

Madhya Bharat , the popular name for the Union of Gwalior, Indore and Malwa was the largest part B state , comprising an area of 47,000 square miles , a population of seven million and a revenue of Rs 8 crores. It had been formed after federating twenty-five states of Central India, and except for a small portion, the entire region was part of the Malwa plateau. However , getting the two leading states Gwalior (a twenty-one-gun salute state) and Indore (a nineteen-gun salute state) with a history of hostility for two centuries was a herculean task. Gwalior was the first of the twenty-one-gun salute states to agree to integration, and the Ruler Sir George Jivaji Rao Scindia had transferred power to an interim government of popular representatives , who were also authorised to draw up a new constitution. The state had cash reserves as well as investment and reserve funds totalling to over Rs 20 crores. As his 'state' was viable in and by itself , merging it with another entity was contrary to the assurances given both by Governor General Mountbatten as well as the Ministry of states. His traditional rival Indore, was however most reluctant for it was clear that in any scheme of 'merger' Gwalior would always have the edge , because of its size, status , revenue and standing with the Ministry of States .

It must be mentioned here that the Maharaja of Indore, Sir Yeshwant Rao Holkar had been snubbed by the Political Department after he wrote to the President of the USA during the Second World war stressing the imperative need of satisfying the nationalist demands in India. His only concern was that following the Indore tradition to having women at the helm (Devi Ahalyabai), his only daughter Usha Devi should be recognized as the heir .Indore was keen that instead of one Union comprising all the

states of Malwa , two Unions , one each around Gwalior and Indore should be created. The popular ministries in both the states were also in favour of two Unions : however, it was felt that given the longer-term vision of having fewer, but viable states, it was better to get all the states in the region together . Else there would be jostling between the two to add smaller states to their respective Unions. What finally settled the issue was the nudge: offering the position of life long Raj Pramukh for Gwalior, and senior Up Rajpramukh for Indore , and a consolidated amount of Rs 2.5 lakhs over and above the privy purse for holding this 'august office'. Another issue was regarding the role of the Up Rajpramukh – for in every other state , the provision was that the Up Rajpramukh would function when the Raj Pramukh is indisposed , or absent from the state. To satisfy Indore, a special clause was added 'The Rajpramukh may from time to time consult the Senior Vice President (Up Rajpramukh) in important matters connected with the administration of the United State . To get the other states on board, two positions of Junior Raj Pramukhs (by election) was offered to the rest of the states.

These included the states of Dhar and Dewas – both Parmara Rajputs and in the case of Dewas , the two brothers had divided the state between themselves as Dewas Senior and Dewas Junior. Then there was Ratlam, Alirajpur, Barwani, Jhabua, Khilchipur ,Narsinghar ,Sailana,Sitamu, Jobat, Kathiwara, Mathwar, Rajgarh, Nimkhera, Jamnia and Piploda . They were all paying their tribute either to the Scindias or the Holkars, but the British gave them all their 'independent status' which served the dual purpose of reducing the strength of these two power centres, besides making them totally beholden to the Raj. There were in addition to these Rajput states, four Muslim states of Jaora, Kurwai, Mohammadgarh and Pathari. Pathari was related to Dost Mohammad, the founder of Bhopal, and the others too claimed Afghan ancestry. However , most of the states comprised blocks of territories separated by intervening states creating a veritable mosaic

which was difficult to administer or develop. This was yet another reason why it was felt that one Union would be better than two Unions.

Interestingly, with regard to the setting up of a seventy-five-member Interim legislature and Constituent Assembly, there was a general agreement that based on the population of the states, forty would be elected from Gwalior, fifteen from Indore and twenty by an electoral college from all the other states .

The Union was inaugurated by Prime Minister Nehru on 28 May, 1948, who also resolved the 'capital issue' by declaring Indore as the summer capital and Gwalior as the winter capital with the caveat that as Gwalior was much bigger than Indore, the duration for Gwalior would be six and a half months !