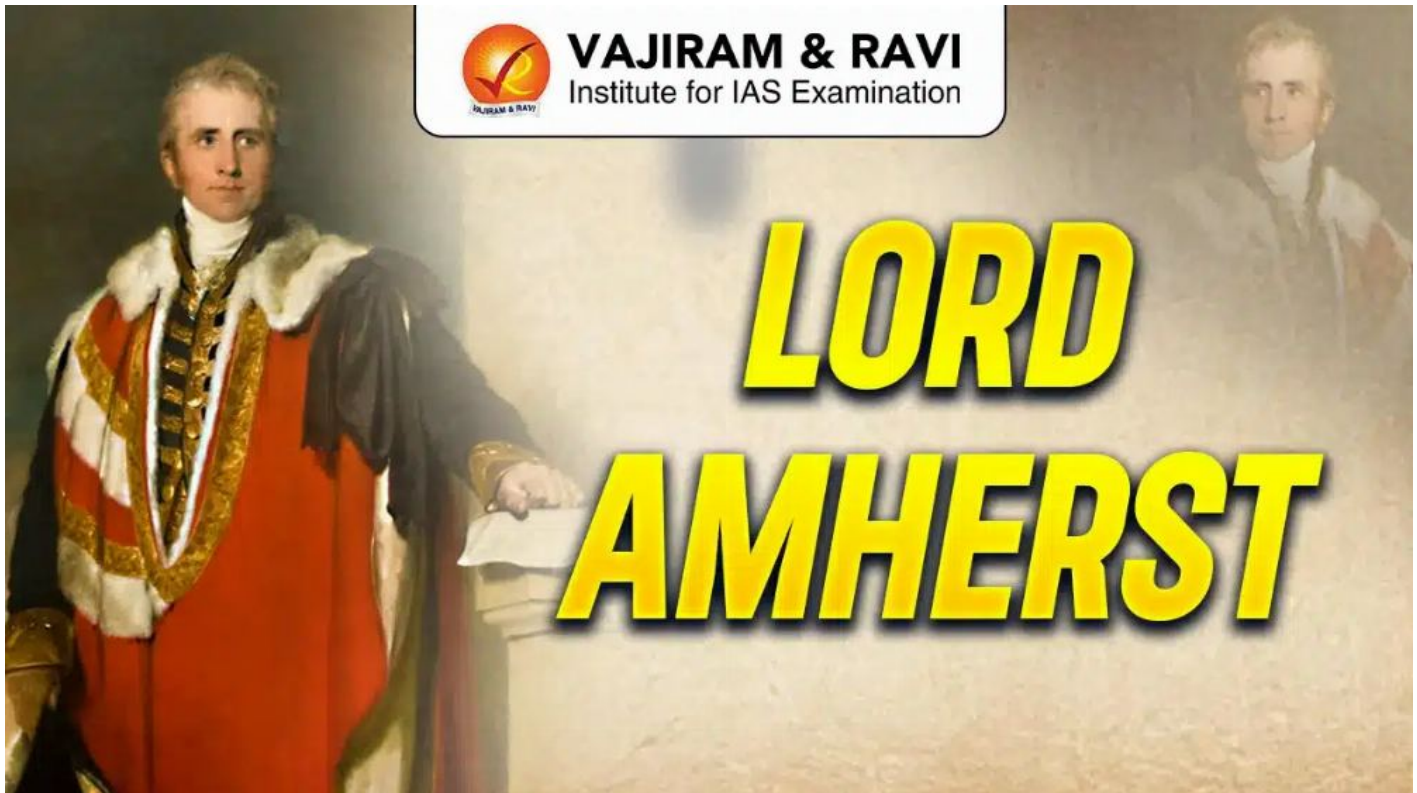


# Lord Amherst (1773-1857), Biography, Contributions, Events

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William Pitt Amherst, 1st Earl Amherst, was a British diplomat and colonial administrator. Lord Amherst served as Governor General of India from 1823 to 1828. His tenure marked a decisive phase of British territorial expansion in eastern India and Burma. He is known earlier for his failed diplomatic mission to China in 1816, Amherst entered Indian administration during a fragile period of border tensions, military unrest and imperial consolidation.

## Lord Amherst Biography

Lord Amherst was born on 14 January 1773 at Bath, Somerset, into an aristocratic British family and was closely related to General Jeffrey Amherst. Educated at Christ Church, Oxford, he earned his BA in 1793 and MA in 1797. He succeeded to the Amherst title through a special remainder in 1797. Before India, he served as ambassador extraordinary to Qing China in 1816, where diplomatic failure shaped his cautious yet consequential colonial career. After retirement, Amherst lived in England until his death at Knole House, Kent, in 1857 at the age of 84, closing a career marked by diplomacy and war.

**Read about:** [Lord Northbrook](#)

# Lord Amherst Contributions

Lord Amherst's administration reshaped British India's eastern frontier through war, annexation and institutional development, leaving lasting political, economic and administrative impacts.

- **Territorial Expansion in Eastern India:** His decisions led to British acquisition of Assam, Arakan and Tenasserim. By policies initiated under Amherst, British control extended over Cachar in 1832 and Upper Assam in 1833.
- **Economic Impact on British India:** The annexation of Assam during his tenure directly enabled the expansion of tea cultivation, later making India a global tea producer.
- **Educational Development:** Amherst sanctioned the establishment of Sanskrit College in Calcutta in 1824, supporting classical Indian learning under colonial administration.
- **Administrative Precedents:** He became the first Governor General to spend summers in Shimla in 1827, setting a precedent for future colonial governance practices.
- **Recognition:** In 1826, during his tenure, he was elevated to Earl Amherst of Arracan, reflecting imperial approval despite heavy war costs.

## Events during Lord Amherst

Major Political, Social and Military events that occurred during the tenure of Lord Amherst have been listed below:

- **Anglo-Burmese Border Conflict:** Violence erupted on 24 September 1823 along the Naaf River due to Burmese incursions, compelling Amherst to deploy troops to defend British claims.
  - The First Anglo-Burmese War 1824-26 lasted two years, involved land and naval campaigns and cost Britain nearly 13 million pounds, triggering financial strain in India.
  - The Treaty of Yandaboo 1826 concluded the war and forced Burma to pay one million pounds sterling, accept British diplomatic presence and surrender territories of Arakan, Tenasserim, Assam and Manipur, ending its influence over eastern Bengal frontiers.
- **Barrackpore Mutiny 1824:** Sepoys of the Bengal Army revolted over forced sea travel to Rangoon, violating the Kaala Pani taboo, combined with grievances over pay and logistics.
  - The mutiny was led by sepoy Binda, who expelled British officers from Barrackpore cantonment before being captured and executed as a warning example.
  - British troops killed nearly 200 Indian sepoy during the suppression, reinforcing military discipline through extreme punitive measures.
  - The execution of Binda left a lasting memory, commemorated today by the Binda Baba Temple at Barrackpore, marking early resistance to colonial authority.

**Administrative Transition:** Amherst left India in 1828, succeeded temporarily by William Butterworth Bayley and permanently by Lord William Bentinck, signaling a shift toward reformist governance.

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