Section 1: Answer each question in about 500 words.

1. How did Bairam Khan deal with the initial challenges to his power? Discuss the decline in Bairam Khan’s power after the second battle of Panipat.

Ans: Bairam Khan was a Persian Turk and Shia Muslim. He served under Babur, Humayun and Akbar. He had also accompanied Humayun in his wanderings and gone to Persia with him. Humayun was so much pleased with his wisdom and loyalty that he regarded him as his most trustworthy follower and used to say, “There is no other so luminous a star in our family as you are.” Bairam Khan played a prominent role in Humayun’s restoration of Delhi’s throne. Bairam Khan’s services as the guardian and tutor of Akbar are praiseworthy. He guided the affairs of the state for four years between 1556 to 1560 when Akbar was still a minor. Bairam Khan was a great commander and it was because of him that Akbar could defeat Hemu and capture the throne of Delhi and Agra. In 1560, fall of Bairam Khan began. The unbridled power made him arrogant. He showered favours on his friends and relatives. In the meanwhile, Akbar had become major. He desired to be the king not only in name but in reality also. Akbar relieved Bairam Khan of his duties and gave him a jagir for his maintenance. Bairam Khan revolted but was defeated. Akbar pardoned him and asked him to proceed to Mecca with dignity. Unfortunately on the way, he was murdered by an Afghan.

Causes of Bairam Khan’s fall:
1. Unpopularity of the Bairam Khan among Muslim nobility. He was a Shia and a majority of the Mughal nobles followed Sunni faith.
2. Vanity and haughtiness of Bairam Khan.
3. Showing favours to some nobles.
4. Execution of Governor Tardi Beg who had failed to defend Delhi against Hemu.
5. Akbar’s own ambition to work as an independent ruler without any interference.
6. Conspiracy of royal household against Bairam Khan.
7. Bairam Khan’s revolt against the emperor Akbar.

or

Critically examine the rise of the Maratha power in the seventeenth century. Comment on M.G. Ranade’s idea of ‘Maharashtra Dharma’.

Ans: Following were the important factors responsible for the rise of the Marathas:
1. Inspirational influence of religious and social leaders: Several prominent leaders in the religious and social fields of Maharashtra inspired the people to unite by preaching faith and Bhakti in one God and by condemning the caste system which had divided the society.
2. Love for the motherland:
3. Character of the Marathas: Elphinstone has observed in this regard. “They (Marathas) are all active, laboriously hardy and preserving. If they have none of the pride and dignity of the Rajput’s, they have none of their indolence or want of worldly wisdom too. And all these traits were due to the peculiar physical features of their country.” Shivaji made the best use of these characteristics of the Marathas.
4. Ready-made and easily defensible rock forts: The broken ranges of the hills provided natural forts and the people were inspired to regard these forts as their mother—the seats of their protection.
5. Influence of language and literature: Eknath taught the Marathas to take pride in their mother tongue which helped in bringing about a sense of commonness and unity among the Marathas.
6. The geographical conditions: The large part of Maratha land is a plateau where the Marathas had to struggle hard for their existence. This made the Marathas courageous and hard working.
7. Economic equality: The Marathas did not suffer much from economic inequality, as there were not many people to be accepted as rich. There was no class of economic exploiters. This gave the Marathas a spirit of self-respect and unity.
8. Guerilla warfare: The mountainous areas made it possible for the Marathas to adopt guerilla warfare very successfully
9. Training in the art of administration:
10. Unstable political condition of the South: The Muslim kingdoms in the South were in the process of disintegration. The political situation was quite favourable for the rise of the Marathas.
11. Charismatic personality of Shivaji

2. Give a brief account of Mughal theory of sovereignty. To what extent it was 20 influenced by Turco-Mongol traditions?

Ans: The Indian political thought as well as the Persian and Turco-Mongol traditions have attached much importance to the institution of sovereignty for preserving order and stability of society and for eradicating anarchy and lawlessness. Monarchy was considered to be the keystone of the medieval polity. Thus according to Abul Fazl: “If royalty did not exist, the storm of strife would never subside, nor selfish ambition disappear. Mankind being under the burden of lawlessness and lust would sink into the pit of destruction …”