

7th - The Mughal Empire I



The Delhi Sultan had shrunk in size and power, with several regions breaking free from its control. The governor of Punjab, Daulat Khan Lodi, had declared his independence from the Delhi Sultanate and so the other leaders. The rulers no longer owed allegiance of the Delhi sultanate.

Who were the Mughals? The Mughals were the last powerful descendants of the Mongol. Under the inspired leadership of Babur, they took advantage of the absence of a strong center power to invade India and establish Mughal rule in Delhi. From their mother's side they were descendants of Genghis Khan (died 1227), ruler of the Mongol tribes, China and central Asia. From their father's side they were the successors of Timur (died 1404), the ruler of Iran, Iraq and modern-day Turkey. Mughal Empire in India lasted from the 16th century to mid-19th century (for about 250 years). Mughals expanded their empire to cover almost the whole of the Indian subcontinent and left a permanent mark on the society, culture, art and architecture of India.

Mughal military campaigns

Babur 1526-1530: Babur was born in 1483. He was the first Mughal emperor (1526-1530). Succeeded to the throne of Ferghana in 1494 when he was only 12 years old. He was forced to leave his ancestral throne due to the invasion of another Mongol group, the Uzbeks. After years of wandering he seized Kabul in 1504 when he was 12 years old. He now began to look towards India, about whose wealth he had heard many stories. He made four exploratory attacks into India, none of which were very successful. He was invited by Maharana Sangram Singh, king of Mewar, and Daulat Khan Lodhi, In 1526 he defeated the sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, at Panipat and captured Delhi and Agra.

Major campaigns and events

The First Battle Of Panipat (1526 CE): Babur was a military genius who skillfully combined his artillery with his cavalry to win battles. The Indian soldiers were familiar with big guns but not the light field artillery and muskets used by Babur. Babur inflicted a crushing defeat on Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat in 1526 CE.

The Battle Of Khanua (1527 CE): Rana Sanga and Daulat Khan Lodi had hoped that Babur would return to Kabul after defeating the Delhi sultan. However, having conquered Delhi, Babur decided to stay on in India. In 1527 CE, Rana Sanga, angered by Babur's decision, Babur and Rana Sanga met at the Battle of Khanua near Fatehpur Sikri. Though Rana Sanga had a much larger force, Babur defeated them with his use of artillery and superior military tactics. These two victories put Babur firmly on the throne of Delhi. After defeating the Rajputs, Babur turned east and defeated the Afghans on the banks of the river Ghagra (1529 CE). Babur now controlled an empire which stretched from Kabul to present-day Bihar. He made Delhi the capital of his empire. But Babur's rule was a very short one, lasting only three years. Babur died in 1530 CE.

Humayun 1530-1540, 1555-1556: Babur's son Humayun ascended the throne in 1530 CE. Babur left an empire to his son which was yet to be consolidated. Humayun tried to enlarge his empire by annexing present-day Gujarat, parts of Rajasthan and Bihar. He was an able commander; he did not possess the sustained spirit and energy of his father. He had strong opposition from his own brother so he divided his inheritance according to the will of his father. His brothers were each given a province. The ambitions of his brother Mirza Kamran weakened Humayun's cause against Afghan competitors. Sher Khan was the Afghan governor of present-day Bihar. In 1531 CE, he declared his independence from Humayun. Sher Khan defeated Humayun in the Battle of Chausa in 1539 CE. In 1540 CE, Sher Khan dealt Humayun a final blow in the Battle of Kanauj. Sher Shah was an excellent administrator who introduced many reforms. He brought crime under control. He built the Grand Trunk Road (Sadak-i-Azam), and a network of caravanserais for travelers, planted trees and dug wells. Sher Shah introduced the silver rupee, called the rupiya, as a standard mode of exchange, Gold coins called mohur and copper coins called dam were also minted by his government. Akbar was born during this exile in Sind. In



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1555CE, Humayun made a second attempt to regain Delhi. He captured Lahore, and occupied Delhi and Agra. In Iran Humayun received help from the Safavid Shah. He recaptured Delhi in 1555 but died the next year after an accident in his building. However, his triumph was short Humayun died the following year while fighting the Candelas in Kalinjar.

Akbar 1556-1605:

Early life: Akbar was born in 1542CE in Amarkot when his father was a fugitive there. Akbar was only 13 years old when he was crowned emperor in 1556CE.

Akbar conquests: After consolidating his rule over Delhi and Agra, he began to systematically all his potential rivals in the west, east, south and the northwest. By 1601CE, the Mughal Empire stretched from Afghanistan to Bengal and from Kashmir to the Deccan.

Administration: Akbar was helped in the discharge of his administrative duties by his cabinet. His tutor and mentor, Bairam Khan, took care of the administration of the empire till Akbar was 18. The cabinet consisted of several senior officers. The wazir, who was similar to a prime minister, was the principal advisor to the emperor. The diwan, who was in charge of museum and finance, was similar to the finance minister.

Provincial Government: Akbar divided his empire into 15 subas or provinces, each headed by a governor or subedar. The provinces were divided into sarkars or districts; each sarkar consisted of several parganas, and several villages made up a parganas.

Military Administration-The Mansabdari System: Akbar introduced the Mansabdari system, i.e., a system which consisted of a hierarchy of ranks or offices, In 1574 CE. Every civil or military official was given a jagir or piece of land according to his zat or rank. They drew their salaries form the revenue of the land. They have to maintain certain horses for the Emperor's use.

Land Revenue Policy: Akbar adopted Sher Shah's system of land revenue, and introduced certain additional features to bring greater relief to the people. Raja Todar Mal was appointed the chief revenue officer. Todar Mal introduced the dashala system. The land was divided into four groups department on its fertility and the number of time it was cultivated in a year.

Rajput Policy: Akbar realized that if he were to be accepted as the monarch of an empire in India, it could not be possible without the support of the Rajput's. He gave important posts to Rajput's and other Hindus in his administration. Akbar gave the Rajput's complete freedom to follow their religion, build temples, celebrate festivals and wear their caste mark on their forehead.

Religious Policy: Akbar was a liberal ruler who believed in the equality and unity of all religions. He employed Hindus in his government and gave many of them high ranks. He abolished the religious tax On non- Muslims, the jaziya. He married Hindu princess and allowed them to practice their religion. In 1575 CE, Akbar opened the Ibadat Khana at his new capital, Fatehpur Sikri. He invited people of various faiths to come here and discuss matters of religion with him. A few years later, Akbar founded his own religion called Din-I-Ilahi or divine faith. It stressed belief in one god.

