

ANANTAM IAS · OPTIONAL NOTES

History Optional Consolidation as a Nation

Paper 2 · Unit 13

Integration of the princely states, linguistic reorganisation and the making of the Constitution: 30 marks in four years, asked twice on regionalism and linguistic states.

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UPSC SYLLABUS

Consolidation as a nation: Nehru's foreign policy; India and her neighbours, 1947 to 1964; the linguistic reorganisation of states, 1935 to 1947; regionalism and regional inequality; integration of princely states; princes in electoral politics; the question of national language.

Integration of the princely states

Five hundred and sixty five states covering nearly two fifths of the subcontinent had to be absorbed within months. The mechanism is the examinable part.

- **Lapse of paramountcy** under the Indian Independence Act 1947 returned sovereignty to the princes, who were technically free to accede to either dominion or to remain independent.
- **States Department** under **Sardar Patel** with **V. P. Menon** as secretary handled the negotiation, and the combination of Patel's authority and Menon's drafting is generally credited with the outcome.
- **Instrument of Accession** ceded only **defence, external affairs and communications**, which made accession easy to accept, and internal autonomy was surrendered later through separate merger agreements.
- **Privy purses** and the retention of titles and privileges were the inducement, and they were abolished only by the twenty sixth amendment in 1971 after an initial attempt was struck down.
- **Junagadh** acceded to Pakistan against the wishes of a Hindu-majority population, and a plebiscite in February 1948 confirmed accession to India after the Nawab left.
- **Hyderabad** held out under the Nizam and the Razakars, and **Operation Polo** in September 1948 completed integration by police action.
- **Kashmir** acceded in October 1947 after the Pakistani tribal invasion, with Article 370 providing a special constitutional arrangement, and the resulting dispute went to the UN in 1948.
- **Assessment** for a question: integration was achieved with remarkably little violence outside Hyderabad and Kashmir, and it rested on generous terms, firm pressure and the absence of any viable alternative for the princes.

Linguistic reorganisation

Asked in 2025 on whether the movement generated fears of Balkanisation. It did, and those fears proved unfounded, which is the argument to make.

- Congress had accepted **linguistic provinces in principle from the Nagpur session of 1920**, when it reorganised its own provincial committees on linguistic lines, so the demand had a long pedigree.
- After independence the leadership reversed itself, fearing that linguistic division would encourage secession so soon after partition, and the **Dar Commission of 1948** and the **JVP Committee** of Nehru, Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya both advised against it.
- **Potti Sriramulu's** fast unto death and his death in December 1952 forced the creation of **Andhra State in 1953**, which made further resistance impossible.
- **States Reorganisation Commission** under Fazl Ali reported in 1955, and the **States Reorganisation Act of 1956** redrew the map on broadly linguistic lines.
- Later divisions followed, with **Bombay split into Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960** after the Samyukta Maharashtra agitation, and **Punjab divided in 1966** into Punjab, Haryana and Himachal.

- The **Balkanisation fear** was genuine among the nationalist elite, and Nehru, Patel and Ambedkar all expressed versions of it, which is exactly what the 2025 quotation records.
- **Why it proved wrong** is the analytical point: linguistic states satisfied cultural demands within a federal structure, removed a grievance that might otherwise have become separatist, and channelled regional politics into competition for resources rather than for exit.
- **Counter-evidence** exists in Tamil anti-Hindi agitation and in later movements in Punjab and the northeast, so the answer should note that reorganisation reduced rather than eliminated the problem.

The national language question

Named explicitly in the syllabus and the sharpest constitutional dispute of the early republic.

- **Constituent Assembly** debated the question at length, and the **Munshi-Ayyangar formula** of 1949 was the compromise that resolved it.
- The settlement made **Hindi in Devanagari the official language** rather than the national language, with **English to continue for fifteen years** until 1965, and it provided for a commission to review the position.
- **Article 343 to 351** and the Eighth Schedule embody the arrangement, and the deliberate avoidance of the phrase national language is itself the compromise.
- **Official Languages Act of 1963** provided that English **may** continue after 1965, and the ambiguity of that word produced the crisis.
- **Anti-Hindi agitation** in Madras State in 1965 was severe, involving deaths and self-immolations, and it forced an amendment in 1967 guaranteeing English indefinitely as an associate official language.
- **Three language formula** was adopted for education, and its uneven implementation, with Hindi-speaking states largely not teaching a southern language, remains a live grievance.
- **Political consequence** was substantial, since the DMK's opposition to Hindi imposition was central to its victory in Tamil Nadu in 1967, after which no national party has governed the state.
- The settlement to describe: India has **no national language**, twenty two scheduled languages, Hindi and English as official languages of the Union, and states free to choose their own.

Regionalism and regional inequality

Asked in 2024 on whether regionalism after 1947 was occasioned by developmental imperatives as much as by linguistic particularism. Both halves are true.

- **Linguistic particularism** drove the first wave, producing the reorganisation of 1956 and the later divisions of Bombay and Punjab.
- **Developmental grievance** drove the second wave, and demands for Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and later Telangana rested on claims of resource extraction without local benefit.
- That distinction answers the 2024 question directly: the first generation of demands was cultural and the second was economic, and the three states created in 2000 were justified on developmental rather than linguistic grounds.
- **Regional inequality** is measurable and persistent, with per capita income differences between states widening after liberalisation rather than converging.

- **Finance Commission** transfers and later the Planning Commission's allocations were the institutional mechanism for addressing it, and the debate about their adequacy is continuous.
- **Tribal regions** present a distinct case, since the Fifth and Sixth Schedules provide special arrangements and the northeast has seen sustained autonomy and secessionist movements.
- **Sons of the soil** movements in Bombay, Assam and elsewhere expressed a third form of regionalism directed at migrants rather than at the centre.
- The framing to use: Indian regionalism has been **accommodated rather than suppressed**, through state creation, language policy and fiscal transfer, and that accommodation is the principal reason the Balkanisation fear proved wrong.

Nehru's foreign policy and the neighbours

Named in the syllabus for 1947 to 1964, and it overlaps with the World after 1945 unit, so keep it compact and India-focused.

- **Non-alignment** meant independent judgement on each issue rather than neutrality, and it gave a poor new state diplomatic weight disproportionate to its power.
- **Panchsheel** with China in 1954 set out five principles of peaceful coexistence, and **Bandung in 1955** made India a leading voice of Afro-Asian solidarity.
- **China** deteriorated over Tibet, the asylum granted to the Dalai Lama in 1959, and the disputed boundary, culminating in the **1962 war** that discredited both the policy and Nehru personally.
- **Pakistan** relations were shaped by Kashmir from 1947, by the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 which has survived every subsequent conflict, and by Pakistan's alignment with the United States through CENTO and SEATO.
- **Smaller neighbours** were managed through treaties, with the 1950 treaties with Nepal and Bhutan and the annexation of **Goa in 1961** ending Portuguese rule after negotiation failed.
- **Achievements** to credit are the peaceful integration of the states, the Indus treaty, leadership of the non-aligned world and the avoidance of bloc alignment.
- **Princes in electoral politics**, named in the syllabus, saw former rulers contest and often win seats through the 1950s and 1960s on the strength of local loyalty, most visibly the Scindias in Gwalior, until the abolition of privy purses in 1971 removed their formal standing.
- **Failures** to acknowledge are the misreading of Chinese intentions, the neglect of defence preparedness before 1962, and the internationalisation of Kashmir at the UN.

Last-mile revision

- 565 states; paramountcy lapses 1947; Patel and V. P. Menon; Instrument of Accession covers defence, external affairs, communications; privy purses abolished 1971.
- Junagadh plebiscite 1948; Hyderabad Operation Polo September 1948; Kashmir accession October 1947 and Article 370.
- Nagpur 1920 accepted linguistic provinces; Dar Commission 1948 and JVP against; Potti Sriramulu dies December 1952; Andhra 1953; SRC 1955 and Act 1956; Bombay split 1960; Punjab 1966.
- Munshi-Ayyangar formula 1949; Articles 343-351; Official Languages Act 1963; anti-Hindi agitation 1965; 1967 amendment; no national language.

- Regionalism: linguistic first wave, developmental second wave with Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand in 2000 and Telangana 2014.
- Nehru: Panchsheel 1954, Bandung 1955, Tibet and 1959 asylum, 1962 war, Indus Waters Treaty 1960, Goa 1961.

Common errors to avoid

- Saying Hindi is India's national language. The Constitution makes it an official language and deliberately avoids the term national language.
- Crediting integration of the states to Patel alone. V. P. Menon's drafting of the Instrument of Accession was the enabling technical work.
- Treating linguistic reorganisation as uncontroversial. Nehru, Patel and Ambedkar all opposed it initially and the Balkanisation fear was genuine.
- Presenting all regionalism as linguistic. The 2000 and 2014 state creations rested on developmental grievance.
- Omitting the 1962 war from an assessment of Nehru's foreign policy, since it is the central failure any balanced answer must address.

Mains Practice

Regionalism in India after 1947 was occasioned by developmental imperatives as much as linguistic particularism. Elucidate.

20 marks · 250 words · 2024

“The movement for linguistic States generated deep apprehensions among the nationalist elite. They feared it would lead to the Balkanization of India.” Examine.

10 marks · 150 words · 2025