



DAILY CLASS NOTES

BPSC MODERN HISTORY

Lecture - 02

**Later Mughals and Provincial
Kingdom - 02**



Later Mughals and Provincial Kingdom - 02

Bahadur Shah I (1707–1712 CE)

- ❖ **Real Name:** Prince Muazzam
- ❖ **Regnal Title:** *Shah Alam I*
- ❖ **Popular Nickname:** *Shah-e-Bekhabar* (by Khafi Khan, the Mughal historian)
- ❖ **Accession:** Became emperor in 1707 at the age of 65, after the death of Aurangzeb.

Policies and Relations

- ❖ Adopted a conciliatory (mild) policy towards the Sikhs and Rajputs.
 - ❖ **Sikhs:**
 - The 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, supported Bahadur Shah in the War of Succession.
 - In return, Bahadur Shah conferred on Guru Gobind Singh a *mansab* of 5,000.
 - After Guru Gobind Singh's death in 1708, his disciple Banda Bahadur took leadership of the Sikhs.
 - Banda Bahadur launched a major revolt against the Mughals.
 - Bahadur Shah personally campaigned against him. In 1711, Banda Bahadur was defeated by Mughal forces at Lohgarh Fort (Haryana).
 - ❖ **Marathas:**
 - Released Shahu (son of Sambhaji, grandson of Shivaji) from Mughal captivity in 1707.
 - This release paved the way for Shahu's claim to Maratha leadership against Tarabai.
 - Granted the Marathas the right to collect *Sardeshmukhi* (an additional tax, 10% of land revenue).
 - ❖ **Rajputs:** Tried to reconcile with Rajput rulers but failed to fully resolve hostilities.
- ### Mansabdari System under Bahadur Shah
- ❖ The **Mansabdari** system, introduced by Akbar, continued as the main pillar of the Mughal military-administrative setup.
 - ❖ However, under later Mughals including Bahadur Shah, the system began to weaken:
 - **Jagirs (revenue assignments)** were insufficient to support the growing number of mansabdars.
 - Corruption and inefficiency increased.
 - The Mughal nobility was divided into factions (Turanis, Iranis, Hindustanis, Rajputs, Deccanis), weakening central control.

Significance

- ❖ Bahadur Shah I tried to revive Mughal authority after Aurangzeb's long wars.
- ❖ However, his short reign (1707–1712) showed the decline of imperial control.
- ❖ His conciliatory policies provided temporary peace but failed to contain the rise of regional powers.

Maratha Relations and Taxes

- ❖ **Chauth:**
 - A tax collected forcefully by the Marathas, amounting to **25%** of the land revenue of a region.
 - Its collection often caused conflict between the Mughals and the Marathas.
- ❖ **Sardeshmukhi:**
 - An additional tax of **10%** levied by the Marathas.
 - Paid by local chieftains to the **Chhatrapati** (Maratha king).
 - Considered a voluntary acknowledgment of Maratha sovereignty.

Together, **Chauth** and **Sardeshmukhi** became the main reasons for recurring **Mughal–Maratha conflicts** during Bahadur Shah's reign.

Foreign Relations

- ❖ In **1711**, a **Dutch delegation** visited Bahadur Shah's court.
- ❖ The mission was led by **Joshua Katlay**.
- ❖ They were welcomed by **Juliana** (**Bibi Juliana**, a Portuguese lady at the Mughal court, also known as **Juliana Firangi**).

Death and Legacy

- ❖ Died in **1712 CE**.
- ❖ Historian **Sir Sydney Owen** remarked on his death: *"He was the last Mughal emperor about whom some good words can be said."*

Jahandar Shah (1712–1713 CE)

Accession to the Throne

- ❖ Real name: **Azim-us-Shan**.
- ❖ He ascended the Mughal throne in **1712 CE** after killing his brothers in the battle of **Rabi-ul-Akhar**.
- ❖ His reign lasted only **one year** (1712–1713).

Nature of Rule

- ❖ Jahandar Shah was a **weak, pleasure-loving, and incompetent ruler**.

- ❖ He was excessively influenced by his mistress, the dancing girl Lal Kunwar, who exercised significant power over Mughal politics.
- ❖ His indulgent lifestyle made him unpopular among nobles and subjects.
- ❖ Contemporary people referred to him as a licentious and incapable monarch.

Administration and Politics

- ❖ **Wazir (Prime Minister):** Zulfiqar Khan (Irani group).
- ❖ During his reign, **factionalism** increased in Mughal politics.
 - **Turani Faction:** Chin Qilich Khan (later Nizam-ul-Mulk), Ghaziuddin (I'timad-ul-Mulk).
 - **Irani Faction:** Zulfiqar Khan.
 - **Hindustani Faction:** Syed Brothers – Abdullah Khan and Hussain Ali Khan.

Downfall

- ❖ In 1713 CE, Farrukhsiyar, with the support of the **Syed Brothers**, defeated Jahandar Shah in the **Battle of Agra**.
- ❖ Jahandar Shah was captured and executed.

Significance

- ❖ Jahandar Shah's reign marks the beginning of **open factional politics** among Mughal nobles (Turani, Irani, Hindustani).
- ❖ His rule showed the declining authority of the Mughal emperor and the rising dominance of powerful nobles like the **Syed Brothers**.

Abolition of Jizya Tax (1713 CE)

- ❖ Jahandar Shah **abolished the Jizya tax** in 1713.
- ❖ **Jizya Tax:** A religious tax imposed on **non-Muslims** during Mughal rule.
- ❖ Its abolition was aimed at gaining the support of non-Muslims and softening Mughal religious policy.

Introduction of the Ijara System in Revenue

- ❖ Jahandar Shah promoted the **Ijaredari (Ijara) system** in land revenue administration.
- ❖ **Ijara System:** Land revenue was collected through **public auction (bidding)** and assigned to the highest bidder (contractor).
- ❖ This often led to exploitation of peasants, as revenue farmers sought maximum profit.

Relations with the Rajputs

- ❖ Jahandar Shah maintained **friendly relations** with Rajput rulers to strengthen his political position.

- ❖ **Jai Singh II of Amber (Jaipur):**
 - Appointed as Subedar of Malwa.
 - Honoured with the title Mirza Raja.
- ❖ **Ajit Singh of Marwar (Jodhpur):**
 - Appointed as Subedar (Governor) of Gujarat.
 - Honoured with the title Maharaja.

Significance

- ❖ His **abolition of Jizya** marked a departure from the orthodox policies of Aurangzeb.
- ❖ The **Ijara system** showed financial weakness and decline in administrative efficiency.
- ❖ His **conciliatory policy with Rajputs** aimed at restoring old Mughal–Rajput alliances, but his short reign limited long-term outcomes.

Relations with the Marathas

- ❖ **Jahandar Shah recognized the Maratha claims over:**
 - **Chauth** ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the land revenue, collected forcefully).
 - **Sardeshmukhi** (10% of the land revenue, claimed as a hereditary right of the Maratha king).
- ❖ **Condition imposed:** Only Mughal officials were authorized to collect these taxes in the Deccan, not Maratha agents.
- ❖ This arrangement reflected the **growing power of the Marathas** and the weakening Mughal hold in the Deccan.

Death of Jahandar Shah (1713 CE)

- ❖ Jahandar Shah was **defeated and killed** in 1713 by the **Syed Brothers** (Abdullah Khan and Hussain Ali Khan).

The Syed Brothers played a decisive role in Mughal politics and are remembered as “**King Makers**” for their ability to enthrone and dethrone emperors.

○○○○

BPSC**MODERN HISTORY****DMP - 01****Model Answer**

1. “Discuss the role of Bihar in revolutionary activities during the freedom struggle of India.” (8 Marks)

Ans:-

Approach:-

- ❖ **Introduction:-** Give a Brief Introduction about Bahadur Shah I and Jahandar Shah.
- ❖ **Main Body:-** Highlight the policies of Bahadur Shah I and Jahandar Shah.
- ❖ **Conclusion:-** Conclude by reflecting the decline of the Mughal Empire.

The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 marked a decisive turning point in Mughal history. The empire, already weakened by prolonged wars and strained resources, rapidly into decline. The reigns of **Bahadur Shah I (1707–1712)** and **Jahandar Shah (1712–1713)** are significant as they illustrate how weak leadership, divisive politics, and rising regional powers eroded the authority of the Mughal throne.

Bahadur Shah I, also known as Shah Alam I, adopted a conciliatory approach towards various groups. He released Shahu, the grandson of Shivaji, and granted the Marathas the right to collect sardeshmukhi, thereby strengthening their influence in the Deccan. He attempted reconciliation with the Rajputs and recognized their positions, while also trying to control the Sikh challenge under Banda Bahadur, though with limited success. However, his attempts at balancing diverse interests only highlighted the weakening hold of the central authority, as he could not effectively assert imperial control.

Jahandar Shah, who ascended the throne after fratricidal conflicts, proved to be a weak and luxurious ruler. Under the influence of his mistress Lal Kunwar, the Mughal court lost its dignity. He abolished the *jizya tax* in 1713, but his revenue reforms such as the introduction of the ijaradari system (auctioning of revenue collection) led to exploitation of peasants. His policy towards the Rajputs was conciliatory, granting governorships and titles to Jai Singh II of Amber and Ajit Singh of Marwar. However, his concession to the Marathas, allowing them to collect chauth and sardeshmukhi under Mughal supervision, further eroded imperial authority. Eventually, he was defeated and killed by the Syed Brothers in 1713, marking the rise of powerful nobles as “kingmakers.”

In conclusion, both Bahadur Shah I and Jahandar Shah failed to strengthen the empire. While Bahadur Shah’s compromise policies could not check the rise of regional powers, Jahandar Shah’s weak character and court politics accelerated the decline. Their reigns demonstrated that the Mughal emperor had ceased to be the real center of power, paving the way for the fragmentation of the empire.

○○○○



PW Web/App: <https://smart.link/7wwosivoicgd4>