

A really, REALLY brief introduction to
post-medieval Indian History

Abridged Indian History

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Ancient History (3300 BCE – 1126 AD)

- Indus Valley Civilization
- Peak population of 5 million
- Located in present day Pakistan.
- Harappa, Lothal, and Mohenjo-daro.
- Planned cities.

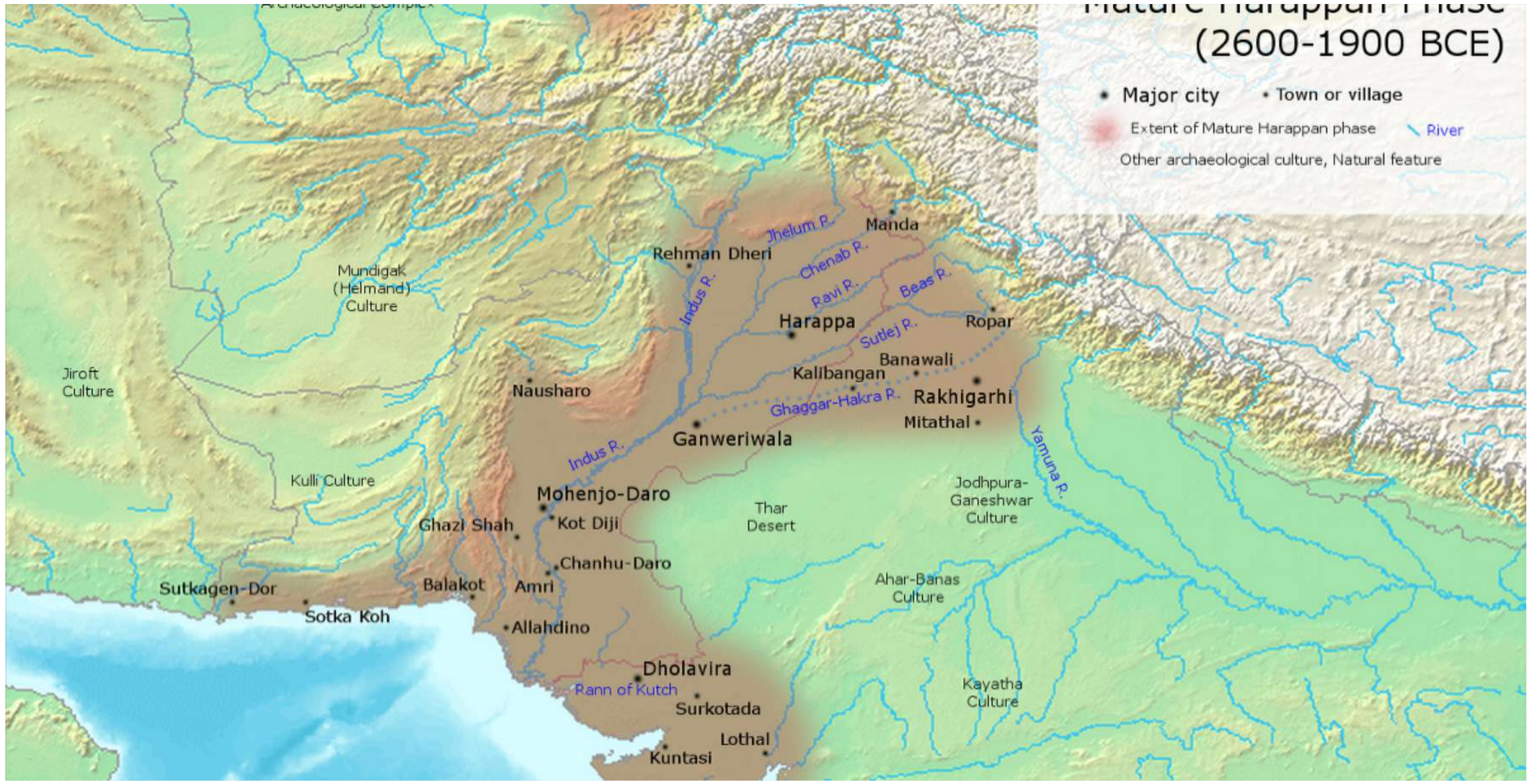
Indus Valley Civilization Early Harappan Phase (3300-2600 BCE)

- Town or village
- River
- Early Harappan sub-region
- Other archaeological culture, Natural feature

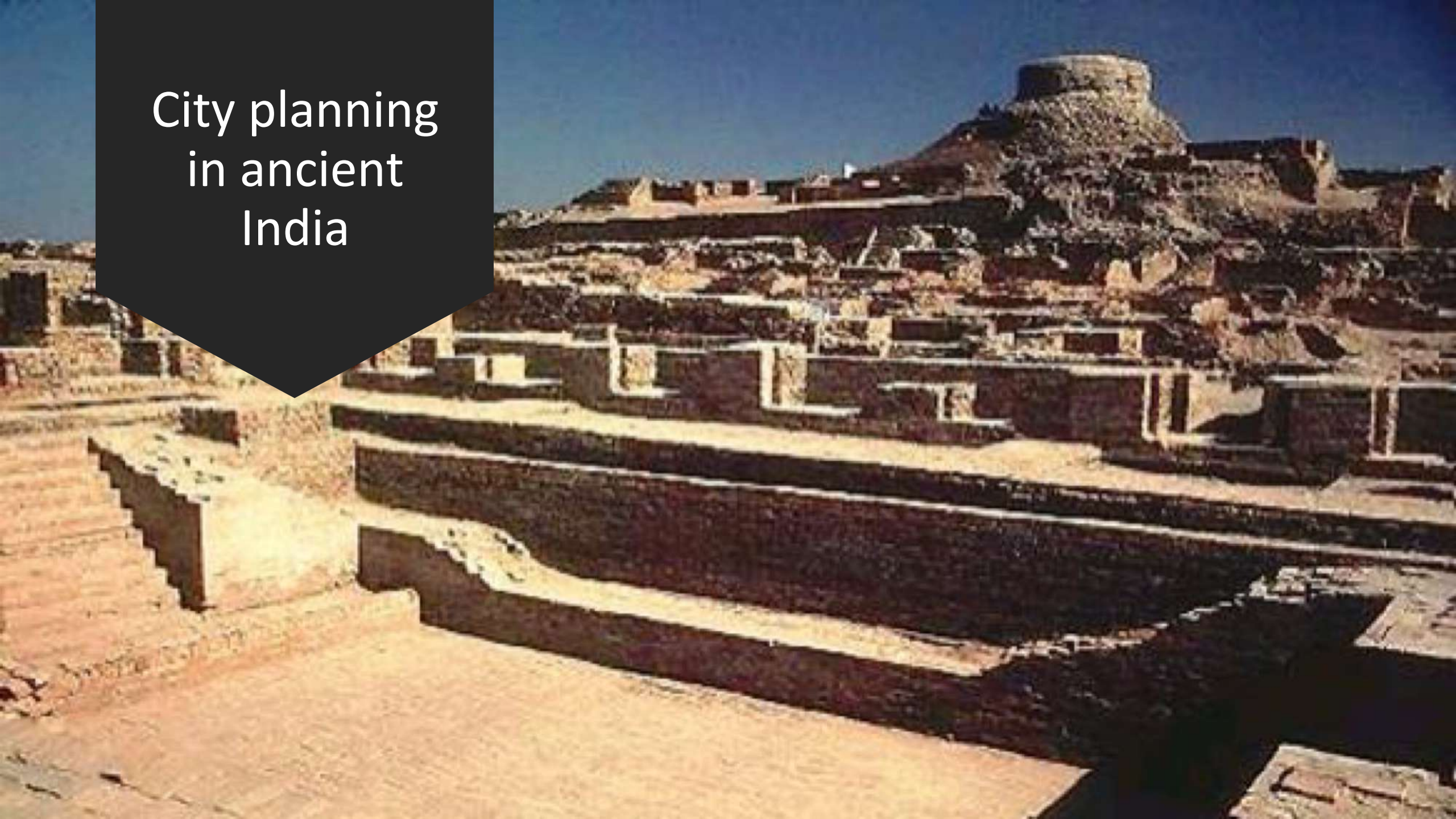


Mature Harappan Phase (2600-1900 BCE)

- Major city
- Town or village
- Extent of Mature Harappan phase
- River
- Other archaeological culture, Natural feature



City planning
in ancient
India



A photograph of an ancient water reservoir in Dholavira, Gujarat, India. The structure is built with reddish-brown bricks and is partially filled with water. The reservoir is surrounded by a low wall and has a series of steps leading down to the water. The background shows a dry, hilly landscape with some green trees and a clear blue sky. A white text box with a black border is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Water reservoirs in Dholavira".

Water reservoirs in Dholavira

Weights and Measures
c. 2700-2000 B.C.
Chert, Jasper, Copper, Clay &
Ivory
Mohenjodaro, Harappa,
Dholavira and Banawali
All Mature Harappa sites
Loan from A.S.I.



Mauryan Empire

- Founded by Chandragupta Maurya
- Most important ruler was Ashoka, Chandragupta's son
- First empire to control the entire Indian subcontinent.
- Pivotal to the spread of Buddhism

Territorial evolution of the Mauryan Empire



The approximate extent of the **Magadha** state in the 5th century BCE.



The Maurya Empire when it was first founded by **Chandragupta Maurya** c. 320 BCE, after conquering the Nanda Empire when he was only about 20 years old.



Chandragupta extended the borders of the Maurya Empire towards **Seleucid Persia** after defeating **Seleucus** c. 305 BCE.^[25]



Bindusara extended the borders of the empire southward into the **Deccan Plateau** c. 300 BCE.^[26]



Ashoka extended into **Kalinga** during the **Kalinga War** c. 265 BCE, and established superiority over the southern kingdoms.



Capital of inscribed Asoka pillar at Sarnath.
(A. S. photo.)

Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526)

- Slave Dynasty
- Khalji dynasty
- Lodhi dynasty

Qutb – al din – Aibak

- First Muslim ruler of India
- Founder of the slave dynasty
- He built the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in Delhi
- He started the construction of Qutb Minar in memory of the sufi saint Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, which was completed by his successor, Iltutmish after Aibak's death.
- Built the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in India – first mosque built in Delhi after the Islamic conquest of India.





Khalji dynasty

- The first ruler of the Khalji dynasty was Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji.
- He came to power in 1290 after killing the last ruler of the Mamluk dynasty, Muin ud-Din Qaizabad, at the behest of Turkic, Afghan and Persian nobles.
- He was around 70 years old at the time of his ascension
- Ruled for 6 years before he was murdered in 1296 by his nephew and son-in-law Juna Muhammad Khalji, who later came to be known as **Ala ud-Din Khalji**.
- Ala ud-Din Khalji completed the construction of the **Qutub Minar and the Alai Gate**.

Mughal Dynasty



Humayun and Babur (1525 – 1556)

- The Mughal Empire was founded by Babur (reigned 1526–1530)
- Ousted from his ancestral domains in Central Asia, Babur turned to India to satisfy his ambitions.
- Babur's forces occupied much of northern India after his victory at Panipat in 1526. The preoccupation with wars and military campaigns, however, did not allow the new emperor to consolidate the gains he had made in India.
- His son, Humayun (reigned 1530–1556), was driven out of India and into Persia by rebels.
- The Sur Empire (1540–1555), founded by Sher Shah Suri (reigned 1540–1545), briefly interrupted Mughal rule.
- The restoration of Mughal rule began after Humayun's triumphant return from Persia in 1555, but he died from a fatal accident shortly afterwards.

Akbar

- Born in 1542 in Ajmer in exile
- Ascended the throne in 1555 on Humayun's death
- His general – Bairam Khan ruled in his stead till he comes of age
- Mughal Empire greatly expanded geographically under his reign and was a period of great prosperity and stability
- Adopted a liberal policy of religious tolerance, attempting to foster communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims.
- His interaction with various religious theologians had convinced him that despite their differences, all religions had several good practices, which he sought to combine into a new religious movement known as **Din-i-Ilahi**



Jehangir (1605 – 1627)

- Born 1569 in Agra
- Was a just ruler and believed in the swift delivery of justice. Installed “chains of justice” in the Agra fort.
- His court was host to Sir Thomas Roe, an envoy of the English East India Company
- Gave the company exclusive rights to reside and establish factories in Surat and other areas.
 - In return, the company offered to provide the Emperor with goods and rarities from the European market.
- Addicted to opium, state affairs were mainly handled by his wife – Mehrunissa (Nur Jahan)

Shah Jahan

- The Mughal Empire reached the pinnacle of its glory during Shah Jahan's reign
- First act as king – execute his chief rivals, his brothers, and nephews and imprison his step mother Nur Jahan.
- Was more radical in thinking than his father - In 1633, began to impose his interpretation of Sharia provisions against construction or repair of churches and temples.
- Left behind a great legacy of architecture
- Imprisoned by son Aurangzeb (1658) in Agra Fort till he died in 1667.





Aurangzeb

- Expanded the Mughal Empire to 4 million square kilometres,
- Ruled over a population estimated to be over 158 million subjects
- Had an annual yearly revenue of \$450 million (more than ten times that of his contemporary Louis XIV of France) in 1690.
- Under his reign, India became the world's largest economy, worth over \$90 billion, nearly a quarter of world GDP in 1700.
- Abandoned his predecessors' legacy of pluralism and religious tolerance, citing his introduction of the Jizya tax, destruction of Hindu temples, and execution of the ninth Sikh guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur

Disintegration of the Mughal Empire

- Aurangzeb's son, Shah Alam, repealed the religious policies of his father, and attempted to reform the administration.
- However, after his death in 1712, the Mughal dynasty sank into chaos and violent feuds. In 1719 alone, four emperors successively ascended the throne
- In 1771, the Marathas recaptured Delhi from Afghan control and in 1784 they officially became the protectors of the emperor in Delhi, a state of affairs that continued further until after the Third Anglo-Maratha War.

Causes of decline

- In fiscal terms the throne lost the revenues needed to pay its chief officers, the emirs (nobles) and their entourages.
- The emperor lost authority, as the widely scattered imperial officers lost confidence in the central authorities, and made their own deals with local men of influence.
- The imperial army, bogged down in long, futile wars against the more aggressive Marathas lost its fighting spirit.
- Finally came a series of violent political feuds over control of the throne.

British East India Company

- The company rose to account for half of the world's trade, particularly in basic commodities including cotton, silk, indigo dye, salt, saltpetre, tea, and opium.
- During its first century of operation, the focus of the company was trade, not the building of an empire in India
- Company interests turned from trade to territory during the 18th century as the Mughal Empire declined in power and the East India Company struggled with its French counterpart, the French East India Company
- The “British Raj” started after the Battle of Plassey, when the Nawab of Bengal Sirajuddaulah surrendered his dominions to the Company
- In 1765, the Company was granted the *diwani*, or the right to collect revenue, in [Bengal](#) and [Bihar](#)
- In 1773, the Company established a capital in Calcutta, appointed its first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, and became directly involved in governance,
- In 1818, defeated the Marathas followed by the pensioning of their king and the annexation of his territories, hence completing the British supremacy in India.

British Rule begins

- By 1803, at the height of its rule in India, the British East India company had a private army of about 260,000—twice the size of the British Army.
- The company eventually came to rule large areas of India with its private armies, exercising military power and assuming administrative functions.
- Company rule in India effectively began in 1757 and lasted until 1858, when, following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the Government of India Act 1858 led to the British Crown's assuming direct control of the Indian subcontinent in the form of the new **British Raj**.



Indian Republic Day (January 26th)

- India achieved independence from British rule on 15 August 1947 following the Indian independence movement through largely peaceful non-violent resistance and civil disobedience
- The independence came through the [Indian Independence Act 1947](#) (10 & 11 Geo 6 c 30), an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that partitioned British India into the two new independent Dominions of the British Commonwealth
- India obtained its independence on 15 August 1947 as a constitutional monarchy with George VI as head of state and the Earl Mountbatten as governor-general

- India did not yet have a permanent constitution; instead its laws were based on the modified colonial [Government of India Act 1935](#).
- On 28 August 1947, the Drafting Committee was appointed to draft a permanent constitution, with Dr B R Ambedkar as chairman.
- While India's [Independence Day](#) celebrates its freedom from British Rule, the Republic Day celebrates the coming into force of its constitution.
- A draft constitution was prepared by the committee and submitted to the Assembly on 4 November 1947. The Assembly met, over a period of two years, 11 months and 18 days before adopting the Constitution.
- After many deliberations and some modifications, the 308 members of the Assembly signed two hand-written copies of the document (one each in Hindi and English) on 24 January 1950. Two days later, it came into effect throughout the whole nation.

