

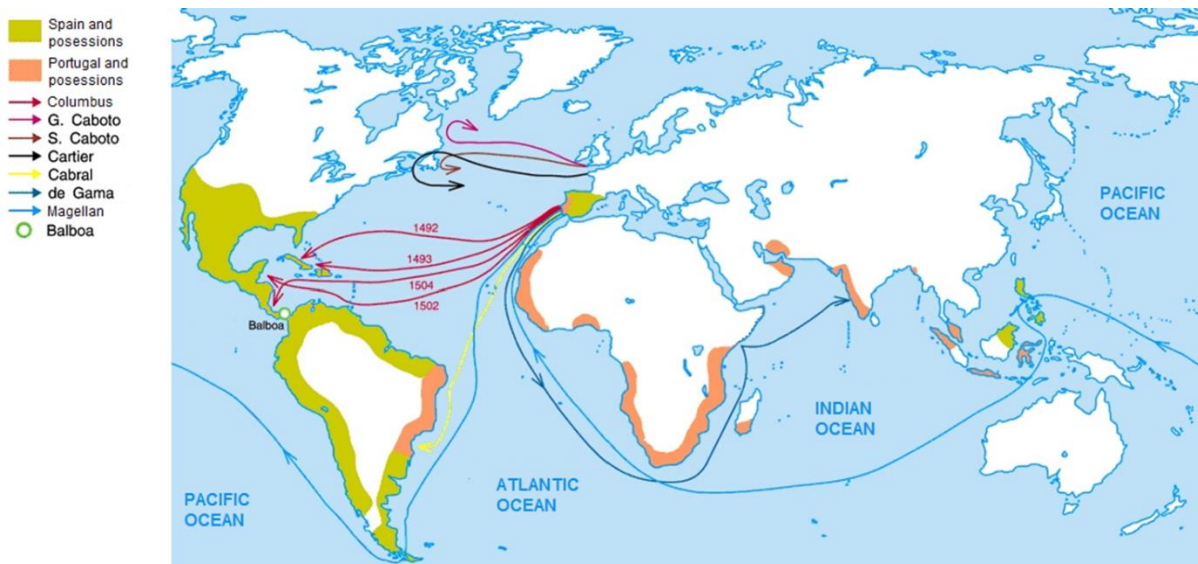
Modern India 2024

Handout 2: Early Modern Era

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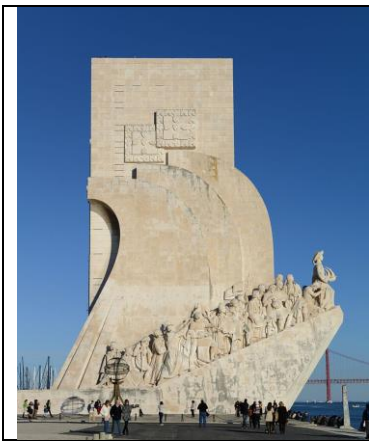
The **Early Modern Period** is a historical era that spans from the late 15th century to the mid-18th century, roughly covering the **period between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment**. This period is characterized by significant social, cultural, economic, and political changes that transformed Europe that laid the foundations for the modern world.

- **Era of Discovery – New World Exploration**
 - The Early Modern Period saw a significant expansion in European exploration and colonization, including the voyages of Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and Ferdinand Magellan. This led to the establishment of global trade networks and the colonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia.



1488	Bartolomeu Dias		Portuguese
1492	Columbus		Genoa, funded by Portugal
1497	Vasco da Gama		Portuguese
1520s	Ferdinand Magellan		Spain
1577	Francis Drake		English
1642	Abel Tasman		Dutch
1770	Capt James Cook		English
1853	Comm Matthew Perry		American

Europeans often displayed a sense of superiority and entitlement towards native peoples, and their actions often had devastating consequences for indigenous populations.



Monument of the Discoveries

- Located in Lisbon along the river where ships departed to explore and trade with India.
- It celebrates the Portuguese Age of Discovery/Exploration during the 15th and 16th centuries.
- Main statue of Henry the Navigator.



Indian Ships
(Medieval Era)



Chinese Ships of Zheng He



Columbus's three ships:
Nina, Pinta, Santa Maria

Colonisation

The history of colonialism begins with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean Sea (1492) and the appearance of Vasco da Gama in the Indian Ocean (1498). The first event set in motion processes which led to the conquest of the American continent and the second resulted in the subjugation of various parts of Asia and Africa.

For nearly three centuries, from circa 1500 onwards, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands (Holland), England, and France were the main European nations engaged in colonizing non-European societies.

(A) 16th century Empires: Spain in the West, Portuguese in the East

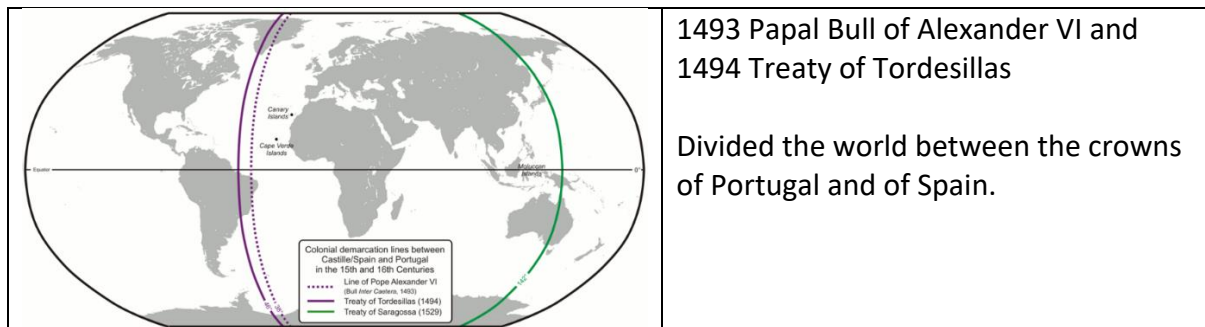
During the Early Modern Period, **Portugal and Spain were two of the major imperial powers** in the world, and their empires played a **significant role in shaping the global political and economic landscape**.

Portugal

- Established its first colony in **Brazil in 1500**, and over the next few centuries, it built a vast empire in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Portugal also established a **trading post empire in Asia**, which included Goa, Malacca, and Macau, and it played a major role in the development of the global economy and the expansion of Western influence in the world.

Spain

- Established its first colony in the Americas with the conquest of **Mexico in 1521**, and it quickly built a **vast empire** in the New World, including most of South and Central America, as well as the **Philippines**.



(B) 17th century: Dutch Prominence

The Dutch (i.e. the Netherlands) replaced the Portuguese as the dominant colonial power in the Indian Ocean in the **seventeenth century**.

- By the early decades of the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company (VOC) had managed to gain control over the seaborne trade between Asia and Europe, using the Cape of Good Hope route.
- As there was hardly any demand for European commodities in Asian markets, the VOC had to pay for the goods it carried from Asia to Europe with bullion. This exchange was

useful for Asian economies since Asia was deficient in the production of silver, which in this context should be regarded as a commodity.

- As some of the **Indonesian islands** were major producers of spices, the Dutch colonized Indonesia, initially large parts of Java. From the 1650s onwards, the VOC, which had taken possession of the **Cape of Good Hope**.

(C) 18th century: Global Anglo-French Rivalry

At the beginning of the **eighteenth century**, England and France emerged as major colonial powers.

- The EIC was incorporated in **1600**, and the French company in **1664**. However, it was only by the end of the seventeenth century, following the decline of the VOC, that these began to make their presence felt in the Indian Ocean.
- Southern India became a major arena of conflict between the two companies in the first half of the **18th century**. This was part of a larger struggle between England and France for colonies. Throughout the century both were engaged in a global contest for **supremacy**, culminating in the **Napoleonic Wars** (c. 1800-15).
- With the defeat of **Napoleon**, the ascendancy of England (Britain) was assured for the next hundred years.

(D) 19th century: British Dominance

From 1815, till the outbreak of World War I, Britain dominated the international capitalist economy.

- British **naval dominance** was unchallenged for most of this period, making it possible for Britain to acquire and control a **vast empire**. However, ultimately what made **Britain** the pre-eminent colonial power in the world was its economy. The **industrialization** of England from the mid-eighteenth century onwards had made its economy the most advanced in the world.
- It is not a coincidence that the first phase of the Industrial Revolution gathered momentum **(1760-80)** just around the time that the EIC **conquered Bengal**. It is the plunder of Bengal and **Atlantic slave** trade that substantially funded the British Industrial Revolution.
- By the nineteenth century Britain also had extensive territorial possessions in the African continent. Ultimately, however, the Indian empire was perhaps the most important component of its **colonial domain**.

Portuguese: The Maritime empire of Estado da India

For centuries, Europe had been trading in **spices, perfumes, and textiles with India**. In the ancient time, the Greeks and Romans were the main actors. During the Middle Ages, it was **Arab merchants** monopolized this highly **profitable trade**. They were in trade with the merchants of Venice which made Venetians very prosperous. Rest of the Europeans envied them for prosperity and despised them for indulging in trade with Muslims.

Fall of **Constantinople** in **1453** resulted in the **domination of Turks** over the land route connected Asia with Europe. Then Portuguese came to India with the explicit mission to seek Christians and Spices.

"Discovery" of India by Vasco da Gama

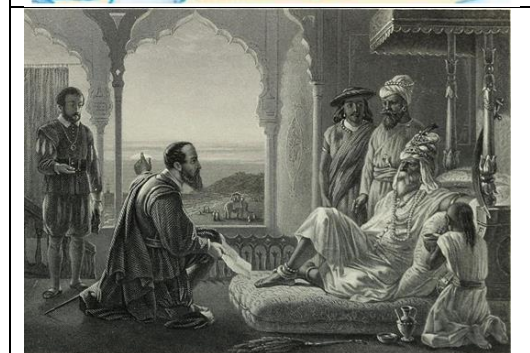
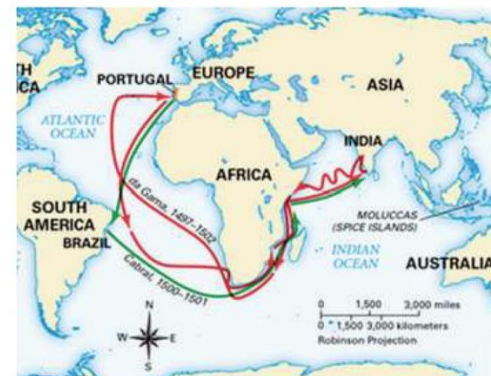
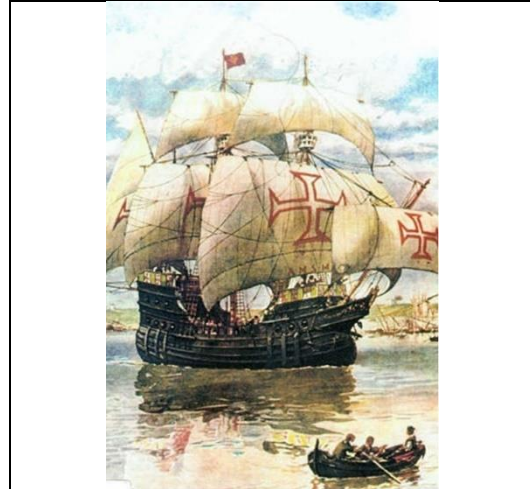
Vasco Da Gama set out from **Lisbon** in **1497** leading a convoy of **four** ships on a journey along the Atlantic coast of Africa, then around the Cape of Good Hope, into the Indian Ocean, finally **disembarking at Calicut** (Kozhikode) in 1498. During his journey, he was guided by an Indian merchant **Abdul Munid Nayar Gujrati**. Calicut was a prominent centre of trade in spices, especially **pepper**. The local ruler bore the title **Zamorin** in European accounts. When da Gama returned, the cargo sold for **60 times** the cost of his **voyage**.

In 1500, a ship sailed under **Pedro Alvarez Cabral**. The Arab merchants tried to obstruct the Portuguese. **Pedro** realized he could take commercial advantage of the mutual **animosity** between the regional rulers of Kerala by using force. Later it became the typical Portuguese **modus operandi**.

The second expedition (1502) of Vasco Da Gama triggered an armed conflict in 1500, culminating in the bombardment of Calicut. In the **third expedition (1524)**, Da Gama ordered massive bombardment of Calicut to enforce his terms of treaty on **Samudri Raja** and a large part of Calicut was destroyed in **action**.

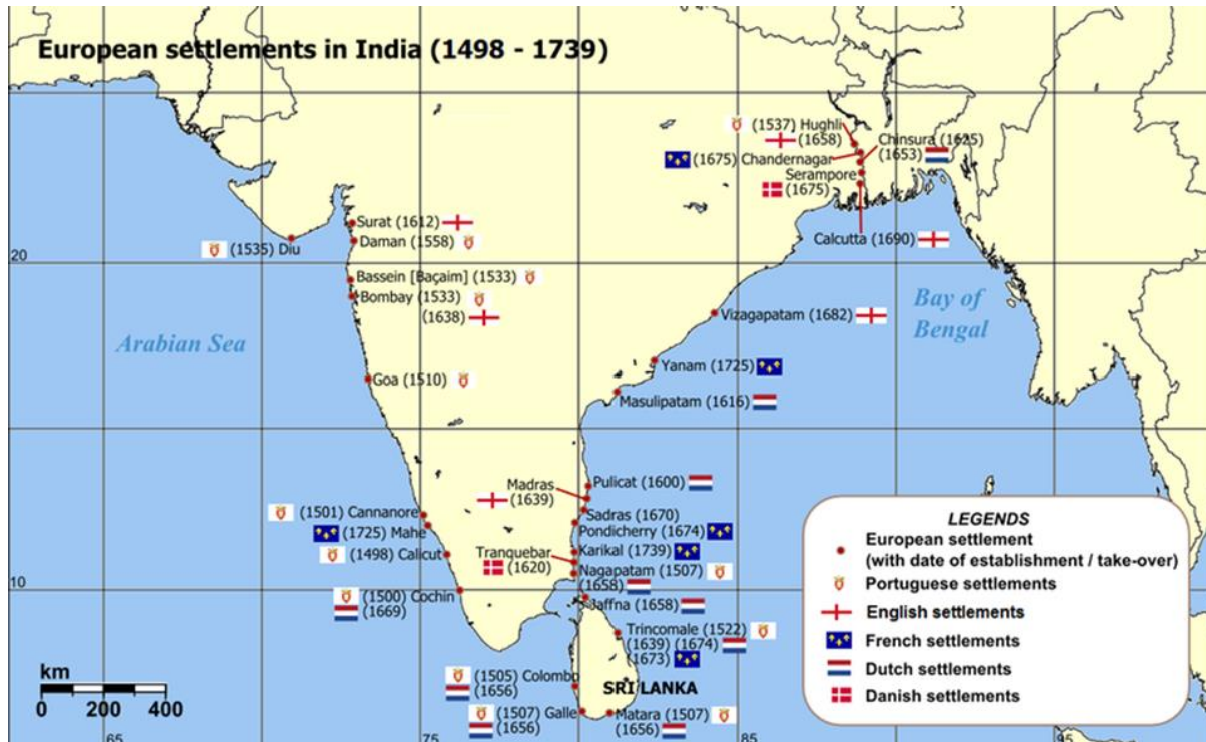
Within a few years of the voyage of da Gama, the Portuguese were travelling regularly along this all-sea route between **Lisbon** and India. In 1503, **Afonso de Albuquerque** came to India and made **Cochin as Portuguese HQ**.

Initial aim of Portuguese was to establish their **supremacy** over **spice trade** but after the expedition of Cabral, Portuguese decided to control the entire trade between Asia and



Europe. The **western coast of India** increasingly became the main zone of the Portuguese commercial activities in Asia. A series of **factories** (feitorias, **trading posts**) were established all the way from Khambhat in north to Malabar in south:

Western Coast	East Coast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochin • Diu, Daman • Goa • Bombay, Bassain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pondicherry • Nagapattinam • Hooghly




Portuguese soon established factories on **strategic coastal locations** in Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and South China Sea, for procuring commodities for sale in European markets. These locations enabled them to monitor and regulate shipping in Asian waters.

- **Goa, 1510**
- **Malacca, 1511**
- **Hormuz, 1515**
- **Colombo, 1518**




this location are still strategic coastal location.

The project, which was initiated by the Portuguese state and the route itself became a **crown monopoly**. The Portuguese commercial enterprise in Asia was conducted by **Casa da India**, a state organization, on behalf of the crown. Widely dispersed Portuguese colonial possessions in Asia from China and Timor came to be collectively designated as **Estado da India** (state of India) which functioned under the control of Casa da India.



	<p style="text-align: center;">Reis Magos Fort, Goa</p> <p>Built in 1550s, it served as a fort, a prison, a hospital, over next 400 years. Goa finally became independent in 1961.</p>
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Three Governors:

<p>Francisco de Almeida (1505-1509)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He constructed some forts – Azaniva, Bassein, Cochin. • Fought against the armies of Egypt, Turkey and Begarha. 	
<p>Afonso de Albuquerque (1453-1515)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He annexed Goa from Ismail Adil Shah, the sultan of Bijapur in 1510. The Portuguese power in India came to be established with victory over Goa. • Established cordial relationship with Vijayanagara Empire. • Encouraged Portuguese to marry Indian women. 	
<p>Nuno da Cunha (1529-38)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bahadur Shah of Gujarat to meet him on ship but in some scuffle, he fell off and died. • New factories came up at San Thome (Coromandal) and at Satgaon Hooghly and Chittagong (Bengal) • Goa became the Headquarter of the Portuguese in 1530. Henceforth, it became the principal official in Asia 	

In order to **exercise effective control**, Portuguese evolved a notorious **Cartaz System** (*Cartaz-Armada-Kafila system*) whereby;

- Every ship had to carry a **cartaz** issued by the authority of **Estado** da India. It mentioned particulars of ship, details of **voyage and cargo**.
- Every ship was forced to play along only specified **routes**.
- It was prohibited from carrying **commodities** such as **spices** which were sought by **Portuguese**
- A **fee** was charged for issuing a cartaz, this became an additional source of income.
- Ships were compelled to proceed via specified Portuguese settlements where they had to pay **custom duties**.
- Ships plying without a cartaz or found **contravening** its terms were captured and the crew was killed/made captive.

Was the Monopoly really established?

- Whereas the Cape of Good Hope was monopolized by Portuguese, the traditional sea-land route from West Asia continued to operate like before, despite Portuguese efforts to close it down. Their possession of **Hormuz** gave them control over **Persian Gulf** but the **Red Sea** remained under Ottoman control, after their failure to occupy **Aden** or any other strategic location.
- In the second quarter of the 16th century, there was a series of military engagements between **Portuguese and Ottomans** (1538-1560), spread over from Gujarat to Egypt. It subdued the **Portuguese expansion in Indian Ocean**.
- Nevertheless,
 - The activities of Arab and Gujarati merchants received a setback. Few Indian ships now could sail to East Africa and Arabia, as well as far East and Spice Islands.
 - By the latter half of the 16th c, over **75% of the pepper** available in European markets was being supplied by Portuguese, which was primarily sourced from India.

Limitations:

After initial success, Portuguese colonies remained **stagnant** for long time and then declined. When other European powers emerged on the scene, the Portuguese lost most of their gains.

1. Economic Reasons:

- a. Portuguese commerce in Asia was partly **sustained by the resources of its empire in Brazil**.
- b. Portuguese didn't have infrastructure for building a wide **distribution network in Europe**.
- c. By the closing decade of the 16th century, Portuguese were finding it **difficult to mobilize sufficient capital** for investing in commercial voyages to Asia.
- d. Maintaining it financially afloat became extremely difficult in **1580**, Phillip II of Spain usurped the throne of Portugal and then Portugal remained under Spanish control till 1640.
- e. Gradually, Portugal became interested in **gold in Brazil**, slave trade in Atlantic rather than pepper in India.

2. Strategic Reasons:

- a. Portuguese **antagonized** local population and created powerful adversaries in the **vicinity**. It could subdue some petty powers on Malabar but further expansion in India was not possible, when at the same time **mighty Mughals** were rising in north India and there were strong kingdoms in Deccan as well.
- b. As their advance into hinterland was limited, the colonies were just fragmented pockets without any land connectivity.
- c. All these forced Portuguese to **rely more on** international trade, rather than regional trade.

3. Administrative Reasons:

- a. It was a crown initiative. The king appointed courtiers and country **nobles in** the administration who had access to the king directly. This led to **ill-development** of civilian bureaucracy with single point of command, which had long term implications.
- b. There was no unity of command agenda since the **mix of government officials**, private traders, soldiers, and clergy - all had their own agenda. Due to lack of

unified command, many parallel power centers emerged with competing objectives to pursue, and they worked at cross purpose.

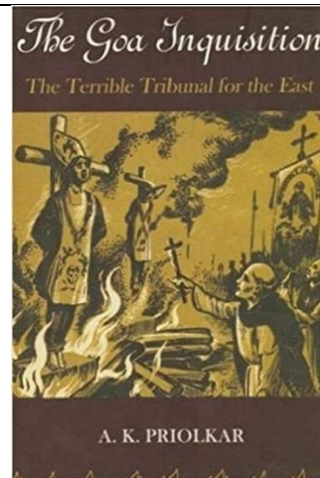
4. Social and Religious Reasons:

- a. Religious fanaticism was a millstone around the neck of Portuguese administration.
- b. The biggest problem the missionaries created was by the religious persecution of **Hindus and Muslims**, the religious persecution reached the next stage when the converted Christians were **tortured** through Goa Inquisition if they follow any of their earlier customs.

Finally, the Dutch and English exploited **the situation**.



Basilica of Bom Jesus, Goa, 1594
UNESCO World Heritage

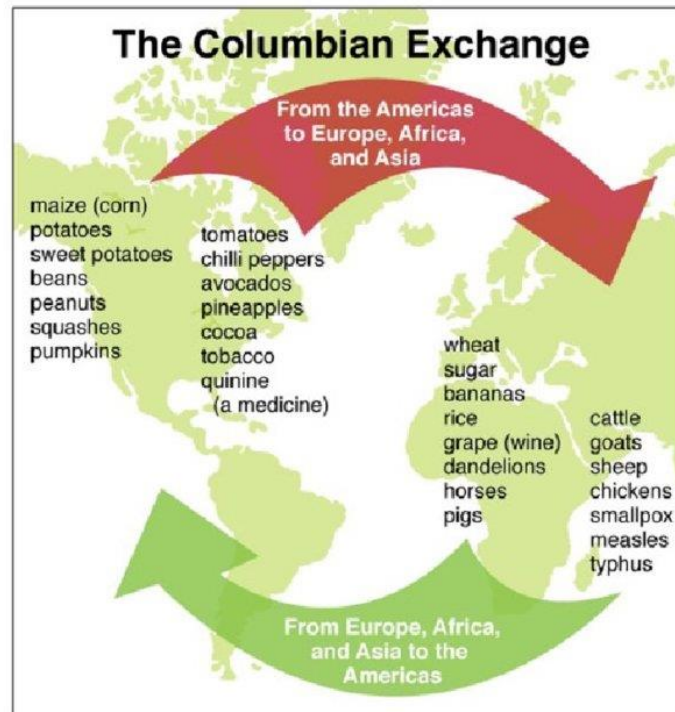


Goa Inquisition
to enforce Catholic Orthodoxy

Comment: |

Prelims related facts:

- Afonso de Albuquerque had abolished **Sati** practice in Goa.
- The **first printing press** of India was set up in 1556 at St. Paul's College, Goa. This college was founded by saint Francis Xavier in 1540s. And the first mention of the press comes from a letter to St. Ignatius of Loyola.
- **Tobacco cultivation in India** was introduced by Portuguese in 1605. Initially tobacco was grown in **Kaira and Mehsana** districts of **Gujarat** and later spread to other areas of the country.
- **Bombay** was given to British in **dowry** in 1661 when Spain ruled over **Portugal** and Spanish queen, **Catherine of Braganza** married British king.
- **Bassain** (Vasai) was conquered by **Marathas** in 1739 under the leadership of **Chimaji Appa**.



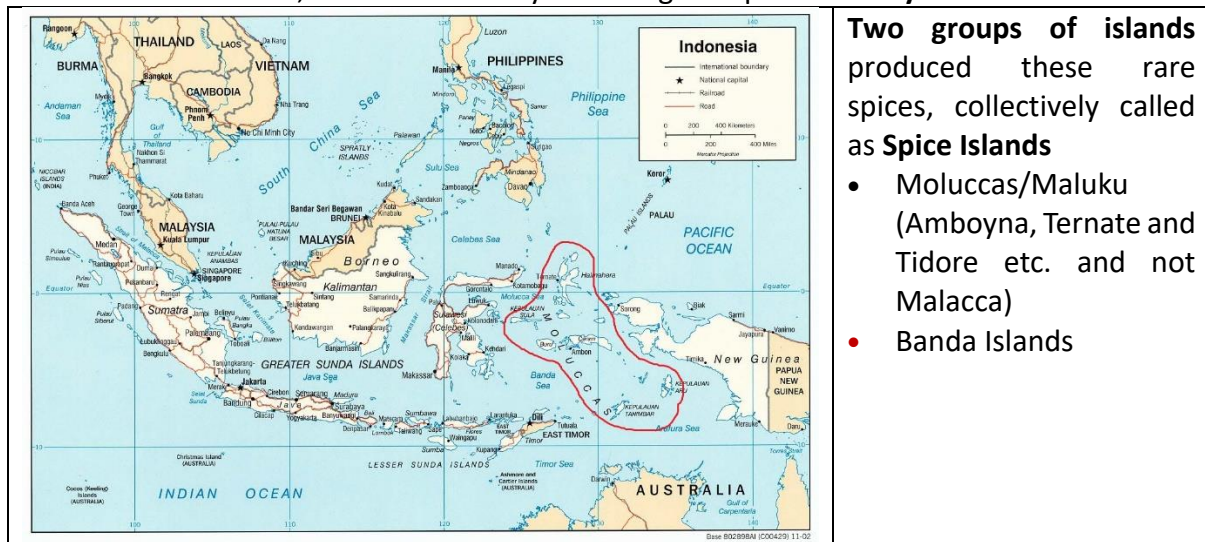
Dutch VOC (1602-1799)

Towards the end of the 16th century, **Portuguese monopoly** on the Cape of Good Hope route began to be challenged by other European traders. The weakening of Portuguese power in the **Indian Ocean** by the end of the 16th c had created a vacuum which the **English** and the Dutch tried to fill. Soon, the **Dutch replaced to Portuguese. They were to dominate the Asia-Europe trade in the 17th c.**

VOC (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie = United Dutch East India Company)

- It was a **joint-stock company** formed in **1602**.
- It was given a **monopoly** over trade with the **East Indies**.
- By **1660**, it had established bases in South Africa, Indonesia, Ceylon, and India, to become the largest and the richest company in the world. Amsterdam thereby became the centre of world trade.

In the opening decades of the 17th c, the VOC was engaged in a **tussle with Portuguese**, attempting to take over some of its **strategic locations in Indian Ocean**. But the focus of VOC was **Indonesia**. Indonesia was the major producer of **spices**. Much **greater profits**, up to several hundred times, could be made by obtaining the spices **directly**.



By 1620s, VOC conquered both these groups of Islands and made Java as the base of operations in SE Asia. The Dutch consolidated their position by taking over Malacca from Portuguese in **1641**. For the next half a century, SE Asia was the preserve of the VOC. This ensured their sole access to the supplies of spices, except pepper.

Jakarta became the seat of Dutch Asian empire. It was renamed **Batavia**.



Intra-Asian trade through multi-continental trading stations was a novel concept at that time, in which Dutch were vigorously invested.

Indian textiles were in great demand across SE Asia, esp. the **coarser cotton** varieties for everyday use. These could be directly or indirectly exchanged for spices. The Dutch obtained the textile from **Gujarat** and **Coromandal regions** were the two most important producers of the cotton textile varieties. **Masulipatanam in Coromandal** and **Surat in Gujarat** became the strongholds of the Dutch. The Dutch soon discovered that there was a European demand for Indian cotton textiles.

Coromandal	Gujarat	Orissa and Bengal	Malabar
<p>The first Dutch factory was established at Petapoli (AP).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Masulipatanam (1605) 2. Pulicut (1610) 3. Nagapattinam (1658) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surat (1618). In 1618 that the VOC received permission from the Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor to do business from a trading post in Surat. 2. Very soon, Dutch outposts emerged all over Gujarat, which were all subordinate to Surat. 	<p>The search for supplies of raw silk for Japanese trade took the VOC to Orissa and thence to Bengal during the era of Shah Jahan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hariharpur (Jagatsinghpur, Orissa) in 1633 • With its growing presence in Bengal, the Dutch set up a factory in Hooghly. (1635) • Chinsura (1656) became the VOC HQ in Bengal • Soon, factories came up in Agra, Patna, Kasimbazar and Dhacca etc. 	<p>In 1663, Dutch supplanted the Portuguese from Malabar when they took over Cochin.</p>

In 1658, they also conquered Sri Lanka from the Portuguese.

Anglo-Dutch Wars

- The **Netherlands** was a major maritime power in the 17th century and had established a dominant position in international trade. However, England was also becoming a major naval and commercial power and was keen to challenge Dutch dominance.
- Both had different economic interests and trading patterns in the region.
 - The Dutch → primarily interested in the **monopoly over the spice** trade in the East Indies.
 - The English → primarily interested in the **textile trade (cotton, silk, muslin etc)** in India.
- Despite different economic interests, they also competed for access to markets and resources. The **first three wars** took place from 1650s-1670s and the **fourth war** in 1780s. These wars were mainly **fought around the world**.
- Outcome
 - **In Battle of Bedara (Chinsura)** in 1759, Dutch were defeated by British and finally expelled from India by **1795**. England now started to emerge as the dominant naval power and the Dutch Republic experienced a decline in power and influence.
 - The Fourth Anglo-Dutch war (1780s) was a financial disaster for the Dutch Republic as well as the VOC. After the French Revolution, the Dutch Republic itself was disturbed. The revolutionary committee nationalized VOC (1799).
 - In the end, Dutch continued their trade in Indonesia in spices, the English concentrated on Indian textile trade.

Prelims related factoids:

- The Dutch were very good at **mapping the coasts and sea** around India and recording the change of currents and seasons because it was important for the merchants to come and go. Consequently, in the Dutch archive one can find a large number of maps of Indian territories.
- The Dutch had a distinctive way of recording daily events in the social and political life of the local community in the form of daily registers called as '**Dagh-registers**'.
- **Battle of Colachel 1741** (Marthanda Varma of Travancore vs Dutch)



Tombs in the Dutch Cemetery, Surat.

Comment: