

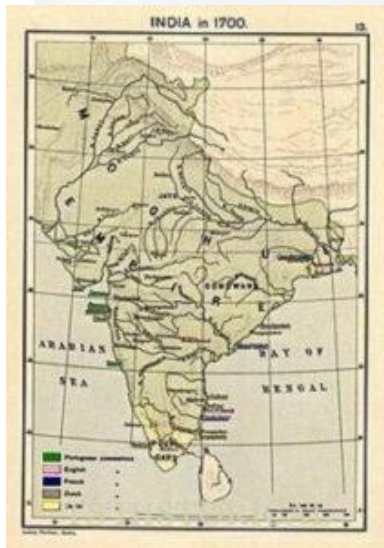


Mughal Empire History

The Mughal Empire: On the fringes of the Indian subcontinent, there are two countries with a Muslim majority. On the west, there's Pakistan, and on the east, there's Bangladesh. Both of these countries, as well as the huge minority of Muslims living in India, have one dynasty to thank for their Muslim faith: the Mughal Empire.

In the 8th Century, the [Umayyad Caliphate](#) conquered Sindh, in what is today Pakistan. However, India was too distant to control and subsequent Caliphs could not exercise control over it or expand further. Then, in the 11th century, **Mahmud of Ghazni** (محمود الغزنوي) invaded India and established a permanent Turkic regime after taking Lahore in 1030. After the collapse of his empire, various dynasties ruled northern India, collectively called **Delhi Sultanate**. However, none was very successful for very long. The last of these dynasties was the Lodhi dynasty.

Mughal Empire Facts





Founder	Zahir ad-din Muhammad Babur
Greatest Emperor	Abu'l-Fath Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar
Architectural Legacy	Shahanshah Shahab ud-Din Muhammad Shah Jahan
Empire's Stern Ruler	Muḥī al-Dīn Muḥammad, Aurangzeb Alamgir
Decline	Decline after Aurangzeb's death in 1707, weakened by internal strife, and invasions.

The Mughal Empire map at its greatest extent, c. 1700 Babur and Humayun (1526–1556)

Main Articles:- [Babur](#) and [Humayun](#)



Main South Asian polities circa 1525 CE, on the eve of the establishment of the Mughal Empire by Babur.

In 1526, a Timurid prince named **Zahir ad-din Muhammad Babur** (ظهیر الدین بابر), with nothing to lose and no options left in Central Asia decided to invade India. Babur was a **fifth-generation descendant of Tamerlane** (تیمورلنک) and a **thirteenth-generation descendant of Genghis Khan** (چنگیز خان). Like many other Timurid princes, he claimed the entirety of Timur's empire. However, he was barely even able to rule Fergana valley. He was pushed south from there by the rise of the Uzbeks until he established his seat of power in Kabul. With the Safavids to the West and Uzbeks to the North, he had nowhere to go but east.

East was India. In 1526, he faced the ruling Lodi Dynasty at Panipat. Despite the rather overwhelming odds, he defeated them, and over the next four years, he conquered almost all of North India after facing other local Hindu and Muslim rulers.

The dynasty he founded came to be known as the Mughals, which is the Persian word for Mongol. Although, the dynasty itself held strong ties to Timur and called itself the Gurkani dynasty. Gurkan is the title of Timur meaning the Royal Son-in-Law, the son-in-law of [Genghis Khan](#) as Timur liked to boast. **Babur died in 1530 at the age of forty-six or forty-seven.**

The story goes that his son and heir [Nasir ad-Din Humayun](#) (نصیر الدین ہمایون) had fallen ill and Babur had bargained with God for his son's life in exchange for his. Although, as was soon revealed, the bargain



wasn't the best bargain he could've gotten. His apparent weakness invited challenges from many local rulers. One Afghan noble named Sher Khan Suri (شیر خان صوری) overthrew Humayun in 1539.

Humayun pretty much became homeless and wandered through Sindh for several years. However, Sher Khan or as he was now called **Sher Shah Suri** (شیر شاه صوری) died in battle in 1545 and his empire was divided up. On the other side, Humayun asked the Safavids for help and started conquering the divided empire. By 1555, both Delhi and Lahore were back in his control. Unfortunately, he lost control while running down the stairs and fell. He died soon after in 1556. That's why you should never run down the stairs or up or just... run.

Akbar to Aurangzeb (1556–1707)

Main Articles:- [Akbar](#), [Jahangir](#), [Shah Jahan](#), and [Aurangzeb](#)



Akbar holds a religious assembly of different faiths in the Ibadat Khana in Fatehpur Sikri.

Humayun's son, Jalal ud-Din Muhammad Akbar (جلال الدین محمد اکبر), a mere twelve or thirteen-year-old was installed as the next ruler of the Mughal Empire. Regents ruled and stabilized the empire on the young Shahanshah's behalf for the first five years of his reign. By 1561, he was ready to take charge. He

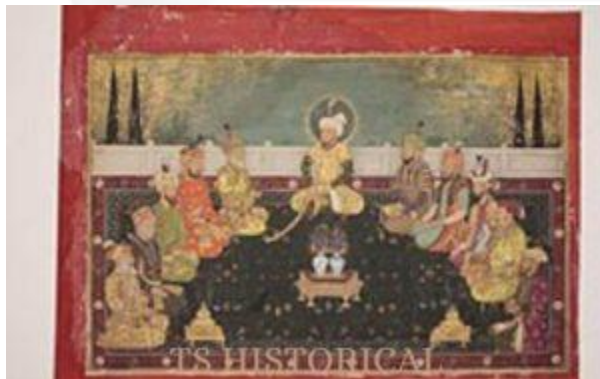


expanded the empire further conquering Gujarat, Bihar, and much of Bengal. However, at this point, the Mughals had a bit of a legitimacy problem. They were a foreign Muslim dynasty ruling over a realm where less than 5% of the population followed the same faith as them.

Babur and Humayun were followers of Sufi Islam and that's also how Akbar started his reign. Although, over the years, he began a struggle to reconcile Islam and the various Indian religions. He invited scholars of various religions to have open discussions in the Ibadat-Khana (عبادت خانہ). He also invited Jesuits from the Portuguese enclave at Goa.

The Portuguese had arrived in India three decades before the Mughal Empire did. Akbar reconciled all these ideas into his **Din-i Ilahi** (دین الہی) or Divine Religion. This new religion kind of put the ruler as partly divine and that was not popular with the Muslims who recited that there is no god but God. He also started worshiping the sun every morning. He tried to cozy up to the Hindus by abolishing the Jizya tax and by financing Hindu Temples.

He was also the one who translated Mahabharata into Persian so his people could read it and understand Hinduism slightly better. By this point, the subcontinent was pretty much self-sufficient and only imported precious metals, war horses, and just a few spices. On the other hand, it exported many valuable things such as pepper, saffron, sugar, indigo, and textiles. Although, as the subcontinent was fractured between many rulers, there were a lot of taxes that people had to pay as they crossed from the territory of one ruler to the other. It was also pretty dangerous since everyone was raiding everyone else. Although, it all changed with the arrival of the Mughal Empire.



Group portrait of Mughal rulers, from Babur to Aurangzeb, with the Mughal ancestor Timur seated in the middle. On the left: Shah Jahan, Akbar and Babur, with Abu Sa'id of Samarkand and Timur's son, Miran Shah. On the right: Aurangzeb, Jahangir



and Humayun, and two of Timur's other offsprings Umar Shaykh and Muhammad Sultan. Created c. 1707–12

During the brief **period of Sher Shah Suri's rule**, he had united all of North India under his banner which allowed trade to flourish from the western edge of India to the eastern one. Sher Shah Suri was also the one who introduced the Rupee coin. So, Hindu Nationalists, take note, that's another thing you gotta change. He also built the Grand Trunk Road or as it's called now, GT Road which connected his vast empire from the border of Afghanistan to Bengal.

The Mughals designed a system of bureaucracy called the Mansabdari System which was reformed by Akbar. A Mansabdar (منصبدار) was an official who was liable to provide the emperor with troops. They had various grades and the higher the grade, the more troops they had to provide. It ranged from 10 soldiers to 5,000 during Akbar's reign. To finance their obligation to the emperor, they were given a jagir (جاگیر) which was essentially the right to collect taxes from a certain amount of land.

The emperor himself appointed these Mansabdars so they remained loyal to him and he moved them around so they wouldn't be able to build a base of power in one place. The system was open to all faiths and in fact, some of the highest Mansabs were held by Mughal and Rajput Princes. The Mansabdars had to handle the Zamindars (زمیندار) who were landowners with a significant degree of command over a single or a few villages.

The Mansabdars often came into conflict with these Zamindars as they tried to collect taxes or enforce edicts but the Zamindars resisted. Due to all these reforms, Akbar was able to provide the strong foundation the young Mughal Empire needed to thrive in India. He is considered the greatest Mughal Emperor by many. In fact, Akbar means "The Great" and was a title, not his given name. He died in 1605.

Akbar's son and heir, [Nur ad-Din Muhammad Jahangir](#) (نور الدین محمد جهانگیر) further tried to expand the empire but it had pretty much reached its limits. He even tried to conquer Timur's former empire but that didn't go anywhere. During his reign, he started actively trying to kill the newly founded Sikh religion, from the region of Punjab. He even executed a Sikh guru. An interesting thing from Jahangir's reign is that he tried to take over Ahmadnagar to the south which fell in 1616 but a rather famous unknown general named Malik Ambar (ملک عنبر) started guerilla warfare against the Mughals there.

He became a major headache for the Mughals but more damaging to the Mughals was the legacy of Deccan Resistance against Mughal rule that he started. He had gathered many Hindus and Muslims in his



mission including a Maratha general named Shahaji Bhosale. He'll become important later. Malik Ambar died in 1626 and Jahangir died in 1627.

leaving the Mughal Empire to Shahab ad-Din Muhammad Shah Jahan (شهاب الدين محمد شاه جهان). Shah Jahan pressed even harder on the Deccan but again, not very successfully. In 1646, Shah Jahan actually led a campaign into Transoxiana with the dream of conquering the Timurid Empire. However, nothing was achieved there either.

He was the one who built the Taj Mahal for his beloved deceased wife, Mumtaz Mahal (ممتاز محل) who, by the way, died giving birth to the couple's fourteenth child in the nineteenth year of their marriage in 1631. Shah Jahan seemed like he was close to death in 1657 and so, civil war erupted among his sons. Even though Shah Jahan recovered, his sons had too much invested in the war and so, he was overthrown and imprisoned by his son [Muhi ud-Din Muhammad Aurangzeb](#) (محيى الدين محمد اورنگزيب) in 1658 after he won the civil war against his brother.

Shah Jahan would spend the next eight years imprisoned in Agra fort being able to see but never visit the Taj Mahal. Aurangzeb was what's called traditionally pious. He revoked many of the tolerant policies implemented by Akbar. He imposed Islam on the entire realm and even composed the **Fatawa al-Alamgiriyya** (الفتاوى العالمكيرية) which is a compilation of the Sharia from various sources like the Quran and the Hadith.

He banned music but he couldn't completely impose that. Although, at the same time, he employed people in his court based on merit and not religion. He employed the largest percentage of Hindus in his court, of any Mughal ruler. He did patronize the construction of Hindu temples while, at the same time, ordering the destruction of temples that he deemed "attractive to Muslims". Like his great-grandpa Akbar, Aurangzeb was a conqueror. He spent most of his life in military campaigns. He extended the empire further south but it got more and more difficult to control. He opened the Pandora's Box that was the Deccan.

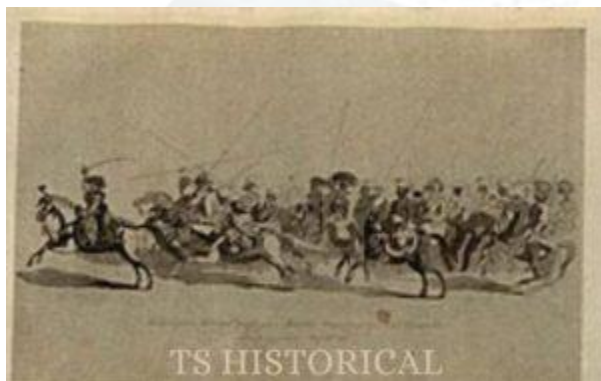
He controlled the Mughal Empire at its territorial zenith and controlled the biggest portion of India since Muhammad ibn Tughlaq's (محمد ابن تغلق) death in 1351. Shahaji Bhosale's son, the great Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhosale founded the Maratha empire which would quickly conquer quite an impressive amount of land in the south.

The Zamindars and Mansabdars obtained more and more power and grew restless. The system established by Akbar needed a strong and active ruler who could keep an eye on the Mansabdars but



that just wasn't Aurangzeb's strong suit. On top of that, the Mansabdars were tired of raising and sending troops all the time. The empire's treasury was also depleted by the constant warring. Aurangzeb spent his final years either conquering new lands or destroying rebellions in previously conquered ones. After Aurangzeb's death in 1707.

Decline (1707–1857)



Horsemen of the invading Maratha

Empire

A civil war broke out. Before it was over, two of his sons and three of his grandsons were dead. His eldest son Bahadur Shah (بهادر شاه) ascended to the throne at the age of sixty-four. He repealed his father's conservative and discriminatory policies against the Hindus, to win them over. Although, Hindus weren't exactly.

The biggest problem the empire was facing. Bahadur Shah himself died in 1712 and before 1720, there were two more wars of succession until the reign of **Muhammad Shah** (محمد شاه) started. His reign was somewhat stabilized the empire until in 1739, **Nadir Shah** (نادر شاه), the Afsharid ruler of Persia invaded, looted, and sacked Delhi. Whatever illusion those around the Mughals had about their strength was now shattered.

The Marathas had already conquered almost all of South India. Now, they were eyeing Delhi itself. On the other side, **Ahmad Shah Durrani**, the first ruler of Afghanistan and a protégé of Nadir Shah was harassing the Mughals as well. He attacked Delhi thrice, in 1748, 1757, and 1760. Marathas conquered Delhi in 1757 and the Mughals were now their tributaries. Their control expanded barely outside the walls of the city. After the collapse of the Marathas, a joint-stock English company whose ambition and



avarice knew no bounds whatsoever, replaced them as the puppet masters. From 1757 to 1857, the empire remained but only in name.

In 1857, it joined the Indian Mutiny and the British finally put an end to its miserable existence. The last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II (بهادر شاه ظفر) was imprisoned where he died. Other Mughal princes were beheaded and their bodies were displayed at the **Khooni Darwaza** (خونی دروازہ) which means “**The Gate of Blood**”.

The legacy of the 331 years of Mughals' existence in India can still be seen all around the Subcontinent. The culture they developed revolved around the Turko-Persian culture of their homeland but eventually, it became its own thing after merging with various local traditions. For instance, it was during the reign of Aurangzeb that Urdu started to emerge as its own language even though many still insist that it's just Hindi with slight changes.

Among tourists to the Subcontinent of India, the Mughals are famous for the beautiful buildings and miniature paintings they left behind. Shah Jahan alone commissioned the imperial city of Shahjahanabad, the **Red Fort of Delhi**, and the [Taj Mahal](#). Finally, the aspect of Indian life where their legacy is most obvious is in the spread of Islam.

People Also Ask?

Who is 1st Mughal emperor?

The first Mughal emperor was Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur. He established the Mughal Empire.

How long did the Mughals rule India?

The Mughal Empire ruled India for approximately 331 years from 1526 to 1857.

Who started the Mughal Empire?

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodhi and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India.