

TRANSFER OF RULE IN THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

INTRODUCTION

The Mughal Empire was an Islamic imperial power that ruled a large portion of Indian subcontinent which began in 1526, invaded and ruled most of Hindustan (South Asia) by the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and ended in the mid-19th century. The Mughal Emperors were descendants of the Timurids of Turkistan, and at the height of their power around 1700, they controlled most of the Indian Subcontinent—extending from Bengal in the east to Balochistan in the west, Kashmir in the north to the Kaveri basin in the south. Its population at that time has been estimated as between 110 and 130 million, over a territory of over 4 million sq. km (1.5 million sq. mi.).

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EMPIRE

The Mughal Dynasty was founded in 1526 by Zahir-ud-Din Mohammad Babur. He came hailing from Uzbekistan and invaded parts of Northern India, defeated the last of Delhi Sultans, Ibrahim Shah Lodhi in the first battle of Panipat.

CLASSIC PERIOD OF MUGHALS

The "classic period" of the Empire started in 1556 with the accession of Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar, better known as Akbar the Great. It ended with the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, although the Empire continued for another 150 years. During this period, the Empire was marked by a highly centralized administration connecting the different regions. All the significant monuments of the Mughals, their most visible legacy, date to this period which was characterised by the expansion of Persian cultural influence in the Indian subcontinent, with brilliant literary, artistic and architectural results.

GENERAL TREND OF SUCCESSION IN THE MUGHALS

There was no general concept of succession within in the Mughals and also no rule of primogeniture was prevalent. The rule was mostly transferred on bloodshed of brothers or other claimants of the throne and a war of succession was common decider of the new Emperor. At the death of each Emperor a series of confederacies and conspiracies started and the one with improved tactics was always successful in getting to the throne. Also the person who had a strong political impact in the court always played an important role in crowning the new Emperor.

Below is the detailed description of all the emperors, their works during their reign and also most importantly the way they get to the throne and eliminated all the problems in their path.

EARLY TRANSFERS OF RULE

The Mughal was not permanently established in the early years as after the death the founder Babur, his son lost to Sher Shah Suri and there was a gap of about 15 years in the Mughal period. There were many problems faced by the early emperors in establishing a strong base of the Empire.

ZAHIR-UD-DIN MOHAMMAD BABUR

Zahir-ud-din Mohammad Babur (February 23, 1483 — January 5, 1531) was a Muslim conqueror from Central Asia who, following a series of setbacks, finally succeeded in laying the basis for the Mughal dynasty of India. He was a direct descendant of Timur through his father, and a descendant also of Genghis Khan through his mother. Babur identified his lineage as Timurid and Chaghatay-Turkic, while his origin, milieu, training, and culture were steeped in Persian culture and so he was largely responsible for the fostering of this culture by his

descendants, and for the expansion of Persian cultural influence in the Indian subcontinent, with brilliant literary, artistic, and historiographical results.

FIRST BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Ibrahim Lodi advanced against him with 100,000 soldiers and 100 elephants; and though Babur's army had grown, it was still less than half the size of his opponents, possibly as few as 25,000 men. This was to be their main engagement, the First battle of Panipat, and was fought on 21 April 1526. Ibrahim Lodi was slain and his army was routed; Babur quickly took possession of both Delhi and Agra. That very day Babur ordered Humayun to ride to Agra (Ibrahim's former capital) and secure its national treasures and resources from looting. Humayun found the family of the Raja of Gwalior there — the Raja himself having died at Panipat — sheltering from the invaders, fearing the dreadful nature of the 'Mongols' from the stories that preceded their arrival. After their safety was guaranteed they gave Humayun their family's most valuable jewel, a very large diamond, which some believe to be the diamond which came to be called the Koh-i-Noor or 'Mountain of Light'. It is thought that they did this to retain their Kingdom. Whether it was because of the gift or not, the family remained the rulers of Gwalior, though now under their new rulers the Timurids.

Babur, meanwhile, marched onward to Delhi reaching it three days after the battle. He celebrated his arrival with a festival on the river Jumna, and remained there at least until Friday (Jum'ah), when Muslim congregational prayers were said and he heard the Khutba, (sermon), read in his name in the Jama Masjid, a sign of the assumption of sovereignty. He then marched to Agra to join Humayun. Upon arrival Babur was presented with the fabulous diamond, and Babur reports that "I just gave it back to him", adding, "an expert in jewels said its value would provide two and a half days food for the whole world."

BATTLES OF BABUR WITH RAJPUTS

Although master of Delhi and Agra, Babur records in his memoirs that he had sleepless nights because of continuing worries over Rana Sanga, the Rajput ruler of Mewar. The Rajput lords had, prior to Babur's intervention, succeeded in conquering some of the Sultanate's territory. They ruled an area directly to the southwest of Babur's new dominions, commonly known as Rajputana as well as fortified dominions in other parts of northern India. It was not a unified kingdom, but rather a confederacy of principalities, under the informal suzerainty of Rana Sanga, head of the senior Rajput dynasty.

The Rajputs had possibly heard word of the heavy casualties inflicted by Lodi on Babur's forces, and believed that they could capture Delhi, and possibly all Hindustan. They hoped to bring it back into Hindu Rajput hands for the first time in almost three hundred and fifty years since Sultan Shah-al Din Muhammad of Ghor defeated the Rajput Chauhan King Prithviraj III in 1192.

Furthermore, the Rajputs were well aware that there was dissent within the ranks of Babur's army. The hot Indian summer was upon them, and many troops wanted to return home to the cooler climes of Central Asia. The Rajputs' reputation for valour preceded them, and their superior numbers no doubt further contributed to the desire of Babur's army to retreat. According to Babur's own calculations the potential strength of the Rajput army was much larger than that deployed by the Lodis at Panipat. Babur resolved to make this an extended battle, and decided to push further into India, into lands never previously claimed by the Timurids. He needed his troops to defeat the Rajputs.

Despite the unwillingness of his troops to engage in further warfare, Babur was convinced he could overcome the Rajputs and gain complete control over Hindustan. He made great propaganda of the fact that for the first time he was to battle non-Muslims, the Kafir, to the extent of taking a vow to abstain from drinking (a common fraction

among his people) for the rest of his life to win divine favour, and declared the war against, Rana Sanga.

The two armies fought each other forty miles west of Agra at Khanwa. In a possibly apocryphal tale referred to in Tod's Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, Babur is supposed to have sent about 1,500 choice cavalry as an advance guard to attack Sanga. These were heavily defeated by Sanga's Rajputs. Babur then wanted to discuss peace terms[citation needed]. Sanga sent his general Silhadi (Shiladitya) to the parley. Babur is said to have won over this general by promising him an independent kingdom. Silhadi came back and reported that Babur did not want peace and preferred to fight. This laid down the foundation of Mughal rule in the Indian Sub-continent.

BABUR'S DEATH AND SUCCESSION OF HUMAYUN

There is a strange incident associated with the death of the first Mughal king Babur. It is said that his son Humayun fell seriously ill and was close to dying, he circled the sick-bed of his beloved son three times, crying to God to take his life and not his son's. The traditions that follow this tell that Babur soon fell ill with a fever and Humayun began to get better again. After few weeks Babur died and the Prime Minister Nizam-ud-din Ali made an effort to place Mahdi Khwaja on the throne of Agra. But the conspiracy failed and Humayun ascended on the Mughal throne on 30th December, 1530.

HUMAYUN REIGN

He succeeded his father in India in 1530, while his half-brother Kamran Mirza, who was to become a rather bitter rival, obtained the sovereignty of Kabul and Lahore, the more northern parts of their father's empire. He originally ascended the throne at the age of 22 and was somewhat inexperienced when he came to power.

Humayun lost his Indian territories to the Pashtun (Afghan) noble, Sher

Shah Suri, and, with Persian aid, regained them fifteen years later. Humayun's return from Persia, accompanied by a large retinue of Persian noblemen, signaled an important change in Mughal court culture, as the Central Asian origins of the dynasty were largely overshadowed by the influences of Persian art, architecture, language and literature.

Subsequently, in a very short time, Humayun was able to expand the Empire further, leaving a substantial legacy for his son, Akbar.

WAR OF HUMAYUN WITH SHER SHAH SURI

Shortly after Humayun had marched on Gujarat, Sher Shah saw an opportunity to wrest control of Agra from the Mughals. He began to gather his army together hoping for a rapid and decisive siege of the Mughal capital. Upon hearing this alarming news, Humayun quickly marched his troops back to Agra allowing Bahadur to easily regain control of the territories Humayun had recently taken. A few months later, however, Bahadur was dead, killed when a botched plan to kidnap the Portuguese viceroy ended in a fire-fight which the Sultan lost.

Whilst Humayun succeeded in protecting Agra from Sher Shah, the second city of the Empire, Gaur the capital of the vilayat of Bengal, was sacked. Humayun's troops had been delayed while trying to take Chunar, a fort occupied by Sher Shah's son, in order to protect his troops from an attack from the rear. The stores of grain at Gauri, the largest in the empire, were emptied and Humayun arrived to see corpses littering the roads. The vast wealth of Bengal was depleted and brought East giving Sher Shah a substantial war chest.

Sher Shah withdrew to the east, but Humayun did not follow: instead he "shut himself up for a considerable time in his Harem, and indulged himself in every kind of luxury." Hindal, Humayun's nineteen year old brother, had agreed to aid him in this battle and protect the rear from attack but abandoned his position and withdrew to Agra where he

decreed himself acting emperor. When Humayun sent the grand Mufti, Sheikh Buhlul, to reason with him, the Sheikh was killed. Further provoking the rebellion, Hindal ordered that the Khutba or sermon in the main mosque at Agra be read in his name, a sign of assumption of sovereignty. When Hindal withdrew from protecting the rear of Humayun's troops, Sher Shah's troop quickly reclaimed these positions, leaving Humayun surrounded.

Humayun's other brother, Kamran, marched from his territories in the Punjab, ostensibly to aid Humayun. However, his return home had treacherous motives as he intended to stake a claim for Humayun's apparently collapsing empire. He brokered a deal with Hindal which provided that his brother would cease all acts of disloyalty in return for a share in the new empire which Kamran would create once Humayun was deposed.

Sher Shah met Humayun in battle on the banks of the Ganges, near Benares, in Chausa. This was to become an entrenched battle in which both sides spent a lot of time digging themselves into positions. The major part of the Mughal army, the artillery, was now immobile, and Humayun decided to engage in some diplomacy using Muhammad Aziz as ambassador. Humayun agreed to allow Sher Shah to rule over Bengal and Bihar, but only as provinces granted to him by his Emperor, Humayun, falling short of outright sovereignty. The two rulers also struck a bargain in order to save face: Humayun's troops would charge those of Sher Shah whose forces then retreat in feigned fear. Thus honour would, supposedly, be satisfied.

REVISIT TO INDIA

Sher Shah Suri had died in 1545, and, although he was a powerful ruler, his son Islam Shah died too in 1554. These two deaths left the dynasty reeling and disintegrating. Three rivals for the throne all marched on Delhi, while in many cities leaders tried to stake a claim for independence. This was a perfect opportunity for the Mughals to

march back to India. Humayun placed the army under the able leadership of Bairam Khan. This was a wise move given Humayun's own record of military ineptitude, and turned out to be prescient, as Bairam was to prove himself a great tactician.

Bairam Khan led the army through the Punjab virtually unopposed. The fort of Rohtas, which was built in 1541-43 by Sher Shah Suri to crush the Gakhars who were loyal to Humayun, was surrendered without a shot by a treacherous commander. The walls of the Rohtas Fort measure up to 12,5 meters in thickness and up to 18,28 meters in height. They extend for 4 km and feature 68 semi-circular bastions. Its sandstone gates, both massive and ornate, are thought to have exerted a profound influence on Mughal military architecture. The only major battle faced by Humayun's armies was against Sikander Suri in Sirhind, where Bairam Khan employed a tactic whereby he engaged his enemy in open battle, but then retreated quickly in apparent fear. When the enemy followed after them they were surprised by entrenched defensive positions and were easily annihilated.

From here on most towns and villages chose to welcome the invading army as it made its way to the capital. On 23 July 1555 Humayun, once again, sat on Babur's throne in Delhi.

HUMAYUN'S DEATH IN AN ACCIDENT

On 27th January, 1556, Humayun with his arms full of books was descending the staircase from his library when the muezzin announced the Azan. It was his habit, wherever he heard the summons, to bow his knee in holy reverence. Kneeling, he caught his foot in his robe, tumbled down several steps and hit his temple on a rugged stone edge. He died three days later, and was succeeded by the 13 year old Akbar.

JALAL-UD-DIN MOHAMMAD AKBAR

Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar also known as Akbar the Great (23

November 1542 – 27 October 1605) was the third Mughal Emperor of Hindustan. He was of Timurid descent, the son of Humayun, and the grandson of Babur who founded the dynasty. At the end of his reign in 1605 the Mughal empire covered most of Northern India.

EARLY CONQUEST OF AKBAR

Akbar decided early in his reign that he should eliminate the threat of Sher Shah's dynasty, and decided to lead an army against the strongest of the three, Sikandar Shah Suri, in the Punjab. He left Delhi under the regency of Tardi Baig Khan. Sikandar Shah Suri presented no major concern for Akbar, and often withdrew from territory as Akbar approached.

The Hindu king Hemu, however, commanding the Afghan forces, defeated the Mughal army and captured Delhi on 6 October 1556. Tardi Beg Khan promptly fled the city. News of the capitulation of Delhi spread quickly to Akbar, and he was advised to withdraw to Kabul, which was relatively secure. But urged by Bairam Khan, Akbar marched on Delhi to reclaim it. Tardi Beg and his retreating troops joined the march, and also urged Akbar to retreat to Kabul, but he refused again. Later, Bairam Khan had the former regent executed for cowardice, though Abul Fazl and Jahangir both record that they believed that Bairam Khan was merely using the retreat from Delhi as an excuse to eliminate a rival.

Akbar's army, led by Bairam Khan, met the larger forces of Hemu on 5 November 1556 at the Second Battle of Panipat, 50 miles (80 km) north of Delhi. The battle was going in Hemu's favour when an arrow pierced Hemu's eye, rendering him unconscious. The leaderless army soon capitulated and Hemu was captured and executed.

The victory also left Akbar with over 1,500 war elephants which he used to re-engage Sikandar Shah at the siege of Mankot. Sikandar, along with several local chieftains who were assisting him, surrendered

and so was spared death. With this, the whole of Punjab was annexed to the Mughal empire. Before returning to Agra, Akbar sent a detachment of his army to Jammu, which defeated the ruler Raja Kapur Chand and captured the kingdom. Between 1558 and 1560, Akbar further expanded the empire by capturing and annexing the kingdoms of Gwalior, northern Rajputana and Jaunpur.

After a dispute at court, Akbar dismissed Bairam Khan in the spring of 1560 and ordered him to leave on Hajj to Mecca. Bairam left for Mecca, but on his way was goaded by his opponents to rebel. He was defeated by the Mughal army in the Punjab and forced to submit. Akbar, however forgave him and gave him the option of either continuing in his court or resuming his pilgrimage, of which Bairam chose the latter.

REIGN OF AKBAR

Akbar, widely considered the greatest of the Mughal emperors, was thirteen years old when he ascended the throne in Delhi, following the death of his father Humayun. During his reign, he eliminated military threats from the Pashtun descendants of Sher Shah Suri, and at the Second Battle of Panipat he defeated the Hindu king Hemu. It took him nearly two more decades to consolidate his power and bring parts of northern and central India into his realm. The emperor solidified his rule by pursuing diplomacy with the powerful Rajput caste, and by admitting Rajput princesses in his harem.

Akbar's reign significantly influenced art and culture in the region. Akbar took a great interest in painting, and had the walls of his palaces adorned with murals. Besides encouraging the development of the Mughal school, he also patronised the European style of painting. He was fond of literature, and had several Sanskrit works translated into Persian, apart from getting many Persian works illustrated by painters from his court. He also commissioned many major buildings, and invented the first prefabricated homes. Akbar began a series of religious debates where Muslim scholars would debate religious matters with

Sikhs, Hindus, Jews, and Portuguese Roman Catholic Jesuits. He had an intolerant attitude towards Hindus during the early years of his reign, but exercised tolerance after he began marriage alliances with Rajput princesses. He founded a religious cult, the Din-i-Ilahi (Divine Faith), but it amounted only to a form of personality cult for Akbar, and quickly dissolved after his death.

CONSOLIDATION OF MUGHAL EMPIRE

In 1566 A.D. Akbar rebuilt sections of the Lahore Fort, following attacks by the Khokhars and Timurs

Having conquered Rajputana, Akbar turned to Gujarat, whose government was in a state of disarray after the death of its previous ruler, Bahadur Shah. The province was a tempting target as it was a center of world trade, it possessed fertile soil and had highly developed crafts. The province had been occupied by Humayun for a brief period, and prior to that was ruled by the Delhi Sultanate. In 1572, Akbar marched to Ahmedabad, which capitulated without offering resistance. He took Surat by siege, and then crossed the Mahi river and defeated his estranged cousins, the Mirzas, in a hard-fought battle at Sarnal. During the campaign, Akbar met a group of Portuguese merchants for the first time at Cambay. Having established his authority over Gujarat, Akbar returned to Agra, but Mirza-led rebellions soon broke out. Akbar returned, crossing Rajasthan at great speed on camels and horses, and reached Ahmedabad in eleven days - a journey that normally took six weeks. Akbar's army of 3000 horsemen then defeated the enemy forces numbering 20000 in a decisive victory on 2 September 1573. The conquest of Gujarat marked a significant event of Akbar's reign as it gave the Mughal empire free access to the sea and control over the rich commerce that passed through its ports. The territory and income of the empire were vastly increased. The Mughal army also conquered Bengal (1574), Kabul (1581), Kashmir (1586), and Kandesh (1601), among others. Akbar installed a governor over each of the conquered provinces. Akbar was not educated but he always facilitated the

educated and learned people and there were nine extraordinary talented persons in his court which he used to call 'No Raten' . This included musicians, writers, comedians and other people with catching abilities.

REVOLT OF JAHANGIR

Jahangir set the precedent for sons rebelling against their Emperor fathers. Akbar had three sons, Salim (Jahangir) , Murad and Daniyal. After the death of Murad and Daniyal, Salim was the only claimant to the throne. In 1601, when Akbar was away from the capital on an expedition, Salim broke into an open rebellion, and declared himself Emperor. Akbar had to hastily return to Agra and restore order. There was a time when Akbar thought of putting his eldest grandson Khusrau Mirza on the throne instead of Jahangir.

JAHANGIR'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

Nur-ud-din Salim Jahangir was the ruler of the Mogul Empire from 1605 until his death. The name Jahangir is from Persian meaning "Conqueror of the World". Born as Prince Muhammad Salim, he was the third and eldest surviving son of Mogul Emperor Akbar. Akbar's twin sons, Hasan and Hussain, died in infancy. His mother was the Rajput Princess of Amber, Jodhabai.

After the death of his father Jahangir was supported by Abdur Rahim Khan-i-khanan, Syed Sadar Jahan, Mahabat khan and Sheikh Farid Bukhari as the next Emperor in the court. On the other hand nobles like Man Singh and Mirza Aziz Koka favoured Khusrau. But Jahangir forcefully succeeded to the throne on 3rd November, 1605, eight days after his father's death.

REVOLT OF PRINCE KHUSRAU

Jahangir soon after had to fend off his son, Prince Khusrau Mirza, when he attempted to claim the throne based on Akbar's will to become his

next heir. Khusrau Mirza was defeated in 1606 and confined in the fort of Agra. He was kept in Agra till 1616. Then he was blinded at the order of Jahangir for plotting in prison to kill the Emperor. In 1620 Khusrau was given in the custody of his younger brother Khurram (Shah Jahan). In March 1622 Khusrau was murdered in a conspiracy by Khurram to kill all possible contenders to the throne.

JAHANGIR'S REGIME

Jahangir decided to start his reign with a grand display of "Justice", as he saw it. To this end, he enacted Twelve Decrees that are remarkable for their liberalism and foresight. During his reign, there was a significant increase in the size of the Mughal Empire, half a dozen rebellions were crushed, prisoners of war were released, and the work of his father, Akbar, continued to flourish. Much like his father, Jahangir was dedicated to the expansion of Mughal held territory through conquest. During this regime he would target the peoples of Assam near the eastern frontier and bring a series of territories controlled by independent rajas in the Himalayan foothills from Kashmir to Bengal. Jahangir would challenge the hegemonic claim over Persia by the Safavid rulers with an eye on Kabul, Peshawar and Qandahar which were important centers of the central Asian trade system that northern India operated within. In 1622 Jahangir would send his son Prince Khurram against the combined forces of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda. After his victory Khurram would turn against his father and make a bid for power. As with the insurrection of his eldest son Khusraw, Jahangir was able to defeat the challenge from within his family and retain power.

DEATH OF JAHANGIR

Excessive drinking had greatly deteriorated the health of Jahangir. In 1627 he was returning from Kashmir when he caught cold and fell seriously ill. He died near Rajore on 29th October, 1627.

SHAH JAHAN SUCCEEDING HIS FATHER

At the death of Jahangir, Nur Jahan was with him. Asaf Khan was in Agra and Shah Jahan was in Deccan. Nur Jahan Summoned his Son-in-law Shahriyar to Lahore. In the mean time Asaf Khan placed Dawar Khan son of Prince Khusrau on the throne temporarily and sent a message to Shah Jahan asking him to reach Agra immediately. Similarly Shahriyar was proclaimed Emperor at Lahore. On hearing this Asaf Khan reached Lahore at the head of a large army and defeated Shahriyar. He imprisoned Shahriyar and blinded him. Afterwards Shah Jahan arrived at Agra from Deccan in February 1628. Dawar Bakhsh was removed from the throne and allowed to go to Persia. Shah Jahan ascended the throne in February 1628. On becoming the Emperor Shah Jahan exterminated his main rivals and showered favours on his supporters. Asaf Khan and Mahabat Khan were given higher ranks. Nur Jahan was asked to retire from public life. She was granted a pension of two lakh per annum.

REIGN OF SHAH JAHAN

The empire continued to expand moderately during his reign but the first signs of an imperial decline were seen in the later years. He is considered to be one of the greatest Mughals and his reign has been called the Golden Age of Mughals. Like Akbar, he was eager to expand his empire. The chief events of his reign were the destruction of the kingdom of Ahmadnagar (1636), the loss of Kandahar to the Persians (1653), and a second war against the Deccan princes (1655). In 1658 he fell ill, and was confined by his son Aurangzeb in the citadel of Agra until his death in 1666. On the eve of his death in 1666, the Mughal Empire spanned almost 750,000,000 acres.

Under Shah Jahan the Mughal Empire attained its highest union of strength with magnificence. The land revenue of the Mughal Empire under Shah Jahan was 20 millions. The magnificence of Shah Jahan's court was the wonder of European travelers. His Peacock Throne, with

its trail blazing in the shifting natural colors of rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, was valued by the jeweler Tavernier at 6½ millions sterling.

His political efforts encouraged the emergence of large centres of commerce and crafts such as Lahore, Delhi, Agra, and Ahmedabad linked by roads and waterways to distant places and ports. He moved the capital from Agra to Delhi.

Under Shah Jahan's rule, Mughal artistic and architectural achievements reached their zenith. Shah Jahan was a prolific builder with a highly refined aesthetic. Among his surviving buildings are the Red Fort and Jama Masjid in Delhi, the Shalimar Gardens of Lahore, sections of the Lahore Fort (such as Sheesh Mahal, and Naulakha pavilion), and his father's mausoleum. Legend has it that Shah Jahan wanted to build a black Taj Mahal for himself. There is no reputable scholarship to support this hypothesis, however, nor other horrific legends that Shah Jahan maimed, blinded, or killed those responsible for designing and building his tomb.

WAR OF SUCCESSION

Shah Jahan ruled the Indian Subcontinent for 30 years. His reign is known as the golden age of Mughal empire. But the sixth Mughal emperor reached the throne after an odious fratricide. This struggle is known as the "War of Succession" in history.

In 1657 Shah Jahan fell seriously ill. At that time his eldest son Dara was in Agra, Shuja was in Bengal, Aurangzeb was in Deccan, Murad was in Gujrat. With this news, the struggle for the succession began. Dara Shikoh, was regarded as heir apparent, but the succession proved far from certain when Shah Jahan's second son Shah Shuja declared himself emperor in Bengal. Imperial armies sent by Dara and Shah Jahan soon restrained this effort, and Shuja retreated.

But Aurangzeb who was the ablest of all his brothers did not

hasten in claiming his rule. He wrote to his younger brother Murad that Dara had kill their father as wants to become the Emperor. Aurangzeb urged Murad that they should defeat Dara and after victory Murad was to become the next Emperor with Kabul, Sindh, Punjab and Kashmir under his rule and rest of the empire to go to Aurangzeb. Murad believed in Aurangzeb. Both the brothers fought in a fierce battle agianst Dara on 29th May, 1658 in the historic battle of Samugarh. Dara Shikoh was supported by the Rajputs. At the end of the day Aurangzeb and Murad were victorious.

After the war Dara fled to Delhi and Aurangzeb occupied Agra. He imprisoned his Emperor father Shah Jahan in the fort of Agra, where he remained in captivity till his death in 1666. Murad was also imprisoned by Aurangzeb after inviting him in a feast and sent to the fort of Gwalior. In 1661 he was executed on the charge of killing Diwan of Gujrat.. Aurangzeb also defeated and killed Shah Shuja and Sulaiman Shikoh ,the son of his brother Dara.

Thus one after another, Aurangzeb successfully disposed off all the claimants to the throne. After that he got himself crowned as Emperor of the Mughal Empire in June 1658.

MUGHAL EMPIRE UNDER AURANGZEB

Muhiuddin Mohammad Aurangzeb Bahadur Alamgir I, more commonly known as Aurangzeb also known by his chosen imperial title Alamgir I (Conqueror of the World), was the 6th Mughal Emperor whose reign lasted from 1658 until his death in 1707. Aurangzeb's reign as the Mughal monarch was marked by many wars of expansion.

Aurangzeb, having ruled most of the Indian subcontinent for nearly half a century, was the second longest reigning Mughal emperor after Akbar. In this period he tried hard to get a larger area, notably in southern India, under Mughal rule than ever before. A devout Muslim. After his death, the Mughal Empire gradually shrunk. Aurangzeb's successors, the

"Later Mughals", lacked his strong hand and the fortunes amassed by his predecessors. Mughal empire attained the climax of its glory in the reign of the sixth Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir. His Empire extended from Ghazni in West to the Karnatak in the South. He handled the affairs of such a large state effectively and ruled over almost all the Indian Sub-continent.

EXPANSIONISM OF THE MUGHAL STATE

From the start of his reign up until his death, Aurangzeb engaged in almost constant warfare. He built up a massive army, and began a program of military expansion along all the boundaries of his empire. Aurangzeb pushed north-west into the Punjab and what is now Afghanistan; he also drove south, conquering Bijapur and Golconda, his old enemies. He attempted to recover those portions of the Deccan territories where the Maratha king Shivaji was sparking rebellions.

This combination of military expansion and religious intolerance had deeper consequences. Though he succeeded in expanding Mughal control, it was at an enormous cost in lives and treasure. And, as the empire expanded in size, Aurangzeb's chain of command grew weaker. The Sikhs of the Punjab grew both in strength and numbers, and launched rebellions. The Marathas waged a war with Aurangzeb which lasted for 27 years. Even Aurangzeb's own armies grew restive — particularly the fierce Rajputs, who were his main source of strength. Aurangzeb gave a wide berth to the Rajputs, who were mostly Hindu. While they fought for Aurangzeb during his life, on his death they immediately revolted against his successors. With much of his attention on military matters, Aurangzeb's political power waned, and his provincial governors and generals grew in authority.

AURANGZEB'S DEATH

He alienated many of his children and wives, driving some into exile and imprisoning others. He died in Ahmednagar on Friday, 20 February

1707 at the age of 88, having outlived many of his children. His modest open-air grave in Khuldabad expresses his deep devotion to his Islamic beliefs. Aurangzeb's legacy to India was factionalism, sectarianism, decentralization, and vulnerability to European encroachment .

SUCCESSION OF BAHADUR SHAH I

Bahadur Shah was a Mughal Emperor, who ruled India from 1707 to 1712. His original name was Qutb ud-Din Muhammad Mu'azzam later titled as Shah Alam by his father. He took the throne name Bahadur Shah in 1707.

A war of succession began immediately after Aurangzeb died. One younger brother, Prince Azam Shah, proclaimed himself emperor and marched towards Delhi, where he unsuccessfully fought Bahadur Shah and died after a nominal reign of three months. Another brother, Muhammad Kam Baksh, was killed in 1709. So, Muazam Bahadur Shah ascended the throne at the age of 63 as the seventh Mughal Monarch. He made settlements with the implacable Marathas, tranquilized the Rajputs, added Assam to the Mughal Empire and became friendly with the Sikhs in the Punjab. He was travelling throughout his reign and only came to rest in Lahore in the last few months of his life.

OVERVIEW OF BAHADUR SHAH I

He was very kind hearted and generous. But due to his old age he lacked the qualities of initiative and quick decision power. His mild and conciliatory temper rendered him quite unsuitable for the job of an Emperor. He could not face the issues and the matters undecided. His negligent nature earned him a nick name of Shah-i-Bekhabar, so Bahadur Shah I was a heedless king. He ruled for 5 years and died in February 1712.

SHORT TENURE OF JAHANDAR SHAH

Jahandar Shah (1661–1713) was a Mughal Emperor who ruled Hindustan for a brief period in 1712-1713.

Jahandar Shah was born on 10 May 1661, a son of the emperor Bahadur Shah I. Upon the death of their father on 27 February 1712, he and his brother Azim-ush-Shan both declared themselves emperor and conducted a struggle for the succession. Azim-ush-shan was killed on 17 March 1712 and Jahandar Shah was able to rule for a further eleven months. He was a man of loose character and was completely devoted to merry making and luxury. His court was depraved. He was a mere puppet in the hands of his favourite wife, Lal Kunwar, who, before her elevation to the position of Queen Consort was a mere dancing girl. Her children were promoted to the highest offices of the Empire. He was defeated in the battle at Agra on 10 January 1713 by Farrukhsiyar, his nephew the second son of Azim-ush-shan, with the support of the Sayyid Brothers. He fled to Delhi, from where he was captured and handed over to the new Emperor, who confined him along with Lal Kunwar. He lived in confinement for a month, until 11 February 1713, when professional stranglers were sent to murder him.

FARRUKHSIYAR'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

Abu'l Muzaffar Muin ud-din Muhammad Shah Farrukh-siyar was the Mughal emperor between 1713 and 1719. Farrukhsiyar was the second son of Azim-us-Shan. He defeated his uncle Jahandar Shah at Samugarh on 10th January, 1713. Following this he ascended the throne with seeking the help of Syed Brothers.

REIGN OF FARRUKHSIYAR

Noted as a handsome but weak ruler, easily swayed by his advisers, Farukhsiyar lacked the ability and character to rule independently. His reign witnessed the primacy of the Syed Brothers who became the

effective powers of the land, behind the façade of Mughal rule. The greatest achievement of Farrukhsiyar's reign was the victory of Mughals over Banda Bahadur who had recaptured Lohgarh in 1713. As a result Banda Bahadur was captured and executed along with his 500 companions.

TRYING TO GET RID OF SYED BROTHERS

Farrukhsiyar was feeble, cowardly and contemptible and strong neither for evil nor for good and his attempt to assert his own power made his reign throughout an agitated and perplexing one ending in another imperial tragedy. Syed Brothers demanded their share in the authority from Farrukhsiyar because they had helped him to come into power. Farrukhsiyar on one hand was favourably inclined towards Khan Dauran Khan and Mir Jumla and detested the interference of Syed Brothers in the affairs of the state. As a result hatches a number of conspiracies to get rid of Hussain Ali and Abdullah Khan (Syed Brothers).

He tried to assassinate Syed Brothers by taking nobles like Ajit Singh Rathore and Daud Khan into confidence but in vain. The result was that Syed Brothers were forced to conspire with the Marhata leader Balaji Vishwanath for dethroning Farrukhsiyar. In 1719 Hussain Ali reached Delhi at the head of 11000 Marhata soldiers. He removed from the throne.

DEATH OF FARRUKHSIYAR

Farrukhsiyar met a humiliating and bloody end, his constant plotting eventually led the Syed Brothers to officially depose him as the Emperor. Farrukhsiyar was imprisoned and starved; later, on 28 February 1719, he was blinded with needles at the orders of the Syed Brothers. Farrukhsiyar was strangled to death on the night of April 27/28, 1719.

RAFI-UD-DARJAT

After putting Farrukhsiyar to death the Syed brothers placed Rafi-ud-Darjat on the throne of Delhi. He was the son of Rafi-us-Shan. He ascended the throne on 28th February, 1719. He was a patient of consumption. Consequently he was deposed on 4th June 1719 after a rule of three months. He died after a few days.

RAFI-UD-DAULAH

Then Syed brothers who had become the King makers in June 1719 placed Rafi-ud-Daulah on the throne. He was the elder brother of Rafi-ud-Darjat. He was also a patient of consumption. He died on 17th September 1719. His reign also lasted for three months.

NEKUSIYAR FOUND WAY TO RULE

Neku Siyar or Nikusiyar Mohammed was the 13th Mughal Emperor. He had been in prison from 1681 to 1719. He took the throne in 1719 at the age of 40 plus. He was son of rebel Muhammad Akbar, son of Aurangzeb and was brought up in a harem in Agra. The local Minister Birbal used him as puppet and proclaimed him emperor. But as the Prince had spent his life inside harem and talked like a catamite, he was laughingly ignored and again put in jail by the Syed Brothers. He died in 1723 at age of 43.

MUHAMMAD SHAH BECOMING EMPEROR OF MUGHAL EMPIRE

In the year 1719 The Throne of Delhi saw four new Emperors but no could stay for than months.

Then came Muhammad Shah or Roshan Khan on the throne. He was the son of Jahan Shah, the fourth son of Bahadur Shah I. He also ascended the throne with the help of Syed Brothers at the age of Seventeen. He was nicknamed as Rangeela meaning merrymaker by many historians as he was very fond of luxury and was unaware of the condition of his State even when Delhi was attacked by Nadir-Shah.

EARLY REIGN

On 29 September 1719, Prince Roshan Akhtar was given the title Abu Al-Fatah Naseer-ud-Din Roshan Akhtar Muhammad Shah and enthroned in the Red Fort at the Peacock Throne. His mother was given 15 thousand rupees monthly for her needs. However, the new Emperor was put under strict supervision. In the course of time, the Emperor became tired of them and wanted to get rid of them. In addition, the Nizam-ul-Mulk was angry with them. Therefore, the Emperor ordered them to be killed. The task was carried out by Muhammad Ameen Khan Torani and Mir Muhammad Ameen Irani, as well as by Muhammad Haider Beg; who killed the Sayyid Brothers in 1722. During this time, the emperor had to fight Muhammad Ibrahim. Muhammad Shah defeated him on 13 November 1720.

ROLE OF SYED BROTHERS IN TRANSFERRING THE RULE IN MUGHAL EMPIRE

Hussain Ali and Abdullah Khan, descendants of Abdul Farh of Mesopotamia are historically known as the Syed Brothers. In the war of succession of 1707 they supported Prince Muazzam who became the Emperor. Then during the reign of Jahandar Shah they helped Farrukhsiyar to become the ruler of Mughal throne. They placed several Kings who were puppets in their hands. As mentioned earlier they also placed two sick Princes on the throne and then made Roshan Khan or Muhammad Shah as the next Emperor. But Muhammad Shah did not like their interference in the affairs of State, so, he planned to get rid of them and gave the task to Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was the Governor of Deccan and the Mughal army under the commander Amin Khan murdered Hussain Ali in 1720. Abdullah Khan tried to avenge the death of his brother. He gave battle to Imperial forces near Agra but was defeated and captured. Later he was poisoned to death.

Thus in 1720 ended the episode of Syed Brothers but not without leaving a definite mark the sands of time.

NIZAM-UL-MULK

After Muhammad Shah got rid of the Sayyid Brothers, he appointed the Nizam-ul-Mulk as Chief Minister on 21 February 1722. He advised the Emperor to be as alert as Emperor Akbar and as brave as Emperor Aurangzeb. He also advised him to help Shah Tahmasp II of Persia; since Shah Tahmasp I had helped Humayun in his time of need. When all these advices turned to no avail, the Nizam-ul-Mulk left Delhi and went to Deccan in 1723.

At the same time, the governorship of Deccan was given to Mubaraz Khan, who constantly fought with the Marathas. Taking advantage of it, the Nizam-ul-Mulk allied with the Marathas and defeated Mubaraz Khan. Thus, though he lost the posts of Chief Minister, governor of Malwa and Gujrat, he became an independent ruler of the newly created state of Hyderabad in 1725.

INVASION OF NADIR SHAH

In 1739, the Napoleon of Persia, Nadir Shah invaded Delhi and looted it. It is an event of macro importance in Indian History as it resulted the fall of the Mughal Empire, the most richest and famous of all Indian Imperial Dynasties.

CAUSES OF THE WAR

- Nadir Shah wanted to empty Kandahar from the Afghans. Therefore he asked the Mughal Emperor to close the Mughal frontiers around Kabul so that the Afghan rebels may not seek refuge in Kabul. The Emperor gave a confirming reply to Nadir Shah but didn't do any thing practically. At this Nadir Shah sent an ambassador to the Mughal Emperor. The Emperor delayed in meeting him and kept him at Delhi for an entire year. Thus Nadir Shah became furious with the Mughal Emperor.

- Looking at the weak position of the Mughal Empire, Nadir Shah wanted to gain the rich treasures of India.

COURSE OF THE WAR

On the basis of the above reasons, Nadir Shah invaded India and decided to attack from Afghanistan. In May, 1738 he attacked Northern Afghanistan. In the same month, he captured Ghazni, in June he captured Kabul and in September Jalalabad also fell to him. In November he surrounded the fortress of Peshawar and completely razed it to the ground. Finally in January 1739, he captured Lahore, the former capital of the Mughal Empire.

Now Nadir Shah had captured territory up to Attock and Muhammad Shah and his courtiers could not close their eyes from further danger. They finally understood that Persian Emperor was not the sort of enemy that could be bought off with the loot of a province. Furthermore he had devastated the area he just conquered. The cities of Wazirabad, Emanabad and Gujrat were not only sacked but razed to the ground, its population murdered. In February 1739, Nadir Shah captured Sirhind and moved towards the field of Karnal, a battle destined to be fateful to the Mughal rulers. On 13 February, the battle of Karnal was fought. Emperor Muhammad Shah had over a hundred thousand force against Nadir Shah's 55,000 men but was still decisively defeated. In the event, the Khan Doran died and wrote a will that the Mughal and Afsharid emperors should not meet but Nadir Shah should be turned back from there at all costs. His will was disregarded and the Emperor himself met Nadir Shah in his camp and abdicated on 26 February, thirteen days after the battle of Karnal. He handed over the keys of the Delhi gate and entered Delhi with him.

At first every thing was cordial among the two emperors. However rumours spread throughout Delhi that Nadir Shah was assassinated. The masses attacked the Persian force and slaughtered 900 Persian

soldiers. At this Nadir Shah massacred the populace, and at least 30,000 people died. The Emperor, Nizam-ul-Mulk and Chief Minister Nawab Qamar-id-Din Khan Bahadur went to Nadir Shah to plead for mercy and thus he stopped the massacre and turned into looting the Mughal treasury. The famous Peacock throne, the Darya-e-Noor diamond and unimaginable wealth was looted. In addition, elephants, horses and every thing that was liked was taken. Muhammad Shah had to marry his daughter Jahan Afroz Banu Begum to Nadir Shah's smallest son.

Now Muhammad Shah was crowned as emperor by Nadir Shah himself on 12 May, and Muhammad Shah ceded the area west of river Indus to Nadir Shah. They both switched crowns according to the Persian tradition of friendship and the Koh-i-Noor diamond was also lost. Then Nadir Shah went back to Persia. After the Sayyid Brothers and the Marathas, this invasion destroyed what was left of the Mughal Empire and neared it to its end. The weakness of the Mughal army was clearly portrayed after this invasion. The Afghans began their relentless invasions of India. Everywhere there was depression and loss of hope. This invasion, in fact, brought the Mughal Empire to its fateful end.

AHMAD SHAH BAHADUR AS 15TH MUGHAL EMPEROR

Ahmed Shah Bahadur (1725–1775) was born to Muhammad Shah. He succeeded his father to the throne as the 15th Mughal Emperor in 1748 at the age of 23. His mother was Udhambai, (also known as Kudsiya Begum). When Ahmed Shah came to power the rule of the Mughal Empire was collapsing. During the reign of his father the city of Delhi (the Mughal capital) had been plundered and much of northern India had been ransacked by the invading army of Nadir Shah).

Ahmed Shah inherited a much weakened Mughal state and after ruling unsuccessfully for 6 years, he was deposed by the Vizier Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung III in 1754 and later blinded along with his mother. He spent the remaining years of his life in prison and died of natural

causes in January 1775. His son Jahan Shah IV temporarily rose to power in 1788 as puppet of Ghulam Qadir.

Ahmad Shah was a pleasure seeking man. He left the affairs of the state in the hands of Mother queen Udham Bai, women and eunuchs of the harem. The Emperor began to enjoy his life with women in his harem. It is said that he didn't used to see the faces of men for several months. When the chief eunuch Javid khan was assassinated, the Emperor appointed Imad-ul-Mulk as his Prime Minister. This move was not liked by Safdar Jang. Thus ensued a struggle for power in which Emperor Ahmad Shah was deposed, blinded and imprisoned.

FIRST DURRANI INVASION

In 1749, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India in order to avenge his defeat earlier on. Thus Mueen-ul-Mulk gathered his force and also sent messages to Delhi for assistance. However, he soon found out that his foe's army was bigger and better than his. In addition, the Mughal Emperor had not given any support. Thus he offered peace to Ahmad Shah, who immediately accepted it. Under the terms of the treaty, Mueen-ul-Mulk gave the invader 5 million rupees and had some Durrani regiments escorted to Lahore. He did this primarily in fear of an attack from the imperial forces, since he had made peace without Delhi's consent. His fears soon justified when the Mughal Emperor sent Shahnawaz Khan to replace Mueen-ul-Mulk's lieutenant of Multan with the post of governor of Multan. At the time the vice governor of Multan was Koramal. Mueen-ul-Mulk ordered him to fight Shahnawaz to the last. In the ensuing battle Shahnawaz was killed and Delhi's Authority declined even further.

THIRD DURRANI INVASION

In 1751, Ahmad Shah Abdali Invaded India once more. This time Mueen-ul-Mulk decided to fight. Both sides encamped alongside Ravi. Fighting ensued for six months with no results. On 12 April, 1752 the

battle of Lahore began. The Punjabis almost won the battle but Raja Koramal was killed in battle and the tide turned against the Punjabis. Ahmad Shah besieged Lahore for two months and finally Mueen-ul-Mulk surrendered to him; thence he was imprisoned. During imprisonment Ahmad Shah was impressed by Mueen-ul-Mulk and conferred him the title of Farzand-e-Khan Bahadur Rustum Hind. Peace was concluded by the Mughals, who fearing that lest Ahmad Shah treat Delhi the same way Nadir Shah had done, gave him Western Punjab and Multan, away from Delhi and Lahore.

LATER REIGN

During the later reign of Ahmad Shah Bahadur, the nobles started fighting among themselves. The Emperor became tired of these quarrels and wanted to get rid of them. He took a few nobles into his confidence and declared war on the other ones. This resulted in many skirmishes which lasted for six months. General Ghaziudin, one of the nobles, aided by the Marathas, defeated Safdar Jung. At this the Emperor collected a large army and camped at Sikandarabad. On the other hand, Ghaziudin ordered a powerful attack and destroyed Imperial force within a few hours. The Emperor left his wives behind and fled to Delhi. Ghaziudin also reached Delhi and arrested the Emperor and his mother. On 25 June, 1754, he had Ahmad Shah's eyes brought out.

DEATH OF AHMAD SHAH BAHADUR

After his deposition, Ahmad Shah Bahadur was imprisoned at the fort of Salimgarh. He stayed there for the rest of his life and finally died in 1775 at the age of 50 during the reign of Emperor Shah Alam II. One of his sons, Bidar Bakhsh reigned briefly in 1788.

ACCESSION OF ALAMGIR II TO THE THRONE

Aziz-ud-din Alamgir II was the Mughal Emperor of India from 3 June

1754 to 11 December 1759. He was the son of Jahandar Shah.

Aziz-ud-Din, the second son of Jahandar Shah, was raised to the throne by Ghazi-ud-Din after he deposed Ahmad Shah Bahadur in 1754. On ascending the throne, he took the title of Alamgir and tried to follow the approach of Aurangzeb Alamgir. At the time of his accession to throne he was an old man of 55 years. He had no experience of administration and warfare as he had spent most of his life in jail. He was a weak ruler, with all powers vested in the hand of his Wazir, Ghazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk. In 1756, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India once again and captured Delhi and plundered Mathura. Marathas became more powerful because of their collaboration with Ghazi-ud-Din, and dominated the whole of northern India. This was the peak of Maratha expansion, which caused great trouble for the Mughal Empire, already weak with no strong ruler.

The relations between Alamgir and his Wazir, Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung III, by this time had gotten worse. Alamgir was murdered by Nawab Mir Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung III (grandson of Asaf Jah I), and the son of Alamgir, Ali Gauhar succeeded him.

Aziz-ud-Din was born on 6 June, 1699 at Multan to prince Maaz-ud-Din, son of future Emperor Bahadur Shah I, while himself a future Emperor. After his father's defeat, he was imprisoned by Emperor Farrukhsiyar. Later the Emperor ordered him to be blinded, and this was done on 21 January, 1714. Till 1754, the prince stayed in prison. In 1754, however, Wazir Ghazi Ud-Din realized that Aziz-ud-Din was well suited as an Emperor for his rule to continue. Therefore, on 2 June, 1754, Aziz-ud-Din was given the title Alamgir II by the Wazir out of his own recommendation, for he wanted to follow the approach of Alamgir I.

FOURTH DURRANI INVASION

Mueen-ul-Mulk of Punjab had died in 1755. His widow now ruled Punjab and allied herself with Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Wazir was

furious and reached Sirhind with full force. There he commanded Adina Beg to depose the governoress and defeat Ahmad Shah, doing so he will gain the governorship of Punjab and Multan. On the other hand Ahmad Shah was himself invading. After some skirmishes Adina Beg fled and Punjab and Sirhind fell to Ahmad Shah (1756). In 1757, Emperor Alamgir II with courtiers, nobles, and the Royal Family went to Sirhind to meet Ahmad Shah, who demanded 9 million rupees. The Emperor and the rest said that they didn't have much. At this Delhi was looted and about 30 million rupees fell to his hands. After this Mathura was also looted. At Agra Ahmad Shah was met with stout resistance but managed to capture and loot it. However, due to heat, the Durranid forces retreated back to Afghanistan, after occupying Punjab upto Sirhind.

SHAH ALAM II

Shah Alam II (1728–1806), also known as Ali Gauhar, was a Mughal emperor of India. He inherited the throne from his father, Alamgir II as Shah Alam II.

He was very coward and lacked the qualities of a ruler. He was in Bihar in 1759 when he was declared Mughal Emperor. He did not dare for 12 years to go Delhi. However it was in 1772 when Marhatas escorted him to his capital. He tried to conquer Bihar and Bengal but he was defeated in the Battle of Buxar to East India Company in lieu of an annual tribute of 25 lacs per annum. Shah Alam was a puppet in the hands of the Rohilla leaders Najib-ud-Daulah, Zabita Khan and Ghulam Qadir. In 1788 Ghulam Qadir removed Shah Alam and placed Bidar Bakht on the throne. He also blinded and imprisoned Shah Alam II. However shortly afterwards Marhatas restored Shah Alam II by defeating and killing Ghulam Qadir. Later on in 1803 Delhi was captured by the British. Shah Alam turned a pensioner of the East India company.

BATTLE OF BUXAR

The political disorders in Bengal and the unpopularity of Mir Jafar raised high hopes in his mind. Mir Jafar was entirely dependent upon British support for maintaining himself on the throne. Shah Alam also asked for British help, but Robert Clive chose to continue with Mir Jafar. Shah Alam's forces were defeated at Buxar in 1764 and driven back by the British.

Further intrigues of the Wazir at Delhi compelled the prince to seek the protection of the British and ask for a sum of money for his subsistence, and offer, in return, to withdraw from the province. Clive sent about a thousand Pounds, and Shah Alam left Bengal and took up residence in Allahabad where he became a pensioner of the British state.

RETURN TO DELHI

Shah Alam took up residence at Allahabad and no doubt could have passed his life peacefully there. But he wished to go back to Delhi to restore the bygone glories of the great Mughals. An opportunity came when the Marathas, having occupied Delhi, invited him there to occupy the throne of his forefathers. The Marathas had acknowledged that they were servants of the emperor. Shah Alam left Allahabad in May 1771 and in December reached Delhi. He had consulted the British and they had advised him not to trust the Marathas. The emperor resided in the fort of Allahabad for six years as a virtual prisoner of the British. Warren Hastings who had been appointed Governor of Bengal in 1772 discontinued the tribute of 2.6 million Rupees and also made over the districts of Allahabad and Kora to the Nawab of Oudh. These measures amounted to a repudiation of the company's vassalage as diwan and the annexation of Bengal. Shah Alam then left for Delhi with a small force trained on the European model, under the command of his able general, Mirza Najaf Khan. He arrived there in December 1772 and sought to restore some of the glories of the Mughal empire. Shah Alam died in 1806.

AKBAR II

Akbar Shah II (1760–1837), also known as Mirza Akbar, was the second-to-last of the Mughal emperors of India. He held the title from 1806 to 1837. He was the second son of Shah Alam II and the father of Bahadur Shah Zafar II.

Emperor Akbar Shah II presided over an empire titularly large but in effect limited to the Red Fort in Delhi alone. The cultural life of Delhi as a whole flourished during his reign. However, his attitude towards East India Company officials, especially Lord Hastings, to whom he refused to grant an audience on terms other than those of subject and sovereign, although honourable to him, increasingly frustrated the British, who regarded him as merely their pensioner. The British therefore reduced his titular authority to 'King of Delhi' in 1835 and the East India Company ceased to act as the mere lieutenants of the Mughal Empire as they did from 1803 to 1835. Simultaneously they replaced Persian text with English text on the company's coins, which no longer carried the emperor's name. The British encouraged the Nawab of Oudh and the Nizam of Hyderabad to take royal titles in order to further diminish the Emperor's status and influence. Out of deference, the Nizam did not, but the Nawab of Oudh did so. To appeal against his treatment by the East India Company (which was not widely recognised or accepted in India), Akbar Shah appointed the Bengali reformer Ram Mohan Roy, who was planning a visit to England, as the Mughal envoy to the Court of St. James, conferring on him the title of Raja. Ram Mohan Roy submitted a well argued memorial on behalf of the Mughal ruler, but to no avail.

BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR THE LAST MUGHAL EMPEROR

Abu Zafar Sirajuddin Muhammad Bahadur Shah Zafar was the last of the Mughal emperors in India, as well as the last ruler of the Timurid Dynasty. He was the son of Akbar Shah II and Lalbai, who was a Hindu

Rajput. He became the Mughal Emperor upon his father's death on 28 September 1837.

Zafar's father, Akbar Shah Saani II, ruled over a rapidly disintegrating empire between 1806 to 1837. It was during his time that the East India Company dispensed with even the fig leaf of ruling in the name of the Mughal monarch and removed his name from the Persian texts that appeared on the coins struck by the company in the areas under their control. Bahadur Shah Zafar who succeeded him was not Akbar Shah Saani's choice as his successor. Akbar Shah was, in fact, under great pressure by one of his queens, Mumtaz Begum to declare her son Mirza Jahangir as the successor. Akbar Shah would have probably accepted this demand but Mirza Jahangir had fallen afoul of the British and they would have none of this.

WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

As the Indian Independence movement of 1857 spread, Sepoy regiments seized Delhi. Seeking a figure that could unite all Indians, Hindu and Muslim alike, most rebelling Indian kings and the Indian regiments accepted Zafar as the Emperor of India, under whom the smaller Indian kingdoms would unite until the British were defeated. Zafar was the least threatening and least ambitious of monarchs, and the legacy of the Mughal Empire was more acceptable a uniting force to most allied kings than the domination of any other Indian kingdom.

When the victory of the British became certain, Zafar took refuge at Humayun's Tomb, in an area that was then at the outskirts of Delhi, and hid there. British forces led by Major William Hodson surrounded the tomb and compelled his surrender on 20 September 1857. The next day British officer William Hodson shot his sons Mirza Mughal, Mirza Khizr Sultan, and grandson Mirza Abu Bakr under his own authority at the Khooni Darwaza (the bloody gate) near Delhi Gate. On hearing the news Zafar reacted with shocked silence while his wife Zeenat Mahal was content as she believed her son was now Zafar's

heir. Numerous male members of his family were killed by British forces, who imprisoned or exiled the surviving members of the Mughal dynasty. After a show trial, Zafar himself was exiled to Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Union of Myanmar) in 1858 along with his wife Zeenat Mahal and some of the remaining members of the family. His departure as Emperor marked the end of more than three centuries of Mughal rule in India.

DEATH OF THE LAST EMPEROR

Death of the last Mughal Emperor was a tragedy and one can never think of that sad end of the marvellous reign of the Mughal Kingdom. Bahadur Shah died in exile on 7 November 1862. He was buried near the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, at the site that later became known as Bahadur Shah Zafar Dargah. His wife Zeenat Mahal died in 1886. Bahadur Shah Zafar always wished to die in his native country, but his wish could never be fulfilled and his grave still lies in Rangoon, Burma.

In a marble enclosure adjoining the dargah of Sufi saint, Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki at Mehrauli, an empty grave or Sardgah marks the site where he had willed to be buried along with some of his Mughal predecessors, Akbar Shah II, Bahadur Shah I (also known as Shah Alam I) and Shah Alam II. He, unfortunately, was not so lucky, though talks of bringing back his remains here have been raised from time to time.

FINAL WORDS

Mughal Empire was the most prestigious era of Muslim rule over Indian Sub-continent, but as Mughal were with no definite or proper rule of transference of Kingship, this played a major part in their decline. All the brothers were killed in the struggle of getting to the throne as War of Succession was the last resort to them. Also other political powers like Rajputs, Marhatas and the infidel ministers were active in disposing emperors from the throne and always put incapable

and inexperienced Princes on throne to get their own benefits. Example of Syed Brothers is eminent in this case. Aurangzeb was the first Emperor responsible for eliminating his brothers to get to the throne. This started the tradition of fratricide and ultimately proved fatal to the existence of Mughal rule in Indo-Pakistan.

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