

Portuguese India

The Portuguese State of India (Estado Português da Índia), also simply known as Portuguese India was a colonial state of the Portuguese Empire within the Indian Subcontinent. The first Europeans to come to India and the last ones to leave were Portuguese.

The first Portuguese to land in India was Vasco De Gama in 1498. However, the period of Portuguese rule in India is said to be between 1505 to 1961. Portuguese colonialism outlived its English counterpart, but unlike them had limited influence beyond the confines of their colonies.

This article will further give details about Portuguese India within the context of the IAS Exam

Timeline of Portuguese India and General Facts

Before we go learn in detail about Portuguese colonialism in India, candidates can have a look at the timeline of their rule in India as well as learn some general information about Portuguese colonialism in India.

Timeline of Portuguese India	
1498	Vasco-da-Gama makes landfall at Calicut where he is received by the Zamorins
1503	First Portuguese fort is established at Cochin (now known as Kochi)
1505	Second Portuguese fort at Cannanore is built
1509	A combined fleet of Egyptian, Arab and Zamorin fleet is destroyed by the Portuguese at the Battle of Diu
1510	Goa is captured from the Bijapur Sultanate by Alfonso Albuquerque
1530	Goa is declared as the capital of Portuguese India
1535	Diu is completely subjugated
1539	Portuguese Diu is under siege by a combined fleet of Ottomans, Mamluks of Egypt, the Gujarat Sultanate and the Zamorin of Calicut. It ends. It ends in absolute victory for the Portuguese
1559	Daman is captured by the Portuguese
1596	In South-East Asia, the Dutch establish a monopoly in the spice trade after dislodging the Portuguese

1661	Bombay is handed over to the English
1612	Surat is lost to the English
1663	The Portuguese lose all their forts to the Dutch on the Malabar Coast
1779	Acquisition of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in
1843	Panjim is made capital of Portuguese India
1961	Portuguese lose their final colonial outpost of Goa when the Indian army launches a military operation to liberate it.

Early Beginnings of Portuguese India

Portuguese colonialism began in earnest when Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on the Malabar Coast on 20 May 1498. He met the Zamorin ruler of Calicut and despite objections from the Arab traders, obtained permission from the Zamorin to trade in Calicut. But Vasco da Gama was unable to pay the custom duties and price of his goods.

When the duties were not paid, the Zamorin's officials detained some of Vasco da Gama's men. This angered him enough to kidnap some natives and fishermen by force.

But as far as the Portuguese government in Lisbon was concerned, the expedition was successful. A sea route bypassing the Ottoman Empire was found and the expedition had yielded a profit far beyond the initial investment.

Further incursion of Portuguese Colonialism

Further conflict with the Zamorin Kingdom and expeditions of Vasco da Gama established a base of operations on the Malabar coast. The first viceroy Francisco de Almeida established his headquarters in what would become modern day Cochin.

In 1509 Alfonso de Albuquerque became the second governor of the Portuguese possessions in the East. A Portuguese fleet under Marshal Fernão Coutinho arrives off the coast of Calicut. Their instructions were clear: Destruction of the Zamorin.

The city was reduced to rubble and the Zamorins palace captured, but the local forces rallied and fell upon the invading Portuguese, causing them to retreat and wounding Albuquerque

Albuquerque relented and entered into a treaty with the Zamorin in 1513 to protect Portuguese interests in Malabar.

With the aid of the Vijaynagar Empire Afonso de Albuquerque defeated the Bijapur sultanate in 1510, establishing the permanent settlement of Goa. It would go on to become the headquarters of the Portuguese colonial possessions in India and seat of the viceroy.

Modern-day Mumbai was also part of colonial possession until it was given to the British in 1661.

Goa was briefly occupied by the British from 1799 to 1813, during which the last vestiges of the inquisition were wiped out.

In 1843 the capital was shifted to Panjim, then renamed Nova Goa, when it officially became the administrative seat of Portuguese India

Portuguese control would only be restricted to Goa and the enclaves of Diu and Daman and Goa for the next century.

Decline of Portuguese India

While most of India got its independence from the British, the Portuguese still held on to its colonial outposts in India. On July 24, 1954, an organisation called the "United Front of Goans" seized the Dara Naive while Nagar Haveli was seized by Azad Gomantak Dal in August of that year. The decision by the International Court of Justice at The Hague to give access to Portuguese territories in India was rendered useless.

Local protests against Portuguese rule in Goa were suppressed with brute force. Despite repeated requests from the Indian government to hand over its colonial holdings, the Portuguese government under Dictator António de Oliveira Salazar refused such a notion claiming they were an integral part of Portuguese territory.

Adopting a 'wait and watch' tactic from 1951 to 1961, the Indian government highlighted the issue of decolonisation before the international communities, while at the same time enforcing an economic embargo.

It was in December 1961, when the Indian military launched an invasion of Goa. Against overwhelming odds, the Portuguese tried to put up a fight but were swiftly defeated by the Indian Army. The Governor of Portuguese India signed the Instrument of Surrender on 19 December 1961, liberating Goa after 450 years of Portuguese rule in India.

India's sovereignty was not recognised by Salazar's government until its fall in the 1970s from which point on the relationship between India and Portugal became amicable.