

Forging the Constabulary

The Structural Evolution of the Punjab Police (1857–1902)

From fragmented military levies to a unified provincial system.

The book cover features a decorative border with four ornate corner designs, each containing a compass rose and architectural sketches. The background is a light, marbled paper. The title and author's name are centered in a bold, dark blue serif font.

CRIMINOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

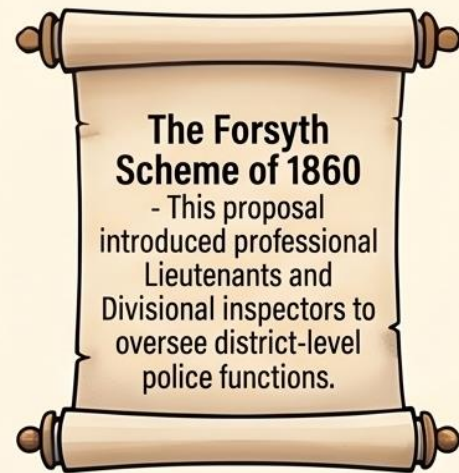
BY DR. MRIDUL SRIVASTAVA

The Evolution of the Punjab Police: From Military Levies to Civil Constabulary (1857–1900)

1857–1861: The Foundation of Reform



The Forsyth Scheme of 1860
- This proposal introduced professional Lieutenants and Divisional Inspectors to oversee district-level police functions.



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The Police Act V of 1861
- This landmark legislation established a dedicated Police Department headed by an Inspector-General.

Military Police
Battalions
Disbanded



Shift to Civil Constabulary
- Replaced by a reorganised, civil-focused police force.

1862–1900: Specialisation and Expansion

Creation of Specialised Units



Ferry Police (River Traffic)



Railway Police (Rail Security)





Systematic Crime Prevention
- Authorities introduced a "Register of Bad Characters" and reformatory villages to track habitual offenders.



Reduced Expenditure
- By 1861, reorganisation efforts successfully reduced police expenditure by 17.5 lacs of rupees.

Frontier Military Police (Derajat Division) - Reorganised in 1860s

Unit Type	Number of Men	Annual Cost (Rs.)
 Horse	403	1,09,600
 Foot	217	20,316
Total	620	1,35,516

Context Summary: Following the 1857 Mutiny, the Punjab Police transitioned from temporary military levies into a structured civil department, introducing the Police Act of 1861, specialised units, and systematic crime prevention.

The Catalyst for Reform

The Catalyst: 1857

Violent Remedies for Violent Maladies.

Extra Police Levies created during the Mutiny.

Characterized by a quasi-military nature and extraordinary extravagance.

The Interim Schemes

Temple's Scheme (1859): Initial attempt to increase efficiency and curtail expense.

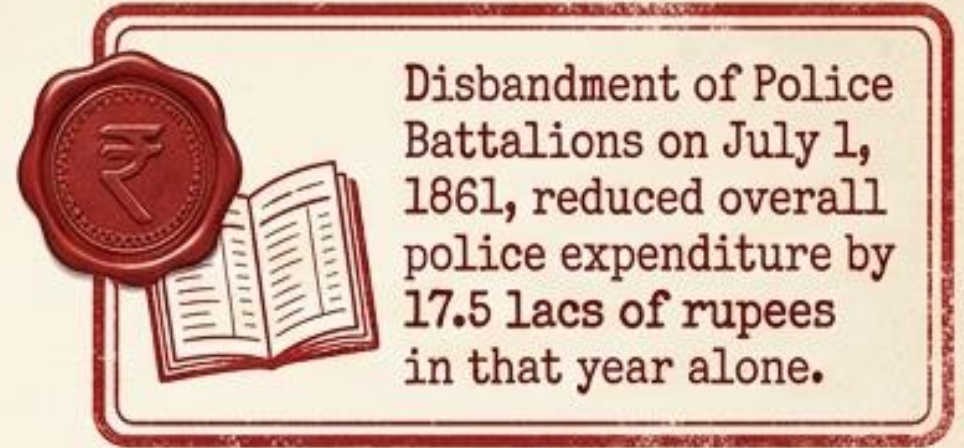
Forsyth's Scheme (1860): Introduced in Lahore. Proposed a European 'Lieutenant of Police' purely for civil functions, overseen by a military 'Divisional Inspector'.

The Resolution: October 1860

Calcutta Police Commission 'Draft Bill' leads to the total extinction of Military Police.

"The suppression of the Mutiny had prepared the people for a civil life and a civil society."

The 1861 Blueprint



Inspector-General
Major George Hutchinson, appointed to correspond directly with the Civil Secretary

The Four Police Circles (Deputy Inspectors-General)

Ambala Circle:
Capt. J.W. Younghusband
(17,358 sq miles)

Lahore Circle:
Capt. George McAndrew
(14,058 sq miles)

Rawalpindi Circle:
Capt. J.N. Miller
(21,067 sq miles)

Multan Circle:
Capt. R.N.T. Thronson
(22,569 sq miles)

District Leadership: 17 District Superintendents and 11 Assistant District Superintendents.

The Frontier Exception

Cis-Indus Districts

Governed by the standard Civil Constabulary under the 1861 Police Act.

Characterized by regularized beats, uniform hierarchy, and total integration into the provincial civil system.

Trans-Indus / Derajat

Policed by the Frontier Military Police (formerly Frontier Political Contingent).

Maintained as a body of quasi-military horse and foot to defend against a hostile, rugged borderland.

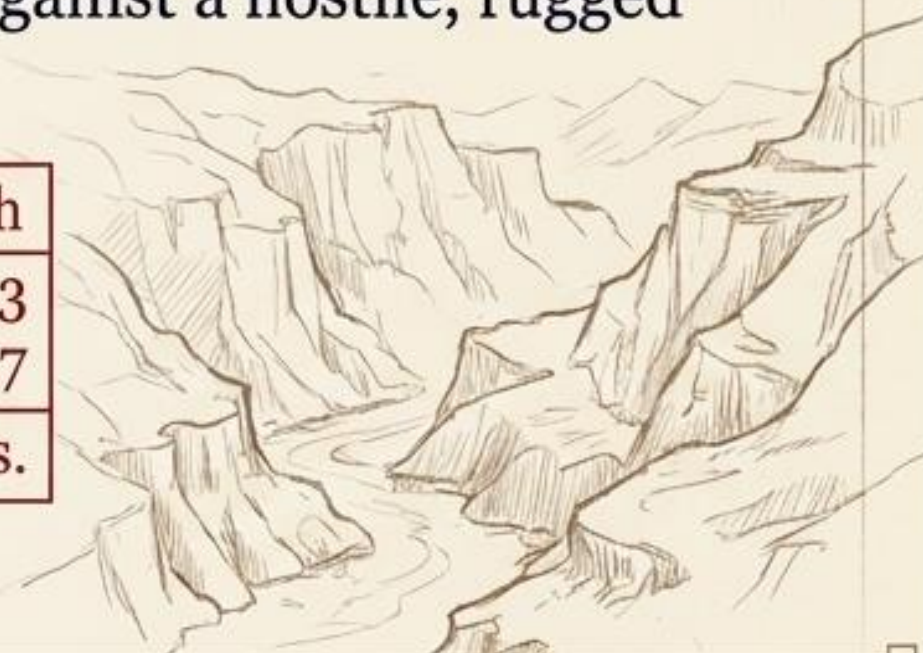
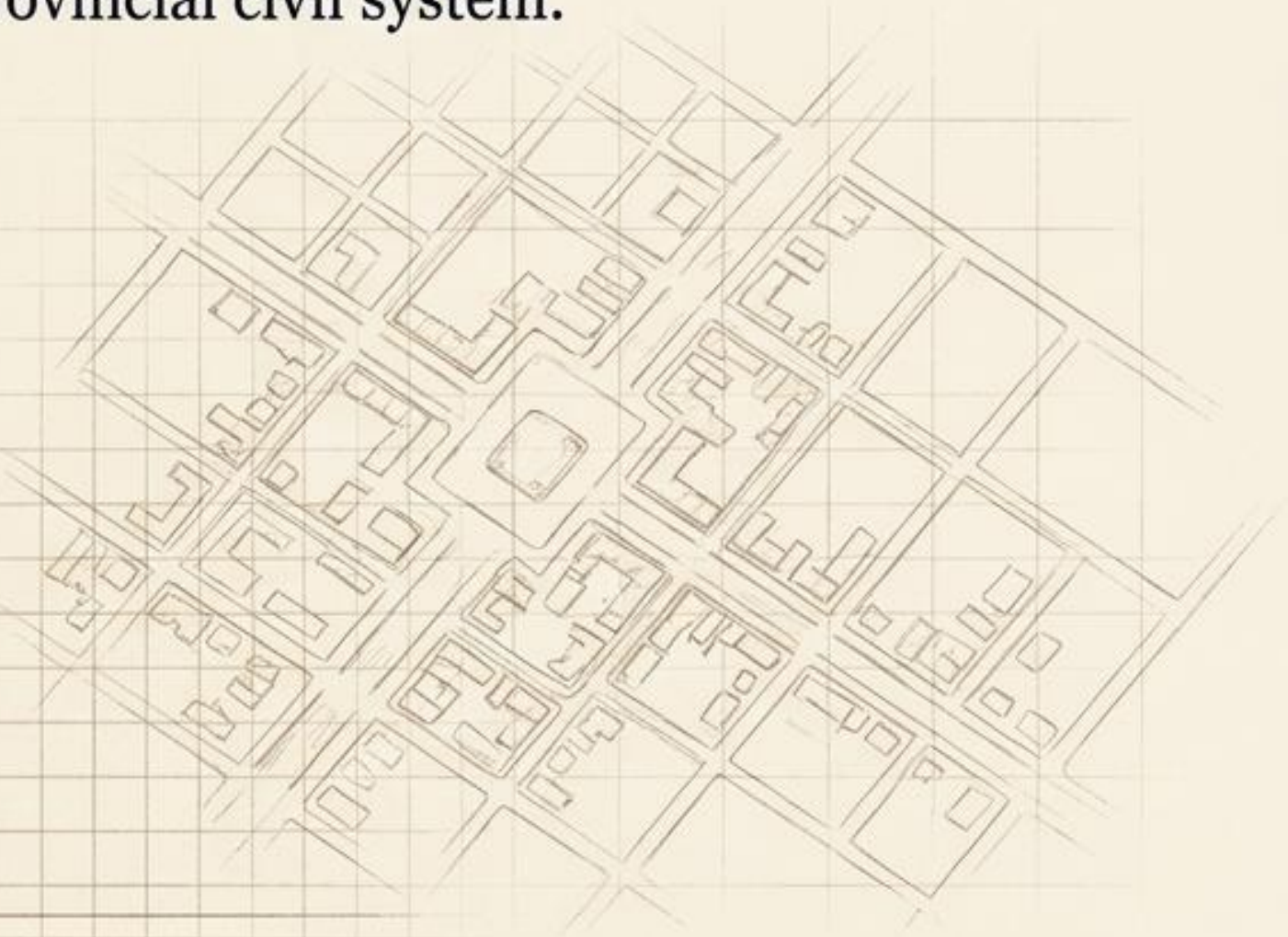
Frontier Force Strength

Horse:	403
Foot:	217

Total Cost:	1,35,516 Rs.
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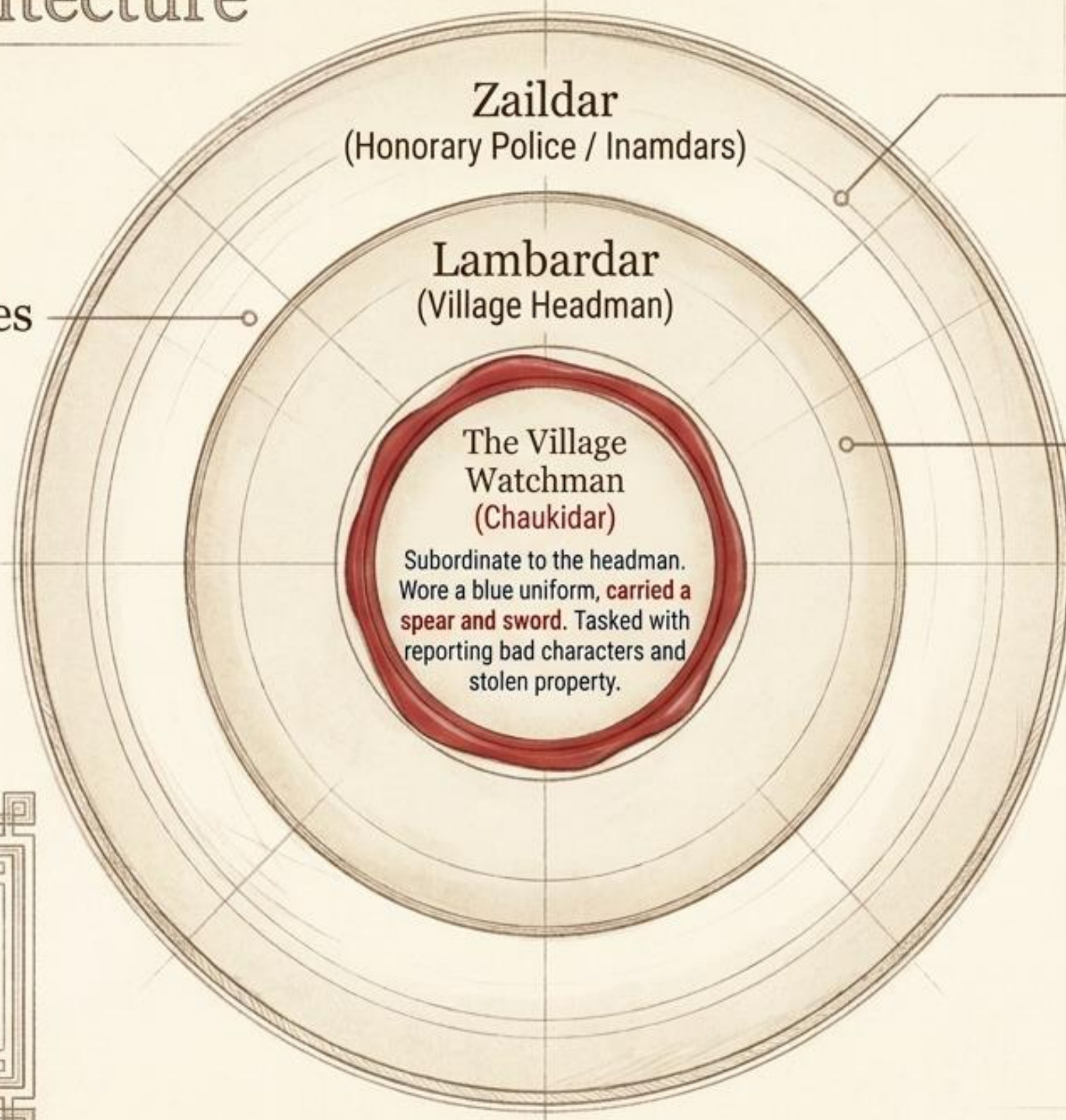
Diagnostic List: Special Difficulties of the Frontier

- Prevalence of **hereditary blood-feuds**
- Absence of prohibition against **arms possession**
- Implacable resentment of **female infidelity**
- Inviolable **asylum** across the border



Grassroots Architecture

Concentric Circles of Control



Zaildar

(Honorary Police / Inamdars)

Lambardar

(Village Headman)

The Village Watchman
(Chaukidar)

Subordinate to the headman. Wore a blue uniform, carried a spear and sword. Tasked with reporting bad characters and stolen property.

Supervised village headmen based on tribe or affinity. Received an honorarium of **Rs. 150/annum**. Immune to regular Police Department punishments.

Land-holder of known influence. Responsible for the conduct of village watchmen, nominated them to the District Magistrate, and paid their wages from a collected fund.

Indigenous Systems

The British also legalized "tikri-chowkidari"—an indigenous system where night patrols were drawn by lot from among the villagers themselves for the preservation of peace.

The Specialized Branches

Diagnostic Table

Branch Name	Primary Jurisdiction	Funding Source	Key Challenge
Ferry Police	Navigable rivers & fordable banks	Ferry Fund	Cattle-lifters using waterways; frequent lack of localized funds (e.g., Dera Ghazi Khan).
Cantonment Police	Military bazaars & cantonments	Government (till 1881), then Cantonment Funds	Jurisdictional clashes; amenable only to Civil Tribunals and their own officers.
Municipal Police	Cities & Towns	Municipal Fund	Dreadful efficiency: low pay attracted unrespectable recruits. "Malady went on growing worse as remedies were applied."
Railway Police	East Indian Railway lines	Shared: Government & Railway Company	Rapid locomotion allowed criminals to "fly away like bees after sucking honey from a garden."

Spotlight: Securing the Waterways

The Squad

Each post on the Jhelum and Chenab rivers consisted of one constable, a chowkidar, and two zamindars.

The Tactics

Constables pursued thieves into the water using inflated skins to stay afloat while intercepting cattle-lifters.

The Geography

Known as '*thaka chaukidari*', sites were strategically chosen where the river current set in strong against the bank, forcing stolen cattle close to view.



Spotlight: The Railway Expansion

Private Failure

Railway authorities rely on crude private watchmen. They lack legal police authority, are untrained, and frequently abuse their power.

1866

Government Intervention

Establishment of Govt Railway Police (204 men). Line measures 234 miles. Rapid locomotion increases crimes like fraud and running train burglary.

1868-69

Vast Expansion

Railway line reaches 1,557 miles. To handle the scale, 3 Assistant Superintendents are attached to ensure proper supervision and control.

1884

The Modern System

"Watch and Ward" duties transferred to Traffic Chowkidars. The concentrated police force is formally deputed to travel with every passenger train to prevent crime.

1893

Preventative Mechanisms

The Registers (1861)

Systemized documentation introduced by Mr. Prinsep. Included a "Register of Bad Characters" to track habitual offenders and a register of Brothels to prevent abduction.

The Trackers

Indigenous trackers were enrolled as trackers were enrolled directly onto the regular police establishment as constables or sergeants.

Crucially, they were exempted from mandatory military drill or standard educational requirements.

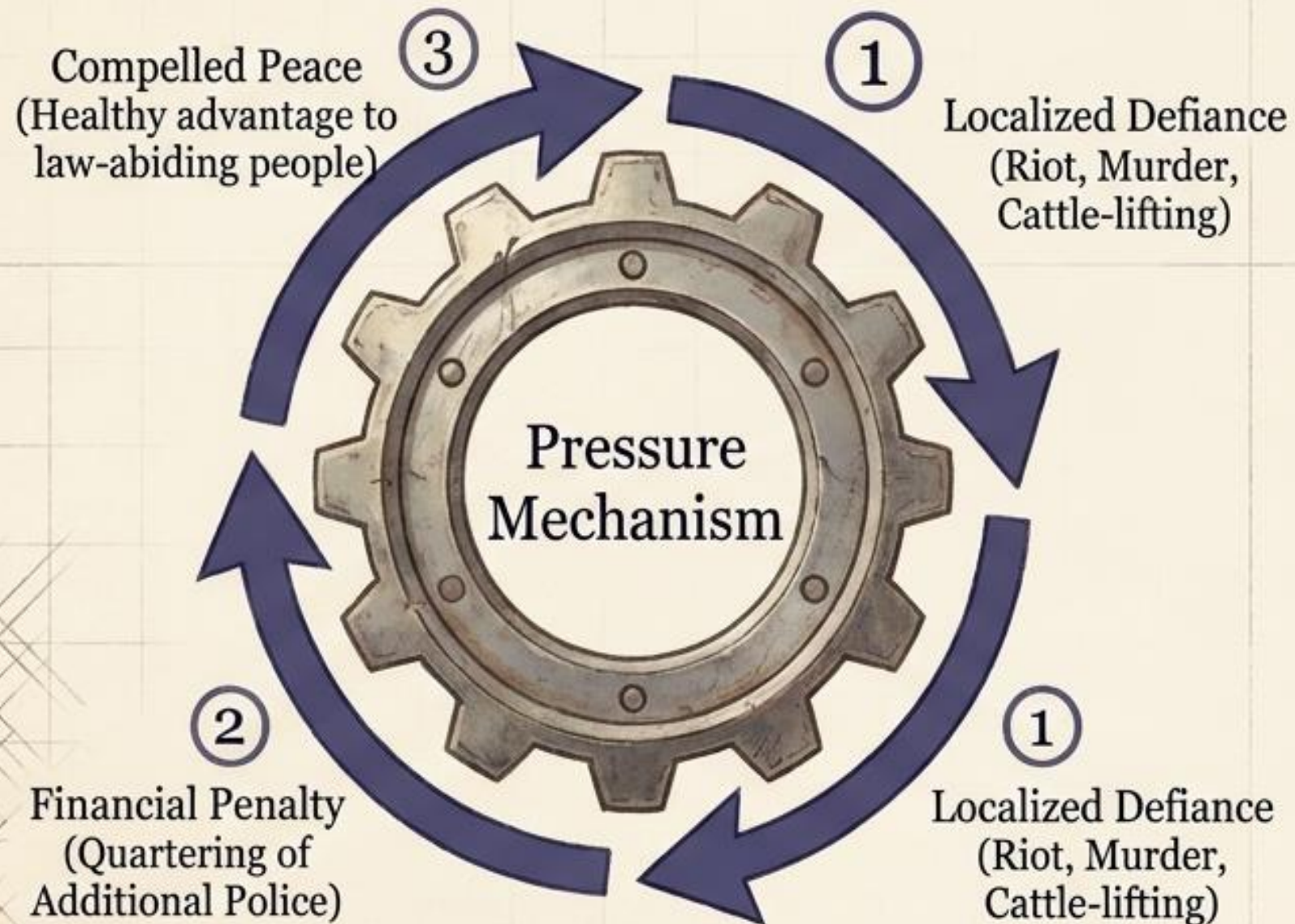
The End of Thuggee Catchers

The specialized Thuggee Establishment, which utilized "approvers" (captured Thugs turned informants), was abolished in late 1862.

Insight: The Supreme Government realized these hyper-specialists "militated against the all-round efficiency" of the general Police Force, who felt freed from investigating those specific crimes.

The Doctrine of Prevention

“Prevention is better than cure.”



Core Mechanism: Punitive Police

- Quartered directly in localities actively defying the law or displaying abnormal waves of crime.
- The Penalty: The massive cost of maintaining this extra force fell entirely upon the offending inhabitants, bypassing the Provincial Police Budget entirely.
- The Objective: Designed not merely to detect crime, but to financially weaponize peace. The advantage accrued to surrounding law-abiding people was considered 'immense'.

Synthesis: The Great Amalgamation

Municipal Police

Abolished as a separate entity due to dreadful inefficiency and unfitness.

Ferry Police

Absorbed by District Police (1880) due to repeated localized funding failures.

Cantonment Police

Assimilated into the uniform provincial pay structure.

The Unification (1884)

The Great Amalgamation transfers all costs directly to the Provincial Budget, ending sectional recruitment permanently.

Outcome Box

Pay grades assimilated, names recorded on one unified list for promotion, and uniform grade distribution established (e.g., first-grade constables fixed at 2/3rds). The birth of a truly centralized Provincial Police Force.