

GENERAL AWARENESS · POLITY · CHAPTER 1

Making of the Constitution (1773–1950)

The British Acts from the Regulating Act to the Indian Independence Act; the demand for and composition of the Constituent Assembly; its officers, committees and Drafting Committee; the Objectives Resolution; adoption on 26 November 1949, signing and commencement on 26 January 1950; and the original handwritten Constitution.

SSC CGL Tier 1

SSC CHSL Tier 1

RRB NTPC · Group D

QUESTIONS PER
PAPER

SSC 0–1 · RRB 0–1

PYQ FREQUENCY

**Dates, chairmen,
Acts' "firsts"**

PREREQUISITE

**None (links: HI-14,
HI-18)**

STUDY TIME

**70 min theory + 25
min practice**

Why this chapter matters: Every Polity syllabus opens here. SSC asks the same facts again and again in new words: who presided over the first meeting, who moved the Objectives Resolution, who chaired which committee, when the Constitution was adopted, signed and enforced, and which Act brought dyarchy, separate electorates or provincial autonomy. Learn each date with its event and each committee with its chairman.

IN THIS CHAPTER

02 Concepts**03** Rule box**04** Shortcuts**05** Traps**06** 27 PYQs**07** Practice MCQs**07** Answer key**08** Quick revision



Concepts & theory

2.1 Company rule: the Acts of 1773–1853

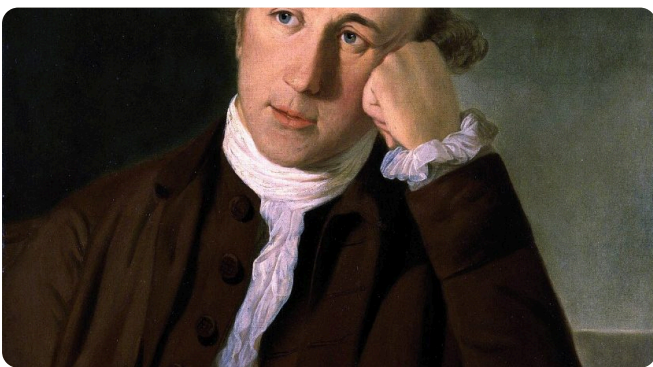
- 1 After the Battle of Buxar (1764) and the grant of the Diwani (1765), the East India Company ruled large territories. The British Parliament then began to control it through a series of **Acts**. These Acts are the historical background of our Constitution.
- 2 **Regulating Act (1773)**: the **first step** by the British Government to control and regulate the Company's affairs in India; it recognised the Company's political and administrative functions.
 - The Governor of Bengal became the **Governor-General of Bengal**, with an executive council of **four**. **Warren Hastings** was the first.
 - The Governors of **Bombay and Madras** were made subordinate to the Governor-General of Bengal.
 - A **Supreme Court at Calcutta (Fort William)** was set up in **1774**, with a chief justice (**Elijah Impey**) and three other judges.
 - Company servants were barred from private trade and from taking bribes or presents.
- 3 **Pitt's India Act (1784)**: separated the Company's **commercial** functions (left with the Court of Directors) from its **political** functions, which went under a new **Board of Control**. This set up "**double government**" (dual control), which lasted until 1858. For the first time, the Company's territories were called "**British possessions in India**".
- 4 **Charter Act 1793** renewed the Company's charter for 20 years.
- 5 **Charter Act 1813**: ended the Company's trade monopoly in India, except in **tea** and trade with **China**; set aside **Rs 1 lakh a year for education**; allowed Christian missionaries into India.
- 6 **Charter Act 1833** (the final step towards **centralisation**):
 - The Governor-General of Bengal became the **Governor-General of India**, with all civil and military powers. **Lord William Bentinck** was the first. This created the first "Government of India" for all British territory.
 - The Governors of Bombay and Madras lost their law-making powers; the Governor-General in Council could legislate for the whole of British India. Laws made under earlier Acts were called **Regulations**; laws under this Act were called **Acts**.
 - It ended the Company's commercial activities; the Company became a purely administrative body. **Macaulay** joined the council as the first Law Member.
- 7 **Charter Act 1853** (the last Charter Act):

- Separated the **legislative and executive** functions of the Governor-General's council. Six new legislative members were added; this **Indian (Central) Legislative Council** worked like a mini-Parliament.
- Introduced **open competition** for the civil services, also open to Indians; the **Macaulay Committee** (1854) was set up for it.
- Local representation began: four of the six new members were appointed by the provincial governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and Agra.

Company rule under Parliament's Acts, 1773–1853

1773	●	Regulating Act: Governor-General of Bengal (Warren Hastings) with a council of 4; Supreme Court at Calcutta (1774)
1784	●	Pitt's India Act: Board of Control; 'double government'; territories called 'British possessions in India'
1793	●	Charter Act: the Company's charter renewed for 20 years
1813	●	Charter Act: trade monopoly ends (except tea and trade with China); Rs 1 lakh a year for education
1833	●	Charter Act: Governor-General of India (Bentinck); Company's trade ends; laws now called 'Acts'
1853	●	Charter Act (last): legislative wing of the council separated; open competition for civil services

Regulating Act = first step to control the Company. Charter Act 1833 = final step towards centralisation.



Warren Hastings, first Governor-General of Bengal under the Regulating Act: portrait by Tilly Kettle.



Lord William Bentinck, first Governor-General of India under the Charter Act of 1833.

2.2 Crown rule: the Acts of 1858–1919

1 Government of India Act 1858 (the "Act for the Good Government of India"), passed after the Revolt of 1857:

- The rule of the **British Crown** replaced Company rule. The Governor-General was also given the title of **Viceroy**; **Lord Canning** was the first Viceroy.
- The Board of Control and the Court of Directors were **abolished**, ending double government.
- A **Secretary of State for India**, a member of the British Cabinet, got full control over Indian administration. A **Council of India** of **15 members** was created to advise him.

2 Indian Councils Act 1861:

- Began associating Indians with law-making: the Viceroy could nominate Indians as non-official members. In **1862 Lord Canning** nominated the **Raja of Benares**, the **Maharaja of Patiala** and **Sir Dinkar Rao**.
- Began **decentralisation** by restoring law-making powers to the Bombay and Madras Presidencies; a legislative council was set up for Bengal (1862).
- Gave legal recognition to the **portfolio system** that Canning had introduced in 1859.
- Empowered the Viceroy to issue **ordinances** in an emergency without the council's consent; an ordinance lasted **six months**.

3 Indian Councils Act 1892: more non-official members; the councils could **discuss the budget** and **ask questions** of the executive. It made a limited and **indirect** provision for election: members were nominated on the recommendation of bodies such as provincial councils, district boards, municipalities, universities and chambers of commerce.

4 Indian Councils Act 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms): named after **Lord Morley** (Secretary of State) and **Lord Minto** (Viceroy).

- Enlarged the Central Legislative Council from 16 to **60** members; members could ask supplementary questions and move resolutions on the budget.
- **S. P. Sinha** became the first Indian in the Viceroy's Executive Council (as Law Member).
- Introduced **communal representation**: a **separate electorate for Muslims**, in which only Muslims voted for Muslim members. Lord Minto is called the "**Father of Communal Electorate**". It was criticised for dividing the national movement.

5 Government of India Act 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms): followed **Edwin Montagu's** declaration of **20 August 1917** promising the gradual growth of responsible government; came into force in **1921**.

- Separated **central and provincial** subjects. Provincial subjects were divided into **transferred** (run by the Governor with ministers answerable to the legislature) and **reserved** (run by the Governor and his executive council). This dual scheme is **dyarchy**.

- Brought **bicameralism** at the Centre: a **Council of State** (upper house) and a **Legislative Assembly** (lower house), most members **directly elected**.
- Three of the six members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (other than the Commander-in-Chief) were to be Indians.
- Extended separate electorates to **Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans**; gave a limited franchise based on property, tax or education.
- Created a **High Commissioner for India** in London, provided for a **Public Service Commission** (a Central PSC was set up in 1926) and separated provincial budgets from the central budget.
- Provided for a statutory commission after ten years. The **Simon Commission**, all seven members British, was appointed in November 1927, two years early. The **Communal Award** (1932) of British PM Ramsay MacDonald followed, and the **Poona Pact** (1932) modified it (HI-18).

Crown rule and the road to self-government, 1858–1947



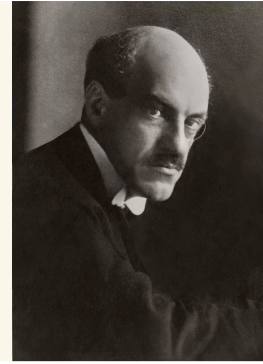
1909 = Lord Morley (Secretary of State) and Lord Minto (Viceroy). 1919 = Edwin Montagu and Lord Chelmsford.



Lord Canning, the first Viceroy (1858); he nominated three Indians to his council in 1862.



Lord Minto, Viceroy at the time of the 1909 reforms: "Father of Communal Electorate".



Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State, whose reforms with Chelmsford became the 1919 Act.

2.3 The Government of India Act 1935 and the Indian Independence Act 1947

- 1 Government of India Act 1935:** a long, detailed Act of **321 sections and 10 schedules**, and the second milestone towards responsible government. It is the **largest single source** of our Constitution.
 - Provided for an **All-India Federation** of provinces and princely states. It never came into being because the princely states did not join.
 - Divided powers into **three lists: Federal (59 items), Provincial (54) and Concurrent (36). Residuary powers** went to the **Viceroy**.
 - **Abolished dyarchy in the provinces** and introduced **provincial autonomy**: responsible governments took office in 1937. It provided dyarchy at the Centre, which was never brought in.
 - Introduced **bicameralism in six of the eleven provinces**: Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Bihar, Assam and the United Provinces.
 - Extended separate electorates to the **depressed classes** (Scheduled Castes), **women** and **labour**; gave the vote to about **10%** of the population.
 - Provided for a **Federal Court** (set up in **1937**), the **Reserve Bank of India**, and a Federal Public Service Commission, provincial PSCs and joint PSCs.
 - **Abolished the Council of India** (of 1858); the Secretary of State got a team of advisers instead. **Burma** was separated from India (in effect from 1937).
- 2** Leaders rejected it. **Nehru** called it "a machine with strong brakes but no engine" and a "charter of slavery".
- 3 Indian Independence Act 1947:** based on the **Mountbatten Plan of 3 June 1947**; passed by the British Parliament and given royal assent in **July 1947** (18 July), when **Clement Attlee** was the British Prime Minister.

- Ended British rule and declared India independent from **15 August 1947**; created **two dominions**, India and Pakistan, each free to leave the British Commonwealth.
- Abolished the office of Viceroy; each dominion got a **Governor-General**, appointed by the British King on the advice of the dominion cabinet.
- Empowered the **Constituent Assembly** to frame any constitution and to act as the dominion's legislature. **Section 8(1)** of the Act recognised the Assembly's power to make the constitution.
- Abolished the office of the Secretary of State for India; British paramountcy over the princely states lapsed; the King dropped the title "Emperor of India".

4 **Lord Mountbatten** stayed on as the first Governor-General of free India; **C. Rajagopalachari** (1948–50) was the first and last Indian Governor-General.

The two Acts that shaped the Constitution

GOVT OF INDIA ACT 1935

- Act of 321 sections and 10 schedules
- All-India Federation of provinces and princely states (never formed)
- Three lists: Federal 59, Provincial 54, Concurrent 36 items
- Residuary powers with the Viceroy
- Provincial autonomy; dyarchy shifted to the Centre (never brought in)
- Two houses in 6 of 11 provinces
- Federal Court (1937), RBI, Federal PSC
- Separate electorates for depressed classes, women, labour
- Council of India abolished; about 10% could vote

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT 1947

- Passed in July 1947 (royal assent 18 July)
- India and Pakistan: two dominions from 15 August 1947
- Each dominion free to leave the Commonwealth
- Viceroy ends: a Governor-General for each dominion
- Constituent Assembly makes the constitution and acts as the legislature
- Secretary of State for India abolished
- British paramountcy over princely states lapses
- 'Emperor of India' dropped from the King's title

The 1935 Act gave the Constitution most of its structure. Nehru called it 'a machine with strong brakes but no engine'.

2.4 The demand for and composition of the Constituent Assembly

1 The idea of a Constituent Assembly was first put forward in **1934** by **M. N. Roy**, a pioneer of the communist movement in India. The Congress officially demanded one in **1935**.

- 2 In **1938** Jawaharlal Nehru declared that the constitution of free India must be framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on adult franchise, without outside interference. The British accepted the demand in principle in the **August Offer of 1940**. The **Cripps Mission** (1942) brought a draft proposal that the Muslim League rejected.
- 3 The Constituent Assembly was finally formed in **November 1946** under the **Cabinet Mission Plan** (Pethick-Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander).
- 4 **Total strength: 389**. British India had **296** seats (292 from the Governors' provinces and 4 from the Chief Commissioners' provinces); the princely states had **93**.
- 5 Seats were allotted roughly in proportion to population, about **one seat per million (10 lakh)** people. Each province's seats were divided among **Muslims, Sikhs and General** (all others) by population.
- 6 Members from British India were **elected indirectly** by the members of the provincial legislative assemblies, using **proportional representation by single transferable vote**. Members from the princely states were **nominated** by their rulers. The Assembly was thus partly elected and partly nominated, and not elected on adult franchise.
- 7 Elections were held in **July–August 1946**: the **Congress won 208** seats, the **Muslim League 73** and small groups and independents **15**. The princely states stayed away at first.
- 8 The Assembly included almost every important leader of the time, but not **Mahatma Gandhi** or **M. A. Jinnah**.

Composition of the Constituent Assembly

Cabinet Mission Plan (1946): 389 seats



Elections, July–August 1946: 296 British-India seats



After partition (from late 1947): 299 members



- Seats roughly 1 per 10 lakh (one million) people
- Provincial seats divided among Muslims, Sikhs and General by population
- Elected indirectly by provincial assembly members: single transferable vote (proportional representation)
- Princely states' members nominated by their rulers
- Partly elected, partly nominated; Muslim League boycotted from the first day

The Assembly was not elected on adult franchise. Mahatma Gandhi was not a member.

From idea to first sessions, 1934–1947

1934

M. N. Roy first puts forward the idea of a Constituent Assembly

1935

Congress officially demands a Constituent Assembly

1940

August Offer: British accept the demand in principle

1946

Cabinet Mission Plan; elections in July–August; Assembly formed in November

9 Dec 1946

First meeting; Sachchidananda Sinha temporary President

11 Dec 1946

Rajendra Prasad elected permanent President

13 Dec 1946

Nehru moves the Objectives Resolution (adopted 22 Jan 1947)

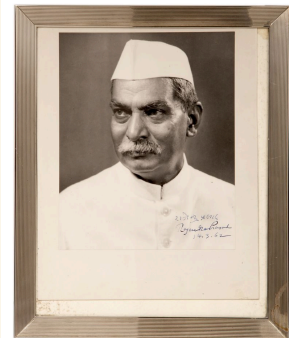
The Muslim League boycotted the first meeting; the princely states joined later.



The Cabinet Mission (1946), whose plan created the Constituent Assembly.



Dr Sachchidananda Sinha, the oldest member, temporary President of the Assembly.



Dr Rajendra Prasad, permanent President of the Assembly and later first President of India.

2.5 Working of the Assembly: officers, Objectives Resolution and committees

- 1 First meeting: 9 December 1946**, in the **Central Hall** of Parliament House, New Delhi. The **Muslim League** boycotted it. **Dr Sachchidananda Sinha**, the oldest member, was elected **temporary President**, following the French practice.

- 2 On **11 December 1946**, **Dr Rajendra Prasad** was elected the permanent **President**. **H. C. Mukherjee** was the Vice-President; **V. T. Krishnamachari** was later elected a second Vice-President. **Sir B. N. Rau** was the **Constitutional (legal) Adviser**.
- 3 **Objectives Resolution:** moved by **Jawaharlal Nehru** on **13 December 1946** and adopted **unanimously** on **22 January 1947**. It declared India an "Independent Sovereign Republic", said all power comes from the people, and promised justice, equality, freedoms and safeguards for minorities. Its modified version became the **Preamble**.
- 4 **Changes after the Indian Independence Act:**
 - The Assembly became a fully **sovereign** body and also the first **legislature** (Dominion Legislature) of free India. As a constitution-making body it was chaired by Rajendra Prasad; as a legislature, from November 1947, by **G. V. Mavalankar**.
 - Members from the areas that went to Pakistan withdrew. The strength fell to **299**: 229 from the provinces and 70 from the princely states.
- 5 **Other functions:** adopted the **National Flag** on **22 July 1947**; ratified India's membership of the **Commonwealth** in **May 1949**; adopted the **National Anthem** and the **National Song** on **24 January 1950**; and elected **Dr Rajendra Prasad** the first President of India on **24 January 1950**.
- 6 From 26 January 1950 it worked as the **Provisional Parliament** until the new Parliament was formed after the first general elections (1951–52).
- 7 **Committees:** the Assembly set up **22 committees, 8 of them major**. The major committees and their chairmen are in the figure below; learn the minor ones from the table.

Major committees and sub-committees

Committee	Chairman
Union Powers Committee	Jawaharlal Nehru
Union Constitution Committee	Jawaharlal Nehru
States Committee (talks with states)	Jawaharlal Nehru
Provincial Constitution Committee	Vallabhbhai Patel
Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas	Vallabhbhai Patel
Drafting Committee	B. R. Ambedkar
Rules of Procedure Committee	Rajendra Prasad
Steering Committee	Rajendra Prasad
Sub-committee: Fundamental Rights	J. B. Kripalani
Sub-committee: Minorities	H. C. Mukherjee
Sub-committee: North-East Frontier Tribal Areas and Assam Excluded Areas	Gopinath Bardoloi
Sub-committee: Excluded Areas (other than Assam)	A. V. Thakkar

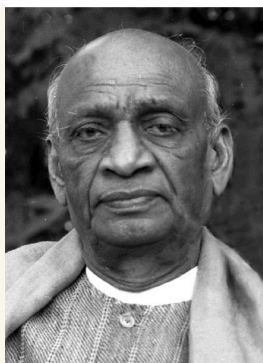
Nehru chaired three, Rajendra Prasad (with minor ones) four, Patel two. The three Nehru committees and the Drafting Committee are asked most.

Minor committee	Chairman
Finance and Staff Committee	Rajendra Prasad
Ad hoc Committee on the National Flag	Rajendra Prasad
Credentials Committee	Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar
House Committee	B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
Committee on Chief Commissioners' Provinces	B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
Order of Business Committee	K. M. Munshi

Minor committee	Chairman
Committee on the Functions of the Constituent Assembly	G. V. Mavalankar
Ad hoc Committee on the Supreme Court	S. Varadachari
Expert Committee on Financial Provisions	Nalini Ranjan Sarkar
Linguistic Provinces Commission	S. K. Dar



Nehru addresses the Constituent Assembly, 1946.



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel chaired the Advisory Committee and the Provincial Constitution Committee.



Seal of the Constituent Assembly: the elephant was its symbol.

2.6 The Drafting Committee and the passing of the Constitution

- 1 The **Drafting Committee** was set up on **29 August 1947** to prepare the draft. It had **seven members**:
 - o **Dr B. R. Ambedkar** (Chairman)
 - o **N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar, K. M. Munshi** and **Syed Mohammad Saadullah**
 - o **N. Madhava Rau**, who replaced B. L. Mitter
 - o **T. T. Krishnamachari**, who replaced D. P. Khaitan after his death in 1948
- 2 **B. N. Rau** prepared the first draft (October 1947) for the committee. The Drafting Committee submitted its draft on **21 February 1948**, and it was published for public discussion. **S. N. Mukherjee** was the Chief Draftsman.
- 3 Dr Ambedkar moved the Draft Constitution in the Assembly on **4 November 1948**. It was debated clause by clause from 15 November 1948 to 17 October 1949, revised and taken up again in November 1949.
- 4 On **26 November 1949** the motion to pass the Constitution was declared passed. The Constitution was **adopted** (enacted) with a **Preamble, 395 Articles, 22 Parts** and **8 Schedules**.

5

Dr Ambedkar is called the "**Father of the Indian Constitution**" and its chief architect. He was first elected to the Assembly from Bengal; after partition he was elected from Bombay. His closing speech of 25 November 1949 warned against the "**grammar of anarchy**" and said that on 26 January 1950 India would enter "a life of contradictions": equality in politics ("one man one vote and one vote one value") but inequality in social and economic life.

From draft to Republic, 1947–1950

22 Jul 1947

National Flag adopted

29 Aug 1947

Drafting Committee set up under Dr B. R. Ambedkar

21 Feb 1948

Draft Constitution submitted and published

4 Nov 1948

Ambedkar moves the Draft Constitution in the Assembly

26 Nov 1949

Constitution adopted (enacted); some Articles in force at once

24 Jan 1950

Signed by 284 members; Anthem and Song adopted; Prasad elected President

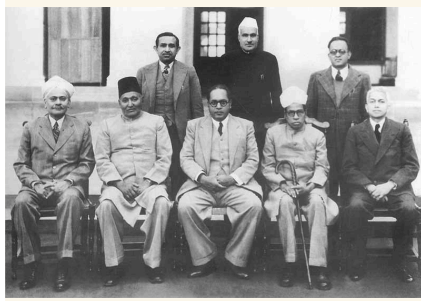
26 Jan 1950

Constitution comes into force: Republic Day

26 January was chosen because the Congress had observed 26 January 1930 as Purna Swaraj (Independence) Day.



Dr B. R. Ambedkar in 1948, Chairman of the Drafting Committee.



Drafting Committee: Ambedkar seated in the centre, with B. N. Rau (seated, far right) and S. N. Mukherjee (standing, far left).



Ambedkar presents the final draft of the Constitution to Rajendra Prasad, November 1949.

2.7 Adoption, signing and commencement; the original Constitution

1 Enactment vs enforcement:

- **26 November 1949**: adopted (enacted). Provisions on **citizenship, elections**, the **provisional Parliament, temporary and transitional** matters and the short title came into force at once. Article 394 lists them: Articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 60, 324, 366, 367, 379, 380, 388, 391, 392, 393 and 394 itself.
- **26 January 1950**: the rest came into force; this is the "**date of commencement**", celebrated as **Republic Day**. The date was chosen because **26 January 1930** had been observed as **Purna Swaraj Day** after the Lahore Congress.
- With the commencement, the Indian Independence Act 1947 and the Government of India Act 1935 were **repealed** (Article 395).

2 Constitution Day (Samvidhan Divas) is observed on **26 November** every year since **2015**; it was earlier known as Law Day.

3 Time taken: **2 years, 11 months and 18 days** (9 December 1946 to 26 November 1949). The Assembly held **11 sessions** over **165 days** and spent **114 days** on the Draft. Its members studied the constitutions of about **60 countries**. The cost was about **Rs 64 lakh**.

4 Signing: at its last session on **24 January 1950**, **284 members** signed the Constitution.

5 The original copy was written by hand:

- **English** version: **Prem Behari Narain Raizada**, in a flowing italic style.
- **Hindi** version: **Vasant Krishan Vaidya**.
- Decorated by **Nandalal Bose** and artists of Santiniketan; **Beohar Rammanohar Sinha** decorated the Preamble page.
- The original copies are kept in **helium-filled cases** in the Parliament Library.

6 Women members: the Assembly had **15 women** members, among them Sarojini Naidu, Hansa Mehta, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Durgabai Deshmukh, Sucheta Kripalani, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, **Ammu Swaminathan** (Madras), **Dakshayani Velayudhan** (the only Dalit woman member), **Begum Aizaz Rasul** (the only Muslim woman member) and **Annie Mascarene**. **Hansa Mehta** presented the National Flag on behalf of the women of India on the night of 14–15 August 1947.

The Constitution-making in numbers

2y 11m 18d

Total time taken

11

Sessions

165

Days of sittings

114

Days on the Draft

141

Days the Drafting Committee sat

about 7,600

Amendments tabled

2,473

Amendments moved in the House

Rs 64 lakh

Approximate cost

284

Members who signed

395 · 22 · 8

Articles · Parts · Schedules (1950)

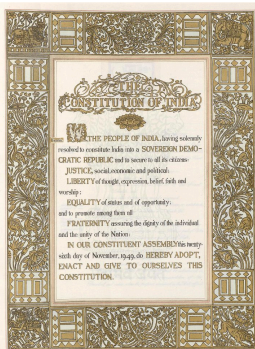
60

Countries' constitutions studied

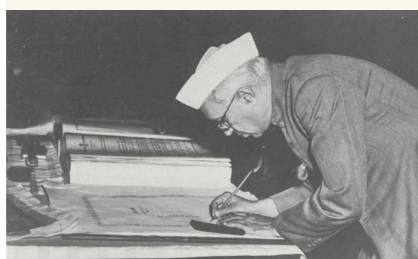
Elephant

Symbol on the seal

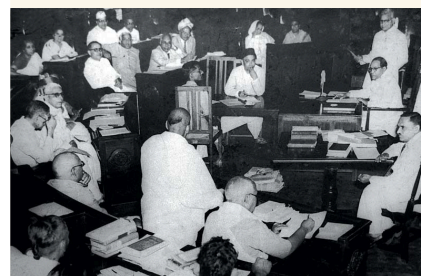
Exam answer for the time taken: 2 years, 11 months and 18 days (9 December 1946 to 26 November 1949).



The Preamble page of the original Constitution, decorated by Beohar Rammanohar Sinha.



Nehru signs the Constitution, New Delhi, 24 January 1950.



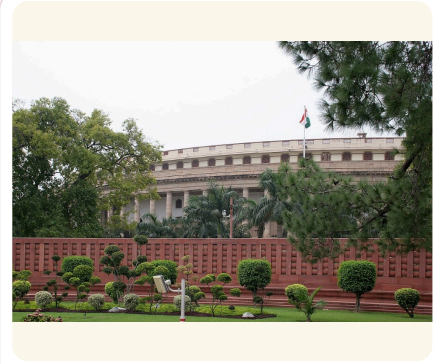
A meeting of the Constituent Assembly, 1950.



Ammu Swaminathan, a member from the Madras constituency.



Hansa Mehta, who presented the National Flag on behalf of the women of India.



Samvidhan Sadan (old Parliament House), whose Central Hall housed the Assembly.

2.8 Criticism of the Assembly and the Constitution today

1 Criticisms of the Constituent Assembly:

- **Not representative:** its members were not elected on universal adult franchise.
- **Not a sovereign body:** it was created on British proposals.
- It took too long.
- **Dominated by the Congress.** Granville Austin called it "a one-party body in an essentially one-party country" and wrote, "The Assembly was the Congress and the Congress was India".
- Dominated by lawyers and politicians, and by Hindus.

2 Ambedkar answered the criticism of borrowing: nothing new could be expected in a constitution framed so late in history; borrowed ideas were adapted to Indian conditions. (The sources of the Constitution are in PO-02.)

The Constitution today (as of October 2026): 106 amendments; the latest, the 106th (2023), reserves one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women. The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 was defeated in the Lok Sabha on 17 April 2026. The Constitution has **25 Parts** and **12 Schedules**; the Article numbering still ends at 395 because new Articles carry letters (for example 21A, 243A). The old Parliament House, where the Assembly met, was renamed **Samvidhan Sadan** in September 2023.

Memorise these 10

MUST KNOW

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 1 | Regulating Act 1773: GG of Bengal + council of 4 · Supreme Court, Calcutta (1774) | CPO 2022 |
| 2 | Pitt's India Act 1784: Board of Control, double government | CHSL 2022 |
| 3 | Charter Act 1833: GG of India (Bentinck) · 1858: Crown rule, Secretary of State | NTPC 2025 |
| 4 | 1909 separate electorates · 1919 provincial dyarchy · 1935 provincial autonomy | CGL 2024 |
| 5 | Indian Independence Act: royal assent July 1947 · Section 8(1) empowers the Assembly | CGL 2022 |
| 6 | 389 seats (Cabinet Mission Plan) → 299 after partition · elections July 1946 | GD 2024 |
| 7 | 9 Dec 1946 first meeting: Sachchidananda Sinha · 11 Dec: Rajendra Prasad | NTPC 2021 |
| 8 | Objectives Resolution: Nehru, 13 Dec 1946 → adopted 22 Jan 1947 | CGL 2022 |
| 9 | Drafting: Ambedkar · House Committee: Pattabhi · Provincial Constitution: Patel | CGL 2021 |
| 10 | Adopted 26 Nov 1949 · signed 24 Jan 1950 · in force 26 Jan 1950 | CHSL 2024 |

Shortcuts & exam tricks

Three "Governor-General" steps

1773 GG of **Bengal** (Hastings) → 1833 GG of **India** (Bentinck) → 1858 **Viceroy** (Canning).

Dyarchy: in and out

19**19** brought dyarchy **in** the provinces; 19**35** took it **out** of the provinces (provincial autonomy) and planned it at the Centre.

Nehru's three "U-S" committees

Union Powers, Union Constitution, States. Patel = Provincial + Advisory. Prasad = Rules, Steering, Finance, Flag.

9-11-13 December 1946

9: first meeting (Sinha) · **11**: Prasad elected · **13**: Objectives Resolution moved. Adopted 22 Jan 1947.

Three dates, three verbs

Adopted 26-11-1949 · **Signed** 24-1-1950 · **Enforced** 26-1-1950. 24 January also gave the Anthem, Song and first President.

Numbers ladder

389 → 299 members · 284 signed · 15 women · 7 in Drafting Committee · 2y 11m 18d · 11 sessions · 165 days.

Common mistakes & traps

WATCH OUT

✗ Rajendra Prasad presided over the first meeting of the Assembly.

✓ Sachchidananda Sinha (temporary President); Prasad was elected on 11 December.

✗ The Constitution was adopted on 26 January 1950.

✓ Adopted 26 November 1949; it came into force on 26 January 1950.

✗ B. N. Rau chaired the Drafting Committee.

✓ Ambedkar was Chairman; Rau was the Constitutional Adviser (not a member).

✗ The 1935 Act introduced dyarchy in the provinces.

✓ 1919 did; 1935 abolished it and gave provincial autonomy.

✗ The Assembly was elected directly by the people.

✓ Indirectly, by provincial assemblies (single transferable vote); states' members nominated.

Previous year questions

27 SSC and RRB questions with their official tags and wording. The correct option is highlighted and the solution follows. Cover the solution and attempt each question first.

SSC CGL Constituent Assembly, Acts · 2021–2025

SSC CGL 2021 Tier 1**19 Apr 2022 · Shift 2**

The Constituent Assembly was recognised by Section _____ of the Indian Independence Act, 1947.

(a) 6(2)

(b) 10(1)

(c) 12(2)

(d) 8(1)

Solution: Section 8(1) let the Constituent Assembly of each dominion exercise the legislature's power to make its constitution.

SSC CGL 2021 Tier 1**11 Apr 2022 · Shift 2**

With reference to the Constituent Assembly, which of the following statements is correct?

(a) The Constituent Assembly adopted the National Anthem in January 1950.

(b) The Constituent Assembly adopted the National song in January 1948.

(c) The Constituent Assembly adopted the National Flag in July 1949.

(d) The Constituent Assembly ratified India's membership of the Commonwealth in May 1947.

Solution: Anthem and Song: 24 January 1950. Flag: 22 July 1947. Commonwealth membership ratified in May 1949.

SSC CGL 2021 Tier 1**11 Apr 2022 · Shift 3**

How many female members were part of the Constituent Assembly that framed the Constitution of India?

(a) 10

(b) 12

(c) 15

(d) 14

Solution: 15 women members, including Sarojini Naidu, Hansa Mehta, Ammu Swaminathan and Dakshayani Velayudhan.

SSC CGL 2021 Tier 1

21 Apr 2022 · Shift 1

Who among the following became a part of the Constituent Assembly from Madras Constituency in 1946?

(a) Ammu Swaminathan

(b) Kamla Chaudhry

(c) Hansa Jivraj Mehta

(d) Begum Aizaz Rasul

Solution: Ammu Swaminathan was elected from Madras in 1946; she was one of the 15 women members.

SSC CGL 2021 Tier 1

18 Apr 2022 · Shift 2

Who was the chairman of the House Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India?

(a) B Pattabhi Sitaramayya

(b) AV Thakkar

(c) JB Kripalani

(d) KM Muni

Solution: B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Thakkar and Kripalani chaired sub-committees; Munshi chaired the Order of Business Committee.

SSC CGL 2022 Tier 1

2 Dec 2022 · Shift 1

Who moved the Objective Resolution that was later adapted as the Preamble of the Constitution of India?

(a) Rajendra Prasad

(b) JB Kripalani

(c) Jawaharlal Nehru

(d) BR Ambedkar

Solution: Jawaharlal Nehru moved it on 13 December 1946; it was adopted on 22 January 1947.

SSC CGL 2022 Tier 1

7 Dec 2022 · Shift 2

'Samvidhan Divas', is celebrated on _____.

(a) 18th November

(b) 26th January

(c) 26th November

(d) 15th August

Solution: 26 November, the day of adoption in 1949; observed as Constitution Day since 2015.

SSC CGL 2022 Tier 1

7 Dec 2022 · Shift 4

When did the Indian Independence Act receive the British royal assent?

(a) July 1947

(b) June 1947

(c) May 1947

(d) August 1947

Solution: 18 July 1947. The Mountbatten Plan came on 3 June; independence on 15 August 1947.

SSC CGL 2022 Tier 1

9 Dec 2022 · Shift 3

Which of the following Acts of the British Parliament stated that a member of the British Cabinet was appointed Secretary of State for India?

(a) Indian Council Act of 1861

(b) Government of India Act of 1858

(c) Regulating Act, 1773

(d) Charter Act of 1853

Solution: The 1858 Act created the Secretary of State for India, a British Cabinet minister, with a 15-member Council of India.

SSC CGL 2024 Tier 1

18 Sep 2024 · Shift 3

Which of the following Acts introduced 'provincial autonomy' by discontinuing the application of dyarchy?

(a) Government of India Act, 1919

(b) Charter Act of 1813

(c) India Council Act, 1909

(d) Government of India Act, 1935

Solution: The 1935 Act ended provincial dyarchy (brought by the 1919 Act) and gave provincial autonomy from 1937.

SSC CGL 2025 Tier 1

24 Sep 2025 · Shift 2

What was the role of the India Council established by the Government of India Act, 1858?

(a) To control trade with India

(b) To advise the Secretary of State

(c) To represent Indian opinion in Britain

(d) To review court judgments

Solution: The 15-member Council of India advised the Secretary of State; the 1935 Act abolished it.

SSC CHSL 2024 Tier 1

5 Jul 2024 · Shift 2

The Constitution of India was adopted on _____.

(a) 26 November
1949

(b) 26 January 1949

(c) 26 January 1950

(d) 24 November
1947

Solution: Adopted on 26 November 1949; it came into force on 26 January 1950.

SSC CHSL 2020 Tier 1

16 Apr 2021 · Shift 2

The members of the Constituent Assembly signed the Constitution of India on _____.

(a) 24 January
1950

(b) 24 January 1952

(c) 26 November
1948

(d) 26 November
1949

Solution: 284 members signed on 24 January 1950, the last day of the Assembly.

SSC CHSL 2023 Tier 1

7 Aug 2023 · Shift 3

The original Constitution of India was hand written in English by:

(a) HVR Iyenger

(b) Prem Behari
Narain Raizada

(c) Vasant Krishan
Vaidya

(d) SN Mukherjee

Solution: Prem Behari Narain Raizada. Vasant Krishan Vaidya wrote the Hindi version; S. N. Mukherjee was the Chief Draftsman.

SSC CHSL 2023 Tier 1

18 Aug 2023 · Shift 1

Which of the following is not a feature of the Government of India Act 1935?

(a) Establishment of
Federal Court

(b) Separation of
Burma

(c) Creation of a All
India Federation

(d) Started dyarchy
at provinces

Solution: The 1935 Act ended dyarchy in the provinces; dyarchy in the provinces had started in 1919.

SSC CHSL 2022 Tier 1

21 Mar 2023 · Shift 2

The Pitts India Act of _____ distinguished between the commercial and political functions of the British East India Company.

(a) 1818

(b) 1792

(c) 1784

(d) 1802

Solution: 1784: political affairs went to the Board of Control, commerce stayed with the Court of Directors.

SSC CHSL 2019 Tier 1

18 Mar 2020 · Shift 2

Who was the Prime Minister of Britain/UK when British Parliament passed an independence bill for India in July 1947 ?

(a) Neville Chamberlain

(b) Clement Attlee

(c) Winston Churchill

(d) Ramsay Macdonald

Solution: Clement Attlee (Labour). Ramsay MacDonald gave the Communal Award of 1932.

RRB NTPC

First meeting, Acts · 2021–2026

RRB NTPC CBT-1

17 Feb 2021 · Shift 1

Who was the president of the first meeting of the constituent assembly which was held on December 9, 1946?

(a) Manabendra Nath Roy

(b) Jawaharlal Nehru

(c) Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha

(d) Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Solution: Sachchidananda Sinha, the oldest member, as temporary President. M. N. Roy first gave the idea of an Assembly (1934).

Which provision of the Indian Council Act of 1909 was most criticised for weakening the unity of the Indian nationalist movement?

(a) Inclusion of Indians in the Governor-General's Council

(b) Introduction of executive councils in presidencies

(c) Creation of separate electorates

(d) Expansion of legislative councils

Solution: Separate electorates for Muslims divided voters by religion; Minto is called the Father of Communal Electorate.

Which Act first created the position of a Governor-General of India with civil and military authority?

(a) Charter Act 1833

(b) Regulating Act

(c) Government of India Act 1858

(d) Pitt's India Act

Solution: Charter Act 1833 (Lord William Bentinck). The Regulating Act created the Governor-General of Bengal.

Which Act transferred the power of governance from the East India Company to the British Crown?

(a) Charter Act, 1833

(b) Regulating Act, 1773

(c) Government of India Act, 1858

(d) Pitt's India Act, 1784

Solution: Government of India Act 1858, passed after the Revolt of 1857.

What does 'dyarchy' mean in the context of the 1919 Act?

(a) Power to the judiciary and legislature

(b) Dual monarchy system

(c) Dual control in provinces

(d) Centralised governance

Solution: Provincial subjects were split into transferred (ministers) and reserved (Governor's council) subjects.

SSC GD Constable 2024

27 Feb 2024 · Shift 2

The election of the Constituent Assembly of India was held in _____.

(a) July 1946

(b) April 1946

(c) March 1946

(d) May 1946

Solution: July–August 1946: Congress 208, Muslim League 73, others 15 of the 296 British-India seats.

SSC GD Constable

6 Mar 2019 · Shift 3

How many members were there in the Constituent Assembly that wrote the Indian Constitution?

(a) 199

(b) 299

(c) 298

(d) 198

Solution: 299 after partition (229 from provinces, 70 from princely states); the original strength was 389.

SSC CPO 2022 Tier 1

11 Nov 2022 · Shift 1

In which town The Supreme Court was established for the First time under the Regulating Act of 1773?

(a) Madras

(b) Assam

(c) Calcutta

(d) New Delhi

Solution: Calcutta (Fort William), 1774, with Elijah Impey as Chief Justice.

SSC Selection Post 2025 (Matric)

29 Aug 2025 · Shift 3

Who was the chairman of the drafting committee of the constituent assembly?

(a) Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

(b) Jawaharlal Nehru

(c) Dr. K. M. Munshi

(d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Solution: Dr B. R. Ambedkar; K. M. Munshi was a member. The committee was formed on 29 August 1947.

Who among the following was the Chairman of Provincial Constitution Committee ?

(a) V.P. Menon

(b) Jawaharlal Nehru

(c) Rajendra Prasad

(d) Sardar Patel

Solution: Sardar Patel; he also chaired the Advisory Committee. Nehru chaired the Union Powers and Union Constitution Committees.

Trend: SSC CGL 2022 tested the Constituent Assembly in depth: the Objectives Resolution, the House Committee, women members (Ammu Swaminathan), Section 8(1) of the Independence Act and the functions of the Assembly. CGL 2024–25 moved to the Acts (provincial autonomy, the India Council of 1858). CHSL asks dates: adoption, signing, Constitution Day and the calligrapher. RRB NTPC 2025–26 asks what each Act did: the Charter Act of 1833, the 1858 transfer to the Crown, dyarchy and separate electorates.

7 PART 7 Practice MCQs

Level 1 · Basic

Q1–Q7 · 15 sec each

Level 2 · Standard

Q8–Q14 · 25 sec each

Level 3 · Exam traps

Q15–Q20 · 35 sec each

Level 1

Q1 Who was the first Governor-General of Bengal under the Regulating Act of 1773?

- (a) Warren Hastings
- (b) Lord Cornwallis
- (c) Lord William Bentinck
- (d) Lord Canning

Q2 Who first put forward the idea of a Constituent Assembly for India (1934)?

- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (b) M. N. Roy
- (c) Mahatma Gandhi
- (d) B. R. Ambedkar

Q3 The Constituent Assembly was set up under the scheme of the:

- (a) Cripps Mission
- (b) August Offer
- (c) Cabinet Mission Plan
- (d) Mountbatten Plan

Q4 Who was the Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly?

- (a) S. N. Mukherjee
- (b) K. M. Munshi
- (c) H. V. R. Iyengar
- (d) B. N. Rau

Q5 What was the symbol on the seal of the Constituent Assembly?

- (a) Elephant
- (b) Lion
- (c) Lotus
- (d) Ashoka Chakra

Q6 Which Act brought in a separate electorate for Muslims?

- (a) Indian Councils Act 1892
- (b) Government of India Act 1919
- (c) Government of India Act 1935
- (d) Indian Councils Act 1909

Q7 The Hindi version of the original Constitution was handwritten by:

- (a) Prem Behari Narain Raizada
- (b) Vasant Krishan Vaidya
- (c) Nandalal Bose
- (d) Beohar Rammanohar Sinha

Level 2

Q8 Which Act set up the Board of Control?

- (a) Regulating Act 1773
- (b) Charter Act 1813
- (c) Pitt's India Act 1784
- (d) Charter Act 1833

Q9 Under the Government of India Act 1935, residuary powers were given to the:

- (a) Viceroy
- (b) Federal Legislature
- (c) Provincial Legislatures
- (d) Secretary of State

Q10 Who chaired the Union Constitution Committee of the Constituent Assembly?

- (a) Vallabhbhai Patel
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Rajendra Prasad
- (d) B. R. Ambedkar

Q11 Who replaced D. P. Khaitan on the Drafting Committee after his death?

- (a) N. Madhava Rau
- (b) V. T. Krishnamachari
- (c) N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar
- (d) T. T. Krishnamachari

Q12 When the Constituent Assembly met as a legislature (Dominion Legislature), who presided?

- (a) Rajendra Prasad
- (b) H. C. Mukherjee
- (c) G. V. Mavalankar
- (d) Jawaharlal Nehru

Q13 How many Schedules did the Constitution have when it was adopted in 1949?

- (a) 10
- (b) 8
- (c) 12
- (d) 9

Q14 In 1862, Lord Canning nominated three Indians to his legislative council. Who among these was NOT one of them?

- (a) Raja Rammohan Roy
- (b) Raja of Benares
- (c) Maharaja of Patiala
- (d) Sir Dinkar Rao

Level 3

Q15 Arrange in order: 1. Drafting Committee set up 2. Objectives Resolution adopted 3. National Flag adopted 4. Draft moved by Ambedkar

- (a) 2, 1, 3, 4
- (b) 3, 2, 1, 4
- (c) 2, 3, 1, 4
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4

Q16 Which provisions came into force on 26 November 1949 itself?

- (a) Citizenship and elections
- (b) Fundamental Rights
- (c) Directive Principles
- (d) Emergency provisions

Q17 Which pair is INCORRECTLY matched?

- (a) Regulating Act 1773 – Supreme Court at Calcutta
- (b) Charter Act 1853 – Governor-General of India
- (c) Indian Councils Act 1861 – Portfolio system
- (d) Government of India Act 1935 – Federal Court

Q18 Consider: 1. Members from British India were elected directly by the people. 2. Princely states' members were nominated by their rulers. 3. The Muslim League boycotted the first meeting. Which are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q19 Match List I with List II:

List I	List II
1. Steering Committee	a. K. M. Munshi
2. Fundamental Rights Sub-committee	b. H. C. Mukherjee
3. Minorities Sub-committee	c. J. B. Kripalani
4. Order of Business Committee	d. Rajendra Prasad

- (a) 1-d, 2-b, 3-c, 4-a
(b) 1-a, 2-c, 3-b, 4-d
(c) 1-c, 2-d, 3-a, 4-b
(d) 1-d, 2-c, 3-b, 4-a

Q20 Which statement about the Government of India Act 1935 is correct?

- (a) It introduced dyarchy in the provinces.
(b) It created the office of Secretary of State.
(c) It gave the Concurrent List 59 items.
(d) It provided bicameral legislatures in six provinces.

Score yourself: ____ / 20 · Time taken: ____ min

7.1 Answer key

1 A	2 B	3 C	4 D	5 A	6 D	7 B	8 C	9 A	10 B
11 D	12 C	13 B	14 A	15 C	16 A	17 B	18 C	19 D	20 D

Q1 Warren Hastings, with a council of four.

Q2 M. N. Roy, in 1934; the Congress demanded it officially in 1935.

Q3 Cabinet Mission Plan, 1946.

Q4 Sir B. N. Rau; S. N. Mukherjee was the Chief Draftsman.

Q5 The elephant.

Q6 The Morley-Minto Reforms, 1909.

Q7 Vasant Krishan Vaidya; Raizada wrote the English version.

Q8 Pitt's India Act; it began 'double government'.

Q9 The Viceroy (Governor-General).

Q10 Nehru also chaired the Union Powers and States Committees.

Q11 T. T. Krishnamachari; N. Madhava Rau replaced B. L. Mitter.

Q12 G. V. Mavalankar; Prasad presided over constitution-making.

Q13 Preamble, 395 Articles, 22 Parts and 8 Schedules.

Q14 Rammohan Roy died in 1833; the three were the Raja of Benares, the Maharaja of Patiala and Sir Dinkar Rao.

- Q15** 22 Jan 1947 → 22 Jul 1947 → 29 Aug 1947 → 4 Nov 1948.
- Q16** Citizenship, elections, provisional Parliament and transitional provisions (Article 394).
- Q17** The Governor-General of India came with the Charter Act of 1833; 1853 gave open competition.
- Q18** Members from British India were elected indirectly by provincial assemblies.
- Q19** Steering–Prasad, FR–Kripalani, Minorities–Mukherjee, Order of Business–Munshi.
- Q20** Six of eleven provinces got two houses. Dyarchy in provinces was 1919; Secretary of State 1858; Concurrent List had 36 items.

One-page quick revision

Night-before sheet · Making of the Constitution

PO-01

TOP 10 POINTS

1. 1773 GG of Bengal · 1784 Board of Control.
2. 1833 GG of India · 1853 open competition.
3. 1858 Crown, Viceroy, Secretary of State.
4. 1909 separate electorate · 1919 dyarchy.
5. 1935: 3 lists, autonomy, Federal Court.
6. Idea: M. N. Roy 1934 · formed Nov 1946.
7. 389 → 299 members · 15 women.
8. 9 Dec 1946 Sinha · 11 Dec Prasad.
9. Objectives Resolution: Nehru, 13-12-1946.
10. Adopted 26-11-49 · signed 24-1-50 · 26-1-50.

Date · Event · Person

TOP 3 TRAPS

- First meeting: Sinha, not Prasad.
- Rau = adviser; Ambedkar = Drafting chair.
- Dyarchy in 1919; autonomy in 1935.

SELF-CHECK

- ☐ 13 Acts (1773–1947) with one "first" each
- ☐ 8 major committees with chairmen
- ☐ 7 Drafting Committee members

Term	Meaning	Term	Meaning
Dyarchy	Dual rule in provinces	Residuary power	Power over unlisted subjects
Enactment	Adoption (26 Nov 1949)	Commencement	Coming into force (26 Jan 1950)
Separate electorate	Community votes for its own	STV	Single transferable vote

Image credits (Wikimedia Commons): Sachchidananda Sinha – Neelsb, CC BY-SA 3.0; Hansa Mehta – Wikimedia Commons contributor (cropped from a source image), CC BY-SA 4.0; Edwin Montagu – Central News Agency, CC BY 3.0. All other photographs are in the public domain.