

Background: Mysore in the late 1700s

- After the end of the Carnatic Wars, the British East India Company gained control of most of the important cities of the south.
- The kingdom of Mysore ruled by the Wadiyar dynasty was under threat from the neighbouring kingdoms of Marathas, Travancore, Hyderabad, and the British through the Madras presidency.
- Hyder Ali commanded most of the battles fought against the neighbors of Mysore from 1755 and contained all the threats at the kingdom's borders.
- In the Carnatic war, Hyder Ali fought alongside the superior French army and learned skills from their warfare. He strengthened the Mysore army and fought the Marathas and Hyderabad successfully.
- In 1759, the young King of Mysore Krishnaraja Wodeyar II rewarded Hyder Ali's performance by granting him the title of Fath Hyder Bahadur or Nawab Hyder Ali Khan.
- Due to numerous conflicts, the Mysore treasury was emptied, weakening the royal family's hold on the affairs of the kingdom. Hyder Ali took advantage of the situation and rose to power in the court.
- Meanwhile, Mysore's biggest trouble, the Marathas faced defeat in the third battle of Panipat. This helped Hyder Ali consolidate his power inside Mysore without the Marathas knocking on their borders.
- Hyder Ali became king of Mysore in 1761 after overthrowing the prime minister and making the king, Krishnaraja Wodeyar II, a prisoner in his palace.
- Hyder Ali formally titled himself Sultan Hyder Ali Khan in his correspondence with the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II.
- A series of income and tax changes that enabled Hyder Ali, an experienced general, to finance a sizable army, gave him the wherewithal to extend his empire, which included the southern part of India.
- Weapon advancements, notably the employment of portable rocket launchers, which were often launched by cavalry riders, were another benefit for Mysore.

First Anglo-Mysore war (1767-99)

- From the middle of the 1750s, the British had won many significant battles that gave them control over commercial hubs like Pondicherry and Arcot.
- When the EIC appeared to be preoccupied with developing in Bengal, in northeast India, in the 1760s, Haidar Ali courted the French as friends and saw the chance to expand into the less powerful EIC presidency (administrative province) of Madras.
- The war was instigated by the Nizam of Hyderabad who wanted to divert the British attention from the Northern Circars.
- 1767: Hyder Ali declared war on the East India Company in August 1767. The East India Company joined forces with the Nizam of Hyderabad to attack Mysore.
- Hyder Ali bought off the Marathas with a huge quantity of silver and they withdrew their support. The withdrawal of the Marathas resulted in the Nizam of Hyderabad switching sides.
- The English forces pushed Mysore and Hyderabad back in the Battle of Trinamalai.
- 1768: The Nizam of Hyderabad signed the treaty with the British and left Mysore to fight the battle alone. The East India Company had meanwhile mobilized more forces from Bombay by now.
- Caught between three armies, Haidar Ali decided to sue for peace, one which the British were glad to accept given the already high costs of the war.
- 1769: The Treaty of Madras was signed between Mysore and the British wherein they promised help to each other in case the other was attacked.

Second-Anglo Mysore War (1780-84)

- Hyder Ali, confident of the British support due to the Treaty of Madras, engaged in war with the Marathas in 1770. But the British refused to assist him.
- Hyder Ali angered by the British breach of the treaty committed himself to an alliance with the French.

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- The Anglo-French war of 1778 ignited conflict in the Indian subcontinent yet again. The British resolved to drive out the French from India and began to attack French outposts.
- 1779: They attacked Pondicherry and then the French-controlled port at Mahé on the Malabar Coast.
- Hyder placed significant strategic value on Mahé because he used the port to acquire French-supplied weapons and ammunition. Hyder not only let the British know that Mahé was under his protection, but he also sent them troops to defend it. In addition to the French, Hyder also organized a confederacy against the British with the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas.
- 1780: Haidar Ali invaded the Carnatic coast to the east with a massive army of 70,000-100,000 men. Through 1780, many isolated British forts were captured and Madras came under serious threat again.
- The British, largely due to poor planning and even poorer logistics, suffered a resounding defeat at the Battle of Pollilur in 1780.
- 1781: Sir Eyre Coote returned to command the English army and defeated Hyder Ali in the Battle of Parangipettai or Porto novo.
- 1782: Hyder Ali died due to illness, possibly cancer. His son, Tipu Sultan took over the reins and continued his father's aggressive policies in the battles.
- 1783: Tipu pushed back the EIC, took over Mangalore, and stopped the export of sandalwood, pepper, and cardamom to Europe.
- 1784: The French withdrew their naval support of Mysore and the EIC got instructions from London to end the war. The Treaty of Mangalore was signed between Tipu Sultan and EIC to end the second war and essentially restored the borders to the situation before the war.
- Tipu Sultan wrote a military manual '*Fathul Myahidin*'.

Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-92)

- France was an ally of Mysore now and Tipu Sultan modernized his army with French help. They attacked the nearby Kingdom of Travancore for wealth.

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- 1789: Tipu Sultan attacked Travancore and all the alliances forged by the British against Mysore kicked into action. The English and allies were commanded by Lord Charles Cornwallis who was the Governor-General of EIC from 1786.
- This war was long-drawn and went on for three years.
- 1792: The siege of Srirangapatam forced Tipu to surrender and Mysore lost its capital. The terms of the Treaty of Seringapatam were harsh:
 - Tipu Sultan was obliged to give up a large slice of his kingdom
 - He had to agree to pay the EIC regular ‘protection’ money
 - Mysore released all prisoners of war
 - Finally, Tipu had to leave two of his sons with the Company as hostages.

Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1798-99)

- Tipu sultan once again tried to regain control of his territories in alliance with the French. He has even written to Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) to send him an army, but Napoleon was busy attacking the British in Egypt at the time.
- The British saw the French-Mysore alliance as a threat to their dominance in the sub-continent. The task of breaking this alliance was taken up by the new EIC Governor-General, Lord Richard Wellesley (appointed 1798), who was the most aggressive governor yet.
- Wellesley had the continued backing of the Maratha Confederacy and the Nizam of Hyderabad whose army was led by Arthur Wellesley (future Duke of Wellington and victor at Waterloo).
- 1799: In the final siege of Srirangapatam, Tipu was attacked from all sides. Tipu Sultan was killed in action, and his remaining family members were exiled.
- Mysore signed a treaty with the EIC in 1799, and the state, now much reduced in the territory, came under British rule through their reinstatement of a puppet ruler, Krishna Raja Wadiyar III of the traditional Wadiyar ruling family.

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- This was the second instance of a subsidiary alliance started by Wellesley in 1798. The first Indian ruler to sign the Subsidiary Alliance was the Nizam of Hyderabad.
- The British entirely took over the administration of Mysore in 1831, but the puppet ruler of Wodeyar remained.
- The Wodeyars ruled the remnant Kingdom of Mysore until 1947 when it joined the Dominion of India.

Impact of the Anglo-Mysore Wars

- The French presence in India was almost fully removed by the end of 1799, hence cementing British dominance.
- The fearsome and determined campaigning of Tipu Sultan however cast a shadow over the British psyche, and the Anglo-Mysore was becoming a tale of legendary battles.
- The Battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) secured British rule over East India.
- The Anglo-Mysore Wars, the Anglo-Maratha Wars (1767–1799), and eventually the Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845–1849) solidified the British claim over South Asia, leading to the British Empire in India.
- Also, on the artillery front, the British East India Company had never seen anything like the Mysorean rockets Tipu deployed during the Battle of Pollilur.
- This was primarily because they utilized iron tubes to contain the fuel.
- As a result, the missile's thrust could be increased and its range extended up to 2 kilometers (1.2 miles).
- They had an impact on British rocket development after Tipu's final defeat in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War and the seizure of many Mysorean iron rockets, which led to the Congreve rocket, which was quickly used in the Napoleonic Wars.