

# Emergence of Bangladesh (1971)



MUGHAL INDIA & BENGAL (TO THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CE)

DR. TAHSEEN H ALI

# *The evolution of the Bengali language*



❖ *'SHRIKRISHNA KIRTTANA'*

FIRST LITERARY WORK IN THE BENGAL  
LANGUAGE

❖ DEALS WITH THE LIFE OF LORD KRISHNA

❖ UNCERTAINTY ABOUT AUTHORSHIP

❖ KRITTIVAS' S *RAMAYANA*

❖ KASHIRAM DAS' S *MAHABHARATA*

❖ INFLUENCES BOTH BENGALI HINDUS AND  
MUSLIMS FOR GENERATIONS

# *The evolution of the Bengali language*



- ❖ BENGALI HINDU POETS WROTE ABOUT ISLAMIC FIGURES (INCLUDING THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD) & SUFI MYSTICS
- ❖ BENGALI MUSLIM POETS WROTE ABOUT HINDU MYSTICS AND LOCAL DEITIES
- ❖ WHY?
- ❖ MYSTICISM ATTRACTED BOTH BENGALI HINDUS AND MUSLIMS AWAY FROM RIGID SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS HIERARCHIES

# *The evolution of the Bengali language*



❖ NO TRADITION OF HISTORICAL WRITING  
IN BENGALI

❖ NOR IN INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

❖ EXCEPTION:

❖ *RAJMALA OF TRIPURA*

# *The evolution of the Bengali language*



- ❖ MUSLIM CONTRIBUTIONS TO EVOLUTION OF BENGALI
- ❖ SYED SULTAN: WORK ON THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)
- ❖ FUSION OF PERSIAN AND LOCAL LANGUAGE CHALLENGES ORTHODOXY OF SANSKRIT
- ❖ *PANCHALIS*
- ❖ COMPOSED BY BOTH HINDU AND MUSLIM POETS

# *The evolution of the Bengali language*



- ❖ BENGALI MUSLIM CONTRIBUTION TO  
BENGALI FROM ABROAD:
- ❖ BENGALI POETS IN THE KINGDOM OF  
ARAKAN
- ❖ DAULAT QAZI & ALAOL
- ❖ *PADMAWATI* BY ALAOL

# *Bengali Vaishnavism*



❖ VAISHNAVISM

❖ THE PLURALIST RULE OF HUSSEIN SHAH

❖ BOTH HAVE A DEEP IMPACT ON THE  
CREATION OF THE IDEA OF BENGAL AND  
THE BENGALI PEOPLE

❖ BISHWAMBHAR: BORN IN 1485/86 CE  
(APPROX.)

# *Bengali Vaishnavism*



## ❖ WHY?

- ❖ VAISHNAVISM SITUATES ITSELF AS A  
"MIDDLE GROUND" BETWEEN THE  
RIGIDITY OF BOTH ESTABLISHED  
HINDUISM AND ISLAM
- ❖ IMPACTS LITERARY, MUSICAL AND  
SPIRITUAL SPHERES OF LIFE

## ❖ KIRTANS

- ❖ IN BENGAL AND BEYOND
- ❖ WOMEN ARE WELCOMED AND PARTICIPATE  
FREELY IN KIRTANS
- ❖ IMPORTANT: NOT AGAIN UNTIL 19<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY WILL WOMEN EXPERIENCE

EMANCIPATION



# "In search of a home & a kingdom"



- ❖ **BABUR, HEIR TO TAMERLANE**
- ❖ **1526 A.D. : DEFEATS THE HOUSE OF LODI AT PANIPAT**
- ❖ **ESTABLISHES THE MUGHAL DYNASTY IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT**
- ❖ **WANTS TO MAKE A HOME IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT**
- ❖ **TENSIONS WITH HIS NOBLES ('AMIRS') WHO WANT TO RETURN HOME**
- ❖ **URNS TO LOCAL HINDU AND MUSLIM NOBILITY TO RULE**



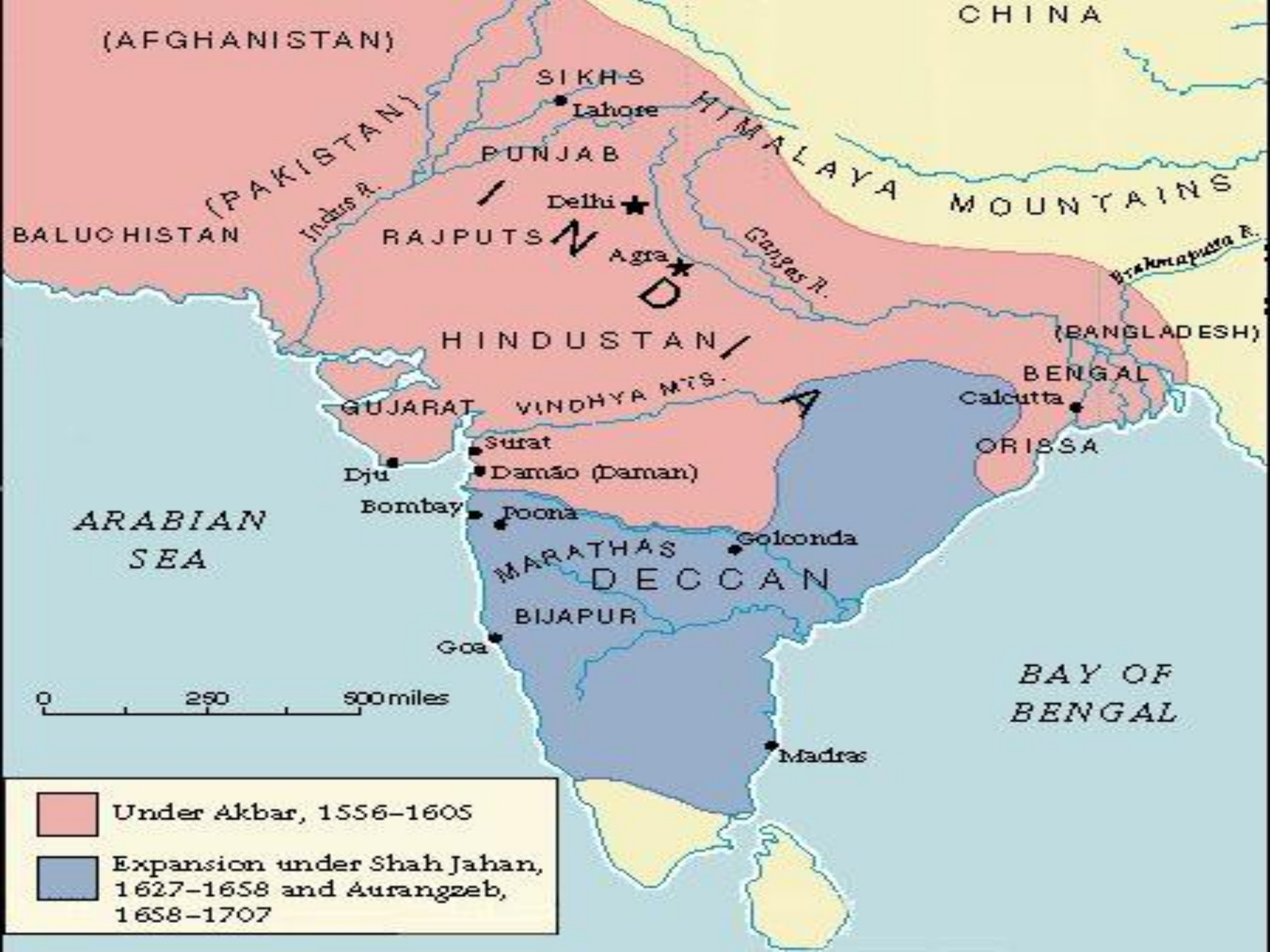
# "In search of a home & a kingdom"



## ❖ THE 'GREAT MUGHALS'

- ❖ BABUR (1526 AD – 1530 AD)
- ❖ HUMAYUN (1530 AD – 1540 AD, 1555 AD – 1556 AD)
- ❖ AKBAR (1556 AD – 1605 AD)
- ❖ JAHANGIR (1605 AD – 1627 AD)
- ❖ SHAH JAHAN (1627 AD – 1658 AD)
- ❖ AURANGZEB (1658 AD – 1707 AD)





# "In search of a home & a kingdom"



## ❖ EMPEROR AKBAR:

- ❖ CONSIDERED ONE OF THE TWO GREATEST RULERS IN SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY
- ❖ TOUCHED ON EVERY ASPECT OF GOVERNANCE
- ❖ PATRON OF ARTS, CULTURE AND LEARNING
- ❖ PLURALISM AND SECULARISM
- ❖ HINDUS, JAINS, SHIA MUSLIMS CHRISTIANS AND OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS ARE PROTECTED AND FREELY PARTICIPATE IN MUGHAL LIFE

# The Mughal System of Governance



➤ THE MUGHALS ESTABLISHED A CENTRALIZED SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THAT SERVED NOT ONLY THEM, BUT THEIR SUCCESSORS, RIGHT DOWN TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA.

➤ KOTWALS = MAGISTRATES

➤ MANSABDAR = NOBLEMAN IN EITHER THE CIVILIAN OR MILITARY HIERARCHY

➤ JAGIRS = FIEFS

# The Mughal System of Governance



## ➤ THE MUGHAL ECONOMY

- KEY CITIES ; DELHI, AGRA, LAHORE, BURHANPUR, AND FATEHPUR SIKRI
- SUBA = LARGEST ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT = PROVINCE
- SUBADAR = HIGHEST CIVIL OR MILITARY ADMINISTRATOR

# The Mughal Economy



- CURRENCY : GOLD, SILVER, COPPER RUPEE
  - $1/40$  OF A COPPER RUPEE = DAM
- A SILVER MUGHAL RUPEE = ENGLISH JACOBAN 2 AND A HALF SHILLINGS
- 1 SHILLING = 20 PENCE / 12 SHILLING = 240 PENCE = 1 POUND
- 1 GOLD COIN = TWO OR THREE DAYS SUPPLY OF WHEAT



# The Mughal Economy



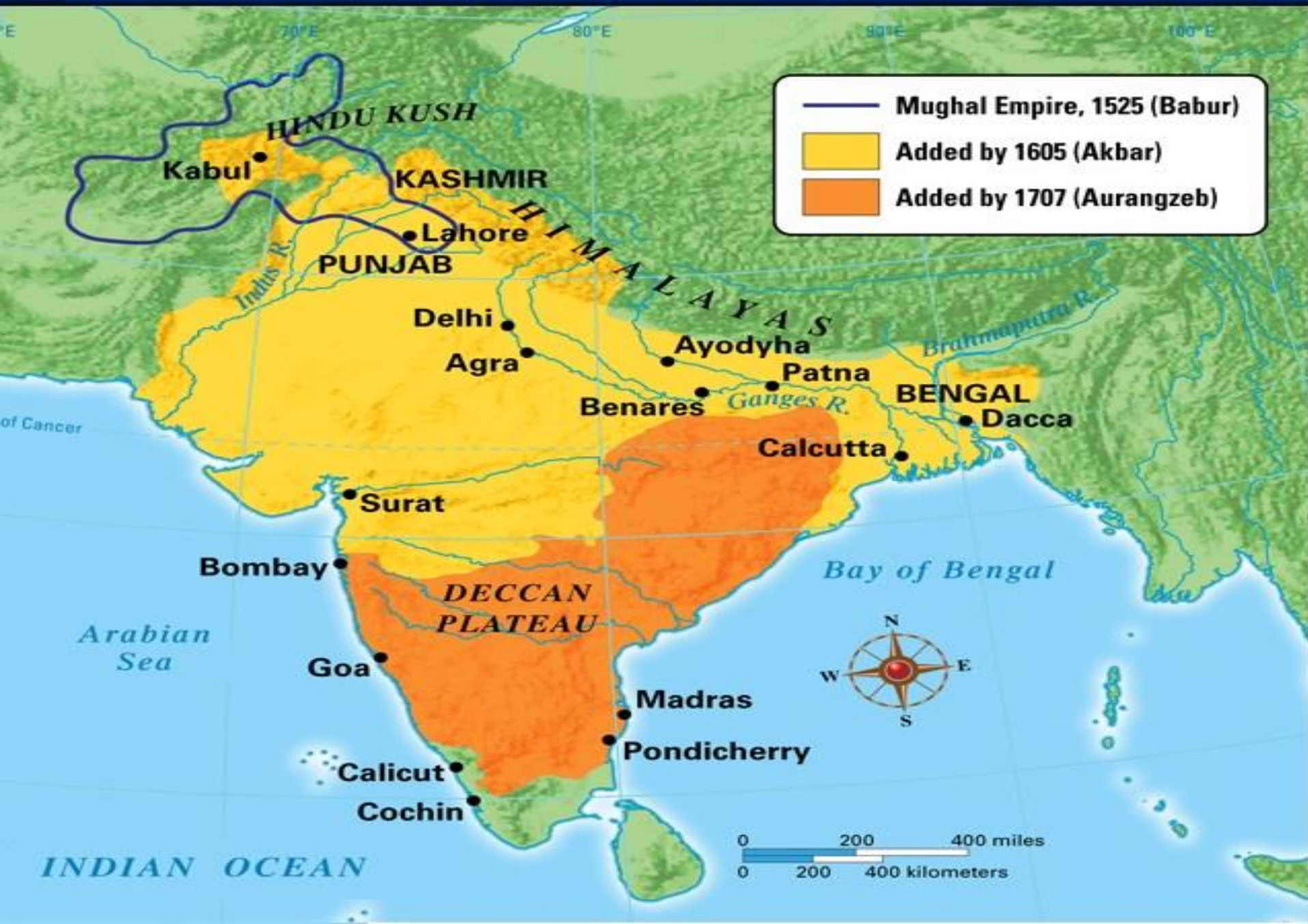
- STANDARDIZATION OF WEIGHTS AND MEASUREMENTS
- NO ONE CAN THROW FARMERS OFF THEIR LANDS, THEY ARE NOT SERFS, HAVE RIGHTS TO THE LAND.
- MUGHAL RULE FLEXIBLE REGARDING PAYMENT OF TAXES BY FARMERS
- CONTINGENCIES IN CASE OF FAMINE: WAIVER OF TAXES, GRANARIES FOR DISTRIBUTION
- IRFAN HABIB, FOREMOST HISTORIAN OF MUGHAL ECONOMY, PEASANTS LIVED BETTER UNDER MUGHALS THAN UNDER BRITISH

# Mughal Trade



- AGRA = SOURCE OF COPPER, SILVER, IRON, GOLD, SILVERWARE
- GUJARAT = VELVET, BOATS, TEXTILES, PERFUMES, DIAMONDS
- BENGAL = RAW SILK, FINE SUGAR, JUTE, GRAIN, HIGH-END COTTON PRODUCTS
- BIHAR = PRODUCTION OF PAPER, ALOE WOOD (USED FOR INCENSE)
- BENARES = FABRICS, EXPENSIVE SARIS (THEN AND NOW)

# Growth of the Mughal Empire, 1526–1707





**Emperor Jahangir:**  
The first of the  
Mughals with  
complete South  
Asian lineage.

Enjoys the system  
handed down by the  
three Mughal  
Emperors before him  
and is a Patron of the  
Arts but it during his  
reign that Mughal  
administration  
becomes mired in  
inefficiency and  
dissension.



# *The Mughals & Bengal*



- ❖ THE MUSLIM GOVERNORS OF THE DELHI SULTANATE IN BENGAL REFUSE TO ACCEPT MUGHAL SUPREMACY
- ❖ BENGALI HINDUS AND BENGALI MUSLIMS JOIN TOGETHER TO RESIST THE MUGHALS
- ❖ THE ENTIRE REGION OF BENGAL DOES NOT COME UNDER COMPLETE MUGHAL CONTROL UNTIL 1584 AD

# *The Mughals & Bengal*



- ❖ IN TIME, ECONOMIC POLICIES OF MUGHAL EMPIRE TURNS BENGAL INTO ONE OF ITS WEALTHIEST PROVINCES
- ❖ MUGHAL INDIA IS WEALTHIER AND MORE PROSPEROUS THAN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN STATES INCLUDING BOURBON FRANCE
- ❖ ON PAR OR HIGHER THAN CONTEMPORARY SAFAVID AND OTTOMAN EMPIRES

# *The Mughals & Bengal*



- ❖ THE GOVERNORSHIP OF SHAYESTA KHAN
  - ❖ PERSONALLY DISSOLUTE BUT:
- ❖ INITIATES A SERIES OF MONOPOLIES ON TRADE
- ❖ INCREASES WEALTH & PROSPERITY OF BENGAL BUT:
- ❖ KHAN SENDS SUBSTANTIAL TRIBUTE TO DELHI
  - ❖ RETAKES CHITTAGONG (1666 A.D.) FROM KINGDOM OF ARAKAN AFTER NEARLY A CENTURY





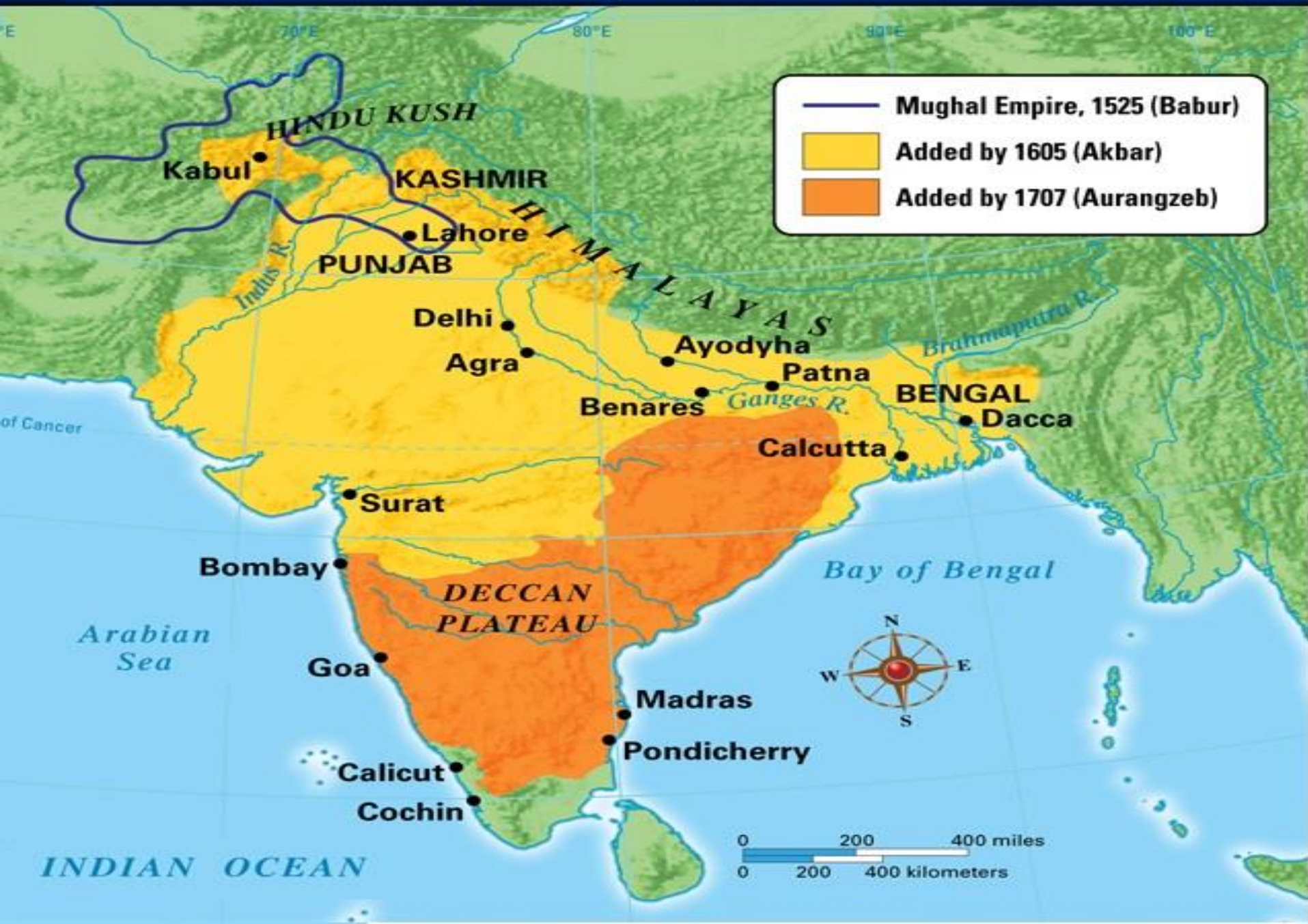


# *The Mughals & Bengal*



- ❖ MUGHAL INDIA IS AT ITS HEIGHT BY  
1689 A.D.
- ❖ YET BY DOING SO AURANGZEB HAS SPENT  
FAR TOO MUCH STRENGTH AND MONEY
- ❖ IRONICALLY, HAS WEAKENED THE  
CENTRAL SYSTEM
- ❖ DIES AN EXHAUSTED MAN IN 1707 A.D.
- ❖ HIS HEIRS BEGIN TO FIGHT AMONGST  
THEMSELVES FOR THE SUCCESSION
- ❖ AUTHORITY COLLAPSES RAPIDLY
- ❖ "DECAY THEORY"

# Growth of the Mughal Empire, 1526–1707



# *The Mughals & Bengal*



- ❖ 1717 A.D.: CHIEF FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR OF BENGAL: MURSHID QULI KHAN:
- ❖ QUIETLY ESTABLISHES BENGAL ONCE AGAIN AS AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM WITH ONLY A NOMINAL ALLEGIANCE TO THE MUGHAL EMPEROR IN DELHI
- ❖ BENGAL WILL BE FREE UNTIL 1757 A.D.