

Akbar's Successors

Who were Akbar's Successors?

Akbar died in 1605 leaving the throne of the Mughal empire to his successors. Akbar's successors, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb ruled the empire till 1707.

Aurangzeb was regarded as one of the most competent rulers among Akbar's Successors. However, The Aurangzeb Deccan Policy aided in the downfall after his death. Moreover, the empire was run by weak successors after Aurangzeb death. Nadi Shah saw the opportunity and imprisoned Aurangzeb's successor in 1739 after looting Delhi.

Jahangir (1605 - 1627 CE)

Salim, the eldest of Akbar's Successors, ascended to the throne after Akbar's death in 1605 CE. He took the name Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir (conqueror of the world).

- Jahangir was the most popular candidate for the succession of the monarchy because the other two of his siblings were alcoholics who nearly killed themselves. Therefore there was no competition for the succession of the throne.
- Around 1611 CE, he married Mehr-un-Nisa (widow of Sher Afghan), also known as Nur Jahan. She had a monumental impact on Jahangir's life. She was the sole woman in the Mughal court, and all the royal farmlands had her name.
- Jahangir had defeated and detained his son, Khushrau Mirza, for being an admirer of the Sikh guru. Jahangir also murdered Guru Arjun, the 5th Sikh Guru, since he was a supporter of his son, Khushrau Mirza.
- The settling of an unresolved conflict with Mewar was Jahangir's crowning achievement. Amar Singh of Mewar (son of Maharana Pratap) submitted himself to Jahangir in 1615 CE.
- After Jahangir death, the empire was ruled by his successor- Shah Jahan.

Shah Jahan (1628- 1658 CE)

In 1628 CE, Shah Jahan seized the throne in Agra after Jahangir death and became Akbar's successor. He was Jahangir's son and Arjmand Banu Begum was his wife (Mumtaz Mahal).

- Khan Lodi, the great ruler of Afghanistan, attempted but failed to overthrow Shah Jahan.
- Under the Mughals, Shah Jahan divided the Deccan region into four provinces: Berar, Telangana, Daulatabad, and Khandesh.
- Shah Jahan is renowned as the best architect among Akbar's Successors, having constructed several of the world's most iconic structures. The Taj Mahal, one of the world's seven wonders, was built by Shah Jahan. Its construction began about 1631 CE and took 22 years to complete. He built the Moti Masjid in Agra, the Sheesh Mahal, the Musalman Burj in Agra (where he spent his final days in imprisonment), and the Jama Masjid in Delhi.
- Shah Jahan's final years were spent being resentful as his four sons battled for control of the throne. Aurangzeb stormed the Agra Fort, compelling Shah Jahan to submit. Shah Jahan was imprisoned in the Agra Fort and subjected to rigorous vigilance till Shah Jahan death.

Aurangzeb (1658 - 1707 CE)

Aurangzeb was regarded as one of the most competent rulers among Akbar's Successors. Aurangzeb was conferred with the title 'Alamgir', which means "World Conqueror."

- Owing to Aurangzeb's Deccan policy, his military campaigns proved to be a significant asset and triumph in the early years of his leadership for around ten years.
- As a severe leader with aggressive policies, Aurangzeb faced rebellions from the Sikhs, Jats, Marathas, and Satnamis. The masses were subjected to harsh treatment, which included levies on agricultural products and rising religious tensions among his provinces.
- Aurangzeb was also against the Sikh influence in the nation and assassinated the 9th Sikh Guru, Teg Bahadur.
- Aurangzeb died in 1707, having left behind a united Empire, but his policies progressively led to the Mughals' downfall and the empire's disintegration.
- After Aurangzeb's death, the Mughal Empire deteriorated precipitously.
- Using this opportunity, Nadir Shah imprisoned the Mughal Emperor and looted Delhi in 1739. The Aurangzeb Deccan Policy aided in the downfall. The decline was also caused by weak successors and the demoralization of the Mughal army.