Lecture-3

Foundation of the British Rule in Bengal

Battle of Buxar

Mir Qasim was the last Nawab of Bengal who endeavoured to reassert royal authority. To consolidate his power he introduced several reforms and organised a disciplined and well-equipped army trained by Europeans. To improve his finances he attempted to check the misuse of dastak (or permit) by the Company's servants who carried on duty-free private trade.

This abuse ruined honest Indian traders through unfair competition and deprived the Nawab of large revenue. Mir Qasim took the drastic step of abolishing all duties on internal trade, thus putting English and Indian merchants on the same footing. This made the English furious. They could not accept this big loss and decided to overthrow him.

In 1763, war broke out between Mir Qasim and the English. The Nawab who was defeated escaped to Awadh. Mir Jafar was reinstated on the throne. Mir Qasim formed an alliance with the Nawab of Awadh and Shah Alam II, the Mughal Emperor. The combined army was decisively defeated at the Battle of Buxar in 1764. Mir Qasim fled.

The Battle of Buxar is one of the most decisive battles of Indian history. It finally established the British as masters of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and gave them control over Awadh and the Mughal Emperor. The reinstallation of Mir Jafar as the Nawab sealed the fate of independent Nawabship in Bengal.

QUESTIONS

1. Who asserted the independence of Bengal during the reign of Mughals ?

A. Murshid Quli Khan.

2. Where Murshid Quli Khan established his capital ?

Ans. Murshidabad.

3. Who became the ruler of Bengal after the death of Murshid Quli Khan ?

Ans. Alivardi Khan in 1740 AD.

4.How many states were there under the rule of Alivardi Khan ?

Ans. Three states-Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.

5. Who became the Nawab (ruler) of Bengal in 1756 AD after the death of Alivardi Khan ?

Ans. Siraj-ud-Daula.