

Chapter

1

Decline of the Mughal Empire (1707–1857)

Sandwiched between the two empires, the Mughal and the British, the mid-18th century India is often depicted as 'a dark age' or 'an age of chaos'. But was it really so?

Let us try to see this period through the eyes of someone living in mid-18th century India. The Mughal Empire was now weak but not yet dead. The regional powers were rapidly gaining strength and autonomy. India was open to trade and had emerged as an attractive destination for European Trading Companies, but none of these companies were perceived as destined to rule India. In the world context, India was not yet an economically backward region. Neither were Europe and North America as rich as they became in the 19th and 20th centuries. All these potentialities still lay in the womb of the future. Perhaps this depiction as 'a dark age' suited a certain way of looking at Indian history which highlighted the British achievements of re-unification of India under the British and the inauguration of a new age of enlightenment in India with the spread of western knowledge and culture. Not many historians would agree today with this kind of depiction.

Hence, it is only appropriate that we refrain from such view and rather look at the mid-18th century Indian polity as a chronological whole, comprising the following three broad themes:

Theme 1: Decline of the Mughal Empire (First half of the 18th century)

The early decades of 18th century saw the decline of the Mughal Empire—a long-drawn-out process effected by many factors. The reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707) marked the beginning of this process of decline which was further hastened by the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739. Though the Mughal Empire did not survive, its institutions and traditions continued in the regional states as well as in British provinces, especially in respect of land revenue administration.

Theme 2: Rise of Autonomous States (Middle decades of the 18th century)

The middle decades of the 18th century saw the rise of autonomous states or regional powers that can be categorised into three groups—the successor states, the new states and the independent kingdoms. The successor states were the erstwhile provinces of Mughal Empire namely Hyderabad, Awadh and Bengal. The new states were the creations of the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Jats and the Afghans. The independent kingdoms were those of Mysore, Kerala and the Rajputs (sometimes wrongly called the Hindu States). How come all these powers failed to keep the British out? Answers to such questions and more shall be discussed under this theme.

Theme 3: Rise of British Supremacy (Second half of the 18th century)

The weakening of the Mughal Empire also provided an opportunity to the East India Company and the last decades of the 18th century saw the transformation of this Company from a trading company to a political power. We shall trace this transition from where it first began, i.e. in south India and Bengal.

Unit-1 covers the above political themes comprehensively and also gives you a glimpse of 18th-century Indian society and economy. In this chapter, you will learn about the first theme, i.e. the decline of the Mughal Empire.

DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

The first half of the 18th century witnessed the decline of the Mughal Empire that had dazzled the world since many years with its extensive territories, military might and cultural achievements. The era of the Great Mughals that had begun in 1526 with Babur's accession to the throne, ended with the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 which also marked the end of an era in Indian history.

The process of decline had set in during Aurangzeb's reign itself (1658–1707) and could not be arrested by his weak successors. When Aurangzeb died, the empire of the Mughals was the largest in India; yet it only represented an inflated balloon. The empire had expanded beyond manageable limits and its vastness only tended to weaken the centre. Aurangzeb's socio-religious policies and fundamentalism, in sharp contrast to his ancestors, provoked the subject population into rebellion, including the great Marathas against whom he waged fruitless wars in the Deccan for 20 years! It had been aptly said, "The Deccan ulcer proved to be as fatal to the Mughal Empire as the 'Spanish ulcer' was to prove later on to the Napoleonic Empire."

A combination of factors further ensured that within 50 years of Aurangzeb's death, the Mughal Empire disintegrated—nine Mughal emperors followed one another in quick succession and many adventurers, Indian and foreign, carved out independent principalities for themselves in India. By 1739 Delhi had been invaded by Nadir Shah, by 1761 (when Abdali invaded) the Mughals had been replaced by the Marathas as the defenders of India, and by 1765 the Mughal emperor had been reduced to a pensioner of the British.

The British carefully kept alive the fiction of the Mughal Empire till 1858. In the 150 years' period between 1707 and 1857 (when the last of the Mughals Bahadur Shah Zafar was deposed by the British) there emerged as many as 12 Mughal emperors, known as the Later Mughals. Two of the longest surviving of these, Muhammad Shah (1719–48) and Shah Alam (1759–1806), witnessed devastating attacks by Nadir Shah (1739) and Ahmad Shah Abdali, who attacked India seven times during 1748–67.

Thus, internal weaknesses of the Mughal Empire combined with external aggressions left the foundations of the Mughal Empire completely shaken, tempting regional powers to assert independence and European trading companies to dabble in Indian politics.

Later Mughals (1707–1857)

Aurangzeb's death in 1707 (at the age of 89) signalled a war of succession among his three sons. The eldest brother, Prince Muazzam, defeated and killed the other two (Muhammad Azam at Jajau and Kam Bakhsh near Hyderabad), emerged victorious and ascended to the throne of Delhi assuming the title of Bahadur Shah I.

Bahadur Shah I or Muazzam Shah Alam I (1707–12)

Bahadur Shah I (1707–12), was also known as Shah Alam I. He was an elderly man of 65, was learned and reversed some of the narrow-minded policies of Aurangzeb. He adopted a more tolerant attitude towards the Hindus and there was also no destruction of temples during his reign. Whether out of statesmanship or weakness, he adopted a **pacific policy** in general with respect to various regional powers:

- **Marathas:** Bahadur Shah allowed the Maratha prince **Shahu**, held as Mughal captive since 1689, to go back to Maharashtra.
- **Rajputs:** He made peace with the Rajput chiefs and confirmed them in their states.
- **Jats and Bundelas:** He made peace with the Jat chief Churaman and Bundela chief Chhatrasal who had joined him in the campaign against Banda Bahadur.
- **Sikhs:** Bahadur Shah tried to make peace with the rebellious Sikhs by giving Guru Gobind Singh a high mansab. But after the death of the Guru, the Sikhs once again raised a revolt under the leadership of Banda Bahadur. This time the emperor decided to be strict and he himself led a campaign against the rebels. He defeated **Banda Bahadur** at **Lohgarh**, a fort built by Guru Govind Singh in the foothills of the Himalayas. Yet, the Sikhs could not be crushed and they later recovered the fort in 1712.

However, Bahadur Shah lavishly granted jagirs and promotions which led to a deterioration in the field of administration during his reign. Called **Shah-i-Bekhabar** (Headless King) by Khafi Khan, he died in 1712.



Bahadur Shah I

Parties at the Mughal Court and the Kingmakers: After Bahadur Shah's death, a new element entered Mughal politics and war of succession—while previously the contest for power was between the royal princes and the nobles had merely backed them, now the nobles became direct aspirants to the throne and began using the princes as pawns to capture positions of authority. In other words, powerful nobles emerged as 'kingmakers'. For instance, at the time of Emperor Jahandar Shah, Zulfiqar Khan emerged as the kingmaker. Similarly, during emperor Farrukhsiyar, it were the Sayyid Brothers who raised Farrukhsiyar to throne in 1713 and pulled him down in 1719 when he ceased to serve their interests.

Worst of all, these nobles belonged to different parties like Irani and Turani, which represented merely interest groups or factions looking for their own self-advancement, even if at the cost of the welfare of the 'nation', the Mughal empire. Though there emerged various parties at the Mughal Court, there were 4 prominent ones—the **Turanis**, the **Iranis**, the **Afghans** and the **Hindustanis**. The first three were descendants of foreigners from Central Asia, Oran and Afghanistan and formed the backbone of the 'army of occupation'. They held important civil and military offices in India. The Turanis and Afghans were mostly Sunnis, while Iranis were mostly Shias. In opposition to this Mughal or Foreign party was

the Hindustani party which mostly comprised of Muslims born in India and got the support of the Rajputs and the Jats. However, it must be noted that the slogans of race and religion were raised by the nobles only to suit their interests, and given up when it was no longer profitable.

Jahandar Shah (1712–13)

In 1712, a war of succession broke out among the four sons of Bahadur Shah. They were in such indecent haste of grabbing the throne that they plunged themselves into the war of succession, leaving Bahadur Shah's dead body unburied for about a month. In the struggle for succession, one of the less able sons, Jahandar Shah, emerged victorious, supported by the most powerful noble of the time—**Zulfiqar Khan** (Irani Party).

Jahandar Shah was a degenerate prince wholly devoted to pleasure. His administration was virtually in the hands of the extremely capable Zulfiqar Khan, who had become his wazir or prime minister.

Zulfiqar believed that it was important to establish friendly relations with the Rajput rajas and the Maratha sardars. Therefore, he rapidly reversed the policies of Aurangzeb.

- **Marathas:** Zulfiqar Khan confirmed the agreement reached between his deputy of Deccan, Daud Khan Panni, and Shahu in 1711, whereby the Marathas were granted the chauth and sardeshmukhi of the Deccan on the condition that these collections would be made by Mughal officials and then handed over to the Marathas.
- **Rajputs:** Jai Singh of Amber was appointed Governor of Malwa while Ajit Singh of Marwar was appointed Governor of Gujarat.
- **Jats, Bundelas, Sikhs:** Zulfiqar Khan continued to pacify Churaman Jat and Chhatrasal Bundela. He also continued to suppress the Sikhs.
- He also abolished the hated **jeziah**.

Zulfiqar Khan tried to improve the finances of the empire by checking the reckless growth of jagirs and offices. But he gave up Todar Mal's land revenue settlement and introduced the evil practice of revenue farming or **Ijarah** whereby the government established contact with the revenue farmers and middlemen who paid the government a fixed amount while they were free to extract whatever they could from the peasant, leading to increased oppression of the peasantry.

Jahandar Shah was soon defeated by his nephew Farrukhsiyar at Agra, thus bringing an end to the reign of Jahandar Shah. Zulfiqar Khan was also executed.

Farrukhsiyar (1713–19)

Farrukhsiyar came to power with the help of **Sayyid brothers**—Abdullah Khan and Hussain Ali Khan Barahow—who came to be known as the kingmakers. As a token of gratitude, Farrukhsiyar appointed Abdullah Khan as his wazir and Hussain Ali Khan as the Mir Bakshi. Farrukhsiyar was incapable, cowardly and allowed himself to be influenced by worthless flatterers. Taking

Jizya (or Jizyah): Jeziah was a per capita yearly tax historically levied by Islamic states on non-Muslim subjects.

advantage, the two brothers soon acquired dominant control over the affairs of the state (1713–20).

The Sayyid brothers adopted the policy of religious tolerance. They believed that India could be ruled harmoniously only by associating Hindu chiefs and nobles with the Muslim nobles in governance. They **abolished the jeziah** and pilgrimage tax. They continued to conciliate the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Jats while suppressing the Sikhs. Farrukhsiyar's reign saw the victory of the Mughals over the Sikhs as the Sikh leader **Banda Bahadur** was taken prisoner at Gurdaspur and later executed at Delhi (19 June 1716).



Emperor Farrukhsiyar

In 1717, the emperor heedlessly granted the British East India Company many trading privileges (**farman of 1717**), including the exemption from custom duties for its trade through Bengal. The provisions of the farman became a source of perpetual conflict between the Bengal Nawabs and the English Company.

The Farman of 1717: In 1717, the Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar issued a farman (royal order) granting the British East India Company many trading privileges like:

- The Company was permitted to carry on trade in Bengal, Bombay and Madras free of customs duty.
- The Company was also permitted to mint its own coins and further fortify Calcutta.
- The Company was also granted the right to issue passes or dastaks for the movements of such goods.
- The Company servants were also permitted to carry out private trade but were not covered by this farman and were required to pay the same taxes as Indian merchants. However, the dastaks were later misused by the Company's servants to carry out private trade.

This was because William Hamilton, a surgeon in the British East Indian Company had successfully cured Farrukhsiyar of a disease (swelling in the groin). After successful treatment, the Farrukhsiyar finally arranged his marriage to the daughter of Raja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur, which had been delayed by the illness. The farman was instrumental in increasing Company's stronghold in Bengal which later colonised Bengal followed by the rest of India.

Soon, Farrukhsiyar wanted to exercise his own authority and conspired to get rid of the Sayyid brothers. However, the Sayyids proved to be too clever for him and with the help of **Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath**, they dethroned the emperor and blinded and killed him. It was the first time in the Mughal history that an emperor was killed by his nobles.

After the execution of Farrukhsiyar, the Sayyid Brothers raised to the throne in quick succession two young princes, Rafi-ud-Darajat and Rafi-ud-Daula, who died of consumption.

- **Rafi-ud-Darajat:** He ruled for the shortest period and died of **tuberculosis**.
- **Rafi-ud-Daula or Shah Jahan II:** He took the title of Shah Jahan II. He was an opium addict and died of dysentery.

The kingmakers now made the 18-year-old Roshan Akhtar, better known as Muhammad Shah the emperor of India. All the three successors of Farrukhsiyar were mere puppets in the hands of the Sayyids. Even their personal liberty to move around and meet people was restricted.

Muhammad Shah or Roshan Akhtar Bahadur (1719–48)

Even though Sayyid brothers had tried hard to befriend all sections of the nobility, a powerful group of nobles headed by Nizam-ul-Mulk and Muhammad Amin Khan began to conspire against them. These nobles were jealous of the growing power of the brothers. Moreover, the murder of Farrukhsiyar also frightened many of them. For, if the emperor could be killed, what safety was there for mere nobles? Muhammad Shah too desired to free himself from the control of the Sayyid brothers and succeeded in killing them in 1720 with the help of a powerful noble, **Nizam-ul-Mulk** (full name-Qamar-ud-din Siddiqi Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah).

After the fall of the Sayyid brothers, Muhammad Shah ruled for a long period of nearly 30 years (1719–48). This was probably the last chance to save the empire—the Mughal rule was still held in high esteem, the Mughal army was still a force to reckon with, the Maratha sardars were still confined to the south and the Rajputs were still loyal to the Mughals. A strong and farsighted ruler might have still saved the situation. But Muhammad was not the man of the moment. He was weak minded and frivolous, and came to be known in Indian history as **Muhammad Shah 'Rangeela'** because of his fondness for wine and women. After the fall of Sayyid brothers he fell into the clutches of a dancing girl Koki Jiu and the eunuch Hafiz Khidmatgar Khan. In this way, Muhammad Shah's reign initiated an irreversible decline of the Mughal Empire and the **physical breakup** of the Empire now began:

- Powerful nobles now began to carve out semi-independent states. For example, Nizam-ul-Mulk in Hyderabad (1724), Murshid Quli Khan in Bengal (1717) and Saadat Khan in Awadh (1722) carved out their autonomous states.
- The Marathas began their northern expansion and in 1737 **Baji Rao I** raided Delhi and terrorised the emperor.
- In 1739 **Nadir Shah invaded India**, defeated the Mughals in the **Battle of Karnal** and annexed strategically important areas west of the Indus (including Kabul) to the Persian Empire. And India once again became vulnerable to the attacks from the north-west. Soon after the assassination of Nadir Shah (1747), **Ahmad Shah Abdali** was chosen as the King of Afghanistan. Between 1748 and 1767, Abdali invaded and plundered the Mughal Empire seven times, beginning his first invasion in 1748 during the reign of Muhammad Shah.

Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah: During Muhammad Shah's rule, Nizam-ul-Mulk was appointed as the wazir in 1722. Instead of supporting the wazir in administrative reforms, Muhammad Shah suspected his own ministers. Disgusted with the fickle-mindedness and suspicious nature of the emperor, Nizam-ul-Mulk decided to pursue his own ambition. He then decided to leave the emperor and his empire to their fate and marched south to found the state of Hyderabad (in Deccan in 1724). Nizam-ul-Mulk's departure was symbolic of the 'flight of loyalty and virtue from the empire' and marked the beginning of the physical breakup of the Mughal Empire.

Nadir Shah's Invasion: Mughal Empire received a fatal blow when the King of Persia Nadir Shah invaded India in 1738–39. Nadir Shah was attracted to India by its well-known fabulous wealth and the bankrupt Persian Empire found an easy prey in the weak Mughal rule. Earlier, Aurangzeb had kept a vigilant eye over the north-west frontier. However, after this death, the frontier had been neglected for years. The

danger was recognized only after Nadir Shah occupied Lahore. Hurried preparations were made for the defence of Delhi but the nobles could not agree on a plan for defence. The emperor Muhammad Shah accompanied by Nizam-ul-Mulk marched from the capital to confront the invader.

Battle of Karnal: On 13 February 1739, the two armies met at **Karnal** and Nadir Shah inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mughal army. While Khan-i-Dauran (Mir Bakshi) fell in the battlefield, Saadat Khan (governor of Awadh) and emperor Mohammad Shah were taken prisoner. Nadir Shah now marched to Delhi and ordered a terrible massacre in imperial capital to revenge the killing of a handful of his soldiers. The devastation of Delhi has been famously lamented by the poets **Mir and Sauda**.

Nadir Shah took possession of the royal treasury; the **Peacock throne** and the **Kohinoor diamond** were the two most prized items of his loot. His total plunder, estimated at 70 crore, enabled him to exempt his own kingdom from taxation for 3 years! Nadir Shah also annexed territory to the west of the River Indus.

Nadir Shah's invasion inflicted a heavy damage on the Mughal Empire and its dwindling image suffered a severe blow. It exposed the hidden weakness of the empire to the Maratha sardars and the foreign trading companies. The invasion ruined central finances; the impoverished nobles began to oppress the peasantry even more in an effort to recover their lost fortunes. The loss of areas west to the Indus once again exposed the empire to dangers from the North-West.

Ahmad Shah Abdali's Invasions: After the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747, **Ahmad Shah Abdali** (or Ahmad Shah Durrani) was chosen as the King of Afghanistan and assumed the title 'Durr-i-Durrani' or Pearl of pearls. He also began invading India during Muhammad Shah's reign in 1748, his first invasion being a fiasco. Between 1748 and 1767, he invaded and plundered Mughal Empire seven times.

In early 1749, he again crossed the frontier and defeated the Punjab Governor Muin-ul-Mulk. However, Muin-ul-Mulk promised him an annual remittance of ₹14,000 and Abdali returned.

In 1752, Abdali invaded India a third time as he stopped receiving the promised remittance regularly. The emperor Ahmad Shah, with a view to save Delhi from devastation, appeased Abdali by surrendering **Punjab and Multan**. But when the Punjab Governor Muin-ul-Mulk passed away, wazir Imad-ul-Mulk appointed Adina Beg as Punjab Governor to restore order (in November 1753). This was seen as interference in Punjab affairs by Abdali.

Hence, in November 1756, Abdali invaded India for the fourth time. In January 1757, he entered Delhi and plundered as far as Mathura and Agra. Before returning, Abdali recognized **Alamgir II** as the emperor, **Imad-ul-Mulk** as the wazir, the Rohilla chief **Najib-ud-Daulah** as Mir Bakshi of the empire and his son **Timur Shah Durrani** (wedded to the daughter of Alamgir II) as his 'supreme agent' to safeguard his interests in India. In this way, Abdali returned to Afghanistan without displacing Mughal dynasty so long it accepted Abdali's suzerainty.

However, in 1758 Najib was expelled from Delhi by the Maratha chief Raghunath Rao who also captured Punjab, forcing Abdali to return to India in 1759 to take revenge on the Marathas. In 1761, he defeated the Marathas in the third **Battle of Panipat**, giving a fatal blow to their ambition of controlling the Emperor and dominating the country. True, the Marathas escorted the Mughal Emperor to the throne of Delhi in 1772 and again in 1789, they never again made an attempt to capture Punjab and Multan or play the defenders of the North-West frontier of India.



Ahmad Shah Abdali

A cumulative effect of the Irani and Durrani invasions as well as the internal feuds of the Indian nobility was that by 1761, the Mughal Empire had ceased to exist in practice as an all India Empire.

Najib-ud-Daulah: He was a Rohilla chief (Afghani) who had joined Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1757 during his attack on Delhi. For a certain period of time, Najib-ud-Daulah and later his son Zabita Khan and grandson Ghulam Qadir exercised undisputed power at Delhi. Najib was the founder of the city of Najibabad in Bijnor district.

Ahmad Shah (1748–54)

Mohammad Shah's successor Ahmad Shah was born of **Udham Bai**, a public dancing girl. He was weak and left the state affairs in the hands of his mother. Udham Bai, the Queen Mother (title of Qibla-i-Alam) was of poor intellect and ruled with the help of his paramour, Javid Khan a notorious eunuch.

During Ahmad Shah's reign, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India twice: in 1749 and again in 1752 when he marched upto Delhi. Emperor Ahmad Shah, with a view to save Delhi from devastation, appeased Abdali by surrendering **Punjab and Multan**. Thus, Punjab and Multan were lost to the Afghans.

In 1752, **Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroz Jung III** (or **Imad-ul-Mulk**, grandson of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah), upon the recommendation of Nawab Wazir Safdar Jung, was appointed as Mir Bakshi (Pay Master General) and received the titles of Amir ul-Umara (Noble of Nobles) and Imad-ul-Mulk by the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah. Feroz Jung III soon emerged powerful and began to intimidate the emperor himself who now wished to have him removed from the court. Before this could be done, Feroz Jung III sought an alliance with the Maratha chief Sadashiv Rao Bhau; together they blinded and deposed Ahmad Shah in 1754 and raised a puppet ruler (Alamgir II) to the throne. Imad-ul-Mulk now became the new wazir and kingmaker.

Note: In this way, Mohammad Shah was succeeded by a number of weak and inefficient rulers - Ahmad Shah (1748–54), Alamgir II (1754–59), Shah Alam II (1759–06), Akbar II (1806–37) and Bahadur Shah II (1837–57).

Alamgir II or Aziz-ud-din (1754–59)

After dethroning Ahmad Shah, **Imad-ul-Mulk** now raised Aziz-ud-din (Jahandar Shah's son) to the throne who began his reign as Alamgir II. It was during his reign that the **Battle of Plassey** was fought (June 1757).

During his reign, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India and plundered Delhi in 1757. The same year **Imad invited the Marathas** to invade Delhi in order to drive out the Afghans and the Rohillas. Accordingly, in March 1758 a massive force of Marathas led by Raghunath Rao appeared at Delhi, defeated the Afghan garrison at Delhi, expelled Najib and overran Punjab, occupying Lahore. They deposed Timur Shah (who had been appointed a year earlier as viceroy by his father, Ahmad Shah Abdali) and instead appointed Adina Beg as Governor of Punjab on behalf of the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao. In August 1759, the Afghan monarch Ahmad Shah Abdali returned to India to avenge the Marathas. (It took him almost two years to deal a fatal blow to Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat, fought on 14 January 1761, resulting in a crushing defeat of the Marathas).

In 1759, Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk got the emperor murdered and raised to throne his puppet Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan III.

Shah Jahan III (1759–60)

He reigned as Mughal emperor for a very brief period. He was the son of the eldest son of Muhammad Kam Bakhsh (who was the youngest son of Aurangzeb). He was placed on the Mughal throne in December 1759 as a puppet ruler by wazir Imad-ul-Mulk. He was later deposed by Maratha chiefs.

Shah Alam II or Ali Gauhar (1760–1806)

During 1759–60, Northern India was swept by the Marathas, led by **Sadashivrao Bhau**, who deposed Shah Jahan III and installed Ali Gauhar, the son of Alamgir II as the rightful emperor under the Maratha suzerainty. Ali Gauhar took the title of Shah Alam II. He was a man of some ability and courage, but the Empire was now beyond redemption. His reign saw two decisive battles: the **Third Battle of Panipat (1761)** and the **Battle of Buxar (1764)**.

In 1761, after the battle of Panipat and before leaving Delhi (20th March 1761), Ahmed Shah Abdali named Shah Alam II as emperor and Najib-ud-Daulah as Mir Bakshi. Abdali last invaded India in 1767. His invasions hastened the downfall of the Mughal Empire, creating anarchy and confusion all around. The Emperor Shah Alam II was not allowed to enter Delhi for 12 years (1760–72, until he was escorted to his throne by the Marathas in 1772). Thus, he remained in exile for 12 years and came to be known as the '**fugitive Mughal Emperor**'. During his absence, the Rohilla leaders Najib-ud-Daulah and later his son Zabita Khan and grandson Ghulam Qadir exercised undisputed power at Delhi.

In 1764, Shah Alam II joined hands with Mir Qasim of Bengal and Shuja-ud-Daulah of Awadh in the Battle of Buxar against the English East India Company. Defeated at Buxar, the Mughal Emperor signed the **Treaty of Allahabad (1765)** with the British. According to the treaty, he was forced to grant the Diwani (right to collect revenue) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the British. In return, the emperor was given a subsidy of ₹26 lakh and the districts of Kora and Allahabad. The Emperor resided in the fort of Allahabad for the next six years as a virtual **prisoner of the English**.

In 1771, the Marathas under **Mahadji Shinde** (or Scindia) returned to northern India, captured Delhi and reinstated Shah Alam II at the Delhi throne (January 1772) under Maratha suzerainty. Shah Alam appointed Scindia in charge of Delhi administration (Henceforth, the Scindias remained the overlords of Delhi until Daulat Rao Scindia was defeated by Lord Lake in 1803).

During 1772–73, the Mughal Emperor supported by the Marathas led an expedition against Rohilla leader Zabita Khan who was earlier appointed as Mir Bakshi by Shah Alam. Zabita Khan was taken prisoner along with his family and other Rohilla leaders and severely humiliated. Zabita's son Ghulam Qadir Rohilla was castrated and made to serve as a page in the palace. Several years later, in September 1787, Ghulam Qadir was able to force the emperor to appoint him as Mir Bakshi and Regent. But soon he had to leave Delhi due to differences with the emperor and re-entered Delhi the next year to take revenge. On 30 July 1788, he took possession of the royal palace, deposed Shah Alam and later ruthlessly blinded him (10 August 1788). Shah Alam was also referred to as the '**blind Mughal Emperor**'. Mahadji Scindia, however, hunted him down and the blind Shah Alam was restored as the king (October 1788).

In 1803, Delhi was recaptured by the English after defeating Daulat Rao Scindia and the blind Mughal emperor once again accepted the protection of the British. From 1803 till 1857, the Mughal dynasty merely served as a political front for the English (the Company's coins continued to carry the stamp of Emperor Shah Alam till 1835).

Shah Alam's power was so depleted during his reign that it led to a saying in Persian, '**Sultanat-e-Shah Alam, Az Dilli ta Palam**', meaning, 'The kingdom of Shah Alam is from Delhi to Palam', Palam being a suburb of Delhi. Shah Alam II also authored his own **Diwan of poems** and was known by the pen-name '**Aftab**'.

In this way, Shah Alam II and his successors were emperors only in name, being puppets in the hands of their own nobles or the Marathas or the British. In fact, the British kept alive the fiction of the Mughal Empire until 1858 when the last of the Mughal Emperors Bahadur Shah Zafar was exiled to Rangoon.

Akbar Shah II (1806–37)

After the death of Shah Alam II, his son succeeded as Akbar Shah II. Akbar, the penultimate Mughal Emperor of India, gave the title of '**Raja**' to **Ram Mohan Roy** and sent him to England to seek a raise in pension. In 1835, the East India Company stopped calling itself a subject of the Mughal Emperor and discontinued issuing coins in his name by deleting Persian lines on Company's coins to this effect.

Bahadur Shah II or Bahadur Shah Zafar (1837–57)

After the death of Akbar II, Bahadur Shah II became the Mughal Emperor. He was fond of poetry and was known by the title of '**Zafar**'. During the **Revolt of 1857**, Bahadur Shah Zafar was proclaimed as the Emperor of India by the rebels. After the Revolt of 1857, he was captured and deported to **Rangoon** where he died in 1862.

In legal terms, the Mughal Empire came to an end on 1 November 1858, with the declaration of Queen Victoria. The most important consequence of the decline of the Mughal Empire was that it enabled the British to conquer India and push it into the very vortex of colonial exploitation for the next 200 years.



Bahadur Shah Zafar

CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

Various internal as well as external factors that contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire are as follows:

Internal Weaknesses

The Mughal Empire was a 'war state' in its core. Its vitality depended ultimately on its military power. The emperor stood at the apex of this structure followed by the military aristocracy

followed by the Mughal army. Multiple issues emerged at all three levels of this broad military structure. These may be understood under the following heads:

Aurangzeb's Misguided Policies

The expansion of Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb only resembled an inflated balloon. The Mughal Empire had expanded beyond the point of effective control and its vastness only tended to weaken the centre. Aurangzeb failed to realise that the vast Mughal Empire depended on the willing support of the people. His policy of religious intolerance antagonised the Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats and Marathas and pushed them into open rebellion. Aurangzeb's mistaken policy of continuous war in the Deccan against the Marathas drained the resources of the empire, broke the back of Aurangzeb whose reign marked the beginning of the end of the Mughal Empire.

Weak Successors

The government of the Mughals was a personal despotism and its success depended on the character of the reigning monarch. The later Mughals proved to be weak and incapable. They became victims of the intrigues and conspiracies of the faction-ridden nobles. They proved to be inefficient generals and administrators who were incapable of suppressing revolts.

Bahadur Shah I (1707–12) was too old to maintain the prestige of the empire and he liked to appease all parties by profuse grants of titles and rewards. Due to such attitude, he was nicknamed 'Shah-i-Bekhabar'. Jahandar Shah (1712–13), the next in succession, was wildly extravagant; Farrukhsiyar was a coward, while Muhammad Shah spent more of his time in watching animal fights. Due to his addiction of wine and women, Muhammad Shah got the title of 'Rangeela'. Ahmad Shah extended the harem (a separate place for concubines/wives of emperor) to a very large area where he spent weeks or months. The later Mughals were evidently weak and incapable, which hastened the process of disintegration.

Wars of Succession and the Role of Kingmakers

In the absence of a definite law of succession (like the law of primogeniture), there usually occurred a war of succession among the Mughal princes. After the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712, the rival claimants to the throne began to be used as tools by the leaders of rival factions to promote their own personal interests. For instance, Zulfiqar Khan acted as the kingmaker in the war of succession which followed after 1712. From 1713 to 1720 the Sayyid Brothers acted as kingmakers and were instrumental in appointing four kings to the throne. After them, Mir Mohammad Amin and Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk acted as kingmakers. This weakened the stability of the Mughal government and fostered partisanship at the cost of patriotism.

Nature of Mughal State

The Mughal state was essentially a police state that confined itself chiefly to maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue. The Mughals failed to foster a feeling of harmony between Hindus and Muslims and create a composite nation. Some efforts in this direction were made by Akbar but these were undone by the bigotry of Aurangzeb and his weak successors. As a result, many Indian chiefs looked at the Mughals as foreigners and as enemies of Hindus and aspired for freedom from Mughal rule.

Degeneration of the Mughal Nobility (or Military Aristocracy)

In the late 16th century, Akbar had organised this aristocracy or ruling class through the mansabdari system. The mansabdars were appointed by the emperor himself on the basis of personal loyalty to the Emperor. They were required to maintain a given number of savars or horsemen, and were often paid in the form of a **jagir (landed estate)**. With time, the mansabdari system became hereditary and the offices of the state became a close preserve of selected few. It also became a closed corporation of nobles belonging to certain ethno-religious groups (the most powerful being the Irani and the Turani groups) and gave no opportunity of promotion to capable men belonging to other classes, as had been the case earlier.

The degeneration of the Mughal rulers further added to the degeneration of the nobility. Many nobles discarded the discipline of military life and took to luxurious living. They spent huge sums on keeping large harems, maintaining a big staff of servants, etc., and indulged in other forms of pomp and show. Such habits of extravagant living drained their limited financial resources and weakened their morality; they now rivalled each other not in gallantry but in flamboyance and flattery. Such degeneration that gripped the later Mughal nobility ensured that the state was now deprived of able administrators and military leaders.

Shifting Loyalty of the Zamindars

The zamindars and the nobles were the two classes that shared State power with the emperor. The zamindars or landlords were the hereditary owners of lands and were variously known as Rais, Rajas, Khuts, Thakurs or Deshmukhs. They played an important role in collection of revenue and local administration. These zamindars also helped the nobility to take advantage of the weakness of the empire and to establish autonomous states for themselves.

Jagirdari Crisis and resulting Court Factions

In the 18th century there emerged an economic crisis, also known as jagirdari crisis. It is defined by Satish Chandra in the following words: 'The available social surplus was insufficient to defray the cost of administration and give the ruling class a standard of life in keeping with its expectations'. This happened because of the unusual increase in the number of mansabdars at a time when the area to be distributed as jagir remained stagnant or even declined.

The jagirdari crisis increased during the last years of Aurangzeb, mainly because of the Deccan wars. The jagir crisis is believed to have led to an unhealthy competition among the nobles in order to have control over good jagirs. Group politics in the Mughal Court became an order of the day, each group wanting to have influence over the emperor to get access to good jagirs. Proximity of any particular group to the emperor naturally alienated the others and this gradually affected the personal bonds of loyalty between the emperor and his nobility. Such a nobility no longer espoused the cause of the empire, they stopped maintaining the required number of soldiers and horses and became more interested in carving out their own autonomous states.

Politicking at the imperial court reached its height after the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712. The reigns of Jahandar Shah (1712–13), Farrukhsiyar (1713–19) and Muhammad Shah (1719–48) were most intrigue ridden. The Irani group was led by Asad Khan and his son Zulfiqar Khan, the Turani group was led by Ghazi-ud-Din Khan Feroz Jung and his son Chin Qilich Khan (Nizam-

ul Mulk) and the Hindustani group was led by the Sayyid brothers. Each faction tried to win the emperor to its view point and poisoned his ears against the other faction. Though these factions were formed based on family relations, yet personal interests played a dominating role. The personal interest of Nizam-ul-Mulk (Qilich Khan) and Burhan-ul-Mulk (Saadat Khan) led them to intrigue with Nadir Shah.

Military Weakness

The Mughal military was also infested with some inherent weaknesses. It was organised in a kind of feudal style, where the soldiers owed greater allegiance to the mansabdari rather than the Emperor and fostered conditions of indiscipline and revolt.

The degeneration of the military aristocracy led to weakening of the Mughal army as well. There was a lamentable dearth of able commanders, effective supervision, military reform and new technology. Further, the Mughal army usually moved with a huge tail of camps which looked like a city with markets and stores. Women and children, cattle and other non-combatants accompanied the army, making it unwieldy and reduced it to the likes of an armed rabble.

The weakness of the military invited both internal as well as external challenges. For instance, the Marathas under Shivaji repeatedly challenged Aurangzeb's rule. After his death, the Maratha depredations increased and in 1738, they even plundered the suburbs of Delhi. This was followed by the Persian invasion under Nadir Shah (1739) and the sack of Delhi, which was an enormous blow to the prestige of the empire.

Empty Treasury

Shah Jahan's zeal for construction had already depleted the treasury which was further drained by Aurangzeb's long wars in the Deccan. The military marches also destroyed standing crops in the Deccan; whatever little was left was destroyed by Maratha raiders. The peasants began to give up agriculture and took to life of plunder and robbery. Under the later Mughals, the financial condition further deteriorated; even as autonomous states gradually stopped the payment of revenue to the centre, political upheavals and lavish living of the emperors and nobles continued.

Size of the Empire and Rise of Regional Powers

The Mughal Empire had become too large and unwieldy to be controlled by any ruler from one centre specially under medieval conditions of transport and communication. During Aurangzeb's rule itself, powerful regional groups like Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs and Marathas defied the Mughal authority in a bid to carve out their own kingdoms. Continuous struggle between the Mughals and these regional powers weakened the empire considerably and contributed to its decline.

External Challenges and Causes

Rise of the Marathas

Perhaps the most significant external factor that contributed to the collapse of the mighty Mughals was the rising power of the Marathas under the Peshwas. They emerged as the strongest regional power and propounded the ideal of Hindu Rashtra that could be built only at the cost of the Muslim empire. After the death of Aurangzeb, the tide soon changed in favour of the Marathas

who now emerged on the offensive, reached upto northern India and even began playing the kingmakers at Delhi court. They acted as the defenders of the country against foreign invaders like Ahmad Shah Abdali. Though the Marathas did not succeed in taking the place of the Mughals, their conquests in Northern India in the 18th century certainly gave a death-blow to the Mughal Empire.

Invasions of Irani (Persian) and Durrani (Afghan) Kingdoms

The Iranian monarch, Nadir Shah attacked India in 1738–39 and defeated the Mughal army in the Battle of Karnal. Nadir Shah's successor Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India seven times between 1748 and 1767. These invasions, besides depleting the Mughal treasury of its wealth, also exposed to the world the military weakness of the empire and its prestige suffered a severe blow.

The Advent of European Powers

The European trading companies also took advantage of the prevailing conditions in India and saw themselves as contenders for power. They participated in court intrigues and hastened the process of disintegration of the Mughal Empire.

CONTINUITY OF MUGHAL TRADITIONS

Contrary to the physical disintegration of the Mughal Empire, the Mughal form of government continued to survive stubbornly for many years. The prestige associated with the Mughal Emperor was so considerable that his sanction was sought by all rebel chiefs and kings. They also continued with Mughal administrative practices. Even the Maratha state which had risen as a reaction to Mughal rule, adopted Mughal methods of administration. However, it must be remembered that these adaptations were only regional and not all India in scale. Thus, several Mughal traditions and institutions were reintegrated into Indian polity by the regional chiefs and also by the British.

Causes of Decline of the Mughal Empire (Views of Prominent Historians):

- **Personal Failings of Emperors and Nobles** (William Irvine, Jadunath Sarkar): They highlighted the personal failings of the emperors and the nobles. Mughal rule was portrayed as Muslim rule and Maratha, Sikh and Bundela uprising were portrayed as Hindu reaction to Islamic onslaught. According to Sarkar, Aurangzeb was a religious fanatic. He discriminated against sections of the nobles and officials on the basis of religion which led to wide scale resentment among the nobility.
- **Jagirdari Crisis** (Satish Chandra, Athar Ali): In the opinion of Satish Chandra, it was the economic crisis which played a key role in the fall of the Mughal Empire. According to him, towards the end of Aurangzeb's rule, the mansabdari-jagirdari system went into disarray. This happened because of a shortage of jagirs and overabundance of jagirdars.
- **Agrarian Crisis** (Irfan Habib): He also stressed the role of economic crisis. He showed that the agrarian system had become exploitative which sparked off peasant revolts and ruined imperial stability. The Mughal government and the nobles tried to extract as much revenue as possible. This subjected the peasantry to a crushing burden which ultimately destroyed the peasants' capacity to pay the revenue. Moreover, the jagirdars were frequently transferred and had little interests in any long-term agricultural development.

- **Deccan Crisis** (M.N. Pearson, J.F. Richards and P. Hardy): According to them, the leading cause of Mughal decline was the Mughal involvement in the Deccan and fight with the Marathas.
- **Rise of Regional Powers** (Muzaffar Alam and Chetan Singh): In their opinion, the main cause for the Mughal decline was the impressive economic progress in Awadh and Punjab regions as opposed to the economic stagnation in Delhi and Agra. Many social and political elements in these regions got rich quickly and began to assert their independence.

Evaluation: The generally accepted view remains one of economic crisis. Yet, we may conclude that there was no one single common cause applicable to the whole of India that led to the decline of the Mughal Empire, but there were a combination of factors that brought about a disequilibrium in the fragile political edifice of the Mughal state and encouraged the revival of the regional identities as reflected in the emergence of regional powers.

Prelim Capsule

Decline of the Mughal Empire (1707–57)

Period	Later Mughals	Important Details
1707–12	Bahadur Shah I or Muazzam Shah Alam I	He allowed the Maratha prince, Shahu , held as Mughal captive since 1689, to go back to Maharashtra. He gave Guru Gobind Singh a high mansab. He defeated Banda Bahadur at Lohgarh, a fort built by Guru Govind Singh. Called Shah-i-Bekhabar (Headless King) by Khafi Khan.
1712–13	Jahandar Shah	He sat on the Mughal throne with the support of Zulfiqar Khan, a powerful noble. Zulfiqar Khan gave up Todar Mal's land revenue settlement and introduced the evil practice of revenue farming or Ijarah . Various parties at the Mughal court emerged- e.g. the Turanis, the Iranis, the Afghans and the Hindustanis.
1713–19	Farrukhsiyar	He came to power with the help of Sayyid brothers - Abdullah Khan and Hussain Ali Khan Barahow. Sayyid brothers abolished the jezia and pilgrimage tax. The Sikh leader Banda Bahadur was executed. Farrukhsiyar issued the farman of 1717 , granting the East India Company many trading privileges. Sayyids killed Farrukhsiyar with the help of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanat—the first time in the Mughal history that an emperor was killed by his nobles.
1719	Rafi-ud-Darajat	He ruled for the shortest period and died of tuberculosis.

1719	Rafi-ud-Daula or Shah Jahan II	He was an opium addict and died of dysentery.
1719-48	Muhammad Shah or Roshan Akhtar Bahadur	He killed the Sayyid brothers in 1720 with the help of a powerful noble, Nizam-ul-Mulk . He is known in history as Muhammad Shah 'Rangeela' . He fell into the clutches of a dancing girl Koki Jiu and the eunuch Hafiz Khidmatgar Khan. The physical breakup of the Empire began. Powerful nobles now began to carve out semi-independent states. For example- Nizam-ul-Mulk in Hyderabad (1724), Murshid Quli Khan in Bengal (1717) and Saadat Khan in Awadh (1722) carved out their autonomous states. 1737 Baji Rao I raided Delhi.
		In 1739 Nadir Shah invaded India, defeated the Mughals in the Battle of Karnal and took possession of the Peacock throne and the Kohinoor diamond. In 1748, Ahmad Shah Abdali first invaded India.
1748-54	Ahmad Shah	The state control fell in the hands of Udham Bai , his mother. Abdali invaded India twice (1749 & 1752). To save Delhi from devastation, Ahmad Shah surrendered Punjab and Multan to Abdali. In 1754, he was deposed by Imad-ul-Mulk with the help of Maratha chief Sadashiv Rao Bhau.
1754-59	Alamgir II or Aziz-ud-din	He was raised to throne by Imad-ul-Mulk , the new wazir and kingmaker. In June 1757, Battle of Plassey was fought. In 1757, Abdali invaded India and plundered Delhi. Before returning, he recognized Alamgir II as the emperor, Imad-ul-Mulk as the wazir, the Rohilla chief Najib-ud-Daulah as Mir Bakshi of the empire and his son Timur Shah Durrani (wedded to the daughter of Alamgir II) as his 'supreme agent'. In 1757, Imad invited the Marathas to drive out the Afghans and the Rohillas. In March 1758, the Marathas led by Raghunath Rao appeared at Delhi, defeated the Afghan garrison at Delhi, expelled Najib and overran Punjab, occupying Lahore. They deposed Timur Shah and instead appointed Adina Beg as Governor of Punjab on behalf of the Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao. In August 1759, the Afghan monarch Ahmad Shah Abdali returned to India to avenge the Marathas (and later defeated them in the Battle of Panipat). In 1759, Alamgir II was killed by wazir Imad-ul-Mulk.

1759-60	Shah Jahan III	He was placed on the Mughal throne as a puppet ruler by wazir Imad-ul-Mulk. He was later deposed by Maratha chiefs.
1760-1806	Shah Alam II or Ali Gauhar	He was raised to the throne as the rightful emperor by the Marathas led by Sadashivrao Bhau. In 1761, Abdali defeated the Marathas in the Battle of Panipat . Before returning, Abdali named Shah Alam II as emperor and Najib-ud-Daulah as Mir Bakshi. Shah Alam II was not allowed to enter Delhi for 12 years during which he remained in exile and came to be known as the ' fugitive Mughal Emperor '. During his absence, the Rohilla leaders Najib-ud-Daulah and later his son Zabita Khan and grandson Ghulam Qadir exercised undisputed power at Delhi. In 1764, Shah Alam II joined hands with Mir Qasim of Bengal and Shuja-ud-Daulah of Awadh in the Battle of Buxar against the English Company. In 1765, he signed the Treaty of Allahabad with the British. He was forced to grant the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the British and himself resided in the fort of Allahabad for the next six years as a virtual prisoner of the English . In 1772, he was reinstated to the Mughal throne by the Marathas under Mahadji Shinde . During 1772-73, Shah Alam supported by the Marathas led an expedition against Rohilla leader Zabita Khan. In 1788, Zabita's son Ghulam Qadir deposed Shah Alam and blinded him, henceforth known as the ' blind Mughal Emperor '. The same year, Mahadji Scindia hunted him down and the blind Shah Alam was restored as the king. In 1803, Delhi was recaptured by the English after defeating Daulat Rao Scindia and the blind Mughal emperor once again accepted the protection of the British. Shah Alam's power was so depleted during his reign that it led to a saying in Persian, ' Sultanat-e-Shah Alam, Az Dilli ta Palam '. He authored his own Diwan of poems and was known by the pen-name ' Aftab '. In 1806-37, Akbar Shah II
1806-37	Akbar Shah II	He was the penultimate Mughal Emperor. He gave the title of ' Raja ' to Ram Mohan Roy and sent him to England. In 1835, the East India Company stopped calling itself a subject of the Mughal Emperor, discontinued issuing coins in his name by deleting Persian lines on Company's coins to this effect.

1837-57

**Bahadur Shah II or
Bahadur Shah Zafar**

He was fond of poetry and was known by the title of "Zafar". During the **Revolt of 1857**, Bahadur Shah Zafar was proclaimed as the Emperor of India by the rebels. After the Revolt, he was captured and deported to **Rangoon** where he died in 1862.



Previous Years' Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. Assertion: Shah Alam II spend the initial years as an emperor outside Delhi.

[UPSC 2003]

Reason: There was always a lurking danger of foreign invasion from the North-West Frontier.

Select the answer for the options given below:

- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
(b) Both A and R are true, but R is the not the correct explanation of A.

- (c) A is true, but R is false.
(d) A is false, but R is true.

2. How did the Mughal emperor Jahandar Shah's reign come to an early end?

[UPSC 2003]

- (a) He was deposed by his Wazir
(b) He died due to slip while climbing down steps
(c) He was defeated by his nephew in a battle
(d) He died of sickness due to too much consumption of wine



Practice Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding Nadir Shah's invasion of India?

1. Ahmad Shah was the reigning Mughal Emperor at the time of Nadir Shah's attack.
2. It exposed the hidden weakness of the empire to the Maratha sardars and the foreign trading companies.
3. As a result of the invasion, Nadir Shah annexed areas west of the Indus to the Persian Empire.

Select the correct answer from the options given below:

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
(c) 2 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

2. Which of the following is true regarding the establishment of Hyderabad state in 1724?

- (a) It represented the spread of Mughal influence to south India.
(b) It reflected adoption of new policy of decentralisation by the Mughal emperor.
(c) It reflected the weakness of central Mughal authority.
(d) It represented the Mughal emperor's trust in his nobles.

3. Which of the following statements is not correct?

- (a) After Ahmad Shah, Aziz-ud-din ascended the throne of Delhi
(b) Aziz-ud-din was placed on the Delhi throne as Alamgir II.

- (c) It was during the reign of Alamgir II that the third battle of Panipat was fought.

- (d) Shah Jahan III became the Mughal Emperor after the death of Alamgir II.

4. With reference to Farrukhsiyar, consider the following statements:

1. He was the son of Jahandar Shah
2. He ascended the Mughal throne with the help of Zulfiqar Khan.
3. During his reign, policy of religious tolerance was adopted.

Which of the above is/are incorrect?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 2 only (d) 3 only

5. Consider the following statements:

1. It was during the reign of Muhammad Shah that Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India.
2. It was during the reign of Ahmad Shah that Nadir Shah invaded India.
3. Ahmad Shah was blinded and deposed by his wazir Safdar Jung.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) all of the above

6. Which of the following are correctly matched?

1. Bahadur Shah II-poetry
2. Akbar Shah II-Raja Ram Mohan Roy
3. Alamgir II-Kingdom from Delhi to Palam
4. Ahmad Shah-court factions

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1, 2 and 4
(c) 1 and 2 (d) all of the above

7. Which of the following statements is/are true regarding the royal farman of 1717 issued by Farrukhsiyar?

1. The Company was permitted to carry on trade in Bengal, Bombay and Madras free of customs duty.
2. The Company was also permitted to mint its own coins and further fortify Calcutta.
3. The Company was also granted the right to issue dastaks for the movement of such goods.

Select the correct answer from the options given below:

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

8. Consider the following statements:

1. The Maratha prince, Shahuji, was released by the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I.
2. Wazir Zulfiqar Khan restored friendly relations with the Rajputs and the Marathas.

Which of the above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) both (d) neither

9. With regard to the Mughal rule, which of the following was the correct meaning of the term 'jeziah'?

- (a) a kind of land revenue
(b) an officer in charge of collecting tax.
(c) a pilgrimage tax.
(d) a tax charged on annual income of non-Muslims.

10. Powerful nobles first began to carve out independent states during the reign of which Mughal Emperor?

- (a) Ahmad Shah
(b) Muhammad Shah
(c) Alamgir II
(d) Farrukhsiyar



Practice Questions – Main Exam

1. How would you like to characterise the 18th century in Indian history? Elucidate.

2. Write short notes on the following-
(a) Aurangzeb's Responsibility in decline of the Mughal Empire.

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- (b) Irani and Durrani invasions in 18th century India.
3. What caused the decline of the Mughal Empire in the first half of the 18th century? Substantiate by giving suitable examples.
4. Explain with illustrative detail the part played by the following factors in the disintegration of the Mughal Empire-
- (a) Inherent defects of the Mansab and Jagir system.
- (b) Growth of new political forces in the provinces.
5. Discuss the role of external forces in the decline of the Mughal Empire.

Answers

Previous Years' Questions - Preliminary Exam

1. (c) 2. (c)

Practice Questions - Preliminary Exam

- | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (c) | 3. (c) | 4. (a) | 5. (a) |
| 6. (b) | 7. (d) | 8. (c) | 9. (d) | 10. (b) |