

Radcliffe Award Report of the Punjab Boundary Commission

by Punjab Boundary Commission



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REPORT OF THE PUNJAB BOUNDARY COMMISSION

To

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

1. I have the honour in present the decision and award of the Punjab Boundary Commission, which, by virtue of section 4 of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, is represented by my decision as Chairman of that Commission.

2. The Punjab Boundary Commission was constituted by the announcement of the Governor-General, dated the 30th of June, 1947, Reference No. D50/7/47R. The members of the Commission thereby appointed were—

Mr. Justice Din Muhammad,
Mr. Justice Muhammad Munir,

Mr. Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan, and
Mr. Justice Teja Singh.

I was subsequently appointed Chairman of this Commission.

3. The terms of reference of the Commission, as set out in the announcement, were as follows:—

"The Boundary Commission is instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. In doing so, it will also take into account other factors."

We were desired to arrive at a decision as soon as possible before the 15th of August.

4. After preliminary meetings, the Commission invited the submission of memoranda and representations by interested parties. Numerous memoranda and representations were received.

5. The public sittings of the Commission took place at Lahore, and extended from Monday the 21st of July 1947, to Thursday the 31st of July 1947, inclusive, with the exception of Sunday, the 27th of July. The main arguments were conducted by counsel on behalf of the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, and the Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly; but a number of other interested parties appeared and argued before the Commission. In view of the fact that I was acting also as Chairman of the Bengal Boundary Commission, whose proceedings were taking place simultaneously with the proceedings of the Punjab Boundary Commission, I did not attend the public sittings in person, but made arrangements to study daily the record of the proceedings and of all material submitted for our consideration.

6. After the close of the public sittings, the Commission adjourned to Simla where I joined my colleagues, and we entered upon discussions in the hope of being able to present an agreed decision as to the demarcation of the boundaries. I am greatly indebted to my colleagues for indispensable assistance in the clarification of the issues and the marshalling of the arguments for different views, but it became evident in the course of our discussions that the divergence of opinion between my colleagues was so wide that an agreed solution of the boundary problem was not to be obtained. I do not intend to convey by this that there were not large areas of the Punjab on the west and on the east respectively which provoked no controversy as to which State they should be assigned to; but when it came to the extensive but disputed areas in which the boundary must be drawn, differences of opinion as to the significance of the term "other factors", which we were directed by our terms of reference to take into account, and as to the weight and value to be attached to those factors, made it impossible to arrive at any agreed line. In those circumstances my colleagues, at the close of our discussions, assented to the conclusion that I must proceed to give my own decision.

7. This I now proceed to do. The demarcation of the boundary line is described in detail in the schedule which forms Annexure A to this award, and in the map^[1] attached thereto, Annexure B. The map is annexed for purposes of illustration, and if there should be any divergence between the boundary as described in Annexure A and as delineated

on the map in Annexure B, the description in Annexure A is to prevail.

8. Certain representations were addressed to the Commission on behalf of the States of Bikaner and Bahawalpur, both of which States were interested in canals whose headworks were situate in the Punjab Province. I have taken the view that an interest of this sort can not weigh directly in the question before us as to the division of the Punjab between the Indian Union and Pakistan since the territorial division of the province does not affect rights of private property, and I think that I am entitled to assume with confidence that any agreements that either of those States has made with the Provincial Government as to the sharing of water from these canals or otherwise will be respected by whatever Government hereafter assumes jurisdiction over the headworks concerned. I wish also to make it plain that no decision that is made by this Commission is intended to affect whatever territorial claim the State of Bahawalpur may have in respect of a number of villages lying between Sulemanke Weir and Gurka Ferry.

9. The task of delimiting a boundary in the Punjab is a difficult one. The claims of the respective parties ranged over a wide field of territory, but in my judgment the truly debatable ground in the end proved to lie in and around the area between the Beas and Sutlej rivers on the one hand, and the river Ravi on the other. The fixing of a boundary in this area was further complicated by the existence of canal

systems, so vital to the life of the Punjab but developed only under the conception of a single administration, and of systems of road and rail communication, which have been planned in the same way. There was also the stubborn geographical fact of the respective situations of Lahore and Amritsar, and the claims to each or both of those cities which each side vigorously maintained. After weighing to the best of my ability such other factors as appeared to me relevant as affecting the fundamental basis of contiguous majority areas, I have come to the decision set out in the Schedule which thus becomes the award of the Commission. I am conscious that there are legitimate criticisms to be made of it: as there are, I think, of any other line that might be chosen.

10. I have hesitated long over those not inconsiderable areas east of the Sutlej River and in the angle of the Beas and Sutlej Rivers in which Muslim majorities are found. But on the whole I have come to the conclusion that it would be in the true interests of neither State to extend the territories of the West Punjab to a strip on the far side of the Sutlej and that there are factors such as the disruption of railway communications and water systems that ought in this instance to displace the primary claims of contiguous majorities. But I must call attention to the fact that the Dipalpur Canal, which serves areas in the West Punjab, takes off from the Ferozepore headworks and I find it difficult to envisage a satisfactory demarcation of boundary at this point that is not accompanied by some arrangement

for joint control of the intake of the different canals dependent on these headworks.

11. I have not found it possible to preserve undivided the irrigation system of the Upper Bari Doab Canal, which extends from Madhopur in the Pathankot Tahsil to the western border of the district of Lahore, although I have made small adjustments of the Lahore-Amritsar district boundary to mitigate some of the consequences of this severance; nor can I see any means of preserving under one territorial jurisdiction the Mandi Hydro-electric Scheme which supplies power in the districts of Kangra, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Lahore, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepore, Sheikhpura, and Lyallpur. I think it only right to express the hope that, where the drawing of a boundary line cannot avoid disrupting such unitary services as canal irrigation, railways, and electric power transmission, a solution may be found by agreement between the two States for some joint control of what has hitherto been a valuable common service.

12. I am conscious too that the award cannot go far towards satisfying sentiments and aspirations deeply held on either side but directly in conflict as to their bearing on the placing of the boundary. If means are to be found to gratify to the full those sentiments and aspirations, I think that they must be found in political arrangements with which I am not concerned, and not in the decision of a boundary line drawn under the terms of reference of this Commission.

CYRIL RADCLIFFE,

NEW DELHI,
The 12th August 1947.

THE SCHEDULE

See Annexures A and B attached.

ANNEXURE A

1. The boundary between the East and West Punjab shall commence on the north at the point where the west branch of the Ujh river enters the Punjab Province from the State of Kashmir. The boundary shall follow the line of that river down the western boundary of the Pathankot Tahsil to the point where the Pathankot, Shakargarh and Gurdaspur tahsils meet. The tahsil boundary and not the actual course of the Ujh river shall constitute the boundary between the East and West Punjab.

2. From the point of meeting of the three tahsils above mentioned, the boundary between the East and West Punjab shall follow the line of the Ujh river to its junction with the river Ravi and thereafter the line of the river Ravi along the boundary between the tahsils of Gurdaspur and Shakargarh, the boundary between the tahsils of Batala and Shakargarh,

the boundary between the tahsils of Batala and Narowal, the boundary between the tahsils of Ajnala and Narowal, and the boundary between the tahsils of Ajnala and Shadara, to the point on the river Ravi where the district of Amritsar is divided from the district of Lahore. The tahsil boundaries referred to, and not the actual course of the river Ujh or the river Ravi, shall constitute the boundary between the East and West Punjab.

3. From the point on the river Ravi where the district of Amritsar is divided from the district of Lahore, the boundary between the East and West Punjab shall turn southwards following the boundary between the tahsils of Ajnala and Lahore and then the thasils of Tarn Taran and Lahore, to the point where the tahsils of Kasur, Lahore and Tarn Taran meet. The line will then turn south-westward along the boundary between the tahsils of Lahore and Kasur to the point where that boundary meets the north-east corner of village Theh Jharolian. It will then run along the eastern boundary of that village to its junction with village Chathianwala, turn along the northern boundary of that village, and then run down its eastern boundary to its junction with village Waigal. It will then run along the eastern boundary of village Waigal to its junction with village Kalia, and then along the southern boundary of village Waigal to its junction with village Panhuwan. The line will then run down the eastern boundary of village Panhuwan to its junction with village Gaddoke. The line will then run down the eastern border of village Gaddoke to

its junction with village Nurwala. It will then turn along the southern boundary of village Gaddoke to its junction with village Katluni Kalan. The line will then run down the eastern boundary of village Katluni Kalan to its junction with villages Kals and Mastgarh. It will then run along the southern boundary of village Katluni Kalan to the north-west corner of village Kals. It will then run along the western boundary of village Kals to its junction with village Khem Karan. The line will then run along the western and southern boundaries of village Khem Karan to its junction with village Maewala. It will then run down the western and southern boundaries of village Maewala, proceeding eastward along the boundaries between village Mahaidepur on the north and villages Sheikhpura Kuhna, Kamalpuran, Fatehwala and Mahewala. The line will then turn northward along the western boundary of village Sahjra to its junction with villages Mahaidepur and Machhike. It will then turn north-eastward along the boundaries between villages Machhike and Sahjra and then proceed along the boundary between villages Rattoke and Sahjra to the junction between villages Rattoke, Sahjra and Mabbuke. The line will then run north-east between the villages Rattoke and Mabbuke to the junction of villages Rattoke, Mabbuke, and Gajjal. From that point the line will run along the boundary between villages Mabbuke and Gajjal, and then turn south along the eastern boundary of village Mabbuke to its junction with village Nagar Aimanpur. It will then turn along the north-eastern boundary of village Nagar Aimanpur, and run along its eastern boundary to its junction

with village Masteke. From there it will run along the eastern boundary of village Masteke to where it meets the boundary between the tahsils of Kasur and Ferozepore.

For the purpose of identifying the villages referred to in this paragraph, I attach a map of the Kasur tahsil authorized by the then Settlement Officer, Lahore District, which was supplied to the Commission by the Provincial Government.

4. The line will then run in a south-westerly direction down the Sutlej River on the boundary between the Districts of Lahore and Ferozepore to the point where the districts of Ferozepore, Lahore and Montgomery meet. It will continue along the boundary between the districts of Ferozepore and Montgomery to the point where this boundary meets the border of Bahawalpur State. The district boundaries, and not the actual course of the Sutlej River, shall in each case constitute the boundary between the East and West Punjab.

5. It is my intention that this boundary line should ensure that the canal headworks at Sulemanke will fall within the territorial jurisdiction of the West Punjab. If the existing delimitation of the boundaries of Montgomery District does not ensure this, I award to the West Punjab so much of the territory concerned as covers the headworks, and the boundary shall be adjusted accordingly.

6. So much of the Punjab Province as lies to the west of the line demarcated in the preceding paragraphs shall be the

territory of the West Punjab. So much of the territory of the Punjab Province as lies to the east of that line shall be the territory of the East Punjab.

1. [↑](#) Not published.

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