

List of Viceroys of India

[UPSC Notes]

Viceroy of India

The British rule in India was steady and paced out. It took its time by starting off as a trading unit after Queen Elizabeth I gave the Royal Charter to the East India Company on 31 December 1600. What started as a trading power, turned Britain into one of the most powerful countries in the world.

Despite being a geographically small island county, Britain established one of the largest empires in the world. It was famously called the 'the empire on which the Sun never sets'. This success that Britain enjoyed was backed up by the strongly rooted and efficient form of bureaucracy that they established in each of their colonies. This formed a proper chain of command and hierarchy in the system, making it very systematic. In India, the British were able to establish this control through Governor-General & Viceroys. The progression from a Governor-general to a Viceroy has been explained below;

- **Governor-General of Bengal (1773-1833)**

Upon the inception of the East India Company's settlement in India, the company ran its order in Bengal through a post called the 'Governor of Bengal'. The first Governor of Bengal was Robert Clive who played a vital role in the subsequent battles with regional kingdoms to strengthen the British stronghold over India.

- Besides Bengal, the EIC had two other presidencies, namely Bombay and Madras. Each had its own Governor.
- It was after the Regulating Act of 1773 was passed when the post of Governor of Bengal was converted into 'Governor-General of Bengal', giving it control over the other two presidencies of Bombay and Madras.
- The first Governor-General of Bengal was Warren Hastings.

- **Governor-General of India (1833-58)**

It was under the Charter Act of 1833 that the post name of Governor-General of Bengal was changed into 'Governor-General of India'.

- This post was mainly administrative in nature that tended to the official matter. The Governor-General of India reported to the Court of Directors of the East India Company.
- The first Governor-General of India was William Bentinck.

- **Viceroy of India (1858-1947)**

The revolt of 1857 was the first organised rebellion attack that the somewhat docile Indian population has launched onto the EIC. It worried the English monarch back in Britain who feared losing India as its cash cow. To appease the crowds with the promise

of a better administration and efficient rule-making, the company rule was abolished by the Crown and India came under its direct control.

- The Government of India Act of 1858 was passed that changed the name of the post of Governor-General of India to the 'Viceroy of India'.
- The Viceroy was to be directly appointed by the British government.
- The first Viceroy of India was Lord Canning.

List of the Viceroys of India

| Viceroy of India- Relevant Facts for UPSC | Tenure | Significant Events |
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| Lord Canning | 1856- 1862 | <p>The Revolt of 1857 happened during his service.</p> <p>The establishment of three universities at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857</p> <p>The rule of the East India Company was abolished and the control was transferred to the Crown by the Government of India Act, 1858</p> <p>Indian Councils Act of 1861</p> |
| Lord Elgin | 1862- 1863 | <p>Wahabi Movement happened under his reign.</p> |
| Lord John Lawrence | 1864- 1869 | <p>The Bhutan War (1865) happened in his service.</p> <p>The High Courts at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were established in 1865.</p> |
| Lord Mayo | 1869- 1872 | <p>The financial distribution between the centre and the state was introduced for the first time.</p> <p>India's first Census was done in 1872</p> <p>The Mayo College for the royal elite was set up</p> <p>Establishment of Statistical Survey of India</p> |

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| | | <p>Lord Mayo was the only Governor-General who was killed in India. He was killed by Sher Ali Afridi in Port Blair</p> |
| Lord Northbrook | 1872-1876 | <p>Civil Marriage under the Universal Marriage Act was introduced in 1872</p> <p>This act allowed intercaste marriage.</p> <p>Arya Samaj was established.</p> <p>Kuka Movement was observed in Punjab</p> |
| Lord Lytton | 1876-1880 | <p>Several acts were introduced; the Vernacular Press Act (1878), and the Arms Act (1878).</p> <p>The Second Afghan War happened from 1878-80</p> <p>Queen Victoria took the title of 'Kaiser-i-Hind' which translates to Queen Empress of India</p> |
| Lord Ripon | 1880-1884 | <p>Upon receiving backlash, the Vernacular Press Act (1882) was repealed.</p> <p>The first Factory Act of 1881 was introduced.</p> <p>There was a government resolution passed on the establishment of local self-government (1882)</p> <p>The Ilbert Bill controversy (1883-84)</p> <p>Hunter Commission on education (1882)</p> |
| Lord Dufferin | 1884-1888 | <p>The Third Burmese War (1885-86).</p> <p>One of the most noteworthy events was the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885.</p> |

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| Lord Lansdowne | 1888-1894 | <p>Another Factory Act was introduced in 1891.</p> <p>Indian Councils Act (1892)</p> <p>The Durand Commission was set up in 1893.</p> |
| Lord Elgin II | 1894-1899 | <p>First British Officer called Rands was killed by Chapekar (Ramkrishna & Damodar) Brothers. This was the first political murder in the Indian history of British rule.</p> |
| Lord Curzon | 1899-1905 | <p>The Police Commission was appointed in 1902.</p> <p>The appointment of the Universities Commission happened in 1902.</p> <p>Indian Universities Act of 1904 was introduced.</p> <p>Partition of Bengal of 1905 was Curzon's master move towards the British Policy of 'Divide and Rule'.</p> |
| Lord Minto II | 1905-1910 | <p>The Swadeshi Movement was observed from 1905 to 1911.</p> <p>Surat Split of Congress (1907)</p> <p>The Muslim League was established in 1906.</p> <p>Morley-Minto Reforms came in 1909.</p> |
| Lord Hardinge II | 1910-1916 | <p>The Partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911.</p> <p>The British capital shifted from Calcutta to Delhi (1911)</p> <p>Establishment of the Hindu Mahasabha (1915)</p> |

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| Lord Chelmsford | 1916-1921 | <p>Chelmsford's India saw a lot of change and tragedy. The Lucknow pact occurred in 1916.</p> <p>The Champaran Satyagraha was launched in 1917.</p> <p>Montagu's August Declaration (1917)</p> <p>The Government of India Act (1919) was introduced.</p> <p>The Rowlatt Act (1919) or the Black laws were introduced. There were nationwide protests.</p> <p>This led to one of the most tragic events in Indian history, the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre (1919).</p> <p>Launch of Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements</p> |
| Lord Reading | 1921-1926 | <p>The Chauri Chaura incident (1922) happened which led to the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922 by Mahatma Gandhi</p> <p>Establishment of Swaraj Party(1922)</p> <p>Kakori train robbery (1925)</p> |

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| Lord Irwin | 1926-1931 | <p>The Simon Commission came to India in 1927.</p> <p>Harcourt Butler, Indian States Commission (1927)</p> <p>Nehru Report (1928)</p> <p>Deepavali Declaration (1929)</p> <p>Lahore session of the Congress where the Purna Swaraj Resolution was taken happened in 1929</p> <p>The revolutionary Dandi March was from 12 Mar 1930 – 6 Apr 1930 which successfully launched the Civil Disobedience Movement the same year.</p> <p>First Round Table Conference (1930)</p> <p>Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931)</p> |
| Lord Willingdon | 1931-1936 | <p>Establishment of the Communal Award (1932)</p> <p>Second & Third Round Table Conference (1932)</p> <p>The Poona Pact (1932) resolved the issues between Dr BR Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi over separate electorates for Dalits.</p> <p>Government of India Act of 1935</p> |
| Lord Linlithgow | 1936-1944 | <p>Resignation of the Congress ministries after the outbreak of the Second World War (1939)</p> <p>Tripuri Crisis & formation of Forward Bloc (1939)</p> <p>Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League (demand for a separate state for Muslims) 1940</p> <p>'August Offer' of 1940</p> <p>Formation of the Indian National Army (1941)</p> <p>Cripps Mission (1942)</p> <p>Quit India Movement (1942)</p> |

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| Lord Wavell | 1944-1947 | C. Rajagopalachari's CR Formula (1944) Wavell Plan and the Simla Conference (1942) Cabinet Mission (1946) Direct Action Day announced by the Muslim League (1946) Announcement of end of British rule in India by Clement Attlee (1947) |
| Lord Mountbatten | 1947-1948 | June Third Plan (1947) Redcliff commission (1947) India's Independence (15 August 1947) |
| Chakravarti Rajagopalachari | 1948-1950 | Last Governor-General of India, before the office, was permanently abolished in 1950 |