

India – partition at the stroke of midnight

In 1947, Britain, faced with irreconcilable differences over the demand for a separate state for India's Muslims, decided to divide the country. The break-up, agreed to by most of India's political leaders, brought independence but also tragedy, resulting in the exodus of some 15 million people and the deaths of up to one million in internecine bloodshed

COUNTDOWN TO PARTITION

► **1858:** India comes under direct rule of British crown after failed rebellion of 1857

► **1885: Indian National Congress** founded – becomes forum for emerging nationalist feeling

► **1906: All India Muslim League** founded to defend Muslim political interests



► **1920:** Nationalist figurehead **Mahatma Gandhi** (left) launches anti-British civil disobedience campaign

► **1930:** Poet **Allama Iqbal** advocates establishment of separate Muslim state

► **1930s:** Mistrust increases between Muslim League and Congress

► **1933:** Name "Pakistan" – Urdu for "Land of the Pure" – coined by Cambridge student **Rahmatullah Chowdhry**

► **1940:** Muslim League leader **Mohammed Ali Jinnah** calls for separate Muslim state

► **1946, Jul:** Cabinet Mission Plan – British proposal for Hindus and Muslims to work together within united India – collapses

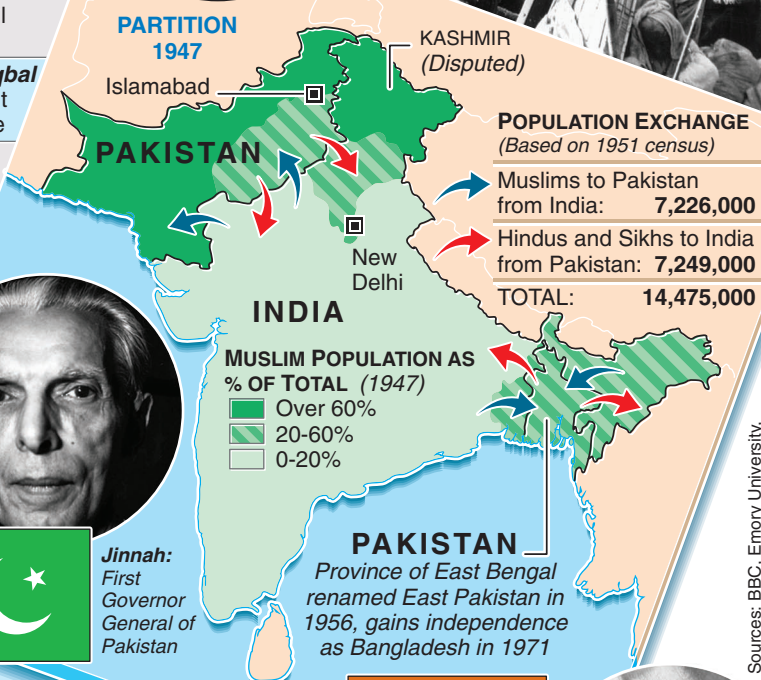
► **Aug:** Bloodiest Hindu-Muslim violence in nearly a century kills 5,000 in Calcutta – convinces Britain partition is inevitable



► **1947, Jun:** Partition plan of British viceroy **Lord Mountbatten** (left) accepted by Jinnah and Congress leader **Jawaharlal Nehru**

► **Jul:** British Parliament passes **Indian Independence Act**, ordering demarcation of dominions of India and Pakistan by midnight Aug 14-15

► **Aug 14-15:** Separate states born – secular but Hindu-dominated India and Muslim-majority Pakistan



Nehru:
First Prime Minister of independent India