

1. THE TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE: BATTLE FOR KANNAUJ

Following the death of Harshavardhana, Kannauj became the symbol of sovereignty in North India. Three major powers fought for control over it for nearly two centuries (8th–10th Century CE). This weakened all three, paving the way for Islamic invasions.

1.1 The Three Protagonists

DYNASTY	REGION	KEY RULERS & CONTRIBUTIONS
Gurjara-Pratiharas	Western India (Rajasthan/Gujarat)	Nagabhata II: Captured Kannauj explicitly. Mihira Bhoja: Devotee of Vishnu (took title <i>Adivaraha</i>). Arab traveler Sulaiman called him the greatest enemy of Islam.
Palas	Bengal & Bihar	Gopala: Elected by nobles (end of anarchy/ <i>Matsyanyaya</i>). Dharmapala: Founded Vikramshila University . Patron of Vajrayana Buddhism.
Rashtrakutas	Deccan (Malkhed)	Dhruva: Defeated both Palas and Pratiharas but returned south. Amoghavarsha: Wrote <i>Kavirajamarga</i> (first Kannada poetic work). Built Manyakheta capital.

ZELUNO EXAM TRAP

Who was the strongest?

Militarily, the **Rashtrakutas** were the most powerful. They repeatedly defeated the Palas and Pratiharas in the North but could never hold Kannauj permanently due to logistical difficulties in maintaining supply lines from the Deccan.

1.2 The Feudal Structure (Samanta System)

The Early Medieval period is defined by the crystallization of Indian Feudalism. Central authority weakened as land grants created powerful intermediaries.

- **Vishti:** Forced labor became more common.
- **Subinfeudation:** Landlords granted land to sub-landlords, creating a multi-layered hierarchy (Raja → Mahasamanta → Samanta).
- **Closed Economy:** Trade declined; local self-sufficiency increased; gold coins became rare compared to the Gupta age.

2. THE IMPERIAL CHOLAS (9TH-13TH CENTURY)

While the North fractured, the Cholas established the most centralized and powerful empire in South Indian history, known for its **Local Self-Government** and **Naval Power**.

2.1 Political History & Conquests

850 CE

Vijayalaya Chola captures Thanjavur from Muttaraiyars (feudatories of Pallavas). Founder of the Imperial line.

985-1014 CE

Rajaraja I: Destroyed the Chera navy at Trivandrum. Conquered Northern Sri Lanka. Built the ****Brihadeshwara Temple**** (Rajarajeshwara) at Thanjavur.

1014-1044 CE

Rajendra I:

- Complete conquest of Sri Lanka.
- **Gangaikondacholapuram:** Marched up to the Ganges (defeated Mahipala of Bengal) and built this new capital.
- **Naval Raid (1025 CE):** Sent a fleet to ****Sri Vijaya**** (Sumatra/Malaysia) to secure the trade route to China.

2.2 Chola Administration: The Gold Standard

The administration was highly organized but allowed significant village autonomy. This balance is the unique feature of the Chola state.

ASSEMBLY TYPE	COMPOSITION & FUNCTION
Ur	General assembly of the village (included tax-paying residents). Common in non-Brahmin villages.
Sabha (Mahasabha)	Assembly of Brahmins (in Agraharas/Brahmadeya villages). Highly organized with committees (**Variyams**).
Nagaram	Assembly of Merchants/Traders . Prominent in urban centers.

DEEP DIVE: UTTARAMERUR INSCRIPTION

Located in Kanchipuram district (reign of Parantaka I). It details the ****Kudavolai System**** (Pot Ticket System) for elections to the Sabha.

Disqualifications for Candidates:

- Failure to submit property accounts.
- Committing sins (incest, theft).
- Serving on a committee for the last 3 years (Rotation principle).

3. THE COMING OF ISLAM: GHAZNAVIDS TO GHORIDS

The transition from "raids" to "rule" marks the end of the Early Medieval period. One must distinguish between the motives of Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori.

3.1 Comparative Analysis: The Two Invaders

Confusing these two is a common error. Ghazni looted; Ghori stayed.

FEATURE	MAHMUD OF GHAZNI (998–1030 CE)	MUHAMMAD GHORI (1173–1206 CE)
Objective	Plunder & Iconoclasm. Used wealth to beautify Ghazni. No intention of political rule in India.	Empire Building. Wanted to establish a permanent political entity in India.
Key Event	Raid on Somnath (1025 CE). Destroyed the temple. Met minimal resistance.	Battles of Tarain (1191, 1192). Defeated Prithviraj Chauhan.
Scholar	Al-Biruni (wrote <i>Kitab-ul-Hind</i>) and Firdausi (wrote <i>Shahnamah</i>).	Left behind General Qutb-ud-din Aibak (Founder of Slave Dynasty).

3.2 The Battles of Tarain: The Turning Point

The Second Battle of Tarain (1192) is often cited as the moment Muslim rule was established in North India.

1191 CE: First Battle of Tarain

Prithviraj Chauhan (III) defeats Ghori. Ghori is wounded and retreats. Prithviraj fails to pursue and annihilate the Ghurid army (Strategic Error).

1192 CE: Second Battle of Tarain

Ghori returns with mounted archers. Prithviraj is captured/executed. The gateway to Delhi and the Doab is opened.

1194 CE: Battle of Chandawar

Ghori defeats **Jaichand** of Kannauj (Gahadavala dynasty). This consolidated Turkic control over the Gangetic valley.

ANALYSIS: WHY DID RAJPUTS FAIL?

It wasn't lack of bravery, but systemic issues:

- Lack of Political Unity:** Prithviraj and Jaichand were rivals. No concept of "Nation."
- Military Tactics:** Rajputs relied on slow **War Elephants**. Turks relied on swift **Cavalry (Horses)** and Horse-Archers.
- Feudal Army:** Rajput armies were collections of feudal levies loyal to local chiefs, not a unified command structure.

4. SULTANATE CONSOLIDATION: SLAVE & KHILJI DYNASTIES

The period 1206–1320 CE saw the transition from a military occupation to a consolidated empire. Focus on the administrative machinery set up by Iltutmish and the radical economic reforms of Alauddin Khilji.

4.1 The Mamluk (Slave) Dynasty (1206–1290)

Three key figures defined this era. Note the evolution of the Monarchy's prestige.

Qutb-ud-din Aibak (1206–1210)

Ruled from Lahore. Known as *Lakh Baksh* (Giver of Lakhs). Started Qutub Minar. Died playing Chaugan (Polo).

Iltutmish (1210–1236)

The Real Founder.

- **Iqta System:** Institutionalized the transfer of revenue rights (Iqta) to officials (Iqtadars) in lieu of salary.
- **Turkan-i-Chahalgani:** Created a corps of 40 loyal Turkish nobles (The Chalisa).
- **Currency:** Introduced the Silver *Tanka* and Copper *Jital* (basis of modern rupee).

Balban (1266–1287)

Theory of Kingship (Niyabat-i-Khudai).

- Destroyed the power of the 'Chalisa' to restore the Crown's prestige.
- Introduced Persian customs: *Sijda* (prostration), *Paibos* (kissing feet), and *Nauroz* festival.
- Established **Diwan-i-Arz** (Military Department) to counter Mongols.

4.2 Alauddin Khilji: Imperialism & Economics

The Khilji Revolution (1290) ended the Turkish monopoly. Alauddin (1296–1316) is the most critical figure for exams due to his market reforms.

REFORM AREA	KEY MEASURES (EXAM TERMINOLOGY)
Military	First to maintain a massive Standing Army paid in cash. Dag: Branding of horses. Chehra: Descriptive roll of soldiers (to prevent proxy).
Market Control	Objective: To maintain a large army on low pay (keeping inflation zero). Sahana-i-Mandi: Market Superintendent. Prices were fixed for all commodities (grain to needles). State granaries established.
Agrarian	Masahat: Measurement of land was made mandatory. Biswa: Standard unit of measurement. Revoked privileges of local chiefs (Khuts, Muqaddams).

ZELUNO INSIGHT: MALIK KAFUR'S EXPEDITIONS

Alauddin was the first Sultan to penetrate the Deep South. His general, **Malik Kafur**, defeated the Yadavas (Devagiri), Kakatiyas (Warangal), Hoysalas (Dwarasamudra), and Pandiyas (Madurai).

Result: He did not annex them but demanded heavy annual tribute (Vassalage).

5. THE TUGHLAQS: AMBITION & DISINTEGRATION

The Tughlaq dynasty ruled for the longest period among the Delhi Sultans but also oversaw the breakup of the empire.

5.1 Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (MbT): The Learned Fool?

A genius ahead of his time or a madman? He undertook 5 controversial experiments. Chronology is important.

- Taxation in Doab:** Raised taxes during a famine. Result: Revolt. Created **Diwan-i-Kohi** (Dept of Agriculture) to provide *Taccavi* (loans).
- Transfer of Capital (1327):** Delhi to Daulatabad (Devagiri). Aimed to control the South. Result: Failed logistics; returned to Delhi.
- Token Currency (1329):** Introduced Bronze coins at par with Silver Tanka. Result: Failed due to lack of security features (every house became a mint).
- Khurasan Expedition:** Raised a huge army for a year, then disbanded it. Financial drain.
- Qarachil Expedition:** Attempt to secure the Kumaon hills. Army perished in the cold.

5.2 Firoz Shah Tughlaq: The Welfare State?

Contrast him with MbT. Firoz was a populist who appeased the nobles and Ulema.

DEPARTMENT / CONCEPT	PURPOSE
Diwan-i-Bandagan	Department of Slaves . He collected 180,000 slaves. (Eventually became a burden).
Public Works	Built extensive Canals (e.g., Yamuna to Hissar). Founded cities: Hissar, Firozabad, Jaunpur (in memory of Jauna Khan/MbT).
Religious Policy	Strictly orthodox. Imposed Jizya on Brahmins (first time separate from land tax). Destroyed Puri Jagannath temple.

CRITICAL EVENT: TIMUR'S INVASION (1398)

The Mongol ruler **Timur (Tamerlane)** invaded Delhi during the reign of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Tughlaq.

Impact: He sacked Delhi completely. The Sultanate never recovered its prestige. This power vacuum allowed the Sayyids and Lodis to rule a shrunken kingdom ("From Delhi to Palam").

6. THE VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE (1336–1646)

While the North crumbled under Tughlaq mismanagement, Harihara and Bukka (Sangama brothers) founded the "City of Victory" on the banks of the Tungabhadra. It became the bastion of Hindu culture in the South.

6.1 Krishna Deva Raya (1509–1529)

The greatest ruler (Tuluva Dynasty). A contemporary of Babur (Babur mentions him as the most powerful King in India in *Baburnama*).

- **Literature:** Composed *Amuktamalyada* (Telugu) on statecraft and *Jambavati Kalyanam* (Sanskrit).
- **The Ashtadiggajas:** 8 Telugu poets in his court. (Includes **Tenali Rama** and **Allasani Peddana**).
- **Portuguese Alliance:** Maintained friendly relations with Albuquerque to secure **Horses** and restrict horse supply to the Bahmani sultans.

6.2 Administration: The Nayakara System

This system is the defining feature of the Vijayanagara state. Often compared to the Iqta system, but with differences.

SYSTEM	DETAILS
Nayakara (Provincial)	Amaram (land) was given to military chiefs (Nayaks). They maintained an army for the King. Unlike Iqtadars, Nayaks were often hereditary and semi-independent.
Ayagar (Village)	A body of 12 functionaries (Karnam, Talaiyari, etc.) managed village affairs. They were paid via tax-free land (Manyam). Impact: Reduced village autonomy compared to Cholas.

6.3 Battle of Talikota (1565)

Also known as *Rakshasa-Tangadi*.

The Coalition: The 5 Deccan Sultanates (Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Bidar) united against Vijayanagara (Rama Raya).

Result: Complete destruction of Hampi. The empire collapsed, though it lingered on under the Aravidu dynasty.

BAHMANI KINGDOM: MAHMUD GAWAN

The Bahmani kingdom (founded by Alauddin Bahman Shah, 1347) peaked under the Prime Minister **Mahmud Gawan**.

He introduced the use of **Gunpowder** in war (first time in Deccan) and built the famous Madrasa at Bidar. His execution led to the disintegration of the kingdom into 5 Sultanates.

7. BHAKTI & SUFISM: THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION

The 14th–16th centuries saw the emergence of powerful popular movements that challenged ritualistic orthodoxy, promoted social equality, and used vernacular languages. These movements softened the religious divide.

7.1 Bhakti Movement: Nirguna vs. Saguna

This is the core distinction for exams. Bhakti focused on pure devotion (Bhakti) over knowledge (Jnana) or ritual (Karma).

NIRGUNA (FORMLESS DEVOTION)	SAGUNA (DEVOTION TO FORM)
Concept: Worship of a God without attributes, form, or gender. Stress on the unity of God and universal brotherhood.	Concept: Worship of God with form and attributes (Avatars like Rama and Krishna). Focus on personal love and devotion.
Key Figures: Guru Nanak (rejected idol worship, caste), Kabir (opposed both Hindu/Muslim orthodoxy), Dadu Dayal (Dadu Panth).	Key Figures: Tulsidas (wrote <i>Ramcharitmanas</i> in Avadhi), Surdas (Krishna devotee, wrote <i>Sur Sagar</i>), Chaitanya (Kirtans, popularized Krishna Bhakti in Bengal).

7.2 Sufism: The Mystic Path of Islam

Sufis aimed at union with God through love, devotion, music (Sama), and mystical practices. They played a huge role in the conversion process and cultural syncretism.

Chishti Silsila (Order)

Founder in India: **Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti** (Ajmer).

Key Figure: **Nizamuddin Auliya** (Delhi). Known for tolerance and living among the poor. Believed in the use of music (Qawwali) as devotion.

Suhrawardi Silsila

Founder: **Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya** (Multan).

Distinction: Unlike the Chishtis, they accepted state service and high posts; were not ascetic and accumulated wealth.

Naqshbandi Silsila

Founder: **Khwaja Baqi Billah**.

Distinction: Most orthodox and opposed to Sufi practices like music. **Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi** (Mujaddid) tried to counter Akbar's liberal reforms (Din-i-Ilahi).

ZELUNO EXAM TRAP: MAHARASHTRA DHARMA

Bhakti in Maharashtra was distinct.

Centre: Vithoba temple in Pandharpur.

Key Figures: **Jnaneswar** (wrote *Bhavartha Dipika/Jnaneswari* - a Marathi commentary on the Gita), **Eknath** (opposed untouchability), and **Tukaram** (contemporary of Shivaji). They used *Abhangas* (devotional Marathi hymns).

8. THE LODI DYNASTY AND THE FIRST BATTLE OF PANIPAT (1526)

The Lodi dynasty (1451–1526) was the first Afghan dynasty to rule Delhi. Their feudal nature and internal conflicts provided the perfect opening for the Mughals.

8.1 The Lodi's Afghan Confederacy Model

Unlike the Turkic rulers (who believed in the divinity of the Sultan), the Afghan Lodis believed in the principle of **equality among nobles**. The Sultan was merely the first among equals.

- **Bahlol Lodi (1451–1489)**: Founder. Successfully annexed Jaunpur. Maintained peace by treating Afghan nobles as peers.
- **Sikandar Lodi (1489–1517)**: Consolidated the kingdom. Founded the city of **Agra** (1504) and made it his new capital (strategic shift south). Introduced **Gaz-i-Sikandari** (standard land measurement).
- **Ibrahim Lodi (1517–1526)**: Tried to restore the Turkish concept of an absolute monarchy. This alienation of the Afghan nobles (like **Daulat Khan Lodi**) led to invitations being sent to Babur.

8.2 The First Battle of Panipat (1526)

A classic case study in the impact of military technology and superior strategy over sheer numbers.

Protagonists

Babur (12,000 men, cavalry, artillery) vs. **Ibrahim Lodi** (100,000 men, war elephants).

Key Tactics

Tulguma: Flanking party maneuver (Babur's cavalry attacked from sides and rear).

Araba: Use of carts and ropes (Ottoman/Rumi method) to protect artillery guns and central division.

Outcome

Ibrahim Lodi killed on the battlefield (first Sultan to die this way). Mughal rule formally established, beginning a new age.

DEEP DIVE: BABUR'S CHALLENGE AFTER PANIPAT

Babur did not win India at Panipat; he won the battle.

His real challenge came at the **Battle of Khanwa (1527)** against **Rana Sanga** of Mewar, who was a formidable opponent. Babur successfully invoked the banner of *Jihad* to motivate his homesick army before this battle.

9. MUGHAL EMPIRE (1526–1556): FOUNDATION AND SETBACK

The Mughal Empire, founded by Babur, was distinct from the Sultanate: it was Central Asian in origin (Timurid/Chagatai Turk), highly centralized, and based on military power.

9.1 Babur's Conquests (1526–1530)

A continuous sequence of victories was needed to stabilize the new empire after Panipat.

YEAR	BATTLE	OPPONENT	SIGNIFICANCE
1526	Panipat	Ibrahim Lodi	Secured Delhi and Agra. Marked the beginning of the Mughal rule.
1527	Khanwa	Rana Sanga (Mewar)	Consolidated power in North India. Babur took the title Ghazi.
1528	Chanderi	Medini Rai (Rajput)	Secured the crucial Malwa region, linking North to Deccan.
1529	Ghagra	Mahmud Lodi (Afghan Confederacy)	Decisive battle against the Afghans in the East (Bihar/Bengal border).

9.2 Humayun: The Man of Two Halves (1530–1540 & 1555–1556)

Humayun inherited an unstable kingdom and lost it entirely to the brilliant strategist Sher Shah Suri.

- **Division of Territory:** Divided the empire among his three brothers (Kamarán, Askari, Hindal), a disastrous move that crippled him strategically.
- **Sher Shah Suri: The Great Interregnum:** The Afghan leader defeated Humayun in two decisive battles:
 1. **Battle of Chausa (1539):** Humayun barely escaped by swimming across the Ganges.
 2. **Battle of Kannauj/Bilgram (1540):** Humayun lost his entire kingdom and became an exile for 15 years (in Safavid Persia).
- **Humayun's Return:** Returned in 1555 after Sher Shah's dynasty weakened. Died in 1556 from a fall from the library stairs in Purana Qila.

MUGHAL ADMINISTRATIVE PRELUDE: SHER SHAH SURI

Sher Shah's 5 years of rule were a blueprint for Akbar.

Key Reforms: Built the **Grand Trunk Road** (Sarak-i-Azam), introduced **Patta** (title deed) and **Qabuliyat** (acceptance of liability), and organized the land revenue system (Rai system). His currency reforms laid the basis for the modern Rupee.

10. AKBAR: THE CONSOLIDATOR OF EMPIRE

Akbar inherited a fragile kingdom at age 13. His reign transformed the Mughal state from a military occupation into a secular, centralized indigenous empire. The core exam focus must be on his **Administration** and **Religious Policy**.

10.1 Second Battle of Panipat (1556)

The Crisis

Hemu (Vikramaditya): The Hindu general of Adil Shah Suri had captured Delhi and Agra. He was the only Hindu to occupy the throne of Delhi during the medieval period.

The Battle

Fought between Bairam Khan (Akbar's regent) and Hemu. Hemu was struck in the eye by a stray arrow while on his elephant *Hawai*, leading to his capture and execution.

10.2 The Mansabdari System (Iron Frame of Empire)

Introduced in 1571, this was the backbone of the civil and military administration. It was not hereditary.

RANK COMPONENT	SIGNIFICANCE
Zat (Personal Rank)	Determined the noble's status in court and his personal salary.
Sawar (Cavalry Rank)	Determined the number of horsemen (cavalry) the noble had to maintain for the state.
Categories	1. 1st Class: Sawar rank equal to Zat rank. 2. 2nd Class: Sawar rank half of Zat rank. 3. 3rd Class: Sawar rank less than half of Zat.

10.3 Land Revenue: The Dahsala System

Devised by **Raja Todar Mal** (Finance Minister) in 1580.

Method: The state took the average produce of different crops for the last **10 years** (Dah-sala). The state's share was fixed at one-third of this average, payable in cash.

Polaj vs. Parauti: Land was classified based on fertility (Polaj = cultivated annually; Parauti = left fallow for 1-2 years).

DEEP DIVE: SULH-I-KUL

Akbar's religious policy evolved through three phases:

- 1. Orthodox Phase:** Early years under Bairam Khan.
- 2. Ibadat Khana (1575):** House of Worship at Fatehpur Sikri. Initially for Muslims, later opened to Hindus, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jains. Debates convinced him that all religions had truth.
- 3. Sulh-i-kul (1580s):** "Peace with all." This was a policy of state neutrality, not a new religion. **Din-i-Ilahi** (Tauhid-i-Ilahi) was merely a spiritual order of disciples, not a religion.

11. THE AGE OF MAGNIFICENCE: ART & ARCHITECTURE

While Akbar built the empire, his successors polished it. Jahangir is synonymous with **Painting**, and Shah Jahan with **Architecture**.

11.1 Jahangir (1605–1627): The Connoisseur

- **Chain of Justice (Zanjir-i-Adl):** A golden chain at Agra Fort for anyone to seek royal justice.
- **Painting:** Shifted focus from manuscripts (Akbar) to **Portraiture** and **Nature/Animals**.
 - *Ustad Mansur:* Famous for bird/animal paintings (e.g., Siberian Crane, Dodo).
 - *Bishandas:* Master of portraits.
- **The English Arrival:** Captain **William Hawkins** (1608) and **Sir Thomas Roe** (1615) visited his court. Roe secured the first Firman to establish factories.

11.2 Shah Jahan (1628–1658): The Builder

The Golden Age of Mughal Architecture. The style shifted from Red Sandstone (Akbar) to **White Marble** with **Pietra Dura** (inlay work of semi-precious stones).

MONUMENT	KEY FEATURES
Taj Mahal (Agra)	Built for Mumtaz Mahal. Chief Architect: Ustad Ahmad Lahori . Represents the climax of the Charbagh style.
Red Fort (Delhi)	Built when capital shifted from Agra to Shahjahanabad (Delhi) in 1638. Contains Diwan-i-Aam (Public) and Diwan-i-Khas (Private).
Jama Masjid (Delhi)	Largest mosque in India at the time. Built on a high plinth.

CRITICAL CONCEPT: THE JAGIRDARI CRISIS

Though the empire looked wealthy, the seeds of decline were sown under Shah Jahan.

The number of Mansabdars increased, but the **Paibaqi** (land available for assignment as Jagirs) decreased.

Result: Nobles had to wait years for a Jagir. When they got one, they squeezed the peasantry to maximize short-term profit, ruining agriculture.

12. THE DECLINE AND THE RISE OF MARATHAS

Aurangzeb's reign is divided into two halves: North Indian focus (1658–1681) and the disastrous Deccan Campaign (1681–1707). This power vacuum allowed the rise of Shivaji.

12.1 Aurangzeb's Policies

Reversed Akbar's liberalism. A "Puritan" monarch.

- **Religious:** Re-imposed **Jizya** (1679). Banned music at court (though he was an expert Veena player). Destroyed temples at Kashi (Vishwanath) and Mathura (Keshavdev) amidst rebellions.
- **The Deccan Ulcer:** He annexed **Bijapur (1686)** and **Golconda (1687)**.
Strategic Error: By destroying these Shia sultanates, he removed the buffer between the Mughals and the Marathas. The Marathas then spread like a wildfire across the Deccan.

12.2 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj: Maratha Administration

Shivaji (1627–1680) created a nation-state based on **Swarajya**. His administration (Ashtapradhan) is a high-yield topic.

MINISTER (ASHTAPRADHAN)	FUNCTION
Peshwa (Mukhya Pradhan)	Prime Minister. General administration.
Amatya (Majumdar)	Finance & Revenue (Accountant General).
Sumant (Dabir)	Foreign Minister.
Sachiv (Surnavis)	Royal Correspondence.
Senapati (Sar-i-Naubat)	Military Commander.

12.3 Revenue System: Chauth & Sardeshmukhi

How did the Marathas finance their campaigns?

- **Chauth:** 25% (1/4th) of land revenue claimed from neighboring territories (Mughal/Deccan) in exchange for protection from Maratha raids.
- **Sardeshmukhi:** An additional 10% levy claimed by Shivaji as the hereditary *Sardeshmukh* (Headman) of the region.

TIMELINE: TREATY OF PURANDAR (1665)

Fought between **Raja Jai Singh** (representing Aurangzeb) and **Shivaji**.

Terms: Shivaji surrendered 23 out of 35 forts. He agreed to visit the Mughal court at Agra (where he was later imprisoned and escaped in a fruit basket). This treaty marked the peak of Mughal pressure on the Marathas.

13. THE RISE OF THE PESHWAS: FROM CHHATRAPATI TO CONFEDERACY

Following the death of Aurangzeb (1707) and the release of Shahu, the central authority of the Maratha Empire shifted from the Chhatrapati (King) to the Peshwa (Prime Minister), leading to a decentralized Confederacy.

13.1 Shifting Power: The Peshwa Era

The appointment of **Balaji Vishwanath** as the first Peshwa in 1713 institutionalized the power of the Brahman ministers from Pune.

Balaji Vishwanath (1713–1720)

The **Second Founder** of the Maratha state. Secured the **Mughal Farman (1719)** from Delhi through the Sayyid Brothers. This Farman granted Marathas the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi across the Deccan, legally legitimizing their tax claims.

Baji Rao I (1720–1740)

The greatest exponent of **Guerilla Warfare** after Shivaji. Adopted the policy of "Hindu Pad Padshahi."

Battle of Palkhed (1728): Defeated the Nizam of Hyderabad decisively. Maratha expansion reached the North (Malwa and Bundelkhand).

Balaji Baji Rao (Nana Saheb) (1740–1761)

Moved the capital to Pune. Annexed vast territories, making the Marathas the dominant power in North India. This over-extension led to the **Third Battle of Panipat**.

13.2 The Maratha Confederacy (Decentralization)

The vast empire was administered through five semi-autonomous Maratha ruling families, all loyal to the Peshwa in Pune.

RULING HOUSE	CAPITAL CITY	ROLE/EXAM SIGNIFICANCE
Peshwa	Pune	De facto head of the Confederacy. Administered the home territories (Maharashtra).
Holkars	Indore	Controlled Malwa region. Led by the famous **Ahilyabai Holkar** later.
Scindias	Gwalior	Controlled North-Western territories (Delhi, Agra). Had significant influence on the declining Mughal court.
Gaekwads	Baroda	Controlled Gujarat. Primarily focused on trade routes and coastal territories.
Bhonsles	Nagpur	Controlled Eastern Maratha regions (Orissa, Berar).

MARATHA REVENUE TERMINOLOGY

The system transitioned from Shivaji's centralized *Ryotwari* (direct peasant dealing) to the Peshwa's decentralized *Kamat* (contract farming) and *Ijara* (revenue farming), where tax collection was leased out, leading to greater exploitation.

14. DECISIVE BATTLES & THE 18TH CENTURY POWER VACUUM

The 18th century witnessed the terminal decline of the Mughal Empire and the failure of the Marathas to replace it as the central power. This created the perfect environment for European colonial expansion.

14.1 The Third Battle of Panipat (1761)

The single most catastrophic military event for the Marathas, directly leading to the collapse of the Peshwa's authority.

Protagonists

Marathas (under Sadashiv Rao Bhau and Viswas Rao) vs. **Ahmad Shah Abdali** (Afghan ruler) + Alliance of Rohillas (Afghan) and Nawab of Awadh (Shuja-ud-Daula).

Causes of Maratha Failure

1. **Logistics:** The Marathas brought women and non-combatants, slowing their movement and depleting food.
2. **Alliances:** Failed to secure the support of Jats (Suraj Mal) and Rajputs.
3. **Tactics:** Abandoned guerilla warfare for traditional frontal attack against superior Afghan cavalry and artillery.

Immediate Outcome

Massacre of the Maratha army. The blow weakened the Peshwa's control, allowing the autonomous Maratha houses (Scindia, Holkar) to strengthen their positions, thus accelerating the Confederacy's disintegration.

14.2 The Successor States (Post-Mughal)

These provincial kingdoms, formed on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, were the last independent powers the British had to confront.

STATE	FOUNDER (TITLE)	EXAM SIGNIFICANCE
Hyderabad	Nizam-ul-Mulk (Chin Qilich Khan)	First to break away from Delhi. Maintained autonomy by constantly fighting the Marathas.
Awadh (Oudh)	Saadat Khan (Burhan-ul-Mulk)	Prosperous revenue administration. Became a key player in the Battle of Buxar (1764) against the British.
Bengal	Murshid Quli Khan	Shifted capital to Murshidabad. Separated the revenue administration (Diwani) from the Mughal control. The richest province seized by the British.

ZELUNO TRAP: THE DECCAN CONTEXT

After Aurangzeb, the **Nizam of Hyderabad** and the **Marathas** became the two primary powers in the Deccan. Their constant struggle (e.g., Treaty of Bhalki, 1751) prevented either from consolidating total authority, making them susceptible to European intervention.

15. CULTURE AND SOCIETY ON THE EVE OF COLONIALISM

The 18th century was not just a period of political decline but also one of remarkable cultural resilience and artistic decentralization. Art shifted from the Imperial court to regional courts.

15.1 Later Mughal and Regional Art Styles

As the Mughal court lost patronage, artists migrated to successor states, leading to unique hybrid styles.

STYLE	REGION	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
Awadh (Lucknow)	Awadh Court	Focus on elaborate court scenes, music, dance, and sensual themes. Less religious, highly decorative.
Kishangarh School	Rajasthan	Famous for the **Bani Thani** painting (the Indian Mona Lisa). Highly stylized, delicate lines, and strong devotion (Krishna-Radha themes).
Pahari School	Kangra, Basohli (Hills)	Developed a distinctive style based on **Vaishnava Bhakti** and the poetry of Jayadeva's **Gita Govinda**. Characterized by lyrical movement and bright, primary colors.

15.2 Social Conditions and Economic Stagnation

Despite political chaos, life in villages remained largely unchanged, but the administrative burden increased.

- Zamindars:** Gained massive power in the 18th century due to the weakening central Mughal authority. They became the effective intermediaries who owned land rights.
- Women's Status:** Declined across most communities. The Purdah system became more rigorous, and Sati became more common among the upper castes, especially in North India.
- Trade:** **Internal trade remained robust** (Maratha chaos mainly affected revenue, not local markets). However, the *disruption of gold imports* and *constant warfare* caused severe rural distress.

MARATHA ARCHITECTURE & GADHI STYLE

The Marathas did not build massive imperial structures like the Mughals. Their architecture was utilitarian and fortified.

Wada/Gadhi: Fortified residence of a noble/Peshwa (e.g., Shaniwar Wada, Pune). Characterized by massive walls, small windows, and internal courtyards.

Temples: Built in the simple **Hemadpanti** style (often without mortar).

16. THE RISE OF THE SIKHS: FROM SAINTS TO SOLDIERS

The transformation of Sikhism is a pivotal chapter in North Indian history. It evolved from a **Nirguna Bhakti** movement into a **Military Brotherhood (Khalsa)** in response to political persecution.

16.1 Chronology of the Ten Gurus

For exams, focus on the specific contributions and the shift in policy towards the Mughal state.

1. Guru Nanak (1469–1539)

Founder. Preached monotheism (Ik Onkar). Introduced **Langar** (community kitchen) to break caste barriers. Contemporary of Babur.

2. Guru Angad (1539–1552)

Standardized the **Gurmukhi Script**. This gave the Punjabi language a distinct identity separate from Sanskrit/Persian.

5. Guru Arjan Dev (1563–1606)

Turning Point: Compiled the **Adi Granth**. Built the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple).

Execution: Executed by **Jahangir** for blessing the rebel prince Khusrau. This event militarized the Sikhs.

6. Guru Hargobind (1606–1644)

Adopted the concept of **Miri** (Temporal Power) and **Piri** (Spiritual Power). Constructed the **Akal Takht** (Throne of the Timeless) opposite the Golden Temple to conduct political affairs.

16.2 The Khalsa Panth (1699)

Established by the 10th Guru, **Gobind Singh**, at Anandpur Sahib. This created a distinct political community.

- **The 5 Ks:** Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (comb), Kara (steel bracelet), Kachera (shorts), Kirpan (sword).
- **Titles:** Men took the title **Singh** (Lion) and women **Kaur** (Princess), rejecting caste surnames.
- **Zafarnama:** The famous "Letter of Victory" written by Guru Gobind Singh to Aurangzeb in Persian, condemning the Emperor's moral failures.

ZELUNO INSIGHT: ADI GRANTH VS GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Adi Granth: Compiled by Guru Arjan Dev. Contains hymns of the first 5 Gurus and Bhakti Saints (Kabir, Baba Farid, Namdev).

Guru Granth Sahib: The final eternal Guru. It includes the hymns of the 9th Guru (Tegh Bahadur) added by Guru Gobind Singh. It does **not** contain the writings of Guru Gobind Singh himself (those are in the *Dasam Granth*).

17. THE SIKH CONFEDERACY AND EMPIRE

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikhs found a temporary leader in Banda Bahadur, followed by a period of fragmentation into **Misls**, and finally unification under Ranjit Singh.

17.1 Banda Singh Bahadur & The First Sikh State

- **Agrarian Uprising:** He rallied the peasantry against the Mughal Zamindars.
- **Sovereignty:** He was the first to strike **coins** in the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh.
- **Execution:** Captured and executed by Mughal Emperor **Farrukh Siyar** in 1716.

17.2 The Misl System (Confederacy)

During the chaos of the invasions by Nadir Shah (1739) and Abdali, Sikhs organized themselves into 12 **Misls** (equal militias). They met at Amritsar (Sarbat Khalsa) to take collective decisions (Gurmatta).

SYSTEM COMPONENT	FUNCTION
Rakhi System	A protection tax. Cultivators paid 20% of their produce to the Sikhs in exchange for protection against Afghan raiders and local oppression.
Sukerchakia Misl	The Misl to which Ranjit Singh belonged. Located in Gujranwala (modern Pakistan).
Bhangi Misl	The most powerful Misl initially. Controlled Lahore and Amritsar before Ranjit Singh rose to power.

17.3 Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Sher-e-Punjab)

He bridged the Medieval and Modern eras. His empire was secular and highly modernized.

1799: Conquest of Lahore

Captured Lahore from the Bhangi Misl. Made it his capital.

1809: Treaty of Amritsar

Signed with the British (Metcalfe). It fixed the **Sutlej River** as the boundary. Ranjit Singh was checked from expanding east, so he expanded west (Peshawar, Multan, Kashmir).

Military Modernization (Fauj-i-Khas)

Employed European officers (Ventura, Allard) to train infantry and artillery. His army was the second strongest in Asia after the British East India Company.

18. CONCLUSION: THE ECONOMY OF PRE-BRITISH INDIA

To understand the impact of Colonialism, one must understand the economic baseline of Medieval India. Was it truly a "Golden Bird"?

18.1 The Structure of Trade

India was the **Workshop of the World** for textiles. The balance of trade was perpetually in India's favor.

SECTOR	DETAILS (HIGH-YIELD POINTS)
Textiles	Cotton (Bengal, Gujarat, Coromandel) and Silk (Bengal) were the largest exports. Dacca Muslin (Mulmul) was legendary for its fineness.
Banking (Hundi)	A sophisticated system of bills of exchange (Hundi) allowed money transfer across the empire. Major banking houses (Jagat Seths in Bengal) controlled state finance.
Imports	India had very little demand for foreign goods. The only major imports were War Horses (from Arabia/Central Asia) and Bullion (Gold/Silver).

18.2 The Weakness: Why did the Economy Collapse?

Despite the wealth, structural flaws made the transition to capitalism impossible without external intervention.

- **No Middle Class:** Society was polarized between the extravagant nobility and the subsistence peasantry. The merchant class was rich but had no political power (unlike the Bourgeoisie in Europe).
- **Technological Stagnation:** While Europe advanced in navigation and printing, India lagged. Example: The Mughals never built a significant **Blue Water Navy**.
- **Science:** Lack of interest in mechanical improvements. Agriculture remained dependent on monsoons with primitive tools.

FINAL SUMMARY: THE MEDIEVAL LEGACY

Politics: Shifted from Centralized Empires (Delhi Sultanate/Mughals) to Regional Confederacies (Marathas/Sikhs).

Culture: Development of a composite culture (Indo-Islamic architecture, Urdu language, Hindustani music).

Religion: Bhakti and Sufism softened the rigid edges of orthodoxy, creating the social fabric of modern India.