

Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845–1849)

Importance

- End of the **last powerful Indian kingdom before 1857**
- Repeated questions on:
 - **Battles**
 - **Treaties**
 - **Dalhousie**
 - **Koh-i-Noor**
- Direct link to **British annexation policy**

Background of the Anglo-Sikh Wars

Sikh Empire under Ranjit Singh

- Maharaja **Ranjit Singh (1799–1839)** built a strong Sikh Empire
- Punjab acted as a **buffer state** between British India & Central Asia
- The Army modernised using **European officers**

Post-1839 Weakness

- Death of Ranjit Singh → **succession struggles**
- The Army became powerful but **undisciplined**
- Court politics is dominated by factions

British Strategy

- The British feared:
 - Strong Sikh army
 - Russian influence
- Adopted the **forward policy** after 1839

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–1846)

Causes

- Political instability after Ranjit Singh
- Weak regency under **Rani Jindan**
- Betrayal by Sikh commanders:
 - **Lal Singh**
 - **Teja Singh**
- British troop concentration near the Sutlej

Major Battles

Battle	Date	Outcome
Mudki	18 Dec 1845	British victory
Ferozeshah	21–22 Dec 1845	Costly British win
Baddowal	21 Jan 1846	Sikh success
Aliwal	28 Jan 1846	British victory
Sobraon	10 Feb 1846	Decisive British victory

Treaties after the First War

1. Treaty of Lahore (8 March 1846)

- Sikh army reduced
- War indemnity imposed
- **Duleep Singh** was recognised as the Maharaja
- **Rani Jindan** as regent
- Kashmir transferred to the British (as indemnity)

2. Treaty of Amritsar (16 March 1846)

- Kashmir was sold to **Gulab Singh** for ₹75 lakh
- Creation of the **Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir**

3. Treaty of Bhairawal (Dec 1846)

- Rani Jindan removed
- Council of Regency set up
- **Henry Lawrance** appointed British Resident

Outcome of the First War

- Sikh sovereignty weakened
- British interference institutionalised
- Punjab was under **indirect British control**

Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–1849)

Causes

- Resentment against British control
- Revolt at **Multan** (Mulraj)
- Murder of British officers
- Sikh resistance under:
 - **Sher Singh**
 - **Chattar Singh**

Major Battles

Battle	Date	Result
Ramnagar	22 Nov 1848	Inconclusive
Chillianwala	13 Jan 1849	Heavy losses on both sides
Gujarat	21 Feb 1849	Decisive British victory

- Siege of **Multan** → Mulraj surrendered (Jan 1849)

Annexation of Punjab (1848-49)

- Punjab was annexed by **Lord Dalhousie**
- **Duleep Singh deposed**
- Sent to England on a pension
- **Rani Jindan imprisoned**

Administration

- **Sir John Lawrence** → First Chief Commissioner of Punjab

Koh-i-Noor Diamond

- Taken under the **Treaty of Lahore (1849)**
- Ignored Ranjit Singh's wish to donate it to **Jagannath Temple, the Puri**
- Sent to the **British Crown**

Aftermath / Impact of Anglo-Sikh Wars

Political Impact

- End of the Sikh Empire
- British control over Punjab
- Completion of British territorial expansion

Military Impact

- The British gained the **best martial race**
- Sikhs later became the backbone of the British Indian Army

Administrative Impact

- Punjab reorganised administratively
- Revenue & law reforms introduced

Significance

- The last major Indian power defeated before 1857
- British confidence at its peak

Timeline Snapshot

- 1839 → Death of Ranjit Singh
- 1845–46 → First Anglo-Sikh War
- 1848–49 → Second Anglo-Sikh War
- 1849 → Annexation of Punjab

Aspire with Ram IAS