

The First Hindi Map of Independent India

The first Hindi map of Independent India was published in 1952, and the masthead read: *Bharat ke Rajnaitik Vibhag* or India's Political map. This was published by Col Gambhir Singh, MIS (India) in his capacity as the officiating Surveyor General of India.

The map under reference classifies states in four categories: states under Governors (Part A), states under Raj Pramukhas (Part B), Union Territories under Lieutenant Governors (Part C) and Chief Commissioners under the Union government (Part D). It also carries the usual disclaimers regarding the India-Pakistan boundary still being indicative, and not an international boundary.

As this is the first HINDI map of Independent India, this essay will focus on the Hindi speaking region: Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal. The last four entities were merged in Madhya Pradesh in 1956. Ajmer-Merwara was also to merge with Rajasthan in the same year. Incidentally, with the

exception of Rajasthan, all the other states were again divided in 2000, with Uttaranchal (later Uttarakhand) being carved out of UP, Jharkhand from Bihar and Chhattisgarh from MP.

Let us first look at UP which is now called Uttar Pradesh (earlier United Provinces), with its capital at Lucknow. It is important to mention Lucknow for this is used as the exemplar to point out how state capitals are shown on the map. The three erstwhile princely states that were integrated into UP included Rampur, Tehri Garhwal and Benares. With an area of 900 square miles and a population of five lakhs, Rampur was the last signpost of the Rohilla power. Under the Rulership of the enlightened Sir Saiyad Raza Ali Khan Bahadur, it became the first state under a Muslim ruler of significance to openly accept the accession to India. His request that as an interim measure the state should be first made a Chief Commissioner's province was accepted. Incidentally, the Oriental Library of Rampur has a fine collection of over twelve thousand rare manuscripts and a wonderful collection of Mughal miniatures. Meanwhile, Banaras (area 875 square miles and a population of four lakhs) had also agreed to the merger with UP. With respect to Tehri Garhwal, given its contiguity to both Himachal Pradesh and UP, an option was available, especially because it had been clubbed under Punjab States in the aftermath of independence. Finally, the decision to merge it with UP was taken because Pauri Garhwal and Kumaon were with UP. The state had been founded in 688

CE by Raja Kanak Pal, and the present ruler was the 59th direct descendant in the male line.

Let's also take a look at the areas which now comprise Madhya Pradesh (MP). Vindhya Pradesh was formed with thirty five states from Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand – all of whom were Rajputs, but known for intense rivalry and infighting. The most viable state amongst them was Rewa. Two experiments with popular ministries failed, and it became a Part C state and placed under a Lieutenant Governor, with a legislature, but limited powers. Madhya Bharat had twenty five states, including the warring Indore and Gwalior. To appease them, it was decided that the Indore would be the summer capital and that administration would shift to Gwalior in winters. The areas under the erstwhile Central Province (CP) and Berar, along with states like Bastar, Kanker, Surguja, and Jashpur, Korea, Chang Bakar *etal* were constituted as the state of Madhya Pradesh. It was already one of the largest states in the country, and by 1956, it became even larger with the merger of Bhopal, Vindhya Pradesh and Madhya Bharat.

As far as Bihar is concerned, the boundaries of the erstwhile state were not affected except for the addition of the princely states of Kharsawan and Seraikella, which were earlier under the Orissa States Agency. Now both these states are in Jharkhand.

It is also the first map printed in India which shows China as a neighbouring country. Prior to this the vast Himalayan stretch

bordering Ladhak, Himachal, Garhwal (UP), Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan is shown as Tibet. In the 1950 map, the area adjacent to Gilgit Baltistan is shown as 'boundary undefined '. However in the 1952 map, this area is marked as China, but Tibet continues to be shown quite prominently. The only physical feature in Tibet identified on the map is Tsangpo (the Tibetan name for Brahmaputra). As I will show in a later article, by 1956, Tibet disappears from the official map of India, and the entire stretch is shown as China. This continues in the map of 1958, but by 1960, Tibet is again shown as a province of China. Each map tells many a story!