



# Battle of Karnal

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## 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50,000 disciplined troops used **advanced tactics** like mounted musketeers with swivel guns, overpowering the Mughals' outdated cavalry charges.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.

### LATER MUGHALS (1707-1858)

Aurangzeb (Alamgir I)

