

Princely state

[Colonial India](#)

British Indian Empire

Imperial entities of India

Dutch India	1605–1825
Danish India	1620–1869
French India	1668–1954

[Portuguese India](#)

(1505–1961)

Casa da Índia	1434–1833
Portuguese East India Company	1628–1633

[British India](#)

(1612–1947)

East India Company	1612–1757
Company rule in India	1757–1858
British Raj	1858–1947
British rule in Burma	1824–1948
Princely states	1721–1949
Partition of India	1947

A **princely state**, also called **native state** (legally, under the British) or **Indian state** (for those states on the subcontinent), was a nominally sovereign^[1] monarchy under a local or regional ruler in a [subsidiary alliance](#) with a greater power. Though the history of the princely states of the subcontinent dates from at least the [classical period of Indian history](#), the predominant usage of the term *princely state* specifically refers to a semi-sovereign principality on the [Indian subcontinent](#) during the [British Raj](#) that was not directly governed by the British, but rather by a local ruler, subject to a form of [indirect rule](#) on some matters; similar political entities also existed on or in the region of the [Arabian Peninsula](#), in Africa and in Malaya, and which were similarly recognised under British rule,^[2] subject to a [subsidiary alliance](#) and the [suzerainty](#) or [paramountcy](#) of the [British Crown](#). Oman, Zanzibar and the [Trucial States](#) were also under the Viceroy of India, and were administered by their rulers in the same manner as the Indian princely states, as part of the [Persian Gulf Residency](#); they were officially categorised as British [protectorates](#), with differing degrees of autonomy.

At the time of the British withdrawal, 565 princely states were officially recognised in the Indian subcontinent,^[3] apart from thousands of [zamindaris](#) and [jagirs](#). The most important states had their own British Political Residencies: [Hyderabad](#), [Mysore](#) and [Travancore](#) in the South followed by [Jammu & Kashmir](#)

Princely state

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- [British paramountcy](#)
- [Chamber of Princes](#)
- [Jagir](#)
- [Agencies of British India](#)
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- [Privy Purse](#)
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Individual residencies

- [Hyderabad](#)
- [Indore \(Holkar\)](#)
- [Jammu and Kashmir](#)
- [Mysore \(Maisur\)](#)
- [Travancore](#)
- [Sikkim](#)

Agencies

and [Sikkim](#) in the Himalayas, and [Indore](#) in Central India. Gun-salutes were often given for personal distinctions of the ruler rather than the importance of the state and varied from time to time.^[4] The most prominent among those - roughly a quarter of the total - had the status of a [salute state](#), one whose ruler was honoured by receiving a set number of [gun salutes](#) on ceremonial occasions, ranging from nine to 21. Rulers of salute states entitled to a gun salute of eleven guns and above received from the British the style of *His/Her Highness*; while the Nizam of Hyderabad had the unique style of *His Exalted Highness*.

The princely states varied greatly in status, size, and wealth; the premier 21-gun salute states of Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir were each over 200,000 km² in size, or slightly larger than the whole of [Great Britain](#). In 1941, Hyderabad had a population of over 16 million, comparable to the population of [Romania](#) at the time, while Jammu and Kashmir had a population of slightly over 4 million, comparable to that of [Switzerland](#). At the other end of the scale, the non-salute principality of [Lawa](#) covered an area of 49 km², or smaller than [Bermuda](#), with a population of just below 3,000. Some two hundred of the lesser states had an area of less than 25 km² (10 mi²).^{[5][6]} At the time of Indian independence in 1947, Hyderabad had annual revenues of over Rs. 9 [crore](#) (roughly £6.75 million/\$27.2 million in 1947 values, approximately £240 million/\$290 million in 2014 values), and its own army, [airline](#), telecommunication system, railway, postal system, currency, radio service and a major public university; the tiny state of Lawa had annual revenues of just Rs. 28,000 (£2100/\$8463 in 1947 values, £73,360/\$89,040 in 2014 values).^{[6][note 1]}

The era of the princely states effectively ended with Indian independence in 1947. By 1950, almost all of the principalities had [acceded](#) to either India or Pakistan.^[7] The accession process was largely peaceful, except in the cases of [Jammu and Kashmir](#) (whose ruler opted for independence but decided to accede to India following an invasion by Pakistan-based forces),^[8] [Hyderabad](#) (whose ruler opted for total independence in 1947, followed a year later by [the police action and annexation](#) of the state by India), [Junagadh](#) (whose ruler acceded to Pakistan, but was annexed by India).^[9] and [Kalat](#) (whose ruler opted for independence in 1947, followed in 1948 by the state's annexation).^{[10][11]}

As per the terms of accession, the erstwhile Indian princes received [privy purses](#) (government allowances), and initially retained their statuses, privileges, and autonomy in internal matters during a transitional period which lasted until 1956. During this time, the former princely states were merged into unions, each of which was headed by a former ruling prince with the title of *Rajpramukh* (ruling chief), equivalent to a state governor.^[12] In 1956, the position of *Rajpramukh* was abolished and the federations dissolved, the former principalities becoming part of Indian states. The states which acceded to Pakistan retained their status until the promulgation of a new constitution in 1956, when most became part of the province of [West Pakistan](#); a few of the former states retained their autonomy until 1969 when they were fully integrated into Pakistan. The Indian Government formally derecognised the princely families in 1971, followed by the Government of Pakistan in 1972.

History

Though principalities and chiefdoms existed on the Indian subcontinent from at least the [Iron Age](#), the history of princely states on the Indian subcontinent dates to at least the 5th-6th centuries C.E., during the rise of the [middle kingdoms of India](#) following the collapse of the [Gupta Empire](#).^{[13][14]} Many of the future ruling clan groups - notably the [Rajputs](#) - began to emerge during this period; by the 13th-14th centuries, many of the Rajput clans had firmly established semi-independent principalities in the north-west, along with several in the north-east. The widespread expansion of Islam during this time brought many principalities into tributary relations with Islamic sultanates, notably the Delhi Sultanate and [Bahmani Sultanate](#). In the south, however, the Hindu [Vijayanagara Empire](#) remained dominant until the mid-17th century; among its tributaries was the future [Mysore Kingdom](#).

The Turco-Mongol Mughal Empire brought a majority of the existing Indian kingdoms and principalities under its suzerainty by the 17th century, beginning with its foundation in the early 16th century. The advent of [Sikhism](#) resulted in the creation of the [Sikh Empire](#) in the north by the early 18th century, by which time the Mughal Empire was in full decline. At the same time, the [Marathas](#) carved out their own states to form the [Maratha Empire](#). Through the 18th century, former Mughal governors formed their own independent states. In the north-west, some of those - such as Tonk - allied themselves with various groups, including the Marathas and the [Durrani Empire](#), itself formed in 1747 from a loose agglomeration of tribal chiefdoms that composed former Mughal territories. In 1768, [Prithvi Narayan Shah](#), ruler of a small principality in [Gorkha](#) likewise established the [Kingdom of Nepal](#) from a federation of small states, expanding its influence over much of north-eastern India; in the south, the principalities of Hyderabad and Arcot were fully established by the 1760s, though they nominally remained vassals of the Mughal Emperor.

- [Bagelkhand](#)
- [Baluchistan](#)
- [Baroda and Gujarat States](#)
- [Baroda, Western India and Gujarat States](#)
- [Bhopawar](#)
- [Bundelkhand](#)
- [Central India](#)
- [Deccan States](#)
- [Eastern States](#)
- [Gilgit](#)
- [Gwalior Residency](#)
- [Jaipur Residency](#)
- [Madras States](#)
- [Mahi Kantha](#)
- [Malwa](#)
- [Mewar \(Udaipur\) Residency](#) & Western Rajputana Agency
- [North-West Frontier](#)
- [Palanpur](#)
- [Punjab States](#)
- [Rajputana](#)
- [Rewa Kantha](#)
- [Western India States](#)

Lists

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- [States by name](#)
- [Brahmin States](#)
- [Rajput States](#)
- [Maratha States](#)

British relationship with the princely states

[India under the British Raj](#) (the "Indian Empire") consisted of two types of territory: [British India](#) and the *Native states* or *Princely states*. In its [Interpretation Act 1889](#), the [British Parliament](#) adopted the following definitions:

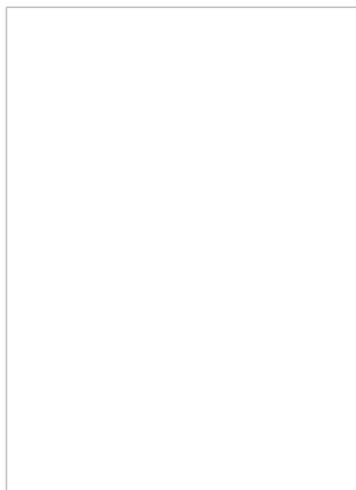
(4.) The expression "British India" shall mean all territories and places within Her Majesty's dominions which are for the time being governed by Her Majesty through the Governor-General of India or through any governor or other officer subordinate to the Governor-General of India.

(5.) The expression "India" shall mean British India together with any territories of any native prince or chief under the suzerainty of Her Majesty exercised through the Governor-General of India, or through any governor or other officer subordinate to the Governor-General of India.^[15]

In general the term "[British India](#)" had been used (and is still used) also to refer to the regions under [the rule of the East India Company](#) in India from 1774 to 1858.^{[16][17]} The term has also been used to refer to the "British in India".

The [British Crown's](#) suzerainty over 175 princely states, generally the largest and most important, was exercised in the name of the British Crown by the central government of British India under the Viceroy; the remaining approximately 400 states were influenced by Agents answerable to the provincial governments of British India under a Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, or Chief Commissioner.^[18] A clear distinction between "dominion" and "suzerainty" was supplied by the jurisdiction of the courts of law: the law of British India rested upon the legislation enacted by the British Parliament, and the legislative powers those laws vested in the various governments of British India, both central and local; in contrast, the courts of the princely states existed under the authority of the respective rulers of those states.^[18]

Princely status and titles



[His Highness Sayajirao Gaekwad III Sena Khas Khe Shamsheer Bahadur GCSI, GCIE, KIH \(21-gun salute\) – the Maratha Maharaja of Baroda](#)

The Indian rulers bore various titles – including [Chhatrapati](#) (exclusively used by the 3 [Bhonsle](#) dynasty of the [Marathas](#)) or Badshah ("emperor"), [Maharaja](#) or [Raja](#) ("king"), [Sultan](#), [Raje](#), [Nizam](#), [Wadiyar](#) (by the Maharajas of [Mysore](#)), Agniraj Maharaj for the rulers of [Bhaddaiyan Raj](#), [Nawab](#) ("governor"), Nayak, [Wāli](#), [Inamdar](#),^[19] [Saranjamdar](#)^[20] and many others. Whatever the literal meaning and traditional prestige of the ruler's actual title, the British government translated them all as "prince," to avoid the implication that the native rulers could be "kings" with status equal to that of the British monarch.

More prestigious Hindu rulers (mostly existing before the Mughal Empire, or having split from such old states) often used the title "[Raja](#)," [Raje](#)" or a variant such as "Rana," "Rao," "Rawat" or [Rawal](#). Also in this 'class' were several [Thakurs or Thakores](#) and a few particular titles, such as [Sardar](#), [Mankari](#) (or Mānkari/Maankari), [Deshmukh](#), Sar Desai, Raja Inamdar, [Saranjamdar](#).

The most prestigious Hindu rulers usually had the prefix "maha" ("great", compare for example Grand duke) in their titles, as in *Maharaja*, *Maharana*, *Maharao*, etc. The states of [Travancore](#) and [Cochin](#) had [queens regnant](#) styled [Maharani](#), generally the female forms applied only to sisters, spouses and widows, who could however act as [regents](#).

There were also compound titles, such as (Maha)rajadhiraj, Raj-i-rajan, often relics from an elaborate system of hierarchical titles under the [Mughal emperors](#). For example, the addition of the adjective *Bahadur* raised the status of the titleholder one level.

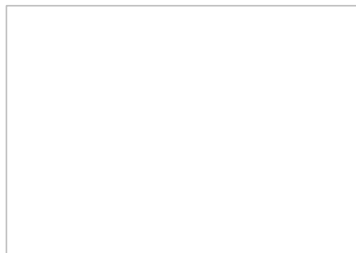
Furthermore, most dynasties Raj a variety of additional titles, such as [Varma](#) in South India. This should not be confused with various titles and suffixes not specific to princes but used by entire (sub)castes.

The **Sikh princes** concentrated at [Punjab](#) usually adopted Hindu type titles when attaining princely rank; at a lower level [Sardar](#) was used.

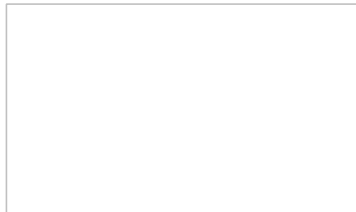
Muslim rulers almost all used the title "[Nawab](#)" (the Arabic honorific of *naib*, "deputy," used of the Mughal governors, who became de facto autonomous with the decline of the Mughal Empire), with the prominent exceptions of the [Nizam of Hyderabad & Berar](#), the [Wāli/Khan of Kalat](#) and the [Wāli of Swat](#). Other less usual titles included [Darbar Sahib](#), [Dewan](#), [Jam](#), [Mehtar](#) (unique to [Chitral](#)) and [Mir](#) (from [Emir](#)).

Precedence and prestige

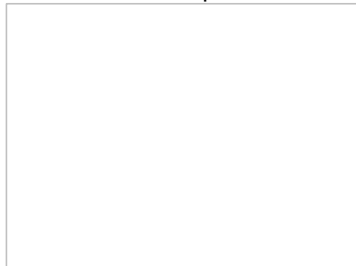
However, the actual importance of a princely state cannot be read from the title of its ruler, which was usually *granted* (or at least recognised) as a favour, often in recognition for loyalty and services rendered to the [Mughal Empire](#). Although some titles were raised once or even repeatedly, there was no automatic updating when a state gained or lost real power. In fact, princely titles were even awarded to holders of domains (mainly [jagirs](#)) and even [zamindars](#) (tax collectors), which were not states at all. Various sources give significantly different numbers of states and domains of the various types. Even in general, the definition of titles and domains are clearly not well-established.



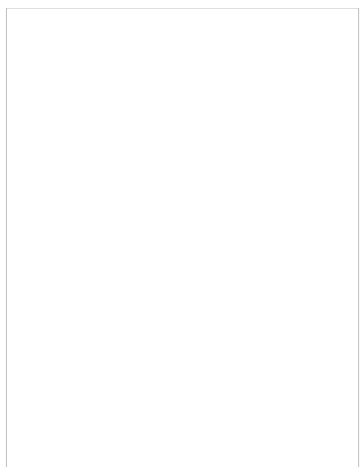
An 1895 group photograph of the eleven-year-old [Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV](#), ruler of the [princely state of Mysore](#) in [South India](#), with his brothers and sisters. In 1799, his grandfather, then aged five, had been granted dominion of Mysore by the British and forced into a [subsidiary alliance](#). The British later directly governed the state between 1831 and 1881.



The Govindgarh Palace of the Maharaja of [Rewa](#). The palace which was built as a hunting lodge later became famous for the first [white tigers](#) that were found in the adjacent jungle and raised in the palace zoo.



The [Nawab of Junagadh](#) Bahadur Khan III (seated centre in an ornate chair) shown in an 1885 photograph with state officials and family.



Photograph (1900) of the Maharani of [Sikkim](#). Sikkim was under the [suzerainty](#) of the Provincial government of Bengal; its ruler received a 15-gun salute.

In addition to their titles all princely rulers were eligible to be appointed to certain British orders of chivalry associated with India, the [Most Exalted Order of the Star of India](#) and the [Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire](#). Women could be appointed as "Knights" (instead of Dames) of these orders. Rulers entitled to 21-gun and 19-gun salutes were normally appointed to the highest rank, Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India.

Many Indian princes served in the [British Army](#), the [Indian Army](#), or in local guard or police forces, often rising to high ranks; some even served while on the throne. Many of these were appointed as an [Aide de camp](#), either to the ruling prince of their own house (in the case of relatives of such rulers) or indeed to the British King-Emperor. Many saw [active service](#), both on the subcontinent and on other fronts, during both World Wars.

Apart from those members of the princely houses who entered military service and who distinguished themselves, a good number of princes received honorary ranks as officers in the British and Indian Armed Forces. Those ranks were conferred based on several factors, including their heritage, lineage, gun-salute (or lack of one) as well as personal character or martial traditions. After the First and Second World Wars, the princely rulers of several of the major states, including Gwalior, [Patiala](#), [Bikaner](#), [Jaipur](#), [Jodhpur](#), [Jammu and Kashmir](#) and Hyderabad, were given honorary general officer ranks as a result of their states' contributions to the war effort.

- Lieutenant/Captain/Flight Lieutenant or Lieutenant-Commander/Major/Squadron Leader (for junior members of princely houses or for minor princes)
- Commander/Lieutenant-Colonel/Wing Commander or Captain/Colonel/Group Captain (granted to princes of salute states, often to those entitled to 15-guns or more)
- Commodore/Brigadier/Air Commodore (conferred upon princes of salute states entitled to gun salutes of 15-guns or more)
- Major-General/Air Vice-Marshal (conferred upon princes of salute states entitled to 15-guns or more; conferred upon rulers of the major princely states, including Baroda, [Kapurthala](#), Travancore, [Bhopal](#) and [Mysore](#))
- Lieutenant-General (conferred upon the rulers of the largest and most prominent princely houses after the First and Second World Wars for their states' contributions to the war effort.)
- General (very rarely awarded; the Maharajas of Gwalior and Jammu & Kashmir were created honorary Generals in the British Army in 1877, the Maharaja of Bikaner was made one in 1937, and the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1941)^[21]

It was also not unusual for members of princely houses to be appointed to various colonial offices, often far from their native state, or to enter the diplomatic corps.

Salute states

Main article: [Salute state](#)

The [gun salute](#) system was used to set unambiguously the precedence of the major rulers in the area in which the British East India Company was active, or generally of the states and their dynasties. As heads of a state, certain princely rulers were entitled to be saluted by the firing of an odd number of guns between three and 21, with a greater number of guns indicating greater prestige. Generally, the number of guns remained the same for all successive rulers of a particular state, but individual princes were sometimes granted additional guns on a personal basis. Furthermore, rulers were sometimes granted additional gun salutes within their own territories only, constituting a semi-promotion. The states of all these rulers (about 120) were known as [salute states](#).

After [Indian Independence](#), the Maharana of [Udaipur](#) displaced the [Nizam](#) of Hyderabad as the most senior prince in India, because [Hyderabad State](#) had not acceded to the new [Dominion of India](#), and the style *Highness* was extended to all rulers

entitled to 9-gun salutes. When the princely states had been integrated into the [Indian Union](#) their rulers were promised continued privileges and an income (known as the [Privy Purse](#)) for their upkeep. Subsequently, when the Indian government abolished the Privy Purse in 1971, the whole princely order ceased to be recognised under Indian law, although many families continue to retain their social prestige informally; some descendants of the rulers are still prominent in regional or national politics, diplomacy, business and high society.

At the time of Indian independence, only five rulers – the Nizam of [Hyderabad](#), the Maharaja of [Mysore](#), the Maharaja of [Jammu and Kashmir state](#), the Maharaja [Gaekwad](#) of [Baroda](#) and the Maharaja [Scindia](#) of [Gwalior](#) – were entitled to a 21-gun salute. Five more – the Nawab of [Bhopal](#), the [Maharaja Holkar](#) of [Indore](#), the Maharana of [Udaipur](#), the Maharaja of [Kohapur](#) and the Maharaja of [Travancore](#) – were entitled to 19-gun salutes. The most senior princely ruler was the Nizam of Hyderabad, who was entitled to the unique style *Exalted Highness*. Other princely rulers entitled to salutes of 11 guns (soon 9 guns too) or more were entitled to the style *Highness*. No special style was used by rulers entitled to lesser gun salutes.

As *paramount ruler*, and successor to the Mughals, the British [King-Emperor](#) of India, for whom the style of [Majesty](#) was reserved, was entitled to an 'imperial' 101-gun salute—in the European tradition also the number of guns fired to announce the birth of an heir (male) to the throne.

Non salute states

There was no strict correlation between the levels of the titles and the classes of gun salutes, the real measure of precedence, but merely a growing percentage of higher titles in classes with more guns. As a rule the majority of gun-salute princes had at least nine, with numbers below that usually the prerogative of Arab Sheikhs of the [Aden protectorate](#), also under British protection.

There were many so-called non-salute states of lower prestige. Since the total of salute states was 117 and there were more than 500 princely states, most rulers were not entitled to any gun salute. Not all of these were minor rulers -- [Surguja State](#), for example, was both larger and more populous than [Karauli State](#), but the Maharaja of Karauli was entitled to a 17-gun salute and the Maharaja of Surguja was not entitled to any gun salute at all.

A number of princes, in the broadest sense of the term, were not even acknowledged as such. On the other hand, the dynasties of certain defunct states were allowed to keep their princely status – they were known as [political pensioners](#), such as the Nawab of [Oudh](#). There were also certain estates of British India which were rendered as [political saranjams](#), having equal princely status.^[22] Though none of these princes were awarded gun salutes, princely titles in this category were recognised as a form of [vassals](#) of salute states, and were not even in direct relation with the paramount power.

Doctrine of lapse

Main article: [Doctrine of lapse](#)

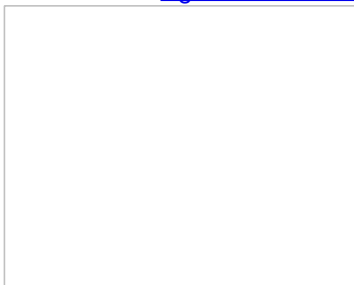
A controversial aspect of East India Company rule was the [doctrine of lapse](#), a policy under which lands whose feudal ruler died (or otherwise became unfit to rule) without a male biological heir (as opposed to an adopted son) would become directly controlled by the Company and an adopted son would not become the ruler of the princely state. This policy went counter to Indian tradition where, unlike Europe, it was far more the accepted norm for a ruler to appoint his own heir.

The doctrine of lapse was pursued most vigorously by the Governor-General [Sir James Ramsay](#), 10th Earl (later 1st Marquess) of [Dalhousie](#). Dalhousie annexed seven states, including [Awadh](#) (Oudh), whose Nawabs he had accused of misrule, and the [Maratha](#) states of [Nagpur](#), [Jhansi](#) and Satara and [Sambalpur](#) and [Thanjavur](#). Resentment over the annexation of these states turned to indignation when the heirlooms of the Maharajas of Nagpur were auctioned off in Calcutta. Dalhousie's actions contributed to the rising discontent amongst the upper castes which played a large part in the outbreak of the [Indian mutiny of 1857](#). The last Mughal Badshah (emperor), whom many of the mutineers saw as a figurehead to rally around, was deposed following its suppression.

In response to the unpopularity of the doctrine, it was discontinued with the end of Company rule and the [British Parliament](#)'s assumption of direct power over India.

Imperial governance

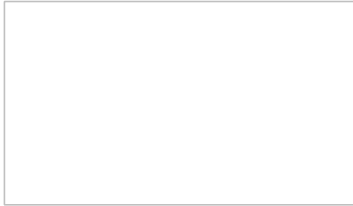
Main articles: [Agencies of British India](#) and [Residencies of British India](#)



Photograph (1894) of the 19-year-old [Shahaji II Bhonsle](#) Maharajah of [Kolhapur](#) visiting the British resident and his staff at the Residency

By treaty, the British controlled the external affairs of the princely states absolutely. As the states were not British possessions, they retained control over their own internal affairs, subject to a degree of British influence which in many states was substantial.

By the beginning of the 20th century, relations between the British and the four largest states –[Hyderabad](#), [Mysore](#), Jammu and Kashmir, and [Baroda](#) – were directly under the control of the [Governor-General of India](#), in the person of a British [Resident](#). Two agencies, for [Rajputana](#) and [Central India](#), oversaw twenty and 148 princely states respectively. The remaining princely states had their own British political officers, or Agents, who answered to the administrators of India's provinces. The Agents of five princely states were then under the authority of [Madras](#), 354 under [Bombay](#), 26 of [Bengal](#), two under [Assam](#), 34 under [Punjab](#), fifteen under [Central Provinces and Berar](#) and two under [United Provinces](#).



Chamber of Princes meeting in March 1941

The [Chamber of Princes](#) (*Narender Mandal* or *Narendra Manda*) was an institution established in 1920 by a [Royal Proclamation](#) of the [King-Emperor](#) to provide a forum in which the rulers could voice their needs and aspirations to the government. It survived until the end of the [British Raj](#) in 1947.^[23]

By the early 1930s, most of the princely states whose Agencies were under the authority of India's provinces were organised into new Agencies, answerable directly to the Governor-general, on the model of the Central India and Rajputana agencies: the [Eastern States Agency](#), [Punjab States Agency](#), [Baluchistan Agency](#), [Deccan States Agency](#), [Madras States Agency](#) and the [Northwest Frontier States Agency](#). The [Baroda Residency](#) was combined with the princely states of northern Bombay Presidency into the [Baroda, Western India and Gujarat States Agency](#). [Gwalior](#) was separated from the Central India Agency and given its own Resident, and the states of [Rampur](#) and [Benares](#), formerly with Agents under the authority of the United Provinces, were placed under the [Gwalior Residency](#) in 1936. The princely states of [Sandur](#) and [Banganapalle](#) in Mysore Presidency were transferred to the agency of the Mysore Resident in 1939.

Principal princely states in 1947

The native states in 1947 included five large states that were in "direct political relations" with the Government of India. For the complete list of princely states in 1947, see [List of princely states of India](#).

In direct relations with the Central Government

Five large Princely states in direct political relations with the Central Government in India^{[24][25][26][27]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Baroda	13,866	3,343,477 (chiefly Hindu)	323.26	<i>Maharaja</i> , Maratha , Hindu	21	Resident at Baroda
Hyderabad	82,698	16,338,534 (mostly Hindu with a sizeable Muslim minority)	1582.43	<i>Nizam</i> , Turkic , Sunni Muslim	21	Resident in Hyderabad
Jammu and Kashmir	84,471	4,021,616 including Gilgit, Baltistan (Skardu), Ladakh, and Punch (mostly Muslim, with sizeable Hindu and Buddhist populations)	463.95	<i>Maharaja</i> , Dogra , Hindu	21	Resident in Jammu & Kashmir

Mysore	29,458	7,328,896 (chiefly Hindu)	1001.38	<i>Maharaja, Kannadiga, Hindu</i>	21	Resident in Mysore
Gwalior	26,397	4,006,159 (chiefly Hindu)	356.75	<i>Maharaja, Maratha, Hindu</i>	21	Resident at Gwalior
Total	236,890	35,038,682	3727.77			

[Central India Agency](#), [Gwalior Residency](#), [Baluchistan Agency](#), [Rajputana Agency](#), [Eastern States Agency](#)

Please expand to view the tables for the Agencies under the Central government

88 Princely states forming the Central India Agency^{[28][29]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Indore State	9,341	1,513,966 (mainly Hindu)	304.9	<i>Maharaja, Maratha, Hindu</i>	19 (plus 2 local)	Resident at Indore
Bhopal	6,924	785,322 (mostly Hindu)	119.82	<i>Nawab(m)/Begum(f), Afghan, Muslim</i>	19 (plus 2 local)	Political Agent in Bhopal
Rewah	13,000	1,820,445 (chiefly Hindu)	65	<i>Maharaja, Baghel Rajput, Hindu</i>	17	Political agent in Baghelkhand
85 smaller and minor states (1941)	22,995 (1901)	2.74 million (Chiefly Hindu, 1901)	129 (1901)			
Total	77,395 (1901)	8.51 million (1901)	421 (1901)			

42 Princely states forming the Eastern States Agency^{[28][30]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Cooch Behar	1,318	639,898 (chiefly Hindu and Muslim)	91	<i>Maharaja, Kshattriya, Brahmo</i>	13	Resident for the Eastern States
Tripura State	4,116	513,010 (chiefly Hindu)	54	<i>Maharaja, Kshattriya, Hindu</i>	13	Resident for the Eastern States
Mayurbhanj State	4,243	990,977 (chiefly Hindu)	49	<i>Maharaja, Kshattriya, Hindu</i>	9	Resident for the Eastern States
39 smaller and minor states (1941)	56,253	6,641,991	241.31			
Total	65,930	8,785,876	435.31			

[Gwalior Residency](#) (2 states)

Two states under the suzerainty of the Resident at Gwalior, Gwalior having direct relations with the central government.^{[24][31]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer

Rampur	893	464,919 (chiefly Hindu and Muslim , in 1931)	51	Nawab, Pathan , Muslim	15	Political Agent at Rampur
Benares State	875	391,165 (chiefly Hindu, 1931)	19	Maharaja, Bhumihaar , Hindu	13 (plus 2 local)	Political Agent at Benares
Total	1,768	856,084 (1941, approx.)	70			

23 Princely states forming the [Rajputana Agency](#), with the Resident for Rajputana at Abu ^{[32][33]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Udaipur (Mewar)	13,170	1,926,698 (chiefly Hindu and Bhil)	107	Maharana, Sisodia Rajput , Hindu	19 (plus 2 personal)	Political Agent for the Mewar and Southern Rajputana States
Jaipur	15,610	3,040,876 (chiefly Hindu)	188.6	Maharaja, Kachwaha Rajput , Hindu	17 (plus 2 personal)	Political Agent at Jaipur
Jodhpur (Marwar)	36,120	2,555,904 (chiefly Hindu)	208.65	Maharaja, Rathor Rajput , Hindu	17	Political Agent for the Western States of Rajputana
Bikaner	23,181	1,292,938 (chiefly Hindu)	185.5	Maharaja, Rathor Rajput , Hindu	17	Political agent for the Western States of Rajputana
17 salute states, 1 chiefship, 1 zamindari	42,374	3.64 million (chiefly Hindu, 1901)	155 (1901)			
Total	128,918 (1901)	9.84 million (1901)	320 (1901)			

3 Princely states forming the Baluchistan Agency ^{[34][35]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Kalat	73,278	250,211 (chiefly Sunni Muslim)	21.3	<i>Khan or Wali</i> , Brahui , Sunni Muslim	19	Political Agent in Kalat
Las Bela	7,132	68,972 (chiefly Sunni Muslim)	6.1	<i>Jam</i> , Kureshi Arab, Sunni Muslim		Political Agent in Kalat
Kharan	14,210	33,763 (chiefly Sunni Muslim)	2	<i>Nawab</i> , Sunni Muslim		Political Agent in Kalat
Total	94,620	352,946	29.4			

Sikkim, as a Protectorate of the British Government ^[36]

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Sikkim	2,818	121,520 (chiefly Buddhist and Hindu)	5	<i>Maharaja</i> , Tibetan, Buddhist	15	Political Officer, Sikkim

Other states under provincial governments

Please expand to view the tables for other states under Provincial Governments

[Madras](#) (5 States)

5 States under the suzerainty of the Provincial Government of [Madras](#)^[34]

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1901	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand) Rupees	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Travancore	7,091	2,952,157 (chiefly Hindu and Christian)	100	Maharaja, Kshatriya-Samanthan , Hindu	21 (including two guns personal to the then ruler)	Resident in Travancore and Cochin
Cochin	1,362	812,025 (chiefly Hindu and Christian)	27	Raja, Samanta-Kshatriya , Hindu	17	Resident in Travancore and Cochin
Padukkottai	1,100	380,440 (chiefly Hindu)	11	Raja, Kallar , Hindu	11	Collector of Trichinopoly (ex officio Political Agent)
2 minor states (Banganapalle and Sandur)	416	43,464	3			
Total	9,969	4,188,086	141			

[Bombay](#) (354 States)

354 states under the suzerainty of the Provincial Government of [Bombay](#)^[37]

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1901	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand) Rupees	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Kolhapur	2,855	910,011 (chiefly Hindus)	48	Maharaja, Kshatriya , Hindu	19	Political Agent for Kolhapur
Cutch	7,616	488,022 (chiefly Hindu)	20	Maharao, Jadeja Rajput , Hindu	17	Political Agent in Cutch
Junagarh	3,284	395,428 (chiefly Hindu)	27	Nawab, Pathan , Muslim	11	Agent to the Governor in Kathiawar
Navanagar	3,791	336,779 (chiefly Hindu)	31	Jam Sahib, Jadeja Rajput , Hindu	11	Agent to the Governor in Kathiawar
349 other states	42,165	4,579,095	281			
Total	65,761	6,908,648	420			

[Central Provinces](#) (15 States)

15 States under the suzerainty of the Provincial Government of the [Central Provinces](#)^[38]

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1901	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand) Rupees	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Kalahandi	3,745	284,465 (chiefly Hindu)	4	Raja, Rajput, Hindu	9	Political Agent for the Chhattisgarh Feudatories
Bastar	13,062	306,501 (chiefly Animist)	3	Raja , Kshatriya, Hindu		Political Agent for the Chhattisgarh Feudatories

13 other states	12,628	1,339,353 (chiefly Hindu)	16		11	
Total	29,435	1,996,383	21			

[Punjab](#) (45 States)

45 states under the suzerainty of the Provincial Government of the [Punjab](#)^{[39][40]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the State (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Bahawalpur	16,434	1,341,209 (chiefly Muslim)	335	Nawab, Daudputra , Muslim	17	Political Agent for Phulkian States and Bahawalpur
Patiala	5,942	1,936,259 (chiefly Hindu and Sikh)	302.6	Maharaja , Sidhu Jat, Sikh	17 (and 2 personal)	Political Agent for Phulkian States and Bahawalpur
Nabha	947	340,044 (chiefly Hindu and Sikh)	38.7	Maharaja , Sidhu Jat, Sikh	13 (and 2 local)	Political Agent for Phulkian States and Bahawalpur
Jind	1,299	361,812 (chiefly Hindu and Sikh)	37.4	Maharaja , Sidhu Jat, Sikh	13 (and 2 personal)	Political Agent for Phulkian States and Bahawalpur
Kapurthala	645	378,380 (chiefly Muslim and Hindu)	40.5	<i>Maharaja</i> , Ahluwalia Kolal, Sikh	13 (and 2 personal)	Commissioner of the Jullundur Division (<i>ex officio</i> Political Agent)
Faridkot	638	199,283 (Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim)	22.7	<i>Raja</i> , Barar Jat, Sikh	11	Commissioner of the Jullundur Division (<i>ex officio</i> Political Agent)
Tehri (Garhwal)	4,500	397,369 (chiefly Hindu)	26.9	Maharaja, Rajput Hindu	11	Commissioner of Kumaun (<i>ex officio</i> Political Agent)
Khairpur	6,050	305,387 (chiefly Muslim)	15 (plus 2 local)	Mir, Talpur Baloch , Muslim	37.8	Political Agent for Khairpur
25 other states	12,661 (in 1901)	1,087,614 (in 1901)	30 (in 1901)			
Total	36,532 (in 1901)	4,424,398 (in 1901)	155 (in 1901)			

[Assam](#) (26 states)

26 States under the suzerainty of the Provincial Government of [Assam](#)^{[41][42]}

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1941	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Manipur	8,638	512,069 (chiefly Hindu and Animist)	19	Raja, Kshatriya , Hindu	11	Political Agent in Manipur
25 Khasi States	3,778	213,586 (Khasi and Christian)	~1 (1941, approx.)			Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills
Total	12,416	725,655	20 (1941; approx.)			

Burma

See also: [Shan States](#) and [Wa States](#)

[Burma](#) (52 states)

52 States in [Burma](#): all except [Kantarawadi](#), one of the [Karenni States](#), were included in British India until 1937.^[43]

Name of Princely state	Area in square miles	Population in 1901	Approximate revenue of the state (in hundred thousand Rupees)	Title, ethnicity, and religion of ruler	Gun-Salute for ruler	Designation of local political officer
Hsipaw (Thibaw)	5,086	105,000 (Buddhist)	3	<i>Sawbwa</i> , Shan , Buddhist	9	Superintendent, Northern Shan States
Kengtung	12,000	190,000 (Buddhist)	1	<i>Sawbwa</i> , Shan, Buddhist	9	Superintendent Southern Shan States
Yawnghwe	865	95,339 (Buddhist)	2.13	<i>Sawbwa</i> , Shan, Buddhist	9	Superintendent Southern Shan States
Mongnai	2,717	44,000 (Buddhist)	0.5	<i>Sawbwa</i> , Shan, Buddhist		Superintendent Southern Shan States
5 Karenni States	3,130	45,795 (Buddhist and Animist)	0,035	<i>Sawbwa</i> , Red Karen , Buddhist		Superintendent Southern Shan States
44 Other States	42,198	792,152 (Buddhist and Animist)	8.5			
Total	67,011	1,177,987	13.5			

State military forces

See article: [Indian State Forces](#)

The armies of the [Native States](#) were bound by many restrictions that were imposed by [subsidiary alliances](#). They existed mainly for ceremonial use and for internal policing. According to the [Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. IV 1907](#), p. 85,

Since a chief can neither attack his neighbour nor fall out with a foreign nation, it follows that he needs no military establishment which is not required either for police purposes or personal display, or for cooperation with the Imperial Government. The treaty made with Gwalior in 1844, and the instrument of transfer given to Mysore in 1881, alike base the restriction of the forces of the State upon the broad ground of protection. The former explained in detail that unnecessary armies were embarrassing to the State itself and the cause of disquietude to others: a few months later a striking proof of this was afforded by the army of the Sikh kingdom of Lahore. The British Government has undertaken to protect the dominions of the Native princes from invasion and even from rebellion within: its army is organised for the defence not merely of [British India](#), but of all the possessions under the [suzerainty](#) of the King-Emperor.^[44]

In addition, other restrictions were imposed:

The treaties with most of the larger [States](#) are clear on this point. Posts in the interior must not be fortified, factories for the production of guns and ammunition must not be constructed, nor may the subject of other States be enlisted in the local forces. ... They must allow the forces that defend them to obtain local supplies, to occupy cantonments or positions, and to arrest deserters; and in addition to these services they must recognise the [Imperial](#) control of the railways, telegraphs, and postal communications as essential not only to the common welfare but to the common defence.^[45]

The troops were routinely inspected by British army officers and generally had the same equipment as soldiers in the Indian Army.^[46] Although their numbers were relatively small, the Imperial Service Troops were employed in China and [British Somaliland](#) in the first decade of the 20th century, and later saw action in the [First World War](#) and [Second World War](#).^[46]

Political integration of princely states in 1947 and after

India

At the time of [Indian independence](#), [India](#) was divided into two sets of territories, the first being the territories of [British India](#)," which were under the direct control of the [India Office](#) in London and the [Governor-General of India](#), and the second being the "[Princely states](#)," the territories over which [the Crown](#) had [suzerainty](#), but which were under the control of their hereditary rulers. In addition, there were several colonial enclaves controlled by France and [Portugal](#). The integration of these territories into [Dominion of India](#), that had been created by the Indian Independence Act 1947 by the British parliament, was a declared objective of the [Indian National Congress](#), which the [Government of India](#) pursued over the years 1947 to 1949. Through a combination of tactics, [Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel](#) and [V. P. Menon](#) in the months immediately preceding and following the independence convinced the rulers of almost all of the hundreds of [princely states](#) to accede to India. In a speech in January 1948, Vallabhbhai Patel said:

As you are all aware, on the lapse of Paramountcy every Indian State became a separate independent entity and our first task of consolidating about 550 States was on the basis of accession to the Indian Dominion on three subjects. Barring Hyderabad and Junagadh all the states which are contiguous to India acceded to Indian Dominion. Subsequently, Kashmir also came in... Some Rulers who were quick to read the writing on the wall, gave responsible government to their people; Cochin being the most illustrious example. In Travancore, there was a short struggle, but there, too, the Ruler soon recognised the aspiration of his people and agreed to introduce a constitution in which all powers would be transferred to the people and he would function as a constitutional Ruler.^[47]

Although this process successfully integrated the vast majority of princely states into India, it was not as successful in relation to a few states, notably the former princely state of [Kashmir](#), whose Maharaja delayed signing the instrument of accession into India until his territories were under the threat of invasion by Pakistan, the state of [Hyderabad](#), whose ruler decided to remain independent and was subsequently defeated by the [Operation Polo](#) invasion, and the states of [Tripura](#) and [Manipur](#), whose rulers agreed to accession only in late 1949, after the Indian conquest of Hyderabad.

Having secured their accession, Sardar Patel and V. P. Menon then proceeded, in a step-by-step process, to secure and extend the central government's authority over these states and to transform their administrations until, by 1956, there was little difference between the territories that had formerly been part of British India and those that had been princely states. Simultaneously, the Government of India, through a combination of diplomatic and military means, acquired control over the remaining European colonial enclaves, such as [Goa](#), which were also integrated into India.

As the final step, in 1971, the 26th amendment^[48] to the [Constitution of India](#) withdrew official recognition of all official symbols of princely India, including titles and privileges, and abolished the remuneration of the princes by [privy purses](#). As a result, even titular heads of the former princely states ceased to exist.^[49]

Pakistan

During the period of the [British Raj](#), there were four princely states in Balochistan: [Makran](#), [Kharan](#), [Las Bela](#) and [Kalat](#). The first three acceded to Pakistan.^{[50][51][52][53]} However, the ruler of the fourth princely state, the [Khan of Kalat Ahmad Yar Khan](#), declared Kalat's independence as this was one of the options given to all princely states.^[54] The state remained independent until it was acceded on 27 March 1948. The signing of the Instrument of Accession by Ahmad Yar Khan, led his brother, [Prince Abdul Karim](#), to revolt against his brother's decision in July 1948, causing an [ongoing and still unresolved insurgency](#).^[55]

[Bahawalpur](#) from the Punjab Agency joined Pakistan on 5 October 1947. The Princely states of the [North-West Frontier States Agencies](#). included the Dir Swat and Chitral Agency and the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara acting as the Political Agent for Amb and Phulra. These states joined Pakistan on independence from the British.

See also

- [Salute state](#)
- [List of Indian Princely states](#) – a list of Indian princely states at the time of Indian Independence
- [List of Brahmin dynasties and states](#)
- [List of Maratha dynasties and states](#)
- [List of Rajput dynasties and states](#)
- [List of Indian monarchs](#)
- Prince and [Principality](#) – information on princely styles worldwide
- [Maratha titles](#)
- [Maratha Empire](#)
- [Rajputana](#)

Notes

1. ↑ Values are from the last imperial Indian census in 1941. Until 1966, when India left the British [sterling area](#), the Indian rupee was pegged to the British [pound sterling](#) and had a value of 1s. 6d (1 shilling and 6d., equal to 18 old pence). The pre-decimal pound was subdivided into 20s. (shillings) and valued at \$4.03 in 1947. One shilling was therefore worth \$0.20 U.S., so a rupee was worth \$0.30 U.S. In 1947, 1s. 6d had an estimated purchasing power of £2.62 in 2014, while \$0.30 in 1947 had an estimated purchasing power of \$3.18 (in 2014 values). (Schedule of Par Values, Currencies of Metropolitan Areas, *The Statesman's Year Book 1947*, pg xxiii, Macmillan & Co.; [measuringworth.com](#))

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1. ↑ [Ramusack 2004](#), pp. 85 Quote: "The British did not create the Indian princes. Before and during the European penetration of India, indigenous rulers achieved dominance through the military protection they provided to dependents and their skill in acquiring revenues to maintain their military and administrative organisations. Major Indian rulers exercised varying degrees and types of sovereign powers before they entered treaty relations with the British. What changed during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is that the British increasingly restricted the sovereignty of Indian rulers. The [Company](#) set boundaries; it extracted resources in the form of military personnel, subsidies or tribute payments, and the purchase of commercial goods at favourable prices, and limited opportunities for other alliances. From the 1810s onwards as the British expanded and consolidated their power, their centralised military despotism dramatically reduced the political options of Indian rulers." (p. 85)
2. ↑ [Ramusack 2004](#), p. 87 Quote: "The British system of indirect rule over Indian states ... provided a model for the efficient use of scarce monetary and personnel resources that could be adopted to imperial acquisitions in Malaya and Africa. (p. 87)"
3. ↑ http://www.worldstatesmen.org/India_princes_A-J.html
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9. ↑ [Aparna Pande \(16 March 2011\). *Explaining Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Escaping India*. Taylor & Francis. pp.31–. ISBN 978-1-136-81893-6.](#)
10. ↑ [Siddiqi, Farhan Hanif \(2015\), "*The Political Economy of the Ethno-nationalist Uprising in Pakistani Balochistan, 1999–2013*" \(PDF\), *The Political Economy of Conflict in South Asia* Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp.57–74: "The statement provided a pretext for the Pakistan government for military action and put the Khan of Kalat in a very precarious situation. Sensing military action against the Khanate, the Khan aligned himself with Pakistan on 30 March 1948."](#)
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13. ↑ [Agarwal, Ashvini \(1989\). *Rise and Fall of the Imperial Guptas*, Delhi:Motilal Banarsidass, ISBN 81-208-0592-5, pp.264–9](#)
14. ↑ [Grousset, Rene \(1970\). *The Empire of the Steppes*. Rutgers University Press. p.69. ISBN 0-8135-1304-9.](#)
15. ↑ Interpretation Act 1889 (52 & 53 Vict. c. 63), s. 18
16. ↑ [1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India, volume IV, published under the authority of the Secretary of State for India-in-Council* 1909, Oxford University Press. page 5. Quote: "The history of British India falls, as observed by Sir C. P. Ilbert in his *Government of India*, into three periods. From the beginning of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century the East India Company is a trading corporation, existing on the sufferance of the native powers and in rivalry with the merchant companies of Holland and France. During the next century the Company acquires and consolidates its dominion, shares its sovereignty in increasing proportions with the Crown, and gradually loses its mercantile privileges and functions. After the mutiny of 1857 the remaining powers of the Company are transferred to the Crown, and then follows an era of peace in which India awakens to new life and progress." 2. *The Statutes: From the Twentieth Year of King Henry the Third to the ...* by Robert Harry Drayton, Statutes of the Realm – Law – 1770 Page 211 \(3\) "Save as otherwise expressly provided in this Act, the law of British India and of the several parts thereof existing immediately before the appointed ..." 3. Edney, M. E. \(1997\) \[Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843\]\(#\), University of Chicago Press. 480 pages. ISBN 978-0-226-18488-3 4. Hawes, C.J. \(1996\) \[Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773–1833\]\(#\). Routledge, 217 pages. ISBN 0-7007-0425-6.](#)
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38. ↑ [Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. IV 1907](#), p. 102
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41. ↑ [Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. IV 1907](#), p. 103
42. ↑ "Assam States," Indian States and Agencies, *The Statesman's Year Book 1947*, pg 160, Macmillan & Co.
43. ↑ [Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. IV 1907](#), p. 101
44. ↑ [Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. IV 1907](#), p. 85
45. ↑ [Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. IV 1907](#), pp. 85–86
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