

## Annexation of Awadh - February 11th 1856

The Annexation of Awadh on 11th February 1856, was an important event in modern Indian history. In this article, you can read about the events leading to the annexation of Awadh by the East India Company and its aftermath for the IAS exam.

### Background about the Kingdom of Awadh

The Oudh, (called Awadh by the British) State was a princely state in the Awadh region of North India.

Upon the decline of the Mughal Empire, following the death of Emperor Aurangzeb, the governors of local provinces began to consolidate their own power. One such province was Awadh. The governors of Awadh began to exert greater autonomy until Awadh evolved into an independent state that controlled fertile lands of the Central and Lower Doab region. The British East India Company checked its power following the Battle of Buxar in 1764. In its aftermath, Awadh came under the nominal control of the British colonial powers.

The capital of Awadh was Faizabad. (Asaf-ud-Daula (1775 AD-1797 AD) shifted the capital from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775 AD.) British agents, then going by the term “residents”, had their base of operations in Lucknow. The Nawab of Awadh erected a Residency in Lucknow as a wider programme of civic reforms.

- The [Battle of Buxar](#), saw the combined armies of the Nawab of Awadh (Shuja-ud-daulah), the Nawab of Bengal and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II defeated by the British. Following the battle, the British became the paramount power in the region.
- In 1765 the Treaty of Allahabad was signed. The treaty stated that the East India Company would receive Rs. 50 lakh from Awadh. In return, both the parties were to help each other in case of war with any other power.
- In May 1816 the Kingdom of Awadh became a British protectorate.
- Wajid Ali Shah was the Nawab of Awadh from 1822. He was the tenth Nawab and was to be the final one.
- Although he was a capable ruler, the British residents gave exaggerated reports about his incompetence to the company authorities. This gave the East India Company a *Casus Belli* (cause for war in Latin) to conquer Awadh. This was in line with Dalhousie's [Doctrine of Lapse](#), in which the British would take over a kingdom if there was misrule also. The Kingdom of Awadh was annexed in February 1856.

### The aftermath of the Annexation

The loss of Awadh only added to the existing tensions between the British and the local populace. The simmering resentment would only boil over as the [revolt of 1857](#), with Awadh being as one of the many focal points of the rebellion.

There were many uprisings in the region between 5th July 1857 and 3rd March 1858 during the rebellion. The British lost control momentarily before crushing the rebellion. Upon reestablish, meant they were bloody reprisals on the local population for their part in the uprising against the British. The reprisals campaigns would last for 18 months.

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After Awadh's territory was merged with the North-Western Provinces, it formed the larger province of North-Western Provinces and Awadh. It was renamed the United Provinces of Agra and Awadh In 1902, before finally being renamed, Agra Province.

