India on the eve of British conquests

- The reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) proved to signify the beginning of the end of Mughal rule in India.
- Muhammad Shah ruled for a long spell of 29 years (1719-48).
- Muhammad Shah’s reign witnessed the establishment of independent states of Hyderabad, Bengal, Awadh and Punjab.

Challenges before the Mughals

External Challenges

- The north-western borders had been neglected by the later Mughals
- Nadir Shah, the Persian emperor, attacked India in 1738-39, conquered Lahore and defeated the Mughal army at Karnal on February 13, 1739.
- Apart from the Peacock Throne and the Kohinoor diamond, seventy crore rupees were collected
- Ahmad Shah Abdali (or Ahmad Shah Durran) successor of Nadir Shah. In 1757, Abdali captured Delhi
- In 1758, Najib-ud-Daula(Mir Bakhshi of the empire and ‘supreme agent’ of Abdali) was expelled from Delhi by the Maratha chief, Raghunath Rao, who also captured Punjab.
- In 1761, Abdali defeated the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat.

Weak Rulers after Aurangzeb—an Internal Challenge

### Bahadur Shah I (1709–March 1712)
- Aurangzeb, became the emperor, taking the title Bahadur Shah.
- Khafi Khan gave the title of Shah-i-Bekhabar to Bahadur Shah.
- Adopted a pacific policy with the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Jats.
- Bahadur Shah I died in February 1712.

### Jahandar Shah (March 1712-February 1713)
- With the help of Zulfikar Khan, Jahandar Shah became the emperor.
- Zulfikar Khan was appointed prime minister;
- He introduced izara system to improve the financial condition of the empire.
- Jahandar Shah abolished Jaziya.

### Farrukhsiyar (1713-1719)
- He followed a policy of religious tolerance by abolishing Jaziya and pilgrimage tax.
- In 1717, Farrukhsiyar gave Farman’s to British.
- In 1719, the Sayyid brothers, with the help of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath, dethroned Farrukhsiyar, he was blinded and killed.(1st ever in Mughal history that emperor was killed by nobles)

### Rafi-ud-Darajat (February 28 to June 4, 1719)

### Rafi-ud-Daula (June 6 to September 17, 1719)
- Sayyid brothers gave the title Shah Jahan II

### Muhammad Shah (1719-48)
- Raushan Akhtar – given title Muhammad shah and Rangieela
- In 1724, Nizam-ul-Mulk became the wazir and founded the independent state of Hyderabad.
- In 1739, Nadir Shah defeated the Mughals in the Battle of Karnal

Ahmad Shah (1748-1754)
- Udham Bai, the ‘Queen Mother’. Udham Bai, given the title of Qibla-i-Alam,

Alamgir II (1754-1758)
- Ahmed Shah Abdali, the Iranian invader, reached Delhi in January 1757. During his reign, the Battle of Plassey was fought in June 1757.

Shah Alam II (1759-1806)
- His reign saw two decisive battles—the Third Battle of Panipat (1761) and the Battle of Buxar (1764).
- Treaty of Allahabad (August 1765), he was taken under the East India Company’s protection and resided at Allahabad. He also issued a farman granting to the Company in perpetuity the Diwani (the right to collect revenue) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Akbar II (1806-37)
- He gave the title of Raja to Ram Mohan Rai. In 1835, the coins bearing the names of Mughal emperors were stopped.

Bahadur Shah II (1837-1857)
- Bahadur Shah Zafar—the last Mughal emperor.
- Captured by the English and sent to Rangoon where he died in 1862.

**Causes of Decline of Mughal Empire**

- Empire-related or Mughal-centric view sees the causes of the decline within the structure and functioning of the empire itself.
- Region related view finds the causes of Mughal decline in the turmoil and instability in the different parts of the empire.
- Emperors who came after Aurangzeb proved to be incapable, weak and licentious monarchs who hastened the process of disintegration of the empire and, finally, its collapse.
- Major factors which contributed to the downfall:
  - Shifting Allegiance of Zamindars
    - The zamindars were hereditary owners of their lands who enjoyed certain privileges on hereditary basis, and were variously known as rais, rajas, thakurs, khuts or deshmukhs.
    - They helped in the collection of revenue and in local administration and increased during Aurangzeb’s reign.

**Jagirdari Crisis**

- Mughal rule has often been defined as “the rule of the nobility”
- Divisiveness among the nobility on the basis of religion, homeland and tribe.
- Mutual rivalry, jealousy and contest for power among the various groups during the rule of the later Mughals (in the absence of a strong central leadership) contributed to the decline of the empire.

**Rise of Regional Aspirations**

- The Rajput struggle against the empire and the growing ambition and power of the Marathas, thus, adversely affected the Mughal.

**Economic and Administrative Problems**

- The expenditure of the state much exceeded its income.

**Rise of Regional States**

- **Successor States**—The Mughal provinces that turned into states after breaking away from the empire. Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.
- **Independent Kingdoms**—These states came into existence primarily due to the destabilisation of the Mughal control over the provinces. Mysore, Kerala and the Rajput states.
- **The New States**—These were the states set up by the rebels against the Mughal Empire. Maratha, the Sikh and the Jat states.

### Survey of Regional Kingdoms

**Hyderabad**

- The founder of the Asaf-Jah house of Hyderabad was Kilich Khan, popularly known as Nizam-ul-Mulk.
- The idea of an independent state in the Deccan—Zulfikar Khan.
- He killed Mubariz Khan in the Battle of Shakh-Kheda (1724), full-fledged viceroy of the Deccan.
- In 1725, he became the viceroy and conferred on himself the title of Asaf-Jah.
- He followed a tolerant policy towards the Hindus. For example, a Hindu, Puran Chand, was his Dewan.

**Awadh**

- The founder of the autonomous kingdom of Awadh was Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk who was appointed Governor of Awadh in 1722.
- He was succeeded by Safdar Jang as the Nawab of Awadh.

**Bengal**

- Taking advantage of the growing weakness of the central authority, two men of exceptional ability, Murshid Quli Khan and Aliwardi Khan, made Bengal virtually independent.
• He established peace by freeing Bengal of internal and external danger.
• Bengal was now also relatively free of major uprisings by zamindars.
• The only three major uprisings during his rule were first by Sitaram Ray, Udai Narayan and Ghulam Muhammad, and then by Shujat Khan, and finally by Najat Khan.
• After defeating them, Murshid Quli Khan gave their zamindaris to his favourite, Ramjivan.
• Murshid Quli Khan died in 1727, and his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din ruled Bengal till 1739.
• His successor, Sarfaraz Khan, was killed in 1740 by Alivardi Khan, the deputy governor of Bihar at Gheria, who assumed power and made himself independent of the Mughal emperor by giving yearly tribute.
• These three Nawabs gave Bengal a long period of peace and orderly administration and promoted its trade and industry.
• Murshid Quli Khan and the succeeding Nawabs gave equal opportunities for employment to Hindus and Muslims.

**Nawabs of Bengal**

- **Murshid Quli Khan** was appointed as the Diwan of Bengal by Aurangzeb. He tried to save the interest of his province by preventing the collection of revenues by the English East India Company.
- **Shuja-ud-Din Khan** who son-in-law of Murshid Quli Khan succeeded the govt. and annexed Suba of Bihar to become a part of Bengal.
- **Sarfraz Khan** crowned who was son of Shuja. He took the title of Alam-ud—daula Haider Jung.
- **Alivardi Khan** legalized his usurpation by receiving a Farman from Emperor Muhammad after paying Rs. 2 crore. He favoured and nominated Siraj-ud-daula who was the son of his youngest daughter as his successor.
- **Siraj-ud-daula** prohibited the English from fortifying their factories at Calcutta but on their refusal to comply with his orders that led to the Battle at Plassey with English forces.
- **Mir Qasim** granted the Zamindari of Burdman, Midnapore and Chittagong to the British. He introduced several revenue and military reforms to strengthen his position.
- **Mir Jafar** granted the right to free trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the Zamindar of 24 parganas to the British. He is also known as the Jackel of Clive. His reinstatement in 1763 by the British took place after the outbreak of the war with Mir Qasim.
- **Najm-ud-daula** was the son of the Mir Jafar and made Nawab who was remained puppet in the hands of the British during the period of ‘Dual System of Government’.

**The Rajputs**

- The Rajputs tried to re-establish their independence in the 18th century.
- This forced the Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah I to march against Ajit Singh (1708), who had formed an alliance with Jai Singh II and Durgadas Rathor.
- But the alliance was broken and the situation was saved for the Mughals.
- At one time the Rajputs controlled the entire territory extending from the south of Delhi up to the western coast.

**Mysore**

- Another important state to make its appearance in the eighteenth century was that of Mysore.
- This territory located at the junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats was ruled by the Wodeyars.
- Various powers, interested in this territory, turned the area into a constant battlefield.
- In the end the Mysore state was brought under the rule of Haider Ali who ruled the state but not without trouble.

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• He was involved in constant warfare with the British and so was his son Tipu Sultan.

Kerala
• Martanda Varma established an independent state of Kerala with Travancore as his capital.
• He extended the boundaries of his state from Kanyakumari to Cochin.

The Jats
• The agriculturist Jat settlers living around Delhi, Mathura, and Agra revolted against the oppressive policies of Aurangzeb.
• After some initial setbacks, Churaman and Badan Singh succeeded in setting up the Jat state of Bharatpur.
• But it was under Suraj Mal that Jat power reached its zenith.
• He not only provided an efficient system of administration but also greatly extended the territory of the state.
• His state included territories from Ganga in the east to Chambal in the south and included the Subahs of Agra, Mathura, Meerut and Aligarh.
• However, the Jat state suffered a decline after the death of Suraj Mal in 1763.
• Thereafter, the state split into small areas controlled by petty zamindars who mainly lived by plunder.

The Sikhs
• Guru Gobind Singh transformed the Sikhs into a militant sect in defence of their religion and liberties.
• Banda Bahadur, later assumed the leadership of the Sikhs in 1708.
• 12 misls or confederacies which exercised control over different parts of the kingdom.
• The credit for establishing a strong kingdom of Punjab goes to Ranjit Singh. He was the son of Mahan Singh, the leader of the Sukarchakiya Ranjit Singh brought under control the area extending from the Sutlej to the Jhelum. He conquered Lahore in 1799 and Amritsar in 1802.
• The Treaty of Amritsar with the British, Ranjit Singh acknowledged the British right over the cis-Sutlej territories.
• The Tripartite Treaty in 1838 with Shah Shuja and the English Company whereby he agreed to provide passage to the British troops through Punjab with a view to placing Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul.
• Ranjit Singh died in 1839

Rohilakhand and Farukhabad
• The states of Rohilakhand and the kingdom of the Bangash Pathans were a fall out of the Afghan migration into India.
• Ali Muhammad Khan set the petty kingdom, Rohilakhand.
• This was the area of the Himalayan foothills between Kumaon in the north and the Ganga in the south.
• Mohammad Khan Bangash, an Afghan, set up an independent kingdom to the east of Delhi in the area around Farrukhabad

Nature and Limitations of Regional States
• The polity that emerged in these states was regional in character, and functional with the collaborative support of the different local groups like the zamindars, merchants, local nobles and chieftains.
• The provincial rulers failed to develop a system based on sound financial, administrative and military organisation.
• The jagirdari crisis intensified as income from agriculture declined, and the number of contenders for a share of the surplus multiplied.

Socio-Economic Conditions
• Agriculture—Though agriculture was technically backward, it was worked by the hard labour of peasants.
• Trade and Industry—India was known as a sink of precious metals.
• Items of Import From the Persian Gulf Region—pearls, raw silk, wool, dates, dried fruits, and rose water; from Arabia—coffee, gold, drugs, and honey; from China—tea, sugar, porcelain, and silk; from Tibet—gold, musk, and woollen cloth; from Africa—ivory and drugs; from Europe—woollen cloth, copper, iron, lead and paper.
• Items of Export Cotton textiles, raw silk and silk fabrics, hardware, indigo, saltpetre, opium, rice, wheat, sugarepepper and other spices, precious stones, and drugs.
• Important Centres of Textile Industry Dacca, Murshedabad, Patna, Surat, Ahmedabad, Broach, Chanderi, Burhanpur, Jaunpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, Agra, Multan, Lahore, Masulipatnam, Aurangabad, Chicacoole, Vishakhapatnam, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Madurai, etc.; Kashmir was a centre of woolen manufactures.
**Ship-building Industry** Maharashtra, the Andhra region and Bengal were the leaders in ship-building. Indian shipping also flourished on the Kerala coast at Calicut and Quilon. The Zamorin of Calicut used the Muslim Kunjali Maraikkars

**Status of Education**

- The Hindu and Muslim elementary schools were called *pathshalas* and *maktabs*. The education was confined to reading, writing, and arithmetic.
- *Chatuspathis* or *Tols*, as they were called in Bihar and Bengal, were the centres of higher education. Some of the famous centres for Sanskrit education were Kasi (Varanasi), Tirhut (Mithila), Nadia and Utkala. *Madrasahs* were the institutions of higher learning for Persian and Arabic. Azimabad (Patna) was a famous centre for Persian education.

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**Societal Set-up**

**Many Castes, Many Sects**

- The family system was primarily patriarchal and caste was the central feature of the social life of the Hindus.
- The *sharif* Muslims consisting of nobles, scholars, priests and army affairs often looked down upon the *ajlaf* Muslims or the lower class Muslims.

**Position of Women in Society**

- Upper class women remained at home, lower class women worked in fields and outside their homes supplementing the family income.
- *Purdah, sati, child marriage, polygamy* did exist which hindered the progress of women.

**Menace of slavery**

- Higher classes of Rajputs, Khatris and Kayasthas kept women slave for domestic work.

**Development in Art, Architecture and Culture**

- At Lucknow, Asaf-ud-Daula built the *bada Imambara* in 1784.
- Sawai Jai Singh built the pink city of Jaipur and five astronomical observatories at Delhi, Jaipur, Benares, Mathura and Ujjain. He also prepared a set of time-tables called *Jij Muhammad-shahi*, to help the people in the study of astronomy.
- In the south, in Kerala, the Padmanabhapuram Palace, famous for its architecture and mural paintings.
- Kanchan Nambiar was a noted Malayalam poet.
- The Tamil language was enriched by *sittar* Tayumanavar (1706-44), one of the best exponents of *sittar* poetry, protested against the abuses of temple-rule and the caste system.
- *Heer Ranjha*, the romantic epic in Punjabi literature, was composed by Warris Shah.
- In Sindhi literature, Shah Abdul Latif composed *Risalo*, a collection of poems.

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MCQs from this chapter will be shared along with the next chapter

**Expansion and Consolidation of British Power in India**

as they are interrelated