

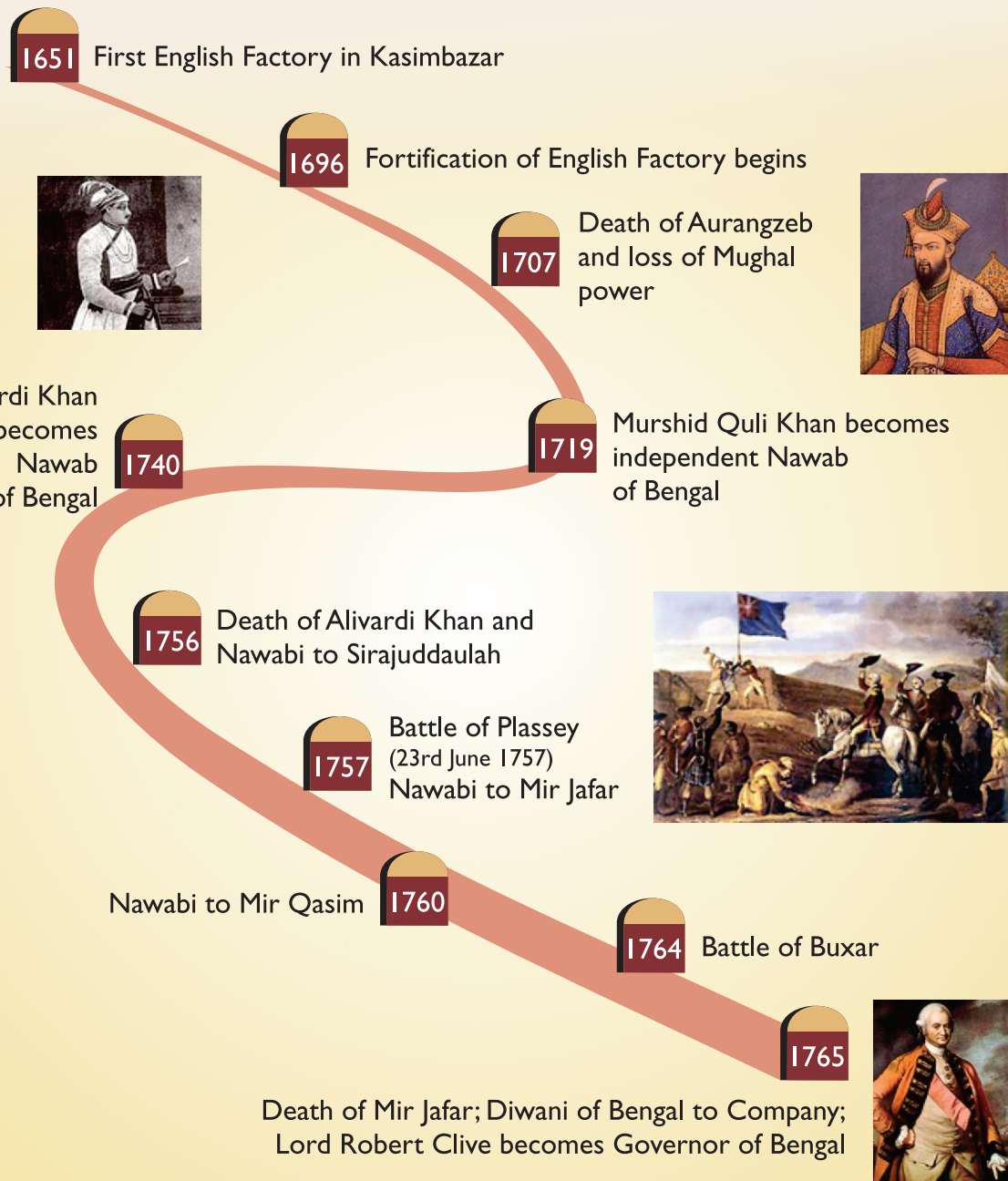


East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule



Home Page

This chapter traces the settling of the English East India Company in the province of Bengal. It deals with the clash of interests between the East India Company and regional kingdoms. The constant clash of interests led to two battles that changed the fate of India for the 200 years that followed. By 1765 the British assumed power to become the 'Nawabs' of Bengal.



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◀ East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule ▶



Retrieve

You already know how the Palas, Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas fought against one another to control the main trade routes and rich cities like Ujjain and Taxila. The 'tripartite struggle' to gain control over the Ganges valley was also the result of the internal conflict between the regional kingdoms.



Aurangzeb

In the previous class you have studied how the Mughals came to India from Central Asia. They became the rulers of the subcontinent from the mid sixteenth century. Babur was the first ruler whereas Aurangzeb was the last powerful ruler of the Mughal dynasty. You are also aware that Aurangzeb spent more than 20 years of his life in the battle fields and in suppressing revolts and rebellions against the Mughal rule. Aurangzeb changed the religious policy followed by successive Mughal rulers which affected the social and religious harmony. It alienated the Rajputs, the Sikhs and the Marathas. Aurangzeb's reign did not let the regional kingdoms of the South and central India gain power.

However, after the death of Aurangzeb the 'Later Mughals' who became the successors were weak and unable to fight internal conflicts.

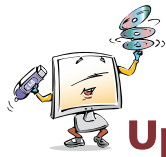
Do you think the regional kingdoms were the result of the final disintegration of the Mughal dynasty?

In which geographical areas of India do you think the regional kingdoms came up?

Till now you have read

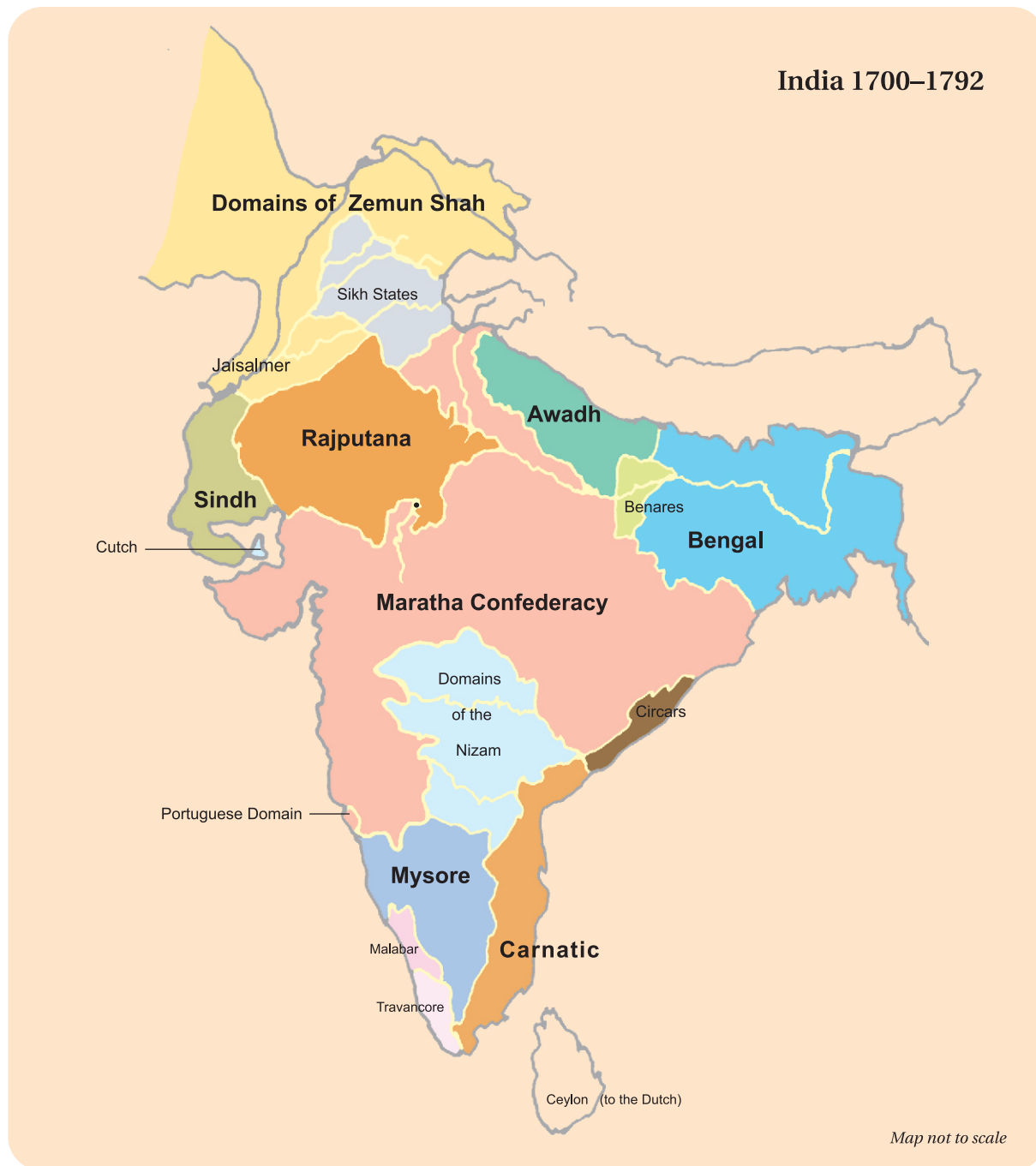
- The regional kingdoms of the 19th century constantly fought for territory and control of trade routes to garner revenue.
- In the next century regional kingdoms lost all powers to non-Indian players.
- Rich European nations took control of regional politics and revenue systems.





Upload Trade and Politics

With the decline of the Mughal power at the centre, a number of regional kingdoms came into existence during this period. Take note of the province of Bengal, which was taken over by the English East India Company in 1765. In the next chapter, you will see a remarkable increase in the territory controlled by the Company.



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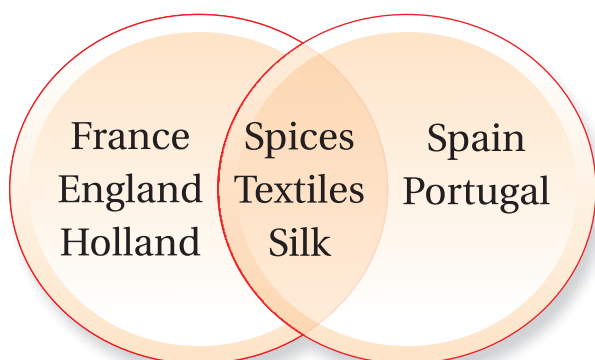
Updates

In an age when satellites were not yet invented to help with navigation, how do you think Vasco Da Gama came so far from Portugal? Since most sailors used minimal technology they sailed along the coastline.



Scramble for India and Trading Rights

Most European countries competed with each other to trade in the Indian subcontinent. Spices, textiles and silk were in great demand in all these countries.



Indian spices and textiles were in high demand all over Europe. Trading with India was thus a profitable venture. As soon as European nations like England, Spain, Portugal, France and Netherland (especially Amsterdam) acquired the technology to navigate vast seas, they pursued trade with India and other Asian nations like Java-Sumatra, Burma, China, etc.

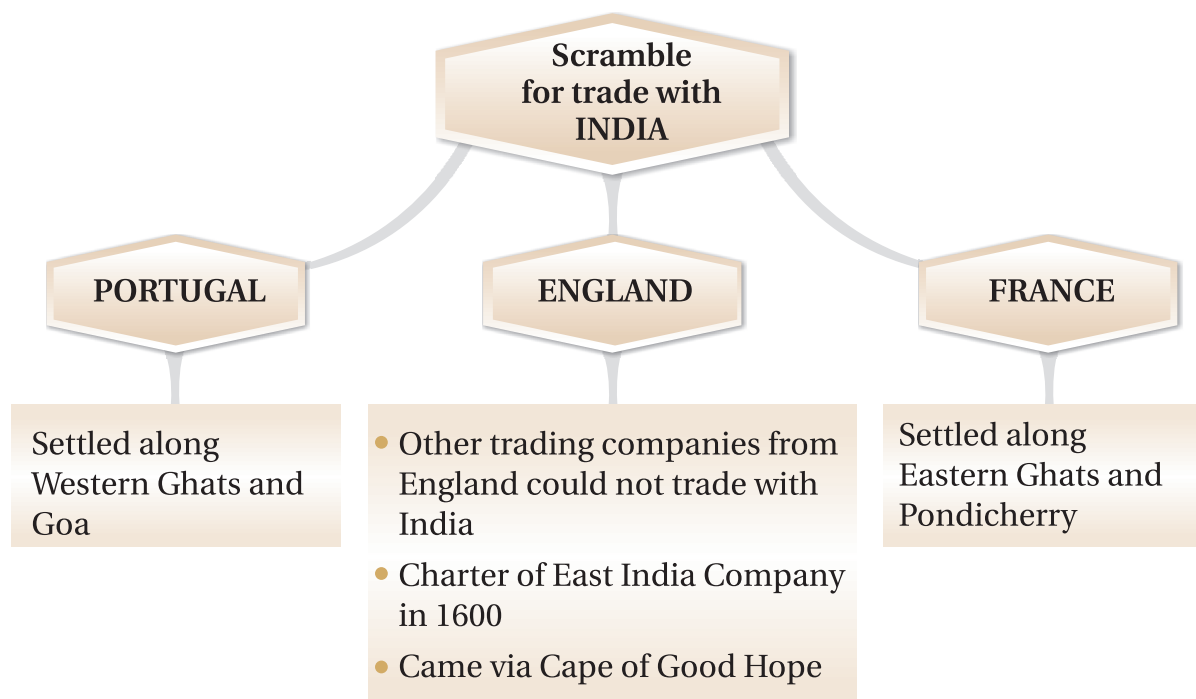
Vasco da Gama had explored the sea route to India in 1498.



Vasco Da Gama

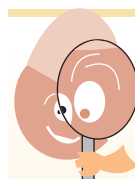
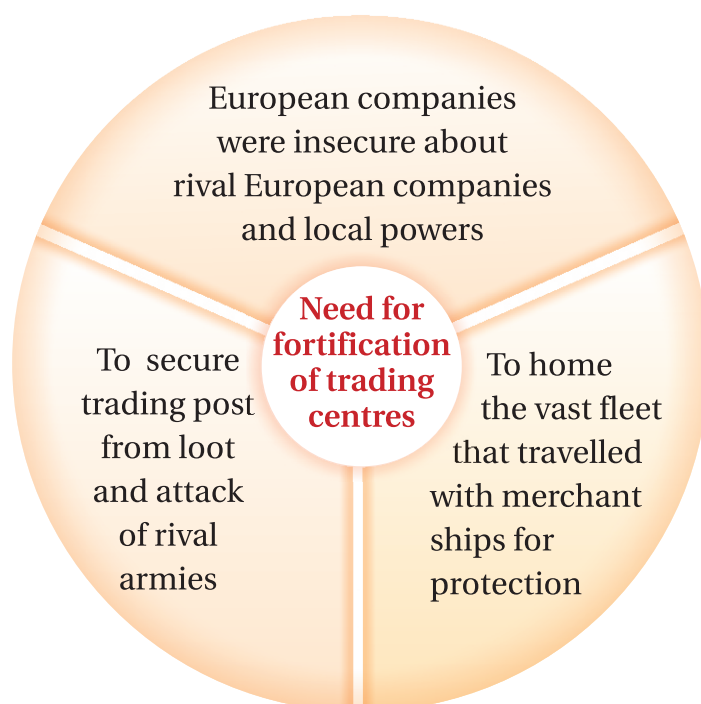
The Portuguese were already settled along the Western Ghats with their base in Goa. Soon the French followed and made their base in Pondicherry. The British, who were the last to come to India, had the strongest hold over her. Trade became so profitable for European nations (with as much as 400% profit) that soon European nations wanted to acquire territory in India and set up kingdoms from where they could trade freely.

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Since all the European trading companies traded in the same products, the prices and demand for these products rose. Monopoly over trade was the only way of controlling trade. During this time elimination of rival companies was the only way of trading.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries the European trading companies tried to secure trading rights by eliminating rivals and fortifying their trading posts. These trading companies took the help of their diplomats to eliminate rivals and expand trade.



One of the most feared rivals of English East India Company was the Dutch East India Company (VOC). VOC was mainly monitored by South African Dutch settlers. Another rival was the French trading company settled in Pondicherry.

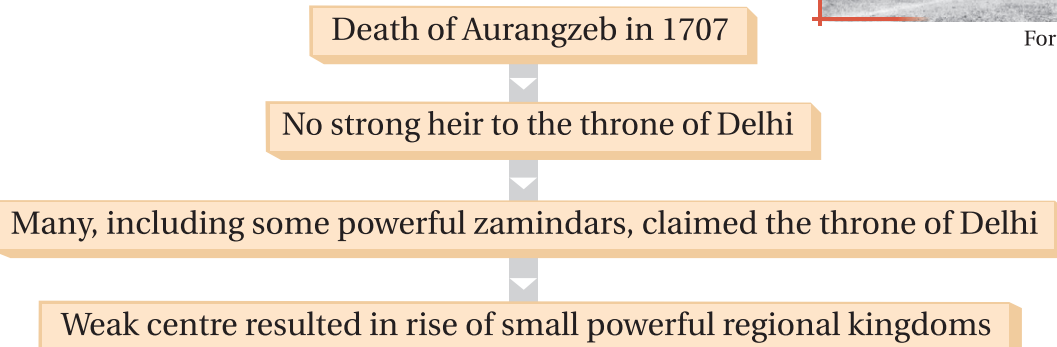
◀ East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule ▶

With these fortifications began the territorial occupation of India by Europeans, especially by the English East India Company.

The local rulers in India opposed fortification and elimination of competition as it meant no further inflation of prices of Indian products.



Fortified trading post



While the East India Company gradually strengthened its position, the central power at Delhi grew weaker day-by-day. Bengal, Punjab, Mysore, Hyderabad and Maratha kingdom were some of the rising powers.



Processing

- The East India Company had rivalry with the _____ and _____ trading companies in India.
- The English _____ their trading area in order to protect their trading interests.



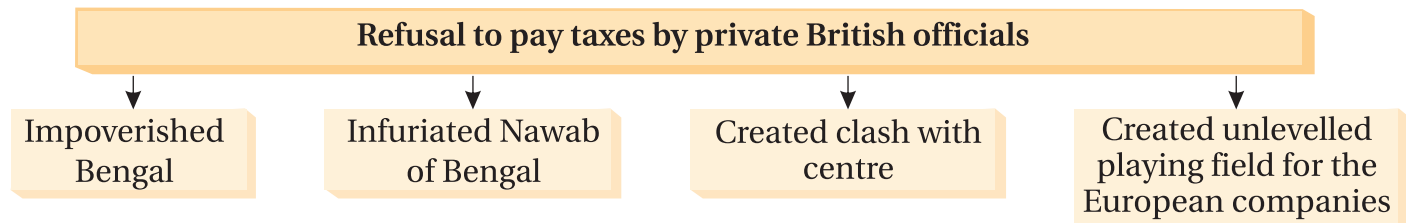
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East India Company Eyes Bengal

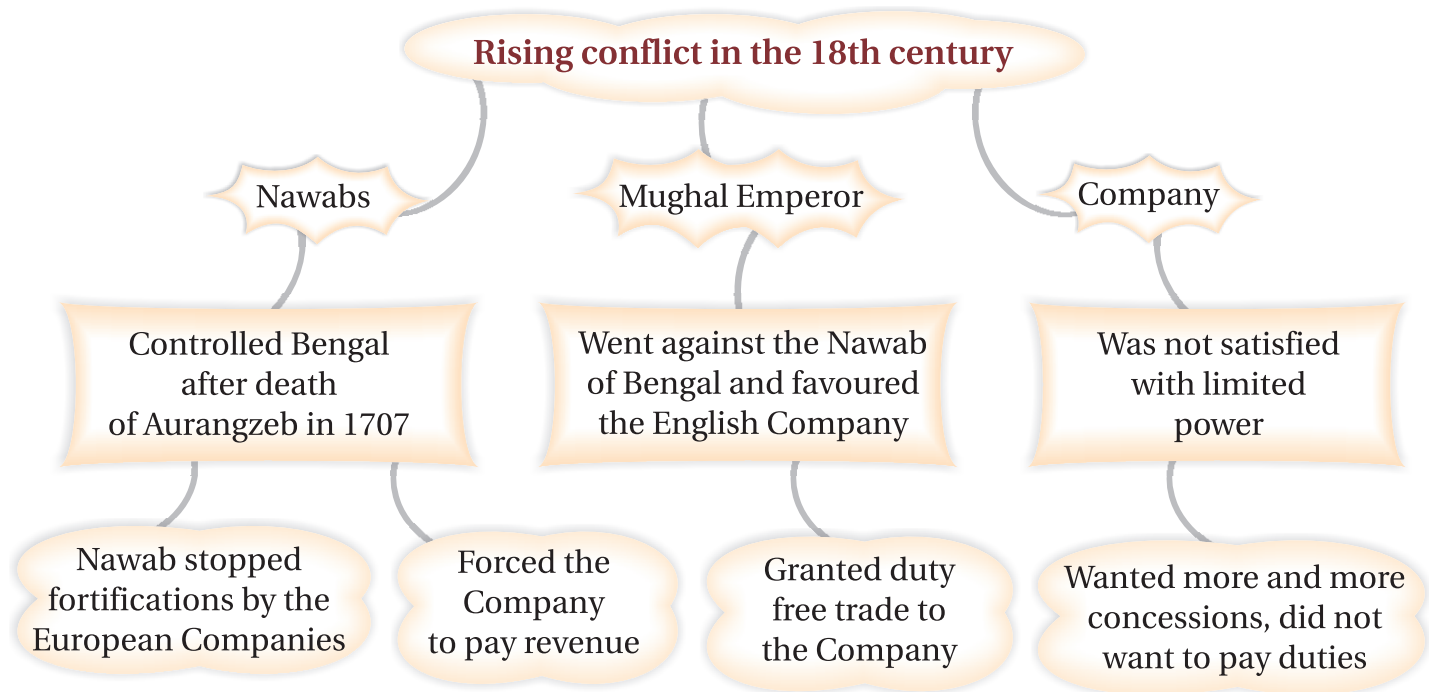
- 1st English factory
- Initially a warehouse
- Fortifies factory in 1696
- Aurangzeb grants trade concession
- Company manipulates loans
- Company wants more trade concessions

The Company was on a constant lookout for trade concessions and manipulated loans to gain more from the trade. Aurangzeb granted the East India Company the privilege of duty-free trade. However, British officials trading privately still had to pay duty. But they refused to do so.

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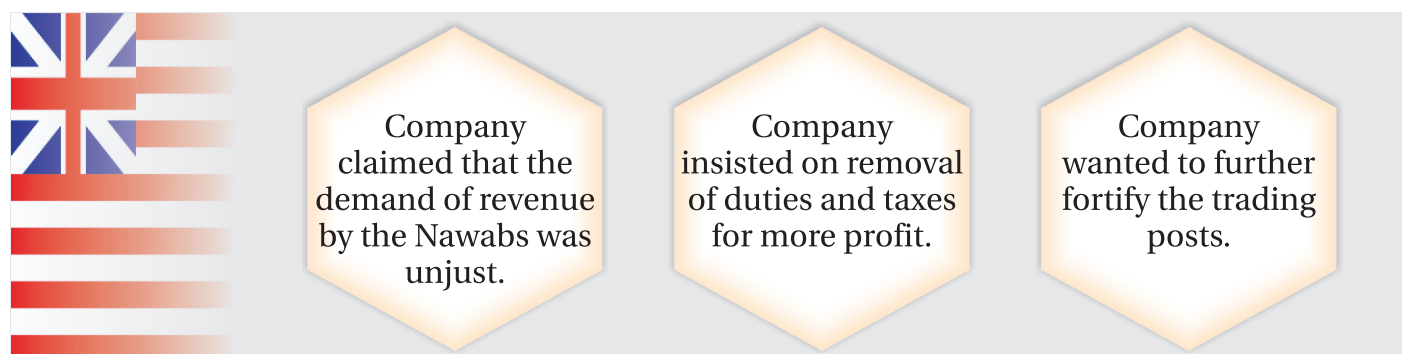


This rise in conflict of interest between the Nawab, the Mughal Emperor and the Company officials increased over time and continued through the early 18th century.



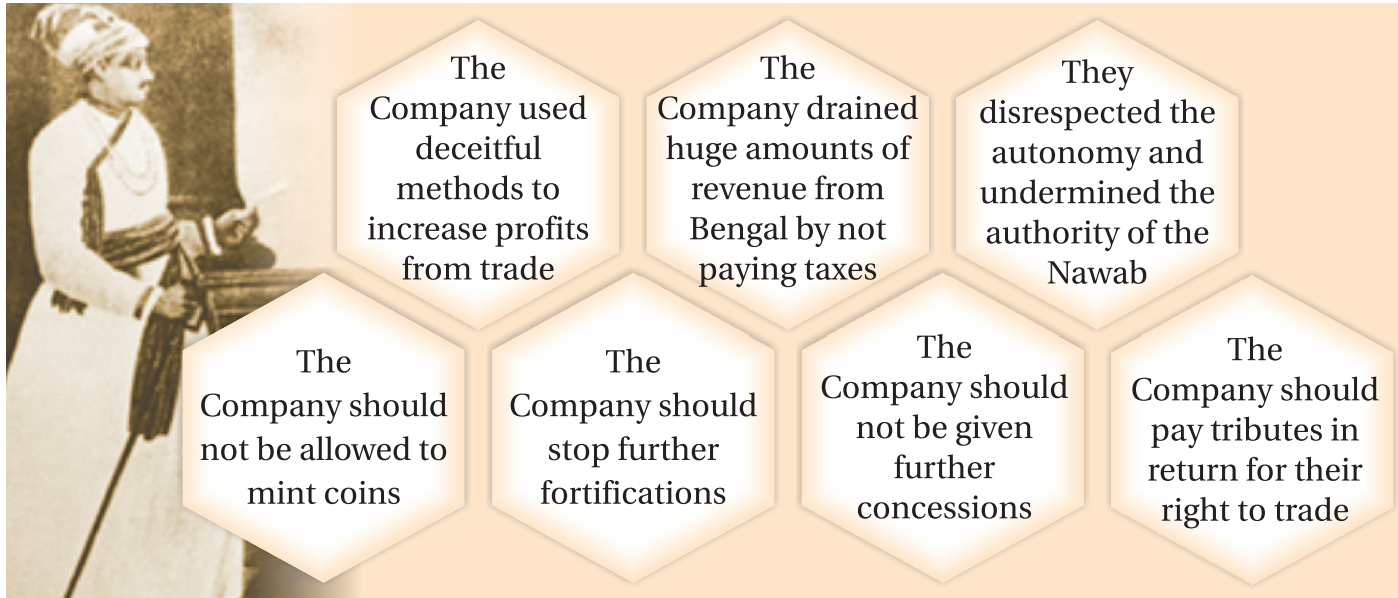
Starting with Murshid Quli Khan and followed by Alivardi Khan and Sirajuddaulah, Bengal saw three powerful rulers who did not allow the Company to take undue advantage of the trading agreement and stopped them from fortifying. They ensured that the revenue was paid and did not give any sort of concession to the Company.

Opinion of the Company



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Opinion of the Nawab



The opposing views led the Nawab of Bengal to impose restrictions on the Company.



Apps

Get into groups and discuss whether fortifying the trading posts was really a good way of encroaching upon area or the Company should have concentrated more on trade and expansion of its army. Each group is to take one factor and support one aspect of the Company policy.

Company Forays into Bengal

BATTLE OF PLASSEY → BATTLE OF BUXAR → DIWANI OF BENGAL

Company wanted puppet ruler for Bengal

Thus supported rival of Sirajuddaulah

Company did not succeed at this

Sirajuddaulah asked the Company not to interfere in local politics

Company was forced to stop fortification

Company forced to pay revenue

Negotiations between Company and Nawab failed

Battle of Plassey

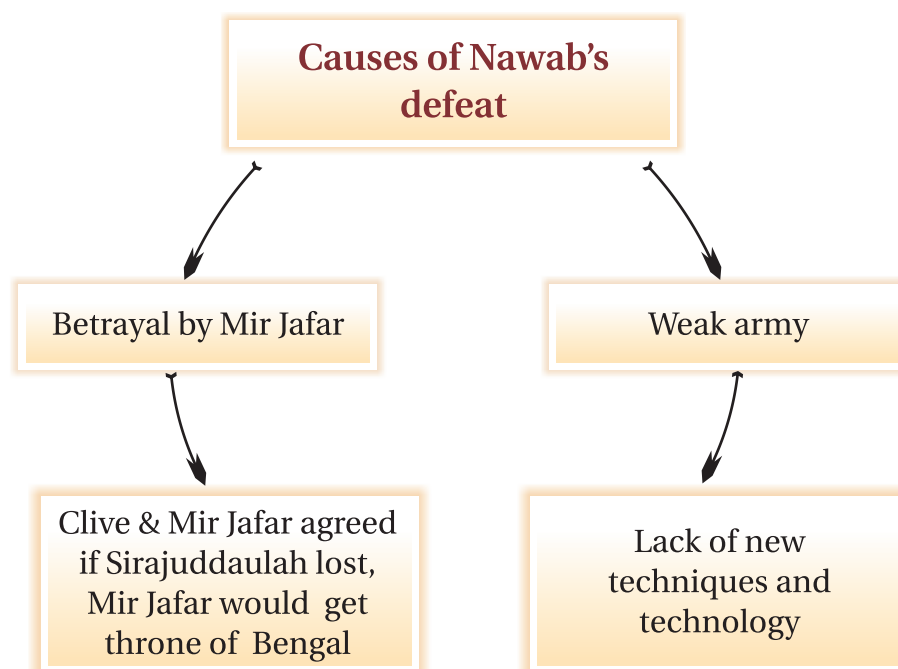
From this point in time till the next two hundred years India saw a new kind of rule and political system.

◀ East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule ▶

When negotiations between the Company and the Nawab failed to find a solution to their issues the ground for battle was ready, and Sirajuddaulah had to declare war on the Company.

Incidents of Plassey

Sirajuddaulah fought the British with support from the French trading post. The English post at Kasimbazar, near Murshidabad, was attacked with 30,000 men and the Calcutta trading post was taken over by Sirajuddaulah. In defence, the Company officials in Madras sent more forces to Bengal under the command of Lord Clive. The battle was fought near the then capital of Bengal, Murshidabad, on the banks of the Bhagirathi river.



WAR CORRESPONDENT

The course and casualties of wars in distant places is reported by special reporters called 'war correspondents'. They risk their lives on the battle fronts to update the world about the happenings on the battle front.

Results of the Battle of Plassey

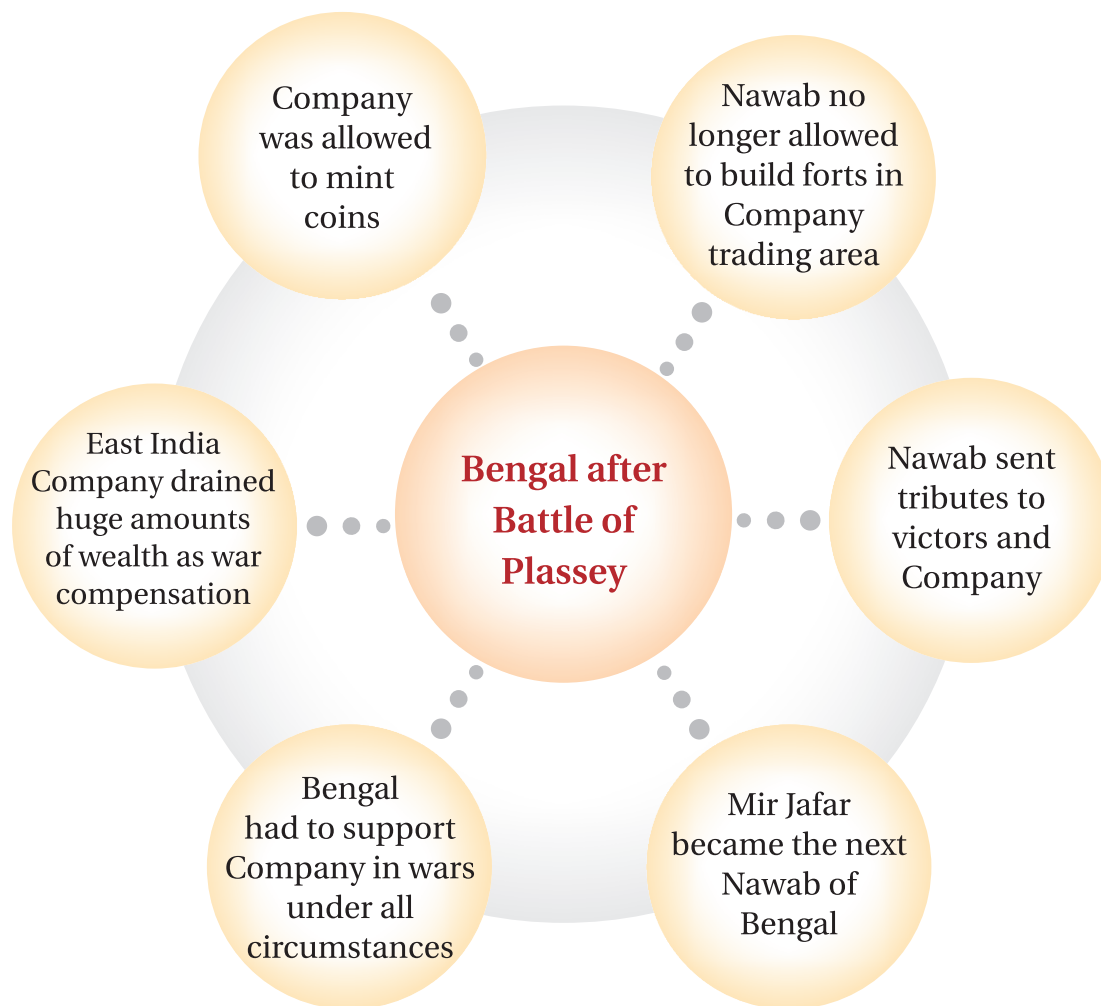
Sirajuddaulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal was captured and executed. Even the women of the royal household were sent off to eastern Bengal (present day Bangladesh) and eventually killed.

Mir Jafar was made the next Nawab of Bengal as per the secret agreement between Clive and him.

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In ancient times, Indian military and warfare technology was so strong that it defeated the huge army of Alexander the Great. In 327 BCE the ancient Indian army used fire arms and other deadly weapons.



The Battle of Plassey was the first victory against the Indian forces by the English East India Company. The Battle of Plassey resulted in not only loss of power for the Nawab of Bengal but for other European nations who were trying to establish themselves in India. The French were no longer significant in Bengal. In 1759 the English forces defeated the French garrison of Masulipatnam and secured Northern Circars for themselves. (Refer to map on Page 3).

While Mir Jafar was the puppet Nawab of Bengal he began to realise his subordinate position. Soon he encouraged the Dutch to advance against the British and expel them from Bengal. By the end of 1759, the Dutch sent seven large ships and 1400 men from Java-Sumatra to enforce their rights in Bengal. Though the English forces and the Dutch never officially fought each other, Clive immediately sent for anti-Dutch operations via sea and land and defeated the large Dutch force on the 25 November 1759 in the Battle of Chinsurah.

◀ East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule ▶

In the Battle of Chinsurah, the British forces once again proved their military might when they defeated an infantry force of more than 2000 and 7 naval ships with just 2 ships and around 1000 infantry. Also in the battle not a single loss was suffered by the English infantry whereas the Dutch forces suffered a loss of more than 300 deaths and more than 300 wounded. With the Dutch defeat in Chinsurah, the English replaced Mir Jafar with Mir Qasim.

These incidents established the English as the indisputable force in Bengal. Clive contributed towards establishing the British as the paramount power in Bengal for which he was also known as the Baron of Plassey and was honoured in the English House of Commons.

Company Grips Bengal



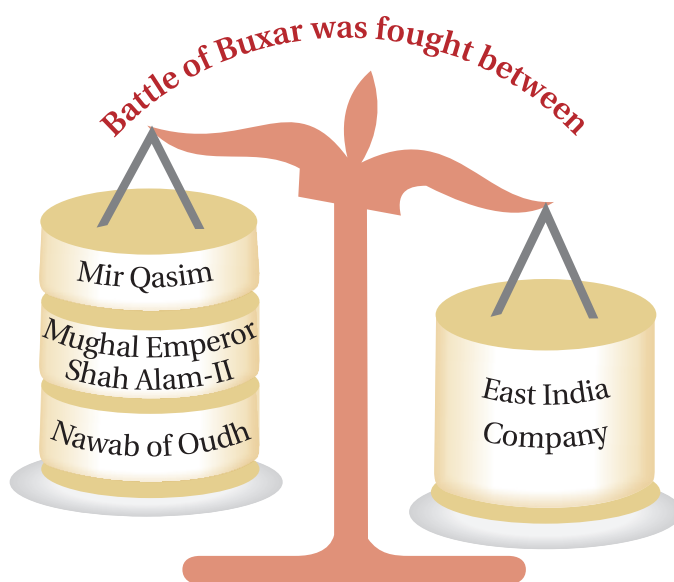
Mir Jafar Ali Khan

The Company soon realised that Mir Jafar was no longer a puppet Nawab. He was replaced by Mir Qasim who followed the Company's orders till his death.



The Battle of Buxar

Even though Mir Qasim was the new Nawab of Bengal it soon became difficult for the Nawab to keep up with the demands of the Company.

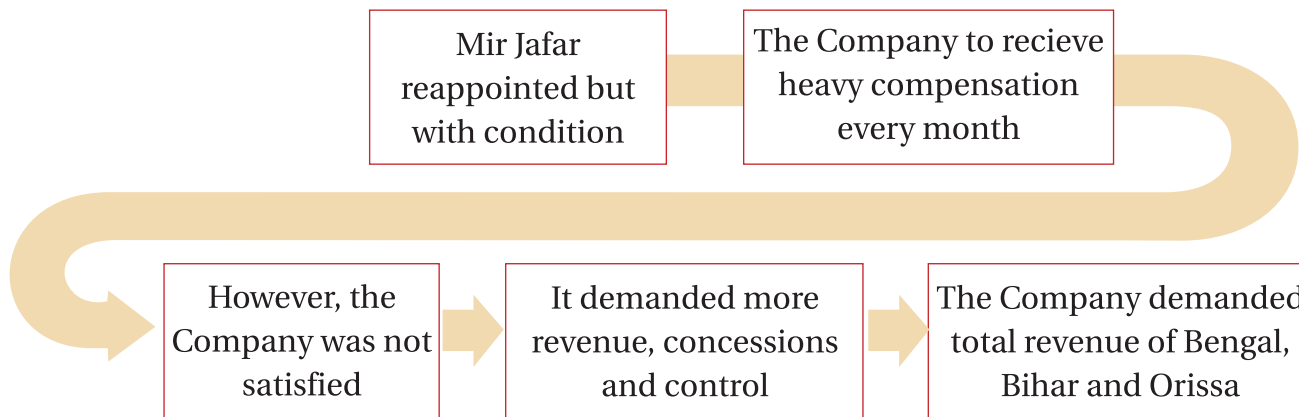


A portrait depicting Battle of Buxar

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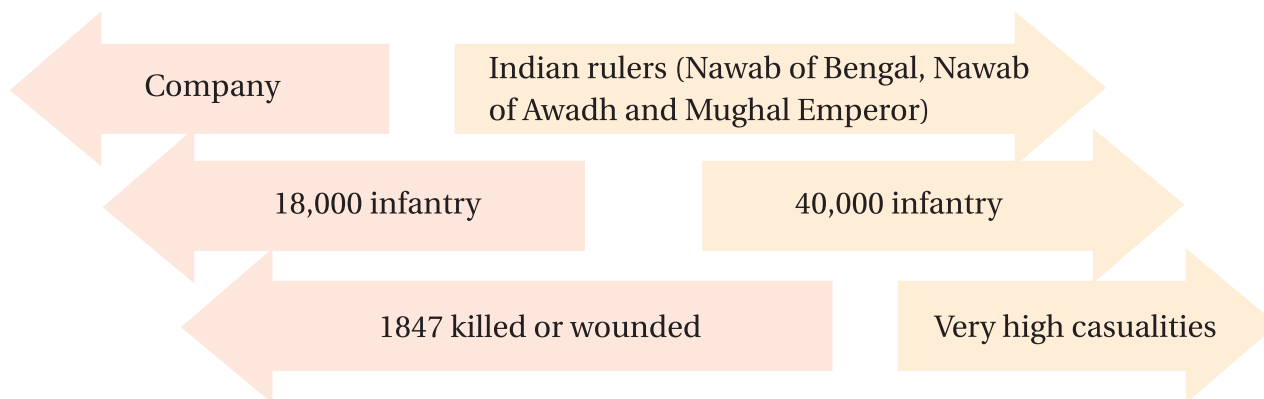
Mir Qasim, along with his allies, fought the Battle of Buxar in the month of October 1764. The Company emerged victorious in the battle.

After the Battle of Buxar



After the Battle of Buxar, the Treaty of Allahabad was signed, according to which the Company secured the Diwani rights to collect taxes from present areas of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. While administrative responsibilities rested on the Nawab of Bengal. This came to be known as the Dual System of Government.

Some facts about the battle will let us understand the magnitude of the power of the Company in comparison with the Indian rulers.



The Company Becomes the 'Naboo'

After the death of Mir Jafar in 1765, the Company decided to do away with puppet nawabs.

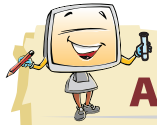
The Company received the Diwani of Bengal from the Mughal Emperor in 1765 and collected huge revenues from the entire province of Bengal.

Robert Clive became the governor of Bengal province and also the Commander-in-Chief of the English army in Bengal in 1765.



The Company officials started calling themselves 'naboo's' copying the traditional title of Nawab. This was their attempt to be the owners of Bengal in the eyes of the common people.

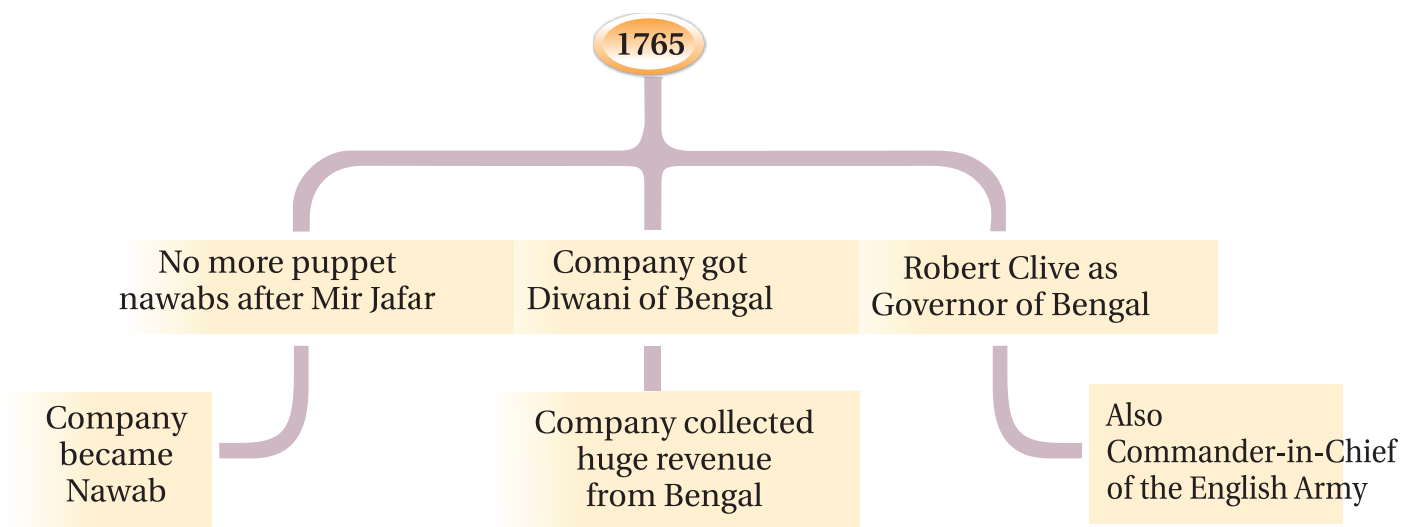
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Apps

History always has events which fall one after another or are parallel to one another. Now determine the correct chronology of the below mentioned events and test your history skills. Form pairs and work on the given events.

- Charter to East India Company
- 1st English factory
- Battle of Buxar
- Death of Aurangzeb
- Fortification of ports
- Battle of Chinsurah
- Battle of Plassey
- Diwani of Bengal



DIPLOMAT

A diplomat assists countries to collaborate and develop their relations with other friendly and unfriendly countries. Very often a diplomat represents the elected, nominated or successor head of the state like the president or the prime minister. In colonial times, the head of the Company stationed in India acted as a diplomat on behalf of the interests of England and the Company headquarters in London.



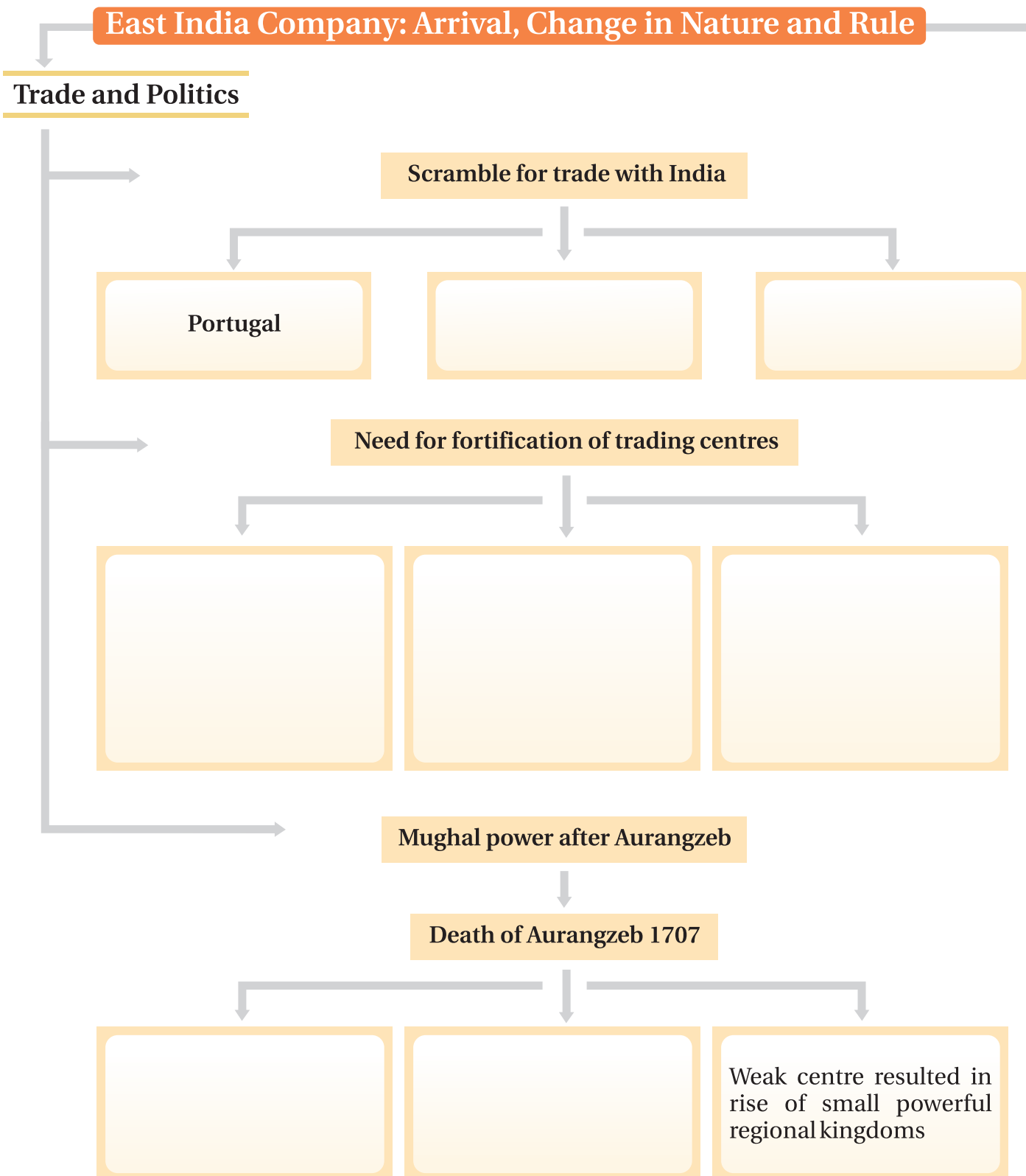
Processing

- The _____ trading officials demanded as many rights as the Company.
- The Battle of Plassey was fought in _____.
- _____ betrayed the Nawab of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey.
- The Battle of Buxar was fought in the month of _____.
- The Company called itself _____ after it decided to do away with the system of puppet nawabs.

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Add to Favourites



East India Company Eyes Bengal

Refusal to pay taxes by private British officials



Battle of Plassey

Reasons

Consequences

Battle of Buxar

Reasons

Consequences

◀ East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule ▶



1. Apart from the English East India Company name two other European Companies that were trading from India.
2. What were the main products in which European Companies traded?
3. Why did the European trading posts feel the need for fortification and why did the nawabs try to stop them?
4. What was the overall situation in India after the death of Aurangzeb?
5. In what ways did the 18th century see such conflict of interests between different groups of power?
6. Why did the Company participate in the Battle of Plassey against the Nawab of Bengal?
7. Highlight the main causes of the defeat of the Nawab of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey.
8. Give the dates of the following events:
 - a. Setting up of the first English trading post
 - b. Accession of Mir Qasim to the throne
 - c. Death of Aurangzeb
 - d. Battle of Buxar
9. What were the impositions and restrictions the Company put on the Nawabs of Bengal after the Battle of Plassey?
10. Explain the concept of a puppet nawab and how the Company gained from it.
11. Why do you think the Company decided not to have any more puppet Nawabs after the death of Mir Jafar?
12. How did the Company teach a lesson to the Nawab of Bengal after his loss at the Battle of Buxar?
13. Why do you think the Company was not interested in the administrative duties of Bengal for a very long time?
14. Throughout the chapter we notice the gradual change in the nature of the East India Company – from a simple trading company to a politically powerful entity with superior military prowess to finally becoming the ruler of the region. China was also being exploited similarly by foreign trading companies at about the same time. Trading companies from Japan and America were draining immense amount of capital from it. Infact, by the end of the 19th century, Chinese territory was divided and economically exploited by these companies. A number of new trading posts were opened and each power had their 'spheres of influence'. With the late entry of America in the race to grab China, the policy of 'open doors' was introduced by



◀ East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule ▶

all imperialist nations like Britain, Russia, Germany, France and Japan gained equal trade rights all over China.

Just like India, China too went through a series of violent revolts to gain freedom from exploitations by these nations.

- a. In what ways do you think the Western penetration was different in China and India?

- b. Use external resources like the Internet and library books and write a brief account on the impositions which the western powers laid on China.



Explorer

Wars that takes in a distant region may not affect other regions and news of the war does not always spread to all other places. You have seen the importance of a war correspondent in delivering news from the war field. However, in ancient times a war correspondent was not available to update others on the casualties and happenings in war fields.

Imagine yourself as a war correspondent posted in South Africa during the 19th century. You have been given the responsibility to report on Boer War in South Africa. Form groups of four and research about the Boer War and make an MS PPT presentation for the class. As a war correspondent you must show the losses in war face by both sides.

◀ East India Company: Arrival, Change in Nature and Rule ▶



Future Calling

War Correspondent



Stations himself/herself in the combat zones and risk their lives to cover first hand stories from war zones

I will cover the heroes of war right from ground zero!

I will find solutions for world peace.

Diplomat

Represents his/her country at an international level and engages with other nations on matters of political, socio-cultural and economic matters and promotes friendly relations between them



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