public fascination with replication.

From Dolly to Present: Cloning's Evolution

Since Dolly, animal cloning has made substantial progress. The cloning of the first endangered species, a gaur named Noah, in 2001 was a notable achievement, despite Noah's death

shortly after birth due to an infection. More recently, in 2020, scientists successfully cloned a Przewalski's horse, an endangered wild horse species, using frozen cells. This milestone, achieved by Revive & Restore and ViaGen Pets and Equine, illustrates how cloning technology can be harnessed for conservation purposes.

Researchers are also exploring the use of gene-editing tools like CRISPR-Cas9 in conjunction with cloning to correct genetic defects and enhance traits, expanding the scope of genetic manipulation. Cloning has become invaluable in scientific research, particularly in creating animal models for human diseases, enabling precise studies on genetic disorders and potential treatments.

The benefits of animal cloning are numerous and potentially transformative. In agriculture, cloning can lead to more consistent and predictable animal production, enhancing food security and quality. Cloning animals with superior traits, such as higher milk or meat productivity, ensures a steady supply of high-quality food.

Cloning also holds promise in medicine. Genetically modified cloned animals can produce drugs in their milk, a process known as "pharming." According to the FDA, "biopharmaceuticals from transgenic animals could revolutionize treatment for a variety of conditions." Cloning also enables xenotransplantation, where organs from genetically engineered pigs are used for human

transplants, addressing the critical shortage of human organs for transplantation.

Ethical and Practical Concerns

Despite its potential, animal cloning raises significant ethical, practical, and welfare concerns. Cloning remains inefficient, with high rates of failure, developmental anomalies, and premature aging, as seen with Dolly, who developed arthritis and died at the age of six. This inefficiency raises animal welfare issues, as many cloned animals suffer health problems.

Cloning also sparks ethical debates about the extent of human intervention in natural processes and the moral status of cloned beings. Critics argue that cloning commodifies animals and threatens biodiversity by focusing on a narrow genetic pool. The commercial cloning of pets has been criticized for fostering a profit-driven industry rather than addressing necessity. Bioethicist Dr Arthur Caplan emphasizes that the ethical issues surrounding animal cloning are complex, involving animal welfare, biodiversity, and the potential consequences of "playing God."

The cloning of Dolly the sheep was a watershed moment in science, propelling it into new realms of possibility. It spurred significant advancements in biotechnology, impacting global agriculture, conservation efforts, and biomedical research, while also raising ethical debates and underscoring the need for responsible use of such technologies.

07 July 1978:

Solomon Islands gains independence from British rule

Sayeka Ghosh

Research Intern, NIAS, Bengaluru



(Image source: ABC)

On 07 July 1978, after being a British protectorate for 90 years, the Solomon Islands declared independence. The British rule began

in 1893 when the islands became a protectorate. Under colonial administration, the Solomon Islanders experienced limited self-governance

and economic development. In 1960, establishing a legislative council marked a gradual transition towards independence, with indigenous Solomon Islanders progressively gaining more representation and authority.

1893-1978: From a British Protectorate to an Independent Country

The Solomon Islands were a British protectorate for almost nine decades. The British established a legislative council in 1960, which evolved into a governing body with increasing powers. In 1970, a new constitution expanded the council's authority, and in 1973, a ministerial system of government was introduced. Constitutional talks in London in 1975 paved the way for internal self-government in 1976, with Peter Kenilorea elected as Chief Minister. Under British rule, the Solomon Islands saw limited economic development, with the economy primarily based on agriculture and fishing. The push for independence gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, influenced by decolonisation movements across the Pacific region.

Newsmakers/Who's Who

The following played an important role in the Solomon Islands becoming independent.

- Peter Kenilorea, the country's first Prime Minister, was crucial in negotiating independence terms with British authorities.
- Baddeley Devesi, appointed as the first Governor-General, represented the link between the new nation and the British Crown.
- Solomon Mamaloni contributed to the development of the country's constitution and political framework.

Significant Milestones

Solomon Islands' journey to independence was marked by several key events:

1960: In August, the legislative council was established, initiating the process of local governance. This marked the first step towards self-rule, allowing Solomon Islanders to have a say in their affairs. The council, though limited in power, provided a platform for indigenous voices in the political process.

1970: On 1 January, a new constitution was introduced, expanding the powers of the legislative council. This significant development increased local representation and decision-making authority. The constitution laid the groundwork for greater autonomy and set the stage for further political advancements.

1973: In August, a ministerial system of government was formed, further increasing local autonomy. This system allowed for the appointment of local ministers responsible for various government portfolios. It represented a crucial step towards full self-governance and prepared Solomon Islanders for leadership roles.

1975: In September, constitutional talks were held in London to finalise the terms of independence. These discussions involved British officials and Solomon Islands representatives, addressing key issues of sovereignty and governance. The talks were pivotal in shaping the future independent nation's political structure.

1976: On 2 January, internal self-government was granted, with Peter Kenilorea elected as Chief Minister. This milestone gave Solomon Islanders control over most internal affairs, with Britain retaining responsibility for defence and foreign relations. Kenilorea's election marked the emergence of local leadership in preparation for full independence.

1978: On 7 July, the Solomon Islands officially gained independence from British rule. This historic day saw the raising of the new nation's flag and the lowering of the Union Jack. Peter Kenilorea became the country's first Prime Minister, ushering in a new era of sovereignty for the Solomon Islands.

Independence and after

After nearly 90 years of British protection, the Solomon Islands formally declared independence on 7 July 1978. Unlike some other decolonisation processes in the region, the transition was peaceful.

Peter Kenilorea became the country's first Prime Minister, leading a democratically elected government. Sir Peter Kenilorea highlighted the significance of independence, stating: "Our independence marks the beginning of our journey as a sovereign nation, with all its challenges and opportunities." The new nation faced the challenge of uniting its diverse ethnic groups and developing its economy while preserving its rich cultural heritage. The Solomon Islands gained control over its vast marine resources, providing opportunities for sustainable fisheries management and marine conservation. However, the commercial exploitation of natural resources, such as logging, has created economic opportunities and environmental challenges.

Since its independence, the Solomon Islands

have made progress in various areas, including the establishment of the Solomon Islands National University in 2013 and the development of its foreign policy. In 2019, the country switched its diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, illustrating its sovereign decision-making power. However, the country has also faced significant challenges, including a civil conflict from 1998 to 2003 highlighting the complexities of nation-building in a diverse society. According to political scientist Dr Tarcisius Kabutaulaka, the challenges facing the Solomon Islands involve governance, economic development, and the potential consequences of rapid modernisation.

As the Solomon Islands continues to develop, it must balance the potential of its sovereignty with its challenges, ensuring that its future aligns with the goals and aspirations of its people. The United Nations has emphasised that: "The voice of small island developing states is crucial in addressing global challenges," underscoring the importance of the Solomon Islands' sovereignty in international forums.