

17th AUGUST:

Q) "Punjab's fate after Ranjit Singh was foredoomed as the impulse of neo-Victorian Imperialism was bound to overwhelm it". Comment. (20M)

Ans) During the beginning of 19th century, the state of Punjab was ruled by the one of the finest rulers in the history of country, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was an able and despotic ruler, who had established a military and secular state in Punjab.

Even both the British and Punjab were afraid of each other and no one dared to attack on another. The Treaty of Amritsar was signed by British with Punjab and Sutlej river was accepted as the dividing line between their territories.

Ranjit Singh provided stability to Punjab by maintaining a delicate balance between the numerous inherited Sikh chieftains and the chiefs of Jammu and other areas. However, after his death in 1839, Punjab fell into the times of instability, where plots, counter-plots, murders etc. ruled the empire, with imbecile kings heading the states. The balance between the chieftains had broken down, under successors of Ranjit Singh leading to unstable Punjab.

not exactly... british armtwisted ranjeet singh mar a times

On the other hand, the imperialism under the Victorian era in Britain took an aggressive stance over the world. This aggressive expansion came in conflict with other imperial powers like Russia in Asia, due to which Britain wanted to establish strong line of defence across its empire.

By rising instability in Punjab, it became a vulnerable buffer state from the expansionist policies of Russia via Afghanistan. It is because of this that Britain occupied Punjab in 1849 on the pretext of rebellion by just 2 nobles. Thus, Punjab became one of the first 'victim of Victorian Imperialism' and was annexed for strengthening the protection of British Indian empire.

mention both anglo-sikh war in brief

Q) "The British policy towards Indian states in 1818-1858 was one of isolation and non-interference tempered by annexation". Comment (20M).

Ans) With the defeat of two of the strongest empires in India, by 1818, British emerged as the sole Paramount power in India. By that time, both Mughal empire and the Maratha empire were defeated by the British and Lord Hastings had become the Governor-General of India. He was a strong imperialist who wanted to remove the facade of 'Sham and Titular' royalties and establish British rule as the paramount power in India.

With no challenges remaining in the country to the British rule, they became more aggressive in appropriating revenues and establishing full political control. An element of planning and vision emerged in the British rule, in contrast to their earlier policies with respect to native states.

The Company Resident started to interfere in

The affairs of state and almost virtually became the ruler of state in fact, if not in reality. The new policy of 'subordinate isolation' was followed with the native states as per which ~~the~~ native states were kept isolated from each other, so that no alliances could be formed against the British rule. The states were also economically and politically weakened with the interference of company Resident to remove any kind of fighting spirit from the rulers.

After the coming of Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856) on the scene as Governor-General, the 'Doctrine of lapse' ~~was~~ ~~of~~ came to be utilised more frequently to ~~conquer~~ annex any state which did not have a legal heir to the throne. He annexed half a dozen Indian states, including Big ones like Satara, Jaitapur, Nagpur etc. He also annexed Oudh on the pretext of 'misgovernance'. Thus, during just 8 years of his reign, he expanded British India

empire by more than 40%.

Thus, it was this aggressive policy of Britain towards the native states, which resulted in the outbreak of the 1857 revolt, came to be ~~to~~ also known as the First independence struggle against British.