

The June 3 Plan (1947)

Background

After World War II, Britain became weak and decided to leave India. The Indian political situation was tense because the Congress wanted a united India, while the Muslim League strongly demanded a separate homeland, Pakistan. The earlier Cabinet Mission Plan had failed to satisfy both sides. Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, was sent to find a final solution for the transfer of power.

Main Features

The June 3 Plan announced that power would be transferred by June 1948. Punjab and Bengal, the two big provinces, were to vote on whether they should be divided. Sindh Assembly was given the choice to join India or Pakistan. In the North-West Frontier Province, a referendum was to decide its future, while the Shahi Jirga of Baluchistan was also given this right. The princely states were allowed to choose freely between India and Pakistan.

Reaction of Parties

The Congress accepted the plan even though it was not happy about dividing India. The Muslim League welcomed it with great joy because it was a victory for the demand of Pakistan. The Sikh community opposed the partition of Punjab at first but later agreed. Gandhi was sad about the division but accepted it for the sake of peace. Overall, all the main political parties gave support to the plan.

Implementation

The British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act in July 1947, turning the June 3 Plan into law. Punjab and Bengal assemblies voted for division, Sindh Assembly voted for Pakistan, and NWFP chose Pakistan through a referendum. The Shahi Jirga of Baluchistan also decided in favor of Pakistan. As a result, two new independent states, India and Pakistan, were created in August 1947, with boundary commissions formed to draw borders.

Importance

The June 3 Plan was a turning point in the history of South Asia. It officially recognized Pakistan's demand for independence and solved the political deadlock between Congress, Muslim League, and Britain. The plan gave provinces the right to decide their future and allowed a relatively quick transfer of power, reducing the risk of more violence. It remains the most important step leading to the creation of Pakistan.