

Invasion and Resistance

Arrival of Europeans in India via Sea Route

- Background: Since ancient times, land-based trade relations existed between Europe and Asia through Constantinople.
- Fall of Constantinople (1453): When the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople and blocked European trade routes, Europeans were forced to discover a new sea route to Asia.

Main Reasons for Sea Voyages

- Technological advancements in shipbuilding and navigation.
- Progress in map-making and the development of the compass (direction-finder).
- Knowledge gained from travelogues written by early explorers.
- High market potential and demand in Europe for Asian spices (especially black pepper) and other products.

1. The Portuguese

- First Europeans to reach India by sea.
- Vasco da Gama: Reached Kappad near Kozhikode in 1498.
- The Zamorin and the Portuguese: Vasco da Gama demanded the expulsion of Arab traders—who controlled foreign trade at the time—and requested exclusive trade monopoly rights. The Zamorin (Samoothiri) rejected this demand, triggering conflicts between the Zamorin and the Portuguese.
- Gama obtained trade permissions from the King of Kolathunadu (Kolathiri) in Kannur. He returned to Portugal with cargo valued at more than 60 times the total cost of his voyage.
- Kunjali Marakkars: The naval chieftains who established a formidable maritime defense on the western coast on behalf of the Zamorin against Portuguese aggression.

Portuguese Influences and Contributions

- First European Fort in India: Fort Manuel (Kochi).
- Major Territories Held: Kochi, Goa, Daman, and Diu.
- Agriculture Introduced: Cashew tree (Parankimaavu), papaya, guava, and pineapple.
- Culture & Knowledge: Printing technology, Christian theological education centers, Chavittu Nadakam, and Margamkali.



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- Architecture & Warfare: European architectural styles, advanced weaponry, and new military strategies.
- Language: Loanwords that entered Malayalam from Portuguese include mesha (table), kasera (chair), alamara (almirah/cupboard), janal (window), pena (pen), and chaak (sack).

2. The Dutch

- Traders hailing from Holland (The Netherlands).
- Major Commercial Centers: Nagapattinam, Bharuch, Ahmedabad, and Chinsurah.
- The Dutch defeated the Portuguese in trade competition along the Indian coast.
- Battle of Colachel (1741): Marthanda Varma, the ruler of Travancore, decisively defeated the Dutch at Colachel near Kanyakumari. Consequently, the Dutch lost their political and trade dominance in India.
- Significance: This was the first war in which a native Indian ruler defeated a major European power.

3. The French

- Carnatic Wars: A series of three wars fought between the British and the French for supremacy in South India.
- Following their victory in the Carnatic Wars, the British confined French influence to small enclaves: Pondicherry (Puducherry), Yanam, Karaikal, and Mahe.

4. English East India Company (The British)

- Established in England in 1600.
- Captain William Hawkins obtained permission from the Mughal Emperor Jahangir to establish the first trading station (factory) at Surat in Gujarat.

Development of Major Port Cities

- Madras (1639): Acquired from Damarla Venkatadri Nayaka by promising half of the customs revenue generated.
- Bombay (1662): Received by King Charles II of Britain as part of the dowry upon his marriage to Portuguese Princess Catherine, and subsequently transferred to the Company.
- Calcutta (1698): Fort William was constructed around three villages: Sutanuti, Kalikata, and Gobindapur.

Shift Towards Political Supremacy

- Battle of Plassey (1757): Robert Clive defeated Siraj-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal, marking

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the inception of British political rule in Bengal.

- **Battle of Buxar (1764):** The British army defeated the combined forces of Shah Alam II (Mughal Emperor), Shuja-ud-Daulah (Nawab of Awadh), and Mir Qasim (Nawab of Bengal). The victory secured for the Company the legal right to collect land revenue (Diwani) in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.

Anglo Wars

- **Anglo-Mysore Wars (4 Wars):** Rulers of Mysore—Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan—fought fiercely against British expansion. Following Tipu Sultan's martyrdom in the Fourth Mysore War (1799), Mysore fell under British dominance.
- **Anglo-Maratha Wars (3 Wars):** Maratha territories were brought under British control by the conclusion of the Third War.
- **Anglo-Sikh Wars:** Following the defeat of the Sikh army, Punjab was annexed to the British territory.

British Land Revenue Systems

Revenue System	Year	Regions Covered	Implemented By	Key Features
Permanent Land Revenue Settlement	1793	Bengal, Bihar, Orissa	Lord Cornwallis	Zamindars collected exorbitant taxes. Farmers were legally bound to pay a fixed sum regardless of actual crop yield.
Ryotwari System	1820	South India, Deccan	Thomas Munro, Alexander Read	Farmers were recognized as land owners. The British collected taxes directly



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				from peasants. Failure to pay resulted in land confiscation.
Mahalwari System	1822	North India, Central Punjab	Holt Mackenzie	The entire village (<i>Mahal</i>) was treated as one tax-paying unit. Defaulting villages were directly annexed into British India.

Impact on Farmers and Artisans

- Exorbitant tax demands forced farmers to borrow from local moneylenders, trapping them in chronic debt.
- Farmers were coerced into growing cash crops such as indigo and cotton instead of staple food crops (Commercialisation of Agriculture), leading to widespread food shortages and famines.
- Large-scale import of machine-made goods from Britain led to the collapse of traditional Indian handicrafts and caused widespread unemployment.

Resistances and Popular Rebellions

- Sanyasi-Fakir Rebellion (1773): Joint struggle waged by destitute peasants, Sanyasis, and Fakirs against the East India Company for harsh tax collection during the severe Bengal Famine of 1773.
- Leadership: Bhavani Pathak, Majnu Shah.
- Indigo Revolt (1859): A massive peasant uprising in Bengal against European planters who exploited farmers to force indigo cultivation.
- Leadership: Digambar Biswas, Bishnu Biswas.
- Santhal Rebellion (1855): An armed uprising by the Santhal tribe living in the Rajmahal Hills of Bengal against British officials and oppressive moneylenders.
- Leadership: Sidhu and Kanhu (both were martyred by the British).



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- **Ulgulan / Munda Rebellion (1899):** A tribal movement in Jharkhand aimed at ending British rule and establishing 'Munda Raj'. The word Ulgulan translates to "Great Tumult".
- **Leadership:** Birsa Munda.
- **Poligar Rebellion:** Resistance organized by military chieftains (Poligars) in Tamil Nadu against British tax increases.
- **Leadership:** Veerapandiya Kattabomman (Panchalankurichi), Maruthu Pandiyar brothers (Sivaganga).
- **Attingal Revolt (1721):** The first organized popular armed uprising against British authority in Kerala. Local inhabitants killed 140 British soldiers led by Captain Gifford and laid siege to Anjengo (Anchuthengu) Fort.
- **Vellore Mutiny (1806):** The first military mutiny in India, triggered in Vellore (Tamil Nadu) by controversial changes made to the uniform regulations and religious dress markers of Indian soldiers.
- **Kittur Rani Chennamma (1829):** Led a brave armed revolt when the East India Company attempted to annex the kingdom of Kittur (Karnataka) using the Doctrine of Lapse.

First War of Indian Independence (Great Rebellion of 1857)

Major Causes

- **Subsidiary Alliance System:** Introduced by Lord Wellesley to force princely states into British vassalage.
- **Doctrine of Lapse:** Introduced by Lord Dalhousie. Rulers without a direct biological male heir were denied the right to adopt a successor, and their territories were annexed.
- **Outrage of Religious Sentiments:** The introduction of the new Enfield rifle cartridges—allegedly greased with cow and pig fat, which soldiers had to bite open—ignited outrage among Hindu and Muslim soldiers.

Outbreak

- Mangal Pandey, a soldier stationed in Barrackpore, attacked a British officer (he was executed on April 8, 1857).
- On May 10, 1857, the rebellion broke out in full scale at Meerut.
- The rebels marched to Delhi and proclaimed Bahadur Shah II as the Emperor of India.

Major Centers of the 1857 Revolt and Their Leaders

Center	Leaders	Historical Highlights
Delhi	Bahadur Shah II, General Bakht Khan	Bahadur Shah II was later captured and exiled to



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		Rangoon by the British.
Jhansi	Rani Lakshmi Bai	Ruler of Jhansi who led a heroic battle against British troops.
Kanpur	Nana Sahib, Tatya Tope	Tatya Tope effectively employed guerrilla warfare tactics against the British.
Lucknow	Begum Hazrat Mahal	Ruler of Awadh who organized regional resistance.
Arrah (Bihar)	Kunwar Singh	Feudal lord of Jagdishpur who cut off and offered his wounded arm to the Ganges during battle.

Outcomes of the Revolt

- Ended the rule of the English East India Company in India.
- Governance of India was transferred directly to the British Crown (Queen's Proclamation of 1858).
- The designation 'Governor-General' was restructured to 'Viceroy'.
- Served as a foundational source of inspiration for future national freedom movements in India.

Special Box Information

Did You Know?

- **Company's First Voyage:** In April 1601, the English East India Company dispatched four ships: Ascension, Dragon, Hector, and Susan.
- **Profit:** Upon returning in 1606, the sale of cargo brought a profit of 95% to the Company. (Source: James Fulcher, "Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction")

Did You Know?

- **Vasco da Gama's Fleet:** Vasco da Gama reached India with three ships: São Gabriel, São Rafael, and Bérrio.

Historical Facts / Personalities



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- Kunjali Marakkar: Title given to the naval commanders of the Zamorin (4 Marakkars served in total). Kunjali III defeated the Portuguese and captured Chaliyam Fort. Kunjali IV was executed by the Portuguese in Goa.
- Itty Achudan: Renowned traditional botanical physician (Vaidyar) from Kadakkarappally, Cherthala (Alappuzha district).
- Robert Clive's Assertion: "Send me two thousand soldiers, and I will conquer India." (Driven by the lack of unity among Indian rulers and British military supremacy).

Literature and Cinema

- Hortus Malabaricus: Comprehensive treatise on 742 medicinal plants of Kerala compiled under Dutch Governor Hendrik van Rheede. Itty Achudan, Appu Bhat, Ranga Bhat, and Vinayaka Bhat assisted in its creation. It is the first printed book to feature Malayalam script. Dr. K. S. Manilal translated it into Malayalam and English.
- Anandamath: Bengali novel written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1882 against the backdrop of the Sanyasi Rebellion and the Bengal Famine. India's national song, 'Vande Mataram', is taken from this novel (sung by the character Bhavananda).
- Nil Darpan: Play written by Dinabandhu Mitra in 1860 depicting the atrocities faced by indigo farmers.
- Books on Birsa Munda:
 - Gandhi Se Pehle Gandhi – Iqbal Durrani
 - Aranyer Adhikar – Mahasweta Devi
- Films on the 1857 Revolt: 1857 (Mohan Sinha), Mangal Pandey: The Rising (Ketan Mehta), Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi (Krish Jagarlamudi).
- Novels on the 1857 Revolt: Jhansi Rani (Mahasweta Devi), Amritham Thedi (Malayattoor Ramakrishnan).

Special Days and Recognitions

- Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day): Celebrated annually on November 15 (since 2021) to mark the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda.
- Birsa Munda is the only tribal leader whose portrait is commemorated inside the Central Hall of the Indian Parliament.

Key Terms and Definitions

- Factory: Storage warehouses and trading outposts set up by foreign traders to conduct business activities.
- Carnatic: Historical region encompassing most of present-day Tamil Nadu and the southern coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh.



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- **Diwani:** Legal right obtained by the British to collect land revenue in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa after the Battle of Buxar.
- **Commercialisation of Agriculture:** Forcing farmers to cultivate market-oriented cash crops (indigo, cotton) instead of food grains.
- **Ulgulan:** The Munda tribal uprising; literally translates to "Great Tumult" or "Great Agitation".
- **Poligar:** Military chieftains in Tamil Nadu who administered military territories called Palayams (Palaiyakkarars).
- **Subsidiary Alliance:** Policy introduced by Lord Wellesley requiring Indian princely states to maintain British troops and cede foreign policy control.
- **Doctrine of Lapse:** Annexation policy introduced by Lord Dalhousie barring ruler-adopted sons from inheriting sovereign power.
- **Viceroy:** The representative of the British Crown in India, replacing the title of Governor-General after 1858.

Quick Revision Timeline

- 1453: Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople.
- 1498: Vasco da Gama lands at Kappad (Kozhikode).
- 1600: English East India Company is chartered.
- 1721: Attingal Revolt (First popular resistance in Kerala against British power).
- 1741: Battle of Colachel (Marthanda Varma defeats the Dutch).
- 1757: Battle of Plassey (Establishment of British political foothold).
- 1764: Battle of Buxar (Company secures Diwani rights).
- 1793: Permanent Land Revenue Settlement implemented by Lord Cornwallis.
- 1806: Vellore Mutiny (First major military rebellion).
- 1855: Santhal Rebellion led by Sidhu and Kanhu.
- May 10, 1857: First War of Independence begins at Meerut.
- 1858: East India Company rule ends; direct rule by the British Crown commences.
- 1859: Indigo Revolt led by Digambar and Bishnu Biswas.
- 1899: Ulgulan / Munda Rebellion led by Birsa Munda.



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