

MODULE 2

MEDIEVAL INDIA

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9

ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

The rulers who ruled substantial parts of the North India between AD1200 to AD1526 were termed as Sultans and the period of their rule as the Delhi Sultanate. These rulers were of Turkish and Afghan origin. They established their rule in India after defeating the Indian ruling dynasties which were mainly Rajputs in northern India. The main ruler who was overthrown by the invading Turk Muhammad Ghori from Delhi was Prithvi Raj Chauhan. These Sultans ruled for more than 300 years (from around AD 1200 to AD 1526). The last of the Delhi Sultan, Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by the Mughals under the leadership of Babur in AD1526 who established the Mughal Empire in India.

During this period of around three hundred years five different dynasties ruled Delhi. These were the Mamluks (AD 1206–AD 1290) (popularly known as slave dynasty), the Khaljis (AD 1290–AD 1320), the Tughlaqs (AD 1320–AD 1412), the Sayyids (AD 1412–AD 1451) and the Lodis (AD 1451– AD 1526). All these dynasties are collectively referred as the Delhi Sultanate.

In this lesson we will give you a detailed account of the process of conquest, expansion and consolidation of Delhi Sultanate in India.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- describe the early invasion on India from the North-West region by the Arabs
- discuss the nature of attacks by Mahmud Ghazni
- describe the nature of Muhammad Ghori's invasion
- identify the factors that helped the establishment of Turkish rule in North India by Muhammad Ghori
- provide an account of the expansion of Delhi Sultanate under the Mamluk sultans
- describe the expansion of the Sultanate by Khaljis and Tughlaqs
- outline the challenges faced by the Sultans in consolidating their rule
- list the causes of the decline of the Sultanate.



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9.1 ARAB INVASION OF INDIA

In the early 8th century Arabs invaded India from the North-West region. This Arab invasion in AD 712 was led by Muhammad Bin Qasim a general of the Umayyad caliphate. Invasion on India was part of the policy of Arab expansion during this period.

The rise of Islam in Arabia (see box) gave rise to a new political system. The process of expansion which had started after the capture of Mecca by the prophet Muhammad continued after his death.

Rise And Spread Of Islam

In the 7th Century AD, a new religion named “ISLAM” was born in Arabia and in a very short span it carved out an empire extending from North Africa to Iberian Peninsula to Iran and India. Islam was founded and preached by Prophet Muhammad (AD 570–632). This religion transformed the religious, political and social life of not only the people of Arabia but also of many parts of the world. Islam laid emphasis upon belief in one God and its holy book as the “QURAN”. Muslims believe that the Quran is revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad. Quran is respected as the supreme source of authority in Islam. Every Muslim was asked to pray five times a day, to fast during the month of Ramzan, to distribute alms and to make a pilgrimage, if possible, to Mecca. After the death of Prophet (AD 632) the task of providing religious and political leadership to the Muslims passed on to the Caliphs. (Caliph is derived from the Arabic word ‘Khalifa’ which means ‘deputy’. This is a title given to the rulers who succeeded Prophet Muhammad). Between AD 632–661 there were four pious Caliphs, all close companions of the Prophet. The Umayyad Caliphate (AD 661–750) succeeded the pious Caliphs. Umayyad dynasty gave stability and prosperity to the Caliphate. Umayyad dynasty was followed by the Abbasid Caliphate (AD 750–1258). During the time of later Abbasids, the Caliphs began to loose political control and independent Muslim Rulers (Sultans) emerged in several regions.

The Arab expansion was notable for the speed with which it was accomplished. Between AD 633–637, Arab conquered West Asia, Jordan Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Persia. They also conquered parts of North Africa and Southern Europe. Between AD 639–637, Egypt was also conquered. By AD 712, the Arabs had entered Spain and were soon making inroads into Southern France. By the 8th Century AD, the Arabs had acquired a core position from Spain to India, connecting the trade of Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

During the early years of the 8th Century, the Umayyads reached the height of their power. They had created the largest ever-Muslim state that existed. Arabs were also attracted by the wealth of India. Arab merchants and sailors had brought back stories of great wealth of India. However, the reason for the invasion of Sindh was to avenge the plunder of Arab Ships by pirates of Debol. King Dahir refused to punish the pirates. Hajjaj the governor of Iraq despatched an army under Muhammad Bin Qasim. He arrived in Sind in AD 712, and besieged Debol which was situated on the sea coast. After crossing the Indus he marched forward. At Rawar, Muhammad Bin Qasim attacked Dahir who was defeated. Arabs killed a large number of fleeing soldiers. Dahir was also caught and killed. Muhammad Bin Qasim now proceeded forward and within a short span he conquered various important places in Sind including Brahmanabad.

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The economic life of Sind got disturbed as a result of campaigns of Qasim. A large number of people and merchants had fled from Sind. He had conquered the major portion of Sind up to the lower Punjab. His rule lasted only for two years. However many Arabs settled down in Sind and established relations with the local population. The Arab influence continued for a long period with pockets of Muslim influence established in various parts of Sind.

9.2 MAHMUD GHAZNI

In all Mahmud Ghazni invaded India 17 times during AD 1000–1026. Mahmud Ghazni was Son of Sabuktigin, the founder of Ghazni dynasty & Turkish slave commander.

Mahmud Ghazni first encountered the Hindushai ruler, Jaipal in AD 1001. In the years AD 1004–06 Mahmud Ghazni attacked the rulers of Multan. Soon Punjab also passed into the hands of the Ghaznavids. Between AD 1014–1019, Mahmud enriched his treasury by looting the temples of Nagarkot, Thanesar, Mathura and Kanauj. The attack against Nagarkot in AD 1008 has been described as his first great triumph. In AD 1025, Mahmud embarked on the most ambitious Indian campaign, the attack on the Somnath temple in Saurashtra. Mahmud captured the city after grim struggle in which more than 50,000 defenders lost their lives. Mahmud left Somnath after a fortnight when he came to know that the Gujarat king Bhima-I had completed preparations to confront him. His attacks on India were an attempt to fulfil his ambition to make Ghazni the formidable power in the politics of Central Asia. Mahmud's raids into India were only to acquire the famous wealth of India. This wealth would help him to consolidate his vast rule in Central Asia. He did not wish to establish an empire in India. The Ghaznavids had their control on parts of Punjab and Sind which continued till AD 1135. However his invasions exposed the weak defence of Indian kingdoms. They also opened possibility of attacks in future by the Turks.

9.3 MUHAMMAD GHORI (SHAHABUDDIN MUHAMMAD)

In AD 1173 Shahabuddin Muhammad (AD 1173–1206) also called Muhammad of Ghor ascended the throne of Ghazni. The Ghoris were not strong enough to meet the growing power and strength of the Khwarizmi Empire; they realised that they could gain nothing in Central Asia. This forced Ghori to turn towards India to fulfil his expansionist ambitions.

Muhammad Ghori was very much interested in establishing permanent empire in India and not merely looting its wealth. His campaigns were well organised and whenever he conquered any territory, he left a general behind to govern it in his absence. His invasions resulted in the permanent establishment of the Turkish Sultanate in the region lying north of the Vindhya Mountains.

Conquest of Punjab and Sind

Muhammad Ghori led his first expedition in AD 1175. He marched against Multan and freed it from its ruler. In the same campaign he captured Uchch from the Bhatti Rajputs. Three years later in AD 1178 he again marched to conquer Gujarat but the Chalukya ruler of Gujarat, Ghima II defeated him at the battle of Anhilwara. But this defeat did not discourage Muhammad Ghori. He realised the necessity of creating a suitable base in Punjab before venturing on the further conquest of India.

He launched a campaign against the Ghaznavid possessions in Punjab. As a result Peshawar was conquered in AD 1179–80 and Lahore in AD 1186. The fort of Sialkot and Debol were captured next. Thus by AD 1190 having secured Multan, Sind and Punjab, Muhammad Ghori had paved the way for a further thrust into the Gangetic Doab.



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The First Battle of Tarain (AD 1191)

Muhammad Ghori's possession of Punjab and his attempt to advance into the Gangetic Doab brought him into direct conflict with the Rajput ruler Prithivaraja Chauhan. He had overrun many small states in Rajputana, captured Delhi and wanted to extend his control over Punjab and Ganga valley. The conflict started with claims of Bhatinda. In the first battle fought at Tarain in AD 1191, Ghori's army was routed and he narrowly escaped death. Prithviraj conquered Bhatinda but he made no efforts to garrison it effectively. This gave Ghori an opportunity to re-assemble his forces and make preparations for another advance into India.

The Second Battle of Tarain (AD 1192)

This battle is regarded as one of the turning points in Indian History. Muhammad Ghori made very careful preparations for this conquest. The Turkish and Rajput forces again came face to face at Tarain. The Indian forces were more in number but Turkish forces were well organised with swift moving cavalry. The bulky Indian forces were no match against the superior organisation, skill and speed of the Turkish cavalry. The Turkish cavalry was using two superior techniques. The first was the horse shoe which gave their horses a long life and protected their hooves. The second was, the use of iron stirrup which gave a good hold to the horse rider and a better striking power in the battle. A large number of Indian soldiers were killed. Prithviraj tried to escape but was captured near Sarsuti. The Turkish army captured the fortresses of Hansi, Sarsuti and Samana. Then they moved forward running over Delhi and Ajmer.

After Tarain, Ghori returned to Ghazni, leaving the affairs of India in the hand of his trusted slave general Qutbuddin Aibak. In AD 1194 Muhammad Ghori again returned to India. He crossed Yamuna with 50,000 cavalry and moved towards Kanauj. He gave a crushing defeat to Jai Chand at Chandwar near Kanauj. Thus the battle of Tarain and Chandwar laid the foundations of Turkish rule in Northern India.

The political achievements of Muhammad Ghori in India were long lasting than those of Mahmud of Ghazni. While Mahmud Ghazni was mainly interested in plundering Muhammad Ghori wanted to establish his political control. His death in AD 1206 did not mean the withdrawal of the Turkish interests in India. He left behind his slave General Qutbuddin Aibak who became first Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.1**

- Fill in the blanks:
 - Sultan Muhammad Ghori was the ruler of _____.
 - The First battle of Tarain was fought between _____ and _____.
 - Muhammad Ghori entrusted his Indian possession to _____.
- When was the Second battle of Tarain fought?

- What was the one major difference between the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad of Ghor?



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9.4 THE MAMLUK SULTANS

With Qutbuddin Aibak, begins the period of Mamluk Sultans or the slave dynasty. Mamluk is an Arabic word meaning “owned”. It was used to distinguish the imported Turkish slaves meant for military service from the lower slaves used as domestic labour or artisan. The Mamluk Sultans ruled from AD 1206 to 1290.

Qutbuddin Aibak (AD 1206–1210)

Qutbuddin Aibak was a Turkish slave who had risen to high rank in Muhammad Ghori’s army. After Muhammad Ghori’s death in AD 1206, the control of his Indian possessions was passed on to Qutbuddin Aibak. Aibak was the first independent Muslim ruler of Northern India, the founder of Delhi Sultanate.

Aibak had to face many revolts from Rajputs and other Indian chiefs. Tajuddin Yalduz, the ruler of Ghazni, claimed his rule over Delhi. Nasiruddin Qabacha, the governor of Multan and Uchch aspired for independence. Aibak was able to win over his enemies by conciliatory measures as well as a display of power. He defeated Yalduz and occupied Ghazni. The successor of Jaichand, Harishchandra had driven out the Turks from Badayun and Farukhabad. Aibak re-conquered both Badayun and Farukhabad.

Qutbuddin Aibak was brave, faithful and generous. Due to his generosity he was known as “Lakh Baksh”. Most of the scholars consider Aibak as the real founder of Muslim rule in India.

Iltutmish (AD 1210–1236)

In AD 1210, Aibak died of injuries received in a fall from his horse while playing chaugan (Polo). After his death a few amirs raised his son Aram Shah to the throne in Lahore. But Aram Shah was incapable ruler and the Turkish amirs opposed him. The Turkish chiefs of Delhi invited the governor of Badayun (son-in-law of Qutbuddin Aibak) “Iltutmish” to come to Delhi. Aram Shah proceeded against him at the head of the army from Lahore to Delhi but Iltutmish defeated him and became the Sultan with the name of Shamsuddin. The credit of consolidating the Delhi Sultanate lies largely with him.

When Iltutmish ascended the throne, he found himself surrounded with many problems. Other commanders of Muhammad Ghori like Yalduz, Qubacha and Ali Mardan rose in defiance again. The chief of Jalor and Ranthambore joined Gwalior and Kalinjar in declaring their independence. Apart from this, the rising power of Mongols under Chenghiz Khan threatened the North West Frontier of the Sultanate.

Iltutmish took up the task of consolidating his position. He defeated Yalduz in AD 1215 in the battle of Tarain. In AD 1217 he drove away Qabacha from Punjab. In AD 1220, when Chenghiz Khan destroyed the Khwarizm empire, Iltutmish realised the political necessity of avoiding a confrontation with the Mongols. Thus when Jalaluddin Mangbarani, the son of the Shah of Khwarizm, while escaping from the Mongols, sought shelter at Iltutmish’s court, Iltutmish turned him away. He thus saved the Sultanate from destruction by the Mongols.

From AD 1225 onwards, Iltutmish engaged his armies in suppressing the disturbances in the East. In AD 1226–27 Iltutmish sent a large army under his son Nasiruddin Mahmud which defeated Iwaz Khan and brought Bengal and Bihar back into the Delhi Sultanate. Similarly a campaign was also launched against the Rajput chiefs. Ranthambore was captured in AD 1226 and by AD 1231 Iltutmish had established his authority over Mandor, Jalore, Bayana and Gwalior.



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There is no doubt that Iltutmish completed the unfinished work of Aibak. The Delhi Sultanate now covered a sizeable territory. Besides this, he also organised his trusted nobles or officers into a group of “Forty” (*Turkan-i-Chahalgani*). He was a farsighted ruler and he consolidated and organised the newly formed Turkish Sultanate in Delhi.

Iltutmish established ‘Group of Forty’ (*Turkan-i-Chahalgani*). These were Turkish amirs (nobles) who advised and helped the Sultan in administering the Sultanate. After the death of Iltutmish, this group assumed great power in its hands. For a few years they decided on the selection of Sultans one after the other. The group was finally eliminated by Balban.

Iltutmish effectively suppressed the defiant amirs of Delhi. He separated the Delhi Sultanate from Ghazni, Ghor and Central Asian politics. Iltutmish also obtained a ‘Letter of Investiture’ in AD 1229 from the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad to gain legitimacy.

Iltutmish made a significant contribution in giving shape to administrative institution such as *iqtas*, *army* and *currency* system. He gave the Sultanate two of its basic coins— the silver ‘*Tanka*’ and the copper ‘*Jittal*’. To affect greater control over the conquered areas Iltutmish granted *iqtas* (land assignments in lieu of cash salaries) to his Turkish officers on a large scale. The recipients of “*iqtas*” called the “*iqtadars*” collected the land revenue from the territories under them. Out of this they maintained an armed contingent for the service of the state, enforced law and order and met their own expenses. Iltutmish realized the economic potentiality of the Doab and the *iqtas* were distributed mainly in this region. This secured for Iltutmish the financial and administrative control over one of the most prestigious regions of North India. (You will read details of administration in lesson 12)

Raziya (AD 1236–40)

The problem of successor troubled Iltutmish during his last days. Iltutmish did not consider any of his sons worthy of the throne. His own choice was his daughter Raziya hence he nominated her as his successor. But after his death his son Ruknuddin Firoz ascended the throne with the help of army leaders. However with the support of the people of Delhi and some military leaders, Raziya soon ascended the throne.

Despite her obvious qualities, Raziya did not fare significantly better primarily because of her attempts to create a counter nobility of non-Turks and invited the wrath of the Turkish amirs. They were particularly incensed over her decision to appoint the Abyssinian, Malik Jamaluddin Yaqut, as the *amir-i-akhur* (master of the horses); the recruitment of a few other non-Turks to important posts further inflamed matters.

The nobility realized that, though a woman, Raziya was not willing to be a puppet in their hands, therefore the nobles started revolting against her in the provinces. They accused her of violating feminine modesty and being too friendly to an Abyssinian noble, Yaqut. She got killed after she was defeated by the nobles. Thus her reign was a brief one and came to end in AD 1240.

Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246–66 AD)

The struggle for power between Sultan and the Turkish Chiefs “*Chahalgani*” which began during the reign of Raziya continued. After Raziya’s death, the power of *Chahalgani* increased and they became largely responsible for making and unmaking of kings. Behram Shah (AD 1240–42) and Masud Shah (AD 1242–46) were made Sultans and removed in succession. After them, in AD 1246, Ulugh Khan (later



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known as Balban) placed the inexperienced and young Nasiruddin (grandson of Iltutmish) on throne and himself assumed the position of Naib (deputy). To further strengthen his position, he married his daughter to Nasiruddin. Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud died in AD 1265. According to Ibn Battuta and Isami, Balban poisoned his master Nasiruddin and ascended the throne.

Balban (AD 1266–87)

The struggle between the sultan and the Turkish nobles continued, till one of the Turkish chiefs, Ulugh Khan, known in history by the name of Balban, gradually arrogated all power to himself and finally ascended the throne in AD 1266. When Balban became the Sultan, his position was not secure. Many Turkish chiefs were hostile to him; the Mongols were looking forward for an opportunity for attacking the Sultanate, the governors of the distant provinces were also trying to become independent rulers, the Indian rulers were also ready to revolt at the smallest opportunity.

The law and order situation in the area around Delhi and in the Doab region had deteriorated. In the Ganga-Yamuna doab and Awadh, the roads were infested with the robbers and dacoits, because of which the communication with the eastern areas had become difficult. Some of the Rajput zamindars had set up forts in the area, and defied the government. The Mewatis had become so bold as to plunder people up to the outskirts of Delhi. To deal with these elements, Balban adopted a stern policy. In the Mewat many were killed. In the area around Badayun, Rajput strongholds were destroyed.

Balban ruled in an autocratic manner and worked hard to elevate the position of the Sultan. He did not allow any noble to assume great power. He even formulated the theory of kingship. The historian Barani, who was himself a great champion of the Turkish nobles, says that Balban remarked ‘whenever I see a base born ignoble man, my eyes burn and I reach in anger for my sword (to kill him).’ We do not know if Balban actually said these words but his attitude towards the non-Turks was that of contempt. Balban was not prepared to share power with anyone, not even with his own family.

Balban was determined to break the power of the Chahalgani. To keep himself well informed, Balban appointed spies in every department. He also organised a strong centralized army, both to deal with internal disturbances, and to repel the Mongols who had entrenched themselves in the Punjab and posed a serious threat to the Delhi Sultanate. Balban re-organised the military department (*diwan-i-arz*) and deployed army in different parts of the country to put down rebellion. The disturbances in Mewat, Doab, Awadh and Katihar were ruthlessly suppressed. Balban also secured control over Ajmer and Nagaur in eastern Rajputana but his attempts to capture Ranthambore and Gwalior failed. In AD 1279, encouraged by the Mongol threats and the old age of Sultan the governor of Bengal, Tughril Beg, revolted, assumed the title of Sultan and had the *khutba* read in his name. Balban sent his forces to Bengal and had Tughril killed. Subsequently he appointed his own son Bughra Khan as the governor of Bengal.

By all these harsh methods, Balban controlled the situation. In order to impress the people with the strength and awe of his government, Balban maintained a magnificent court. He refused to laugh and joke in the court, and even gave up drinking wine so that no one may see him in a non-serious mood. He also insisted on the ceremony of *sijada* (prostration) and *paibos* (kissing of the monarch’s feet) in the court.

Balban was undoubtedly one of the main architects of the Sultanate of Delhi, particularly of its form of government and institutions. By asserting the power of the monarchy, Balban strengthened the Delhi Sultanate. But even he could not fully defend northern



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India against the attacks of the Mongols. Moreover, by excluding non-Turkish from positions of power and authority and by trusting only a very narrow racial group he made many people dissatisfied. This led to fresh disturbances and troubles after his death.

Balban adopted a policy of consolidation rather than expansion. He introduced a new theory of kingship and redefined the relations between the Sultan and nobility. Through these measures Balban strengthened the Delhi Sultanate.

Balban died in AD 1287. After his death the nobles raised his grandson Kaiquabad to the throne. He was soon replaced by his son, Kaimurs, who remained on the throne for a little over three months. During Balban’s reign, Firoz had been the warden of the marches in north-west and had fought many successful battles against the Mongols. He was called to Delhi as *Ariz-i-Mumalik* (Minister of War). In AD 1290 Firoz took a bold step by murdering Kaimurs and seized the throne. A group of Khalji nobles led by him established the Khalji dynasty. Some scholars call this event as the ‘dynastic revolution’ of AD 1290. It brought to an end the so called slave dynasty and Firoz ascended the throne under the title of Jalaluddin Khalji.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.2

1. What problems did Iltutmish face on ascending the throne? Mention any two.

2. Why was ‘Group of Forty’ (*Turkan-i-Chahalgani*) formed by Iltutmish?

3. Whom do you consider the first Sultan of Delhi Sultanate?

4. What measures did Balban take to emphasize that the Sultan had absolute powers?

9.5 THE KHALJIS (AD 1290–1320)

Jalaluddin Khalji (AD 1290–1296)

Jalaluddin Khalji laid the foundation of the Khalji dynasty. He ascended the throne at the age of 70 years. Although Jalaluddin retained the earlier nobility in his administration, but the rise of Khaljis to power ended the monopoly of nobility of slaves to high offices. Jalaluddin ruled only for a short span of six years. He tried to mitigate some of the harsh aspects of Balban’s rule. He was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate to clearly put forward the view that the state should be based on the willing support of the governed, and that since the large majority of the people in India were Hindus, the state in India could not be a truly Islamic state.

Jalaluddin tried to win the goodwill of the nobility by a policy of tolerance. He avoided harsh punishments, even to those who revolted against him. He not only forgave them but at times even rewarded them to win their support. However many people including his supporters, considered him to be a weak sultan.

Jalaluddin’s policy was reversed by Alauddin Khalji who awarded drastic punishments to all those who dared to oppose him.



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Alauddin Khalji (AD 1296–1316)

Alauddin Khalji was Jalaluddin's ambitious nephew and son-in-law. He had helped his uncle in his struggle for power and was appointed as *Amir-i-Tuzuk* (Master of Ceremonies). Alauddin had two victorious expeditions during the reign of Jalaluddin. After the first expedition of Bhilsa (Vidisa) in AD 1292, he was given the *iqta* of Awadh, in addition to that of Kara. He was also appointed *Arizi-i-Mumalik* (Minister of War). In AD 1294, he led the first Turkish expedition to southern India and plundered Devagiri. The successful expedition proved that Alauddin was an able military commander and efficient organiser. In July AD 1296, he murdered his uncle and father-in-law Jalaluddin Khalji and crowned himself as the Sultan.

Alauddin decided to revive Balban's policies of ruthless governance. He decided to curb the powers of the nobles and interference of Ulema in the matters of the state. He also faced, a few rebellions in succession during the early years of his rule. According to Barani, the author of *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Alauddin felt that there were four reasons for these rebellions: 1) The inefficiency of the spy system, 2) the general practice of the use of wine, 3) Social intercourse among the nobles and inter marriage between them and 4) the excess of wealth in the possession of certain nobles.

In order to prevent the reoccurrence of these rebellions, Alauddin formulated certain regulations and implemented them. (1) Families that had been enjoying free land to support themselves should pay land tax for their holdings. This curbed the excess of wealth owned by some people. (2) The Sultan reorganized the spy system and took measure to make it more effective. (3) The use of liquor and intoxicants was prohibited. (4) The nobles were ordered not to have social gatherings or inter-marriages without his permission.

Alauddin established a huge permanent, standing army to satisfy his ambition of conquest and to protect the country from Mongol invasion.

Market Regulations of Alauddin Khalji

Alauddin's measures to control the markets were one of the most important policy initiative. Since Alauddin wanted to maintain a large army, he therefore, lowered and fixed the price of the commodities of daily use. To control the prices, Alauddin set up three different markets for different commodities in Delhi. These markets were the grain market (*Mandi*), cloth market (*Sarai Adl*) and the market for horses, slaves, cattles, etc. To ensure implementation, Alauddin appointed a superintendent (*Shahna-i-Mandi*) who was assisted by an intelligence officer. Apart from Shahna-i-Mandi, Alauddin received daily reports of the market from two other independent sources, *barid* (*intelligence officer*) and *munhiyans* (secret spies). Any violation of Sultan's orders resulted in harsh punishment, including expulsion from the capital, imposition of fine, imprisonment and mutilation.

Control of prices of horses was very important for the Sultan because without the supply of good horses at reasonable price to army, the efficiency of the army could not be ensured. Low price in the horse market were ensured by putting a stop to the purchase of horses by horse dealers and brokers (*dalals*) in Delhi market.

Expansion of Delhi Sultanate

Under Alauddin Khalji the territorial expansion of the Delhi Sultanate, beyond North India, was the most important achievement.



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Alauddin first began his territorial conquest with a campaign against Gujarat. Alauddin was motivated by his desire to establish a vast empire and obtain the wealth of Gujarat. The riches of Gujarat were to pay for his future conquests and her sea port was to ensure a regular supply of Arab horses for his army. In AD 1299, an army under two of Alauddin's noted generals Ulugh Khan and Nusarat Khan marched against Gujarat. Rai Karan the ruler of Gujarat fled, the temple of Somnath was captured. An enormous booty was collected. Even the wealthy Muslim merchants were not spared. Many slaves were captured. Malik Kafur was one among them who later became the trusted commander of the Khalji forces and led the invasions to South India. Gujarat now passed under the control of Delhi.

After the annexation of Gujarat, Alauddin turned his attention towards Rajasthan. Ranthambore was the first target. Ranthambore was reputed to be the strongest fort of Rajasthan and had earlier defied Jalaluddin Khalji. The capture of Ranthambore was necessary to break the power and morale of the Rajputs. The immediate cause of attack was that the ruler of Ranthambore Hamirdeva gave shelter to two rebellious Mongol soldiers and refused to hand over them to the Khalji ruler. Hence an offensive was launched against Ranthambore. To begin with the Khalji forces suffered losses. Nusrat Khan even lost his life. Finally Alauddin himself had to come on the battle field. In AD 1301, the fort fell to Alauddin.

In AD 1303, Alauddin besieged Chittor, another powerful state of Rajputana. According to some scholars, Alauddin attacked Chittor because he coveted Padmini, the beautiful queen of Raja Ratan Singh. However many scholars do not agree with this legend as this is first mentioned by Jaisi in his Padmavat more than two hundred years later. According to Amir Khusrau, the Sultan ordered a general massacre of the civil population. Chittor was renamed Khizrabad after the name of Sultan's son Khizr Khan. Alauddin however returned back quickly to Delhi as Mongol army was advancing towards Delhi.

In AD 1305, Khalji army under Ain-ul-Mulk captured Malwa. Other states such as Ujjain, Mandu, Dhar and Chanderi were also captured. After the conquest of Malwa, Alauddin sent Malik Kafur to the South and himself attacked Siwana. The ruler of Siwana Raja Shital Deva defended the fort bravely but was ultimately defeated. In AD 1311, another Rajput kingdom Jalor was also captured. Thus by AD 1311, Alauddin had completed the conquest of large parts of Rajputana and became the master of North India.

Deccan and South India

The imperialist ambitions of Alauddin were not satisfied with the conquest of the north. He was determined to conquer south as well. The wealth of the southern kingdoms attracted him. The expeditions to the south were sent under Malik Kafur, a trusted commander of Alauddin who held the office of the Naib.

In AD 1306-07, Alauddin planned fresh campaign in Deccan. His first target was Rai Karan (the earlier ruler of Gujarat), who had now occupied Baglana, and defeated him. The second expedition was against Rai Ramachandra, the ruler of Deogir who had earlier promised to pay tribute to Sultan but did not pay. Ramachandra surrendered after little resistance to Malik Kafur and was treated honourably. He was kept a guest at Alauddin's court and was given a gift of one lakh tankas and the title of Rai Rayan. He was also given a district of Gujarat and one of his daughters was married to Alauddin. Alauddin showed generosity towards Ramachandra because he wanted to have Ramachandra as an ally for campaigns in the South.

After AD 1309 Malik Kafur was despatched to launch campaign in South India. The first expedition was against Pratab Rudradeva of Warangal in the Telengana area. This siege lasted for many months and came to an end when Rai agreed to part with his treasures and pay tribute to Sultan.



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The second campaign was against Dwar Samudra and Ma'bar (modern Karnataka and Tamil Nadu). The ruler of Dwar Samudra, Vir Ballala III realized that defeating Malik Kafur would not be an easy task, hence he agreed to pay tribute to Sultan without any resistance. In the case of Ma'bar (Pandya Kingdom) a direct decisive battle could not take place. However, Kafur plundered as much as he could including a number of wealthy temples such as that of Chidambaram. According to Amir Khusrau, Kafur returned with 512 elephants, 7000 horses, and 500 *mans* of precious stone. The Sultan honoured Malik Kafur by appointing him Naib Malik of the empire. Alauddin's forces under Malik Kafur continued to maintain a control over the Deccan kingdoms.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.3

1. Why was the capture of Ranthambore necessary?
-



Notes

2. Who led the expeditions in the South during Alauddin Khalji's rule?

3. Mention two places where expeditions were undertaken during Jalaluddin's reign.

4. List the four regulations issued by Alauddin to curb rebellions.

Following the death of Alauddin in AD 1316, the Delhi Sultanate was plunged into confusion. Malik Kafur sat on the throne for a few days, only to be deposed by Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah. During this period, rebellions broke out in Deogir but were harshly suppressed. Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah was soon murdered and Khusrau ascended the throne. However he too did not last long as some dissatisfied officers, led by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, defeated and killed him in a battle. Thus only four years after the death of Alauddin, the Khalji dynasty came to end and power passed into the hands of the Tughlaqs.

9.6 THE TUGHLAQS (AD 1320–1412)

The founder of the Tughlaq dynasty was Ghazi Malik who ascended the throne as Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in AD 1320 and this dynasty ruled till AD 1412. Ghiyasuddin rose to an important position in the reign of Alauddin Khalji. After a brief rule Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq died in AD 1325 and his son Muhammad Tughlaq ascended the throne. Under the Tughlaqs the Delhi Sultanate was further consolidated. Many outlying territories were brought under the direct control of the Sultanate.

The Deccan and South

The regions of the Deccan which were conquered by the Khaljis had stopped paying tribute and were proclaiming independent status. Muhammad Tughlaq while a prince (called Juna Khan) led the early expeditions against Rai Rudra Dev who was defeated after a prolonged conflict and Warangal was now annexed under direct control of the Sultanate. Ma'bar was also defeated. Now the whole region of Telangana was divided into administrative units and made part of the Sultanate. In contrast to Allauddin Khalji's policy the Tughlaqs annexed the Deccan region. Muhammad Tughlaq even decided to transfer his capital from Delhi to Deogir and renamed it as Daultabad. In fact he wanted to control the northern region from this place. Substantial number of nobles, religious men and craftsmen shifted to the new capital. It seems that the idea was to treat it as the second capital and not abandon Delhi. Later the whole scheme was given up. However, the plan improved ties between the north and south. Apart from territorial expansion the social, cultural and economic interactions also grew.

East India

Bhanudeva II, the ruler of Jajnagar in Orissa had helped Rai Rudra Dev of Warangal in his battle against Delhi Sultans. Ulug Khan led an army against him in AD 1324 Bhanudeva II was defeated and his territory annexed. In Bengal there was discontent of nobles against their Sultan. The dissatisfied nobles invited the Tughlaq prince to invade their ruler. The army of Bengal was defeated and a noble Nasiruddin was installed on the throne.

North West

The Mongol invasions from the North-West region were rocking the Sultanate on regular intervals. In AD 1326–27 a big Mongol assault under Tarmashirin Khan took place.



Notes

Transfer of Capital

One of the controversial measures of Muhammad bin Tughlaq was that he transferred his capital from Delhi to Deogir (Daultabad). According to Dr. Mahdi Hussain, the Sultan wanted to maintain both Delhi and Daultabad as his capitals. As per Barani, in AD 1326–27, Sultan decided to shift his capital from Delhi to Deogir (Daultabad) in the Deccan because it was more centrally located. According to Ibn Batuta, the people of Delhi used to write letters containing abuses to the Sultan, therefore, in order to punish them Sultan decided to shift the capital. Isami says that it was a place at a safer distance from the North West frontier and thus safe from the Mongols. In view of different versions it is difficult to assign one definite reason for this shift.

The entire population was not asked to leave only the upper classes consisting of *shaikhs, nobles, ulema* were shifted to Daultabad. No attempt was made to shift the rest of the population. Though Muhammad bin Tughlaq built a road from Delhi to Deogir and set up rest houses but the journey was extremely harsh for the people. Large number of people died because of rigorous travelling and the heat. Due to growing discontent and the fact that north could not be controlled from south, Muhammad decided to abandon Daultabad.

Muhammad Tughlaq decided to secure the frontier. The region from Lahore to Kalanur including Peshawar was conquered and new administrative control was established. Besides, the Sultan also planned invasions of Qarachil region (In present day Himachal) and Qandhar but did not succeed. In fact these schemes resulted in heavy loss.

Muhammad Tughlaq was very innovative in adopting new policies. He started a new department for the development of Agriculture. It was called *Diwan-i Kohi*. Peasants were given financial support to help in arranging seeds for cultivation. This loan was also given in case of crop failures. Another important measure was to introduce token currency to tide over the shortage of Silver. However, this scheme failed causing great financial loss to the sultanate.

Token Currency

Another controversial project undertaken by Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the introduction of “Token Currency”. According to Barani, the Sultan introduced token currency because the treasury was empty due to the Sultan’s schemes of conquest as well as his boundless generosity. Some historians are of the opinion that there was a shortage of silver world wide at that time and India too faced the crisis therefore, the Sultan was forced to issue copper coins in place of silver.

Muhammad introduced a copper coin (*Jital*) in place of silver coin (*tanka*) and ordered that it should be accepted as equivalent to the *tanka*. However, the idea of token currency was new in India and it was difficult for traders and common people to accept it. The State also did not take proper precautions to check the imitation of coins issued by the mints. Government could not prevent people from forging the new coins and soon the new coins flooded the markets. According to Barani the people began to mint token currency in their houses. However the common man failed to distinguish between copper coin issued by the royal treasury and those which were locally made. Thus the Sultan was forced to withdraw the token currency.

Muhammad Tughlaq was succeeded by his cousin Firuz Tughlaq. Under him no new territories could be added to the Sultanate. He managed to keep large areas intact



Notes

with great efforts. However, the political control of Delhi gradually weakened during the rule of Firuz's successors. The invasion of Timur in AD 1398 left the sultanate desolate. By the end of Tughlaq rule (AD 1412) the Sultanate was confined to a small territory in north India. A number of regions proclaimed independent status. In the east Bengal and Orissa enjoyed complete autonomy. In eastern UP and large parts of Bihar a new independent kingdom of Sharqis emerged. In the Deccan and South Vijaynagar empire and Bahmani kingdom became political powers. Large parts of Punjab were occupied by independent nobles. Gujarat and Malwa became fully independent. Rajput states in Rajasthan no longer treated Delhi Sultans as their overlords.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.4**

1. Under which title did Ghazi Malik ascend the throne in 1320 AD?

2. Whom did Ghiyasuddin send to conquer the South?

3. What was the political motive of Muhammad's transfer of capital?

4. What was the concept of Token currency?

9.7 SAYYID DYNASTY (1414–1450 AD)

After defeating the army of Delhi in 1398 Timur appointed Khizr Khan as the ruler of Multan. Khizr Khan defeated Sultan Daulat Khan and occupied Delhi and founded Sayyid dynasty. He did not assume the title of Sultan but was comfortable with Rayat-i-Ala. The author of the Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi, Yahya Sirhindi claims that the founder of the Sayyid dynasty was a descendant of the prophet.

Khizr Khan was the most competent Sayyid ruler of the dynasty. After Khizr Khan's death Mubarak Shah (AD 1412–34) and Muhammad Shah (AD 1434–45) ascended the throne one after another. All of these rulers tried to control rebellious regions like Katehar, Badaun, Etawah, Patiali, Gwalior, Kampil, Nagaur and Mewat but they failed due to the conspiracy of the nobles.

In 1445 AD, Alam Shah ascended the throne and became the Sultan. He proved a totally incompetent Sultan. Alam Shah's Wazir Hamid Khan invited Bahlol Lodi to take charge of the army and after realizing that it would be difficult to continue as Sultan, Alam Shah left for Badaun.

9.8 RECONSOLIDATION UNDER LODI DYNASTY (1451–1526)

With the help of a few nobles Bahlol Lodi (AD 1451–1489) took charge of the army, and became the Sultan. Thus he laid the foundation of Lodi dynasty whose rulers were Afghans. The Lodis were the last ruling family of the Sultanate period and the first to be headed by the Afghans.

Sultan Bahlol Lodi was a capable general. He was aware of the fact that to establish his control over Sultanate he would require help and support of Afghan nobles. The Afghan nobles wanted Sultan to treat them as an equal partner rather than an abso-

**Notes**

lute monarch. To placate them Bahlol publicly declared that he considered himself one of the Afghan peers and not the king. He did not sit on the throne nor did he insist on his nobles standing in his court. This policy worked well throughout his long reign and he did not face any trouble from his powerful Afghan nobles.

Bahlol Lodi successfully suppressed the revolts in Mewat and Doab. In AD 1476 he defeated the Sultan of Jaunpur and annexed it to Delhi Sultanate. He also brought the ruler of Kalpi and Dholpur under the Suzerainty of Delhi. However, he failed to re-occupy Bengal, Gujarat and the Deccan.

After the death of Bahlol Lodi, Sikandar Lodi (AD 1489–1517) ascended the throne. Sikandar Lodi showed little tolerance towards the non-mulsims. He re-imposed *jaziya* on non-mulsims.

Sikandar Lodi believed in the superior position of the Sultan vis-a-vis the nobles. He compelled nobles and *amirs* to show formal respect to the Sultan in *darbar* and outside and treated them harshly. He re-annexed Bihar, Dholpur, Narwar and some parts of the kingdom of Gwalior and Nagor to the Delhi Sultanate.

After the death of Sikandar Lodi in AD 1517 his nobles helped Ibrahim Lodi to become Sultan. His reign proved a period of revolts. Firstly his own brother Jalal Khan rebelled. Sultan Ibrahim Lodi got him murdered. Bihar declared its independence. Daulat Khan the governor of Punjab also rebelled. Sultan's behaviour caused much dissatisfaction. The rebellions Daulat Khan sent an invitation to Babur at Kabul to invade India. Babur defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in AD 1526 in the battle at Panipat.

Summing up the end of the Sultanate, a scholar states "The Sultanate of Delhi, which had its birth on the battlefield of Tarain in AD 1192, breathed its last in AD 1526 a few miles away on the battlefield of Panipat".

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.5**

1. What policy did Bahlol Lodi adopt to seek the co-operation of Afghan nobles?

2. Who founded the Sayyid dynasty?

3. Who is the author of *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*?

4. What measure did Sikandar take to improve the dignity and *status* of Sultan?

9.9 CHALLENGES FACED BY THE SULTANATE

With the establishment of the Mughal Empire the rule of Delhi sultanate came to an end. During more than 300 years of its rule the Delhi sultanate went through various ups and downs but survived as a political force. Here we would like to discuss the major challenges the sultanate faced.

Attacks by Mongols and others

Since its inception the major threat to the sultanate came in the form of Mongol invasions. Mongols were nomadic groups who inhabited the steppes north of China and east of Lake Baikal. They formed a huge nomadic empire under Chengiz Khan



Notes

in the 12th century. From 13th century onwards they repeatedly attacked the Delhi Sultanate. The Sultans as a policy appeased them and also at times confronted. Balban and Allauddin Khalji confronted them with full military might. During Khalji's time Mongols under Qutlug Khwaja even besieged Delhi and caused a lot of damage. The last significant attack of Mongols was by Tarmashirin during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. A lot of energy and resources of the Sultans were spent in facing these invasions but they could not destroy the sultanate.

Another important attack which shook the foundation of the sultanate was by Timur in 1398. The weakness of the Delhi Sultanate was made even worse by Timur's invasion of Delhi (1398). Timur was a son of the Chief of Chagtai branch of Turks. When he invaded India he was the master of almost whole of Central Asia. Timur's raid into India was a plundering raid and his motive was to seize the wealth accumulated by the Sultans of Delhi over the last 200 years. Sultan Nasiruddin and his Wazir Mallu Iqbal faced Timur but were defeated. Timur entered Delhi and stayed for 15 days. He ordered general massacre and large number of Hindu and Muslim including women and children were murdered. Before leaving India Timur's invasion indicated the downfall of Delhi Sultanate. Delhi Sultanate lost control over Punjab. Timur appointed Khizr Khan, the ruler for Multan who controlled Punjab also. After the fall of Tughlaq dynasty he occupied Delhi and became the ruler of Delhi Sultanate. He laid the foundation of Saiyyid Dynasty.

Inner Conflict of Nobility

Three hundred years of Delhi Sultanate witnessed five dynasties ruling over it. The main reason for change of dynasties and deposing of rulers was a constant struggle between the Sultan and the nobility (Umar). Soon after the death of Aibak they started fighting over the question of succession. Finally Iltutmish emerged victorious. Iltutmish created a group of loyal nobles called Turkan-i-Chihiligani ('The Forty'). After the death of Iltutmish various factions of the group of forty got involved in making their favourite son/daughter as the sultan. In ten years five sultans were changed. After that the Sultan who occupied the throne (Nasiruddin Mahmud) for 20 years hardly ruled and one of the powerful noble Balban was defacto sultan. The same Balban succeeded Nasiruddin after his death. Almost similar events happened after the death of each powerful sultan (Balban, Alauddin Khalji, Firoz Tughlaq and others.) Since there was no well defined law of succession each noble tried to either crown himself or support some favourite heir of the dead sultan. Finally Afghans replaced the Turks as sultan with the accession of Bahlol Lodi.

Provincial Kingdoms

Another consequence of this conflict was declaration of independence by various provincial heads in the regions. As a result a number of independent Afghan and Turkish kingdoms emerged. Important ones of such states were Bengal (Lakhnauti), Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, the Bahmani kingdom in the Deccan etc. Quite often these states were at war with the Sultanate. The whole process weakened the sultanate.

Resistance by Indian Chiefs

The sultans had to face the resistance from Indian chiefs at regular intervals. The Rajput chiefs in Rajputana (Mewar, Ranthambhor, Chittor etc.), Warangal, Deogiri & Ma'bar in Deccan and South, the king of Dhar, Malwa in Central India, Jajnagar in Orissa and a host of smaller chieftains were constantly at war even after successive defeats. All these struggles weakened the sultanate.

**Notes**

The Delhi sultanate was considerably weakened after the Khalji and Tughlaq reign. Finally the invasion of Babur in AD 1526 brought it to an end. Now a much more centralised and strong empire under the Mughals established itself in India and ruled for a further period of more than two hundred years. We will discuss it in our next lesson on the Mughal Rule. But before moving to the Mughals we provide you a brief account of the provincial kingdoms.

Rise of The Provincial Kingdoms

You have read that the process of disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate had started during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. However, Firuz Shah Tughlaq tried to control the situation but failed. During this period, some of the provincial rulers declared their independence from the rule of the Sultanate.

Jaunpur

Jaunpur was a prosperous province in the eastern part of Delhi Sultanate. Malik Sarwar was the Governor of Jaunpur. Soon he became the ruler of Kanauj, Kara, Awadh, Sandeela, Dalmau, Bahraich, Bihar and Tirhut. Though Malik Sarwar did not assume the title of Sultan, but he laid down the foundation of Sharqi Dynasty.

After the death of Malik Sarwar in AD 1399, his adopted son Malik Karanphul succeeded the throne. He assumed the title of Mubarak Shah and thus was the first ruler of Sharqi dynasty. When Mubarak Shah was the ruler of Jaunpur dynasty, during that time Mahmud Tughlaq, the Sultan of Delhi was the puppet in the hands of Mallu Iqbal. Mallu Iqbal undertook an expedition to recover Jaunpur but failed. On Mubarak Shah's death in AD 1402 his younger brother Ibrahim ascended the throne. He ruled for 34 years.

During Ibrahim's reign the relations between Delhi and Jaunpur became worse. Ibrahim was the greatest ruler of Sharqi dynasty under whom Jaunpur became an important centre of learning. Under him Jaunpur evolved a distinct architecture which is known as Sharqi style of architecture. The most famous of their buildings was the Atala Masjid at Jaunpur.

Ibrahim's successor Mahmud conquered the fort of Chunar. He also tried to conquer Kalpi but failed. He invaded Delhi but was defeated by Bahlol Lodi. After Mahmud, Jaunpur saw the rule of Muhammad Shah and Husain Shah. Husain Shah died in AD 1500 and with him ended the Sharqi dynasty.

Kashmir

Shamshuddin Shah (AD 1339) was the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir. In AD 1389 Sikandar ascended the throne. He was a powerful and despotic ruler. Sikandar died in AD 1416 and his son Ali Shah ascended the throne. After some years his brother Shah Khan ascended the throne under the title of Zainul Abidin.

Zainul Abidin was a liberal and enlightened ruler. To secure the support of all the groups, he called back all such groups who had been banished by Sikandar. He abolished 'jaziya' and prohibited cow slaughter. Zainul Abidin paid great attention towards the economic growth of Kashmir. He himself was a great scholar of Persian, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Kashmiri language. He ordered the translation of Mahabharata and Rajatarangini (history of Kashmir) into Persian.

Zainul Abidin's successor proved a weak ruler. Taking advantage of his weaknesses Mirza Haider, a relative of Babur conquered Kashmir. In AD 1586 Kashmir was annexed by Akbar and became part of the Mughal Empire.



Notes

Malwa

Malwa was the south-western province of Delhi Sultanate. It was conquered by Sultan Alauddin in AD 1310 and remained the part of Delhi Sultanate till the death of Firuz Tughlaq. Dilawar Khan threw off his allegiance to Delhi in AD 1401 after the invasion of Timur. He did not take the royal title of Sultan. After the death of Dilawar Khan in AD 1405, his son Ala Khan ascended the throne and acquired the title of Hoshang Shah. He made Mandu his capital. The Hindi Mahal, Jama Masjid, Jahaz Mahal are examples of Mandu architecture.

Hoshang Shah was succeeded by Ghazi Khan who was deposed by his minister Mahmud Khan Khalji in AD 1436. Mahmud assumed the title of Shah and laid the foundation of Khalji dynasty of Malwa. Under Mahmud Khalji, Malwa became strong and prosperous kingdom. He was a generous king. According to Ferishta he was polite, brave and learned person. Mahmud Khalji was followed by Ghiyasuddin and Nasiruddin. Mahmud II ascended the throne of Malwa in AD 1510. He called Medini Rai, a powerful Rajput to crush his disloyal nobles and appointed him his prime minister. The predominance of Rajputs at the court created jealousy among the Muslims nobles. The Sultan of Gujarat defeated Malwa and annexed Malwa to Gujarat.

Gujarat

Gujarat has always attracted the invaders due to its geographical location, prosperity and fertility. Sultan Alauddin Khalji was the first Sultan who annexed Gujarat to the Delhi Sultanate. Since then it remained under the Turkish governors. At the time of Timur's invasion, Zafar Khan was the governor of this province. He threw off the allegiance to Delhi Sultanate. In AD 1410, he became the independent ruler of Gujarat. The most famous of the Gujarat rulers was Ahmad Shah (AD 1411 to 1441). To extend his kingdom, he restrained the Rajput States. Ahmad Shah founded the city of Ahmedabad. After the death of Ahmed Shah in AD 1441 his eldest son Muhammad Shah ascended the throne. He was known as *Zar-Baksh*. He was killed by conspirators in AD 1451. Muhammad Shah was followed by two weak rulers. Nobles raised Fateh Khan, a grandson of Ahmad Shah to the throne. He ruled as Mahmud. Mahmud was the ablest ruler of his dynasty. He ruled for 52 years. Mahmud died in AD 1511. He was followed by a number of rulers who had brief reigns. In AD 1572 Akbar conquered Gujarat and annexed it to the Mughal Empire.

Bengal

Bengal was the easternmost province of Delhi Sultanate. Lack of proper means of transportation and communication created difficulty in controlling this province. Though Bengal was annexed to the Delhi Sultanate, a number of times it gained its independence. During the last decade of the 12th century AD Muhammad Bin Bakhitiyar annexed Bengal to the conquered territories of Muhammad Ghori. But after his death, his successors declared their independence with the support of the local people. Balban forced Bengal to accept the sovereignty of Delhi and appointed his son Bughra Khan as its governor. But after Balban's death he declared his own independence. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq tried to solve this problem by partitioning Bengal into three independent administrative divisions namely Lakhnauti, Satgaon and Sonargaon. Muhammad bin Tughlaq tried to declare the supremacy of Delhi Sultanate but when he was busy in suppressing rebellion in other parts of Sultanate Bengal cut off its connection with Delhi.

Haji Iliyas, a noble united Bengal and became its ruler under the title of Shamsh-uddin Iliyas Shah. To counter increasing influence of Haji Iliyas Firuz Shah Tughlaq invaded Bengal but did not meet with success. He had to sign a treaty with Iliyas.

**Notes**

According to the treaty, river Kosi was accepted as the boundary line between two kingdoms. Haji Ilyas died in AD 1357 and his son Sikandar succeeded the throne. During his reign Firuz Shah Tughlaq again tried to annex Bengal but failed. After the death of Sikandar, Ghiyasuddin Azam ascended the throne. He maintained friendly relations with the king of China which led to the rich foreign trade. This time, Nasiruddin, a grandson of Haji Ilyas was the ruler of Bengal. He peacefully ruled for 17 years.

During the reign of Alauddin Husain Shah, Bengal became rich and prosperous. On his death in AD 1518 his son Nasib Khan ascended the throne under the title of Nasir-ud-din Nusrat Shah.

In AD 1538 Sher Shah Suri defeated Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah and made Bengal a part of his empire.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.6**

1. Why were Mongols attacking the Delhi Sultanate?

2. What was the main conflict among nobles?

3. What name was given to the rulers of Jaunpur dynasty?

4. What steps did Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq take to resolve the problem of Bughra Khan declaring his own independence?

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

Islam rose in Arabia and spread quickly in different parts of the world under the caliphs. The Arabian armies captured the large parts of central Asia and even attacked India in 712 AD. The next important invasion into India was when Mahmud Ghazni attacked India. His main intention was to carry the wealth of India to Ghazni.

In the 12th century India was divided into small kingdoms mostly ruled by Rajput chiefs. During this time the political condition of central Asia was not good because of which Muhammad Ghorī was to look towards India for expansion. In AD 1191 (First battle of Tarain) Muhammad Ghorī was defeated by Prithviraj Chauhan. In 1192 (second battle of Tarain) Muhammad Ghorī returned and this time Rajput forces were defeated. Thus Delhi passed into the hands of Turks. Muhammad Ghorī left his Indian possessions in the hands of his trusted slave – general Qutbuddin Aibak which led to the establishment of Delhi Sultanate. Iltutmish further consolidated the Sultanate by putting down internal rebellions and conciliating the nobility by forming of ‘Group of Forty’. The last powerful Sultan of slave dynasty was Balban who became the Sultan in AD 1266. He ruled in an autocratic manner and worked hard to elevate the position of sultan. After the death of Balban in AD 1287, the Khaljis came to the power in AD 1290.

The coming of Khaljis marked a break in the monopoly of Turkish rule. Jalaluddin Khalji laid the foundation of Khalji dynasty. In AD 1296, Alauddin Khalji murdered his uncle and father-in-law Jalaluddin Khalji and crowned himself as Sultan. He restored the prestige of the crown. He suppressed the nobility and ruled as an autocrat. His able general Alp Khan, Nusrat Khan, Zafar Khan, Ulugh Khan, Malik Kafur won him many victories. Another important measure taken by Alauddin was the establishment



Notes

Establishment and Expansion of the Delhi sultanate

of markets where goods were sold at fixed prices and did not allow any trader to earn more profit. He set up different markets for different commodities in Delhi.

The Khalji dynasty was followed by the Tughlaqs. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq ascended the throne in AD 1320. He was succeeded by Muhammad Tughlaq in AD 1325. Muhammad Tughlaq is famous for his innovative projects. These projects included the transfer of his capital from Delhi to Daultabad, and introduction of token currency. Following the death of Muhammad Tughlaq, the amirs and ulemas placed Firuz Tughlaq on the throne. During his reign the forces of disintegration were active. In AD 1398 Timur invaded the Delhi Sultanate in order to plunder it. The invasion of Timur gave an opportunity to the provincial Kingdoms to declare their independence from the Sultanate.

Malik sarwar began to rule as a defacto ruler of Jaunpur. Another province Malwa also threw its allegiance to Delhi Sultanate and its ruler Mahmud Khalji expanded the boundaries of Malwa. Gujarat broke away from the Sultanate when its governor Zafar Khan began ruling as an independent ruler. The most famous ruler of Gujarat was Ahmad Shah who founded Ahmedabad. The most remarkable ruler of the provincial Kingdoms was Zainal Abidin the ruler of Kashmir. Under him Kashmir became a strong and prosperous state. Bengal the Eastern most province of the Sultanate was annexed many times to Delhi Sultanate but repeatedly gained its independence. Haji Ilyas united Bengal which was divided into three administrative divisions by Delhi Sultanate.

Timur appointed Khizr Khan as the ruler of Multan, who laid the foundation of Sayyid dynasty. This dynasty was replaced by Afghans as the Lodi dynasty founded by Bahlol Lodi in AD 1451. Bahlol Lodi was a capable ruler who was able to win the support of his nobles. He was followed by Sikander Lodi. The last of the Lodis, Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by Babur in AD 1526 in the battle of Panipat. The Delhi Sultanate which had its birth in AD 1192 breathed its last in AD 1526 thus giving way to the establishment of the Mughal Empire.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Who was Mahmud Ghazni? Why did he invade India?
2. Who were Mamluk Sultans? How did Iltutmish consolidate his position?
3. What measures did Balban take to develop a highly centralized system of governance in Delhi sultanate?
4. Describe briefly the measures undertaken by Alauddin Khalji to control the markets?
5. Describe the transfer of capital and the introduction of token currency by Muhammad Tughlaq?
6. What was the impact of Timur's Invasions on Delhi Sultanate?
7. For what reasons did Bengal remain a problem for the Delhi Sultanate?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

9.1

1. a) Ghazni
b) Prithviraj Chauhan & Muhammad Ghori
c) Qutbuddin Aibak

**Notes**

2. AD 1192
3. Mahmud Ghazni was interested in plundering the wealth of India whereas Muhammad Ghori wanted to establish Turkish Rule in India

9.2

1. (i) Discontents and revolts of amirs and nobles.
(ii) Unorganized administration
(iii) Undefined boundaries of the sultanate (any two)
2. To support Monarchy
3. Qutbuddin Aibak
4. (i) Magnificent court with strict rules
(ii) Formulated the theory of 'Kingship' and redefined the relationship between the sultanate and nobles
(iii) Introduction of *sijda* (prostration) and *paibos* (kissing of monarch's feet)
(iv) Did not allow any nobles to assume great powers.

9.3

1. The capture of Ranthambore was necessary to break the power and morale of Rajputs.
2. Malik Kafur
3. Devagiri and Bhilsa
4. (i) Families that had been enjoying free land to support themselves were now required to pay land tax for their holdings.
(ii) The Sultan reorganised the spy system and took measures to make it more effective.
(iii) The use of wine and intoxicants was banned.
(iv) The nobles were ordered not to have social gatherings or inter marriages without his permission.

9.4

1. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
2. His son Juna Khan
3. (a) To maintain control over Deccan
(b) To establish centrally located capital
4. The copper coin (Jittal) introduced by the Sultan was to serve as an equivalent to silver coin (tanka) to tide over shortage of silver.

9.5

1. Equality with nobles
2. Khizr Khan
3. Yahya Sirhindi
4. Compelled nobles to stand in the durbar, respect and pay obedience to Sultan.

9.6

1. Changes in central Asian Politics and to plunder the riches



Notes

2. Main conflict among nobles was the question of succession
3. Sharqi Dynasty
4. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq tried to solve this problem by partitioning Bengal into three independent administrative divisions namely Lakhnauti, Satgaon and Sonargaon

HINTS TO TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Refer Section 9.2 Para 1&2
2. See subtitle Mamluk Sultans and Refer section 9.4 on Iltutmish
3. Refer Balban in section 9.4
4. Refer 9.5
5. Refer First para of first box and first & second para of second box of section 9.6
6. Refer section 9.9 under para 3
7. Refer section 9.9 under subtitle Bengal para 1

GLOSSARY

Amir	–	Commander, the third highest official grade of the Delhi sultanate
Ariz-i-mamulik	–	Minister Incharge of the army of the whole country
Amir-i-akhur	–	Master of the horses
Amir-i-Tuzuk	–	Master of Ceremonies
Barid	–	Intelligence officer
Chaugan	–	Game quite similar to Polo
Dalal	–	Broker
Darbar	–	Royal court
Doab	–	Land between Jamuna & Ganges
Diwan-i-arz	–	Military Department during Balban's period
Iqta	–	A territory of land assigned in lieu of cash salaries
Iqtadars	–	recipient of iqtas
Jaziya	–	Personal and yearly tax on non-muslims
Jittal	–	Copper coin of the Delhi Sultanate
Khutba	–	Sermon
Khwaja	–	Lord, merchant
Malik	–	In Delhi Sultanate it meant the second highest grade of the officers
Mamluks	–	Slave officers
Mandi	–	Grain Market
Munhiyans	–	Secret spies
Naib	–	Deputy Assistants
Paibos	–	Kissing of feet
Rai Rayans	–	The title given by Alauddin Khalji to Rama Deva of Devagir.
Sarai Adl	–	Cloth Market
Tanka	–	Silver coin of Delhi Sultanate
Ulema	–	Muslims of Religious learning
Umara	–	Plural of amirs, amir means nobles or ruling group in Delhi Sultanate.