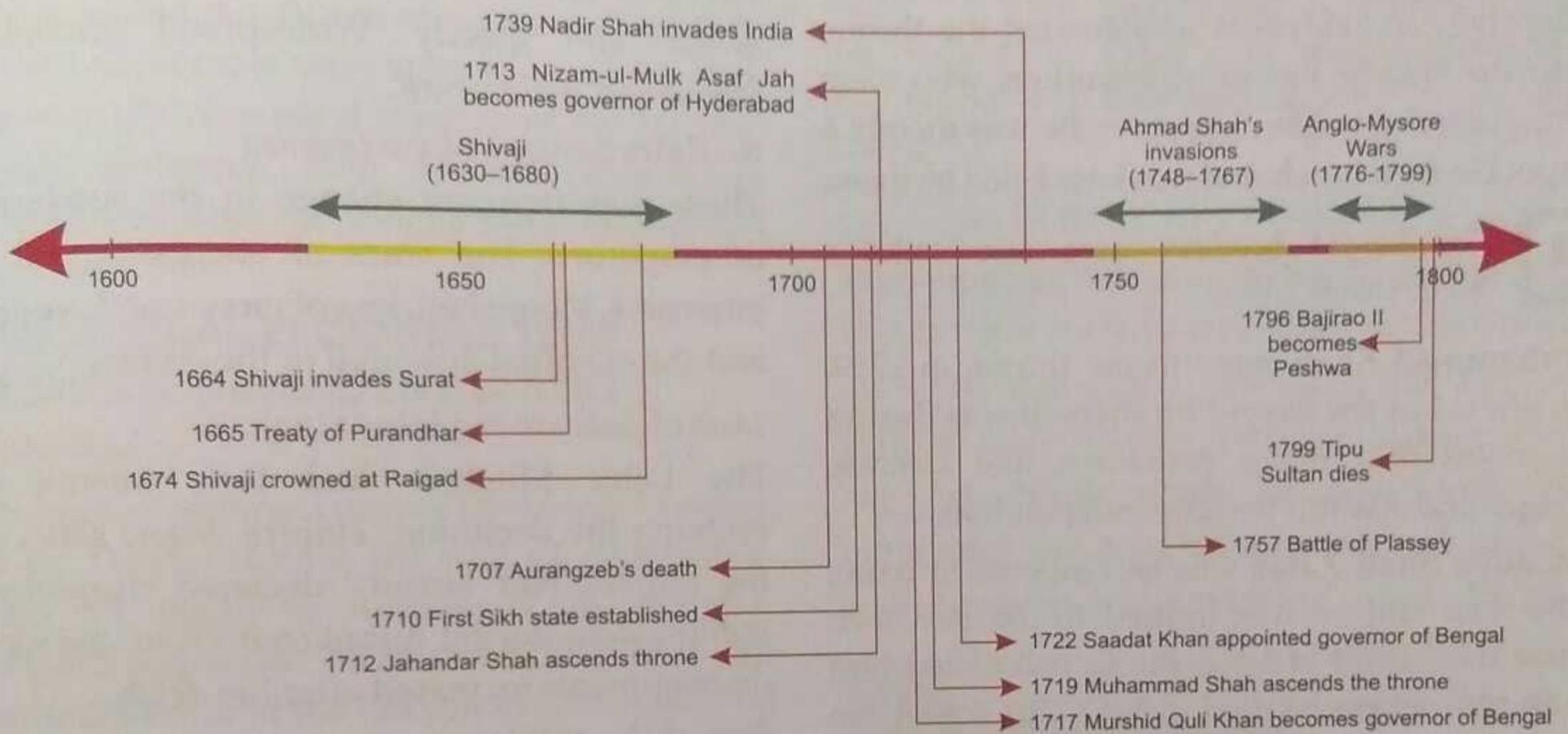


POLITICAL FORMATIONS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY INDIA



The Mughal Empire was at its zenith under Aurangzeb. After his death, the empire weakened and many new regional powers emerged and gained strength before the establishment of British.

The great Mughal Empire rapidly declined after the death of Aurangzeb. The Indian subcontinent witnessed major political changes in the 18th century. The period between Aurangzeb's death and the establishment of the British Empire in India was a time when many independent states rose to power. The subcontinent was fragmented and ruled by different rulers. In this final chapter, we shall study about these rulers and the political scenario of the subcontinent just before the British came to power. The 18th century also marked the end of the medieval period in India.

CRISIS IN MUGHAL EMPIRE AND LATER MUGHALS

Aurangzeb died in 1707. Soon after his death, the disintegration of the Great Mughal Empire began. There were a series of inconsequential¹ kings known as the Later Mughals. After Aurangzeb's death, a war of succession broke out and finally, **Bahadur Shah I** ascended the throne. It was difficult for him to hold the large empire together which was already in a state of collapse. Also, the Sikhs rose up in revolt during his reign. He tried to implement peace. His reign was short and lasted till 1712.

¹inconsequential: anything which has no importance

(e) When was the Third Battle of Panipat fought?

WEBLINK

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shivaji>

ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

A. Choose the correct option:

1. (d) 1739
2. (b) Bahadur Shah Zafar
3. (a) Murshid Ali Khan
4. (a) Baji Rao II
5. (c) Sawai Raja Jai Singh II

B. Match the following:

A	B
1. Peshwa	(a) Chief minister
2. Amatya	(b) Accounts
3. Nyayadhish	(c) Highest judicial authority
4. Mantri	(d) Home minister
5. Sachiv	(e) Royal letters

C. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Raigad (b) Haider Ali (c) Asaf Jah
(d) Banda Bahadur (e) Seringapatam

D. Short-answer questions:

1. After the death of Aurangzeb, the kings who came to the throne were known as the Later Mughals.
2. The Peshwa or Prime minister of the Maratha kingdom was appointed to act as the head of the state in times of emergency in the kingdom. With time, the Peshwas became the real rulers of the empire while the successors of Shivaji were just nominal heads of the state. The office of Peshwa became hereditary.
3. Bahadur Shah Zafar was exiled to Burma by the British.
4. The post Mughal era saw the rise of small regional succession states. This was because the Later Mughals were weak, the empire was very huge and the distant areas were difficult to manage. Governors were appointed to look after the areas which were distant from the Mughal capital. However, they declared themselves independent from the Mughals and established their own states.
5. Tipu Sultan was the ruler of Mysore who fought against the British valiantly.
6. Nadir Shah invaded and plundered the Mughal Empire and carried away treasures worth crores of rupees. He also carried away the Peacock throne and the Koh-i-noor diamond. This invasion resulted in a loss of prestige of the Mughal Empire and revealed its weakness.

7. Fighting with all his valour, Tipu Sultan eventually died defending his capital, Seringapatam in 1799.
8. Shivaji's mother Jijabai and his teacher, Dada Konddev ji had a deep impact on him.
9. Shivaji's dreamt of building a Maratha empire by uniting all the Marathas under one independent kingdom.

E. Long-answer questions:

1. The decline of the Mughal Empire was due to a combination of reasons. It began during the last years of Aurangzeb's rule.

Aurangzeb was intolerant to other religions. His orthodox religious policy led to dissatisfaction among the people and invoked the wrath of both the Hindus and the Shia Muslims. Also, his successors were weak and the empire was left in the hands of the nobles who were corrupt, selfish and greedy. Widespread corruption weakened the empire.

There were no definite laws of succession. There was frequent change in the succession of emperors. The wars of succession led to bitterness, bloodshed, loss of money and prestige and the eventual downfall of the empire.

2. Shivaji was a proficient administrator. He looked into the welfare of his people. He was assisted by a cabinet of eight ministers. The chief minister was the Peshwa. He was responsible for the welfare of people and co-ordination of various departments. The *Amatya* looked after the accounts. The *Mantri* was the home minister and the *Sachiv* was responsible for all royal letters and accounts of the *Paraganas*. The *Senapati* recruited and trained soldiers. The highest judicial authority was the *Nyayadhish*. *Danadhyakshya* looked after the charitable works.

Shivaji's revenue system was well-organised. The farmers paid two-third of the produce as revenue. In parts of the Mughal empire which were under Shivaji's authority, two types of taxes were levied. *Chauth* was one-fourth of the land revenue. *Sardeshmukhi* was one-tenth of the land revenue. He cautioned the officials against harassment. Shivaji was just and approachable to all.

3. Many changes were introduced in the military administration. Shivaji had a standing army called *Paga*. He introduced guerilla and commando warfare. He initiated the use of *bagh nakh* (tiger claw), a traditional weapon designed to fit over the knuckles. He also invented a weapon called *vita*. He had infantry, cavalry and navy. He enforced strict disciplinary measures in the army and had an efficient network of spies.
4. Aurangzeb was against the Sikhs and forced them to convert to Islam. Those who refused were killed. Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh were put to death. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Bahadur became the commander of the *Khalsa*. The Sikhs rose in revolt under his leadership. The aim of this organization was to safeguard Sikhs against the Mughals. Many Sikhs joined him to avenge the death of the gurus. In 1710, the first Sikh state was established. Now the Sikhs organized themselves into 12 *misls* or *jathas*. Later Maharaja Ranjit Singh became the leader of all the *misls*. He expanded the borders of the Sikh kingdom. Even the British did not dare attack and conquer this area until Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death.

F. Write short notes on the following:

1. Bengal has a rich and diverse cultural history that dates back to the ancient times. The state was ruled by numerous dynasties. During Mughal rule, Bengal became a recognized commercial centre in the country. They were patrons of art and culture and Bengal's already rich culture blossomed even more.

The Mughals appointed governors to rule Bengal. Murshid Ali Khan became the governor of Bengal in 1717 CE. He shifted the capital of Bengal from Dacca to Murshidabad and declared himself the Nawab. He paid a nominal allegiance to the Mughal emperor. He built the beautiful Katra Masjid.

Siraj-ud-din, his son-in-law succeeded him in 1725. He was generous and just. Alvardi Khan became the next Nawab. He faced problems of repeated conflict with the Marathas. His grandson, Siraj-ud-daulah succeeded him. This young Nawab had to face the growing ambitions of the British. He was defeated by them in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. After him, the British placed a puppet Nawab on the throne of Bengal. Peace and prosperity flourished in Bengal under the rule of the Nawabs. Trade and agriculture were promoted and there was no religious bias.

2. Awadh roughly occupied the area of modern day Uttar Pradesh. It was an important province because of its strategic location which was an advantage for trade and commerce. Also, agriculture flourished there because of fertile soil.

In 1722, Saadat Khan was appointed the governor of Awadh by the Mughal emperor. As the power of the emperor declined, he established his own dynasty. He was succeeded by Safdarjung, his son-in-law. He faced many problems – the corrupt policy of the Delhi court, lawlessness and the army. He dealt with all the problems and established peace in the province. He was also very generous and helped the needy.

3. Hyderabad became a part of the Mughal Empire in the Deccan during the rule of Aurangzeb. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal-appointed governor **Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah** became the governor of the Deccan in 1713. Later he was made the *wazir* of the Mughal Empire. But, later he moved back to the Deccan. In 1724, he declared himself the governor of the six Deccan provinces, Hyderabad being one of them. He started the Asaf Jahi dynasty. During this period, Persian, Urdu, Telugu and Marathi developed simultaneously. The highest official positions were given to the deserving person irrespective of their religion. Nizam-ul-Mulk's successors ruled as Nizams of Hyderabad. Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jahi II, moved the capital back to Hyderabad from Aurangabad. Hyderabad became the largest Indian state in British India.

G. Give reasons for the following:

1. Awadh was an important province of the Mughal Empire because of its strategic location which was an advantage for trade and commerce. Also, agriculture flourished there because of fertile soil.
2. Shivaji attacked Surat to get funds for his army.
3. Tipu Sultan was called Tiger of Mysore because he fought against the British valiantly. He was a true patriot and realized the potential danger of the East India Company. Four Anglo-Mysore Wars were fought between 1776 and 1799. Fighting with all his valour, Tipu Sultan eventually died defending his capital, Seringapatam. Till he was alive, the British could not get Mysore.