

Battle of Karnal

Source: IE

Why in News?

The **Battle of Karnal** in **February 1739**, resulted in the decisive defeat of **Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah Rangila** by **Persian ruler Nadir Shah**, marking a pivotal turning point in Indian history.

It not only showcased the military prowess of Nadir Shah but also exposed the vulnerabilities
of the Mughal Empire, leading to its eventual downfall.

What are the Key Facts Related to the Battle of Karnal?

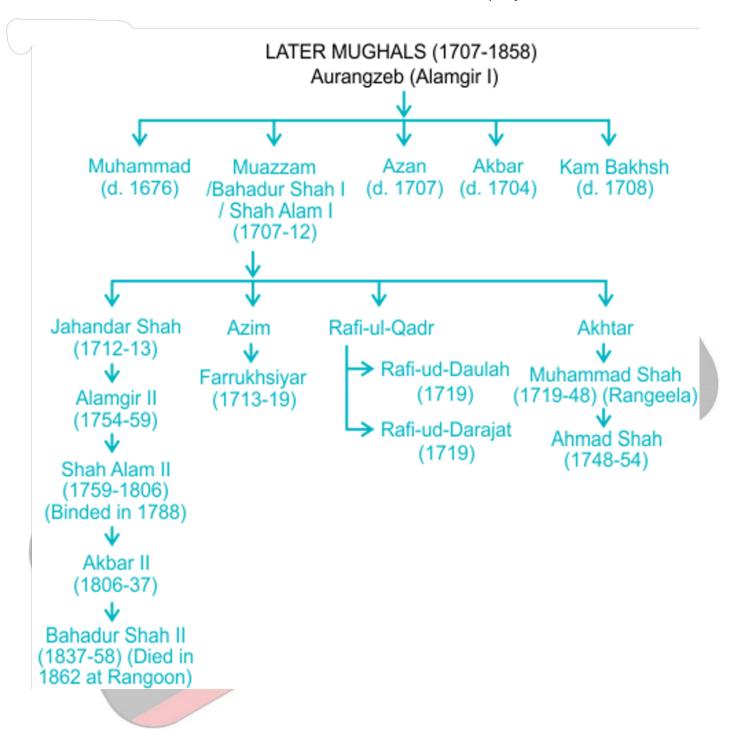
- Background: After consolidating his rule in Persia, Nadir Shah (also known as the Napoleon of Persia) invaded Afghanistan (1738) and advanced into Mughal territory through the Khyber Pass, exploiting the empire's instability after Aurangzeb's death (1707).
 - By January 1739, Nadir Shah had already captured Kabul (in June 1738) and had seized Lahore.
- Forces: Despite having 300,000 soldiers, the **Mughal army lacked coordination**, while Nadir Shah's 50,000 disciplined troops used **advanced tactics** like mounted musketeers with swivel guns, overpowering the Mughals' outdated cavalry charges.
- Battle & Loot of Delhi: Nadir Shah crushed the Mughal army (within 3 hours), killing commanders Khan Dauran and Sa'adat Khan and capturing Muhammad Shah.
 - He then looted Delhi (capital Shahjahanabad), seizing immense wealth, including the Peacock Throne (takht-i-taus) and Koh-i-Noor diamond.
- Impact on the Mughal Empire: The invasion left the Mughal Empire economically shattered and weakened, fueling the rise of Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad, the Marathas, and the Sikhs.
 - The invasion led to the annexation of the Mughal provinces to the west of the Indus viz., Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sindh and Multan to Persia.
 - This decline facilitated British expansion in India in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- Foreign Invasion Due to the Battle: Ahmad Shah Abdali, the commander of Nadir Shah, established his rule over Afghanistan after Nadir Shah's death.
 - He invaded North India many times between 1748 and 1767. The most well known was his victory over the Marathas in 1761 (the third Battle of Panipat).

Later Mughals Who Faced Foreign Invasions

- Muhammad Shah (1719-48): Titled 'Rangeela' due to his luxurious lifestyle.
 - With the help of Nizam-ul-Mulk, killed the Sayyid Brothers.
 - Faced Invasion: Nadir Shah (1739) Battle of Karnal.
- Alamgir II (1754-59)
 - Faced Invasion: Ahmad Shah Abdali (January 1757).
 - Key Battle: Battle of Plassey (June 1757) was fought during his reign.
- Shah Alam II (1760-1806, intermittent rule)

Faced Invasions:

- Third Battle of Panipat (1761) Ahmad Shah Abdali (supported by Najib-ud-Daulah (a Rohilla chieftain), nawab Shuja-ud-Daulah of Awadh).
- Battle of Buxar (1764) British East India Company.



PDF Refernece URL: https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/battle-of-karnal