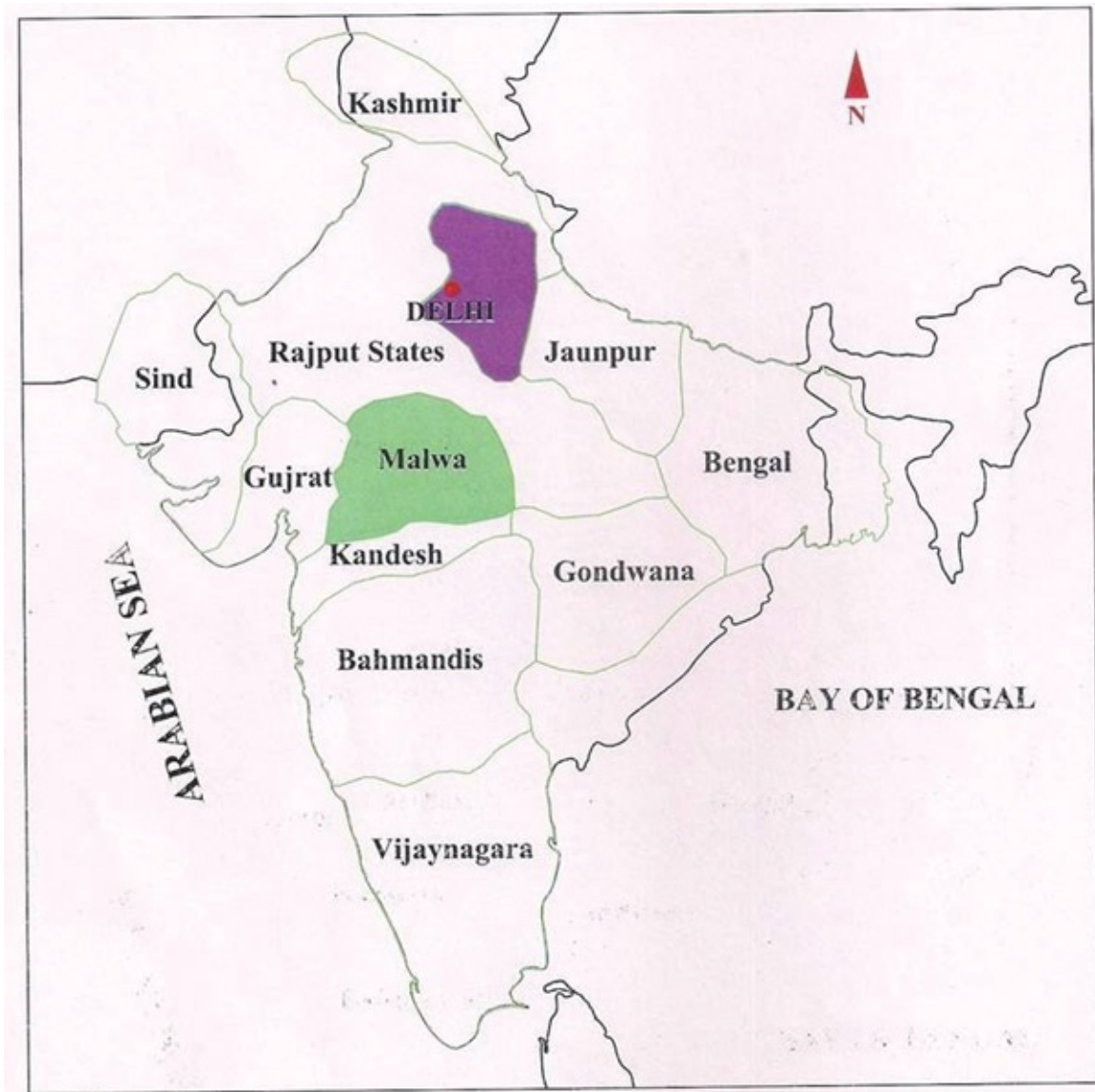


12

PROVINCIAL KINGDOMS OF
MEDIEVAL INDIA



Provincial kingdoms

As we have discussed earlier, the **Delhi Sultanate expanded** as a result of the annexation of the states like Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Malwa, various states of *Rajputana* (like Ranthambor, Jalore, Nagore, Ajmer), the Deccan states of Warangal, Telengana, the Yadavas of Devagiri, the southern states of the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra and the Pandyas of Madurai. However, **after the 13th century** (around the reign of Firoze

Shah Tughlaq), due to internal weaknesses, the **process of disintegration** of the **Delhi Sultanate started**. It was during this period that some of the provincial rulers declared their independence from the rule of the Sultanate and a large number of regional states arose. The establishment of **Vijayanagar** and the **Bahmani kingdom** were a result of the **assertion of power by provincial officers**, like **Harihara** and **Bukka**, and **Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah** respectively. Similarly, the Sultanates in **Gujarat**, **Malwa**, **Bengal** and **Jaunpur** near Varanasi, emerged as powerful **provincial kingdoms**. This constant evolution and development of provincial states can also be explained on the basis of growth of agriculture and agriculture-related activities as *wherever good agricultural activity took place, it not only fed the population but generated a large surplus that could be sold and wealth could be generated. This resulted in the rise of powerful sections in the society that controlled the agricultural surplus. Sometimes, some members of this powerful section asserted themselves and acquired political power and became kings and established ruling dynasties, whereas sometimes some groups came from outside who conquered the land, controlled the administration, and became powerful.*

An important point to note is that all these kingdoms had a **regional history that pre-dated** the **Sultanate** period. For instance, **Bengal** was an important regional kingdom in the 8th and the 9th centuries under the **Palas** and subsequently in the 12th century under the **Senas**. Even the regional state of Vijayanagar ruled over different cultural zones. Hence, it should be **noted** that *these provincial kingdoms never disappeared, though the regional dynasties gained and lost power, and the regions changed their geographical boundaries.* Even though these states did wage wars amongst themselves, they **provided stability** over their respective regions. These different regional dynasties had their own vibrant culture and exclusive art, literature and architecture forms, and they too influenced each other. Thus, these provincial kingdoms were not closed isolated areas, rather they were in **continuous interaction** — be it religious, cultural or economic — with another kingdoms. For instance, the early Vijayanagar rulers called themselves as **Hindu Suratrana**, meaning **Hindu Sultan**, where the term Sultan was borrowed

from the Delhi Sultanate. Similarly, the **Iqtadari system** of the Delhi Sultanate **influenced** the **administrative systems** of the **Vijayanagar** and **Bahmani** kingdoms. There were well-established trade and commerce networks, and regular **migration of** artisans occurred from one region to another, as evident in the migration of the **silk weavers** — *Pattanulkars* — from the Gujarat region to the Vijayanagar state in the 15th century.



DECCAN AND SOUTHERN INDIA: VIJAYANAGAR AND BAHMANI KINGDOM



The Vijayanagar Kingdom (c.1336–1672 CE)

The Vijayanagar kingdom constituted four dynasties — **Sangama** (c.1336–1485 CE), **Saluva** (c.1485–1503 CE), **Tuluva** (c.1503–1570 CE) and **Aravidu** (till the end of the 17th century). There are varied sources for the study of the Vijayanagar kingdom, such as literary and archaeological sources, as well as numismatics. **Krishnadevaraya's Amukthamalyada**, **Gangadevi's Maduravijayam**, and **Allasani Peddanna's Manucharitam** are some of the indigenous literature of this period. Many foreign travelers valuable accounts on the socio-economic conditions of the Vijayanagar kingdom are also available, since they visited the Vijayanagar kingdom. This includes the **Moroccan Ibn Batuta**, **Venetian Nicolo de Conti**, **Persian Abdur Razzak**, and the **Portuguese Domingo Paes**. The copper-plate inscriptions such as the **Srirangam copper-plates** of **Devaraya II** provide the genealogy and achievements of Vijayanagar rulers. The **Hampi** ruins and other monuments of Vijayanagar provide information on the cultural contributions of the Vijayanagar rulers. The numerous coins issued by the Vijayanagar rulers contain figures and legends explaining their titles and achievements. It is pertinent to note that the empire included people from different cultural regions — the Tamil, Telugu and

Karnataka region — who all spoke different languages and belonged to different cultures.



Map of Deccan Sultanate and Vijayanagar Empire



Elephant Stables, Hampi

In the south, Vijayanagara's main rivals were the Sultans of Madurai and the struggle between them continued for almost four decades. By

c.1377 CE, the Sultanate of Madurai was wiped out and the Vijayanagara kingdom comprised the whole of south India up to Rameshwaram, including the Tamil country as well as that of the Cheras (Kerala). In the north, they had continuous hostility with the Bahmani Sultanate (this conflict will be dealt in detail later)



Sangama dynasty

Harihara and Bukka (c.1336–1377 CE)

- Founders of the Sangama dynasty of Vijayanagar kingdom.
- According to legends, they belonged to a family of five brothers and were originally feudatories of the Kakatiyas of Warangal and after their fall, they served as ministers in the Kampili state (modern Karnataka). When Kampala was overrun by Muhammad bin Tughlaq for giving refuge to a Muslim rebel, the two brothers were imprisoned and converted to Islam. Later, they returned to the Hindu fold at the initiative of the saint Vidyaranya. They also proclaimed their independence and to commemorate the memory of their guru, the brothers founded a new city of Vidyanagar or Vijayanagara (meaning *city of victory*) on the south bank of river Tungabhadra.
- The decline of the Hoysala kingdom enabled Harihara and Bukka to expand their newly founded kingdom. By c. 1346 CE, they brought the whole of the Hoysala kingdom under their control. It is pertinent to note that in this struggle they were aided by their brothers who with their relations took up the administration of the areas conquered, and thus the Vijayanagara kingdom was a kind of cooperative commonwealth at first.
- Bukka succeeded his brother in c.1356 and ruled till 1377 CE. During his reign, the Sultanate of Madurai was eliminated.

Harihara II (c.1377–1406 CE)

- The Vijayanagara empire embarked on expansion towards

the eastern sea coast under his reign. He continued to extend the kingdom's territory through a series of conflicts against the Reddis of Kondavidu for the control of the Andhra between Nellore and Kalinga. From the Reddis of Kondavidu, Harihara II conquered the Addanki and Srisailam areas as well as most of the territory between the peninsula to the south of the river Krishna, which eventually brought him in confrontation with the Velamas of Rachakonda (Telangana).

- Harihara II was able to maintain his position in the face of the Bahmani–Warangal alliance. His greatest success was in wresting Belgaum and Goa in the west from Bahmani Sultanate. According to legends, *the ruler of Warangal had helped Bahmani Sultanate founder, Hasan Gangu, in his struggle against Delhi, but his successor invaded Warangal and seized the stronghold of the Kaulas and the hill fort.* This alliance of Warangal and the Bahmani Sultanate lasted for over 50 years and was a major factor in the ability of Vijaynagara to overrun the Tungabhadra doab.

Deva Raya I (c.1406–1422 CE)

- He was a very capable ruler noted for his military exploits and his support to irrigation works in his kingdom. He constructed a dam across river Tungabhadra to bring canals into the city to relieve the shortage of water. He also built a dam on the river Haridra for irrigation purposes.
- Throughout his reign, Deva Raya was continually at war with the Velamas of Telangana, the Bahmani Sultan of Gulbarga, the Reddis of Kondavidu, and the traditional rivals of Vijayanagara, the Gajapatis of Kalinga.
- Early in his career, he was defeated by the Bahmani ruler Firoz Shah and had to not only pay a huge indemnity but also had to marry his daughter to the Sultan. But this marriage could buy peace only for a short time and later, with the ruler of Warangal on his side, the balance of power in the Deccan tilted in favour of Deva Raya I. In c. 1420 CE,

Firoz Shah invaded Pangal, which had been taken by Vijayanagar, but this time Deva Raya inflicted a **shattering defeat on Firoz Shah**. The two-year siege at Pangal ended in disaster for Firoz Shah's armies. The Sultan had to hand over the southern and eastern districts of his kingdom to Deva Raya I. Consequently, by c. 1422, Deva Raya I came to control territory up to the **Krishna– Tungabhadra doab including Pangal**.

- He **modernised the Vijayanagar army** by improving the cavalry, employing Turkic archers, and procuring horses from Arabia and Persia.
- He maintained a **secular attitude** in administrative matters. He had 10,000 Muslims in his army, being the first Vijayanagar king to do so. He had a mosque and a slaughterhouse constructed for the convenience of the Muslim soldiers in his army.
- **Italian** traveller, **Nicolo Conti** (in c.1420), and **Russian** merchant **Nikitin** (author of *Voyage to India*), visited during his reign. Nicolo Conti commented on Vijayanagara and Deva Raya I that *"In this city, there are 90,000 men fit to bear arms... their king is more powerful than all the kings of India"*.
- Deva Raya I was a **patron of Kannada literature** and architecture. There was a **pearl hall** where he honoured men of eminence. **Madhura**, a noted **Jain poet**, was in his court (and also in the court of his father King Harihara II). He wrote the *Dharmanathapurana* on the life of the 15th **Jain Tirthankar** in **Kannada**, as well as a poem in **eulogy** of **Gommateshvara** of **Shravanabelagola**.
- The noted **Hazare Rama temple**, an excellent example of Deccan architecture, was constructed during his rule. The credit for making the capital city of the Vijayanagar kingdom one of the biggest cities in the 15th century goes to him.

Deva Raya II (c.1425–46 CE)

- The **greatest of the Sangama dynasty** rulers who was an able administrator, an ambitious warrior, and a man of letters. He authored well-known works in the **Kannada** language (*Sobagina Sone* and *Amaruka*) and in the **Sanskrit** language (*Mahanataka Sudhanidhi*). He also wrote a commentary on the Brahmasutra.
- Some of the most noted **Kannada poets** of the medieval period, such as **Chamarasa** and **Kumara Vyasa** gained his patronage. The **Sanskrit poet Gunda Dimdima**, and gifted Telugu poet **Kavisarvabhauma** (Emperor among Poets) **Srinatha**, author of *Haravilasam*, was also present at his court.
- In case of secular literature, the noted South Indian **mathematician, Parameshvara**, from the Kerala school of astronomy and mathematics lived in his kingdom.
- He acquired the title of **Gajabetegara**, which literally means “**Hunter of Elephants**”, an **honorific title** that explained his addiction to hunting elephants or a metaphor referring to his victories against enemies who were “as strong as elephants”. Despite some reversals, Deva Raya II **extended** and held **territories up to the Krishna river**.
- According to an account of the visiting **Persian** chronicler **Abdur Razzak**, *Deva Raya II's empire extended from Ceylon to Gulbarga, and Orissa to the Malabar*, and according to **Nicolo Conti**, *the king levied tribute on Ceylon, Quilon, Pegu, Pulicat*.

The next dynasty, **Saluva** founded by **Saluva Narasimha** (the **earlier king's minister**) reigned only for a brief period (c.1486–1509 CE).

Tuluvas Dynasty

Vira Narasimha Raya (c.1505–1509 CE)

Krishna Deva Raya (c.1509–29 CE)

- The **greatest** of the Vijayanagar rulers, was also known as ‘**Abhinava Bhoja**’, ‘**Andhra Pitamah**’, ‘**Andhra Bhoja**’ (as he was great patron of literature and art). His imposing

- personality was accompanied by high intellectual quality.
- He was a great commander and an efficient administrator. He fought a **series of war with the independent kingdoms** (Deccan Sultanates) that came up on the ruins of the Bahmani kingdom. The Muslim armies were decisively defeated in the **battle of Diwani**. Then he invaded the Raichur Doab and completely **shattered the Adil Shahi forces of Bijapur** first, attacked Gulbarga and captured the city of Raichur in c.1520 CE, and **set free the three Bahmani princes** who were imprisoned there. He thus restored the Bahmani Sultanate to Muhammad Shah, and Krishna Deva himself took the title of **Yavanarajya sthapanacharya**. Krishna Deva Raya's Orissa campaign was also successful. He **defeated the Gajapathi ruler Prataparudra** and conquered the whole of Telangana. He compelled the ruler of Orissa to restore to Vijaynagar all the territories upto the river Krishna. He also maintained law and order and dealt with the Portuguese influence in the Deccan.
 - He maintained friendly relations with the Portuguese. King **Albuquerque** sent his ambassadors to the court of Krishna Deva Raya. The **Portuguese** travellers **Domingo Paes** and **Barbosa** came to India during his reign.
 - Though a Vaishnavite, he respected all religions. **Eight eminent scholars of Telugu known as the 'Ashta diggajas' adorned his court:**
 - **Allasani Peddanna** (the greatest, who was also called **Andhrakavita Pitamaga**); his important works include **Manucharitam** and **Harikathasaram**.
 - **Tenali Ramakrishna**, author of **Panduranga Mahamatyam**.
 - **Pingali Suranna**, author of **Garuda Puranam**, **Prabhavatee Pradyumnamu**, **Raghava Pandaveeyam** and **Kalapurnodayamu**.
 - He himself authored
 - **Amukthamalyadha** (Telugu)

- *Jambavati Kalyanam* and *Ushaparinayam* (Sanskrit)
- He built some fine stone temples such as famous the *Vittalaswamy* and *Hazara Ramaswamy* temples at Vijayanagar. Apart from repairing many temples, he also added impressive gopurams or gateways to many important South Indian temples. The *famous temple of Tirupati* greatly developed during his period as the deity there *was his titular deity*.
- He also founded a *suburban township* near Vijayanagar called *Nagalapuram* after his mother. Some of the most detailed descriptions of Vijayanagar come from his period.

Achyuta Deva Raya (c.1529 –1542 CE)

- Was the *younger brother of Krishna Deva Raya*, who handpicked him to be his successor.
- A *Portuguese* traveller, *Fernao Nuniz*, came to India during his reign.
- He patronised the *Kannada* poet *Chatu Vittalanatha*, the great *singer* and composer *Purandaradasa* (*father of Carnatic music*), and the *Sanskrit* scholar *Rajanatha Dindima II*.
- The *Tiruvengalanatha temple*, which is now popularly known by his name as the *Achyutaraya temple*, was built in Vijayanagar during his reign.
- Upon his death, the succession was disputed. His son, *Venkata I* (Venkata Raya or Venkatadri Raya), succeeded him, but he was a weak ruler and was killed six months later. Then Krishna Deva Raya's son *Sada Siva Raya*, finally became king while yet a child, under the regency of Aravidu *Aliya Rama Raya*, *son-in-law* of Krishna Deva Raya. The word "*Aliya*" means "*son-in-law*" in the Kannada language. Along with another brother, Venkatadri, the Aravidu brothers rose to prominence during the rule of Krishna Deva Raya. *Rama Raya* was a *successful* army *general*, able *administrator*, and tactful *diplomat* who conducted many victorious campaigns during the rule of

Krishna Deva Raya. Thus after the demise of his illustrious father-in-law, as a member of the family, Rama Raya, began to wield great influence over the affairs of the state.

Sada Siva Raya (c.1542–1570 CE)

- **Last ruler** of **Tuluva** dynasty.
- He was a **puppet** in the hands of **his minister, Aliya Rama Raya**, who was the de facto king. He removed the old nobility and replaced it with those loyal to him.
- Rama Raya tried to **balance the Deccan powers** by playing one against the other. *For instance, when the Nizam of Ahmadnagar and Qutabshahi of Golconda sought Rama Raya's help against Bijapur, Rama Raya secured the Raichur doab for his benefactors.* Later in c. 1549 CE when the Adilshahi of Bijapur and Baridshahi of Bidar declared war on Nizamshahi of Ahmadnagar, Rama Raya fought on behalf of the Ahmadnagar ruler and secured the fort of **Kalyana**. In c. 1557 CE, Rama Raya allied himself with Ali Adilshahi of Bijapur and Baridshahi of Bidar when the Sultan of Bijapur invaded Ahmednagar.
- His **constantly changing** sides to improve his own position eventually prompted the Sultanates to form an alliance. The **Deccan states** (**Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golkonda** and **Bidar**, except Berar) thus formed a **confederacy** and inflicted a **crushing blow** on the **Vijayanagar** armies at **Bannihatti** in the **battle of Talaikotta** in **c.1565 CE**. This battle is also known as **Rakshasa Thangadi**. Rama Raya was imprisoned and **executed** and the city of Vijayanagar was destroyed. The **Battle of Bannihatti** is generally considered to mark the **end of the Vijayanagar** Empire. It should be noted that **Caesar Fredrick** visited Vijayanagar after battle of Talaikotta.

However, the Vijayanagar kingdom continued to exist under the **Aravidu dynasty**, which ruled from **Penukonda** and later from **Chandragiri** (near Tirupati) for about another century. **Thirumala, Sri Ranga**, and **Venkata II** were the important rulers of this dynasty. The last

ruler of Vijayanagar kingdom was **Sri Ranga III** (c.1642–1646 CE).



Administration of Vijaynagar Kingdom

There was a **well-organised administration** under the Vijayanagar kingdom. The **Rayas** (king) enjoyed **absolute authority** in executive, judicial and legislative matters. He was the **highest court** of appeal. In the matter of justice, **harsh punishments** such as mutilation and throwing to elephants were given. **Succession** to the throne was mostly on the **principle of hereditary**, but sometimes usurpation to the throne also occurred, such as when Saluva Narasimha came to power by ending the Sangama dynasty. The king was assisted by a **council of ministers** in his day-to-day administration.

The kingdom was divided into different administrative units called **Mandalams**, **Nadus**, **sthalas**, and finally into **gramas**. The governor of the Mandalam was called **Mandaleswara** or **Nayak**. Vijayanagar rulers gave **full powers to the local authorities** in the administration. It is pertinent to note that the **Chola** traditions of **village self-government** were considerably **weakened** under the **Vijaynagar** rulers. The growth of **hereditary nayakships** tended to curb their freedom and initiative.

The governors of the provinces were royal princes at first. Later, persons belonging to vassals of the ruling families and nobles were also appointed as governors. The **provincial governors** had a large measure of **autonomy** as they **held their own courts**, **appointed their own officers**, and **maintained their own armies**. At times, they **even issued their own coins** (though in small denominations). The term for the provincial governor was not fixed and it depended on his ability and strength. Each governor paid a fixed contribution in men and money to the central government. Thus, it would not be totally wrong to assume that **Vijaynagar** was **more a confederacy than a centralised empire**.

Besides land revenue, tributes, and gifts from vassals and feudal chiefs, customs collected at the ports, taxes on various professions, were other sources of income to the government. **Land revenue** was fixed at generally **one sixth of the produce**.



Army and Military Organisation

The conflict between Vijayanagar Empire and the Bahmani kingdom lasted for many years. The dispute over **Raichur Doab**, i.e., the **region between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra** and also over the **fertile areas of Krishna–Godavari delta** led to this long-drawn conflict. In order to wage continuous wars, there was a need to keep a large army. The Vijayanagar **army** was very **well-organised** and **efficient**. It consisted of the cavalry, infantry, artillery, and elephants. High-breed horses were procured from foreign traders. The Vijayanagar rulers imported **high quality horses from** across the Arabian Sea from **Arabia** and other **Gulf countries**. The **port of Malabar** was the centre of this trade and trade in other luxury commodities. The Vijayanagar rulers always attempted to control the port of Malabar.

One of the important characteristics of the Vijayanagar administration was the **amara-nayaka** system. The **top-grade officers** of the army were known as **Nayaks or Palaiyagars or Poligars**. Interestingly, these officers were **granted land** (called **amaram**) in lieu of their services while **soldiers** were usually **paid in cash**. The **nayaka** was responsible for expanding agricultural activities in his **amaram** (area). He **collected taxes** in his area and with this income maintained his army, horses, elephants, and weapons of warfare that he had to supply to the **raya** or the Vijayanagar ruler. The **nayaka** was also the **commander of the forts**. Some of the revenue was also used for the maintenance of temples and irrigation works. The **amara-nayakas** sent tribute to the king annually and personally appeared in the royal court with gifts to express their loyalty. It is noteworthy to add that in the **17th century**, several of these **nayakas** such as those of **Tanjore** and **Madurai** became independent and **established separate states** and emerged as a powerful section that challenged the Vijayanagar authority, weakened its internal structures and contributed to the defeat of the Vijayanagar in the battle of **Talaikotta**.

The Vijayanagar state also was familiar with the use of firearms and **employed Turkish and Portuguese experts to train the soldiers** in the latest weaponry of warfare. The walls of the forts were made thick to

counter the firearms and special kinds of door with fortified walls front were constructed. On the walls of the forts, special kinds of big holes were made to rest the guns. Special kinds of *parapets* were constructed on the forts to put the canons on it. They had both **small firearms** such as **rifles and pistols**, and certain **heavy arms** such as **cannons**, which had to be put on a bullock cart or on an elephant and pushed into the battlefield.



Social life

Allasani Peddanna in his *Manucharitam* refers to the existence of **four castes** — *Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras* — in the Vijayanagar society. **Foreign travellers** left vivid accounts on the splendour of buildings and luxurious social life in the city of Vijayanagar. **Paes** mentions *the beautiful houses of the rich and the large number of their household servants*. **Nicolo Conti** refers to *the prevalence of slavery*. **Silk** and **cotton clothes** were mainly used for dress. **Dancing, music, wrestling, gambling, and cock-fighting** were some of the common forms of **amusement**.

The Sangama rulers were chiefly **Shaivaite**s and **Virupaksha** was their family deity while other dynasties were **Vaishnavite**s. **Ramanuja's Srivaishnavism** was very popular. It is pertinent to note that **all kings were tolerant** towards other religions. **Barbosa** referred to *the religious freedom enjoyed by everyone*. Regarding **Krishna Deva Raya's** tolerant attitude, **Barbosa** says, "*The king allows such freedom that every man may come and go and live according to his own creed, without suffering any annoyance, and without enquiry whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or heathen*". Muslims were employed in the administration and they were freely allowed to build mosques and worship. As we have read earlier, **Deva Raya II enrolled Muslims** in his **armed services**, allotted them *jagirs*, and erected a mosque for their use in the city. A large number of temples were built during this period and numerous festivals were celebrated.

The **position of women** was **not** much **improved**. However, some of them were learned such as **Gangadevi**, wife of Kumarakampana, who

authored the famous work *Maduravijayam*. Hannamma and Thirumalamma were two other famous poets. According to Nuniz, a large number of women were employed in the royal palaces as dancers, domestic servants, and palanquin bearers. Sahagaman, i.e., Sati was honoured. The practice of devadasi (attachment of dancing girls to temples) was in place. Even Paes refers to the flourishing devadasi system of this period. Polygamy was prevalent among the royal families. Interestingly, the temples were rich and also took active part in both internal and overseas trade.



Economy

According to the accounts of the foreign travelers, the Vijayanagar kingdom was one of the wealthiest kingdoms of the world at that time. Agriculture continued to be the chief occupation of the people. The Vijayanagar rulers provided a stimulus to its further growth by providing irrigation facilities. New tanks were built and dams were constructed across the rivers like Tungabhadra. Nuniz refers to the excavation of canals.

There were numerous industries and they were organised into guilds. Metal workers and other craftsmen flourished during this period. Diamond mines were located in Kurnool and Anantapur district. Vijayanagar was also a great centre of trade. The chief gold coin was the varaha but weights and measures varied from place to place. Inland, coastal, and overseas trade led to the general prosperity. There were a number of seaports on the Malabar coast, the chief being Cannanore. Commercial contacts with Arabia, Persia, South Africa, and Portugal on the west, and with Burma, the Malay peninsulam and China on the east flourished. The chief items of exports were cotton and silk clothes, spices, rice, iron, saltpetre, and sugar. The imports consisted of horses, pearls, copper, coral, mercury, China silk, and velvet clothes. The art of shipbuilding had developed.



Cultural Contributions

The temple building activity further gained momentum during the Vijayanagar rule. The chief characteristics of the Vijayanagar architecture were the construction of tall *Raya Gopurams* or *gateways* and the *Kalyanamandapam* with *carved pillars* in the temple premises. The sculptures on the pillars were carved with distinctive features. The *horse* was the most *common motif* found on these *pillars*. Large *mandapams* contain one hundred pillars as well as one thousand pillars in some big temples. These *mandapams* were used for seating the deity on festival occasions. Also, many *Amman shrines* were added to the already existing temples during this period.

The most important temples of the Vijayanagar style were found in the *Hampi* ruins or the city of Vijayanagar. *Vittalaswamy* and *Hazara Ramaswamy temples* were the best examples of this style. The *Varadharaja* and *Ekamparanatha temples* at *Kanchipuram* stand as examples for the magnificence of the Vijayanagara style of temple architecture. The *Raya Gopurams* at *Thiruvannamalai* and *Chidambaram* speak of the glorious epoch of Vijayanagar. They were continued by the Nayak rulers in the later period. The *metal images* of *Krishna Deva Raya* and *his queens* at *Tirupati* are examples for casting of metal images. Music and dancing were also patronised by the rulers of Vijayanagar.

Different languages such as *Sanskrit*, *Telugu*, *Kannada*, and *Tamil* flourished in the regions. There was a great development in Sanskrit and Telugu literature. The *peak of literary achievement* was *reached* during the reign of *Krishna Deva Raya*. He *himself* was a *scholar* in Sanskrit and Telugu. His famous court poet *Allasani Peddanna* was distinguished in *Telugu literature*. Thus, the cultural contributions of the Vijayanagar rulers were many-sided and remarkable.

Key term/Concept	Meaning
a) <i>Pradhani</i>	Prime minister
b) <i>Raysani</i>	Recorded oral order of king
c) <i>Karnikam</i>	Accountant
d) <i>Kadamal, Irai, Vrai</i>	Kinds of taxes
e) <i>Athavane</i>	Land revenue department

f) <i>Mahanayakachara</i>	Acted as linkage between kings & villages.
g) <i>Padikaval</i>	Selling of policing rights
h) <i>Talara</i>	Watchman

Bahmani Sultanate (c.1347–1527 CE)

In the 14th century, along with Vijayanagar kingdom, **another powerful kingdom** arose in South India, which was the Bahmani Sultanate. As we can recall that, the **Deccan** region was a part of the provincial administration of the Delhi Sultanate. In order to establish a stable administration in the Deccan, **Mohammad bin Tughlaq** appointed ***amiran-i-sada*** also known as ***Sada Amir*** (administrative heads of hundred villages). From c. 1337 CE, the **conflict between the officers in Deccan and Delhi Sultanate**, **accelerated** which ultimately resulted in the **establishment** of an **independent state** in the **Deccan** in **c. 1347 CE** with the **capital at Gulbarga** in Andhra Pradesh. Its founder, **Hasan Gangu**, assumed the title **Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah**, as he traced his descent from the mythical hero of Iran, **Bahman Shah**, and the kingdom was named the **Bahmani Sultanate** after him. Since after Mohammad bin Tughlaq there were no attempts by the Delhi Sultanate to control the Deccan region, therefore, the Bahmani Sultans without any checks annexed the other parts of the kingdom too. One of the important acquisitions was the control over **Dabhol**, an important **port** on the **west coast**.

Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah (c.1347–58 CE)

- **Founder** of the Bahmani Sultanate who was an **Afghan adventurer**, who **began his career as a general** serving under the Sultan **Muhammad bin Tughlaq**. Nazir Uddin Ismail Shah, who had revolted against the Delhi Sultanate, stepped down in favour of Bahman Shah. However, according to the historian **Ferishta**, his original name was **Hasan Gangu**, *as he had earlier served in the service of a brahmana named Gangu and he adopted the word 'Bahman Shah' as a tribute to his brahmana patron.*
- He had **regular confrontations with the Vijaynagar kingdom**

and Warangal state. He led his first campaign against Warangal in c.1350 CE and forced its ruler Kapaya Nayaka to cede to him the fortress of Kaulas.

- By the time of his death, the kingdom stretched from north to south from the Wenganga river to Krishna and east to west from Bhongir to Daulatabad.

Muhammad Shah I (c.1358–1377 CE)

Taj-ud-din Firoz Shah (c.1397–1422 CE)

- Considered as the **most remarkable** figure in the Bahmani Sultanate and greatest of them all.
- He started the **Bahmani expansion towards Berar** by **defeating** the **Gond** Raja **Narsing Rai** of Kherla. A huge amount of money, gold, and silver was paid to Firuz and a daughter of Rai was married to him.
- Later, he **invaded Vijaynagar** with **victories** in **c.1398 CE** and **c.1408 CE**, but faced a **defeat** in **c.1420 CE** at the hands of **Deva Raya I**.
- He was **well acquainted** with the **religious sciences** (commentaries on the Quran, jurisprudence) and **natural sciences** too (such as botany, geometry, logic, etc.).
- Was a good **calligraphist** and a **poet** and often composed extempore verses. According to **Ferishta**, he *was well versed not only in Telugu, Kannada, and Marathi but also in Persian, Arabic, and Turkish*.
- He encouraged the pursuit of astronomy and **built an observatory** near **Daultabad**.
- **Inducted** a large number of **Hindus** in his **administration**. It is said that it was from his time that the Deccan *brahmans* became dominant in administration.

Ahmah Shah Wali (c. 1422–35 CE)

- After the defeat of Firuz Shah in c.1420 CE, he was forced to abdicate in favour of his brother Ahmad Shah I who is called a saint (**wali**) on account of his association with the famous **Sufi saint Gesu Daraz**.

- He continued the struggle for the domination of the south eastern sea board and in order to punish the ruler of Warangal for siding with the Vijaynagar in the previous battle, he **invaded Warangal** (c.1424– 1425 CE), and defeated and killed its ruler and annexed most of its territories. After this, he turned his attention toward Malwa (c.1425– 1435 CE), Gondwana, and the Konkan.
- He **shifted the capital from Gulbarga to Bidar**.

Humayun Shah (c.1458–1461 CE)

- Greatly impressed with his military genius, Humayun appointed **Mahmud Gawan** (who later emerged as one of the most important personality of the Bahmani kingdom) as **minister** who initiated many reforms. After Humayun's death, Gawan became the **guardian** of his minor prince **Nizam Shah** (c.1461–1463 CE) and had the reigns of the government in his hands. However, the young Sultan died in c.1463CE and his brother **Muhammad Shah III** who was aged only nine years (c.1463–1482 CE) succeeded him, and Mahmud Gawan served as his prime minister. The **power of the Bahmani kingdom reached its peak under** the rule of **Muhammad Shah III** (all **due to the advice** and services of **Mahmud Gawan**). It extended from the Arabian sea to the Bay of Bengal. On the west, it extended from Goa to Bombay. On the east, it extended from Kakinada to the mouth of the river Krishna. The history of Bahmani kingdom after this period is actually the record of the achievements of Mahmud Gawan.

Mahmud Gawan (c.1461–1481 CE)

- The Bahmani kingdom reached the height of its power and territorial limits under the able guidance of Mahmud Gawan. He was a **Persian merchant** who came to India (Deccan) at the age of 42 years and joined the services of Bahmani kingdom. He was granted the title of **Malik-ul-Tujjar**, i.e., '**Chief of the Merchants**' by the Bahmani ruler, **Humayun Shah**. The sudden death of Humayun led to the

coronation of his minor son **Nizam Shah** and a **regency council** was set for the administration of which Mahmud Gawan was an important member. Slowly, due to his personal qualities, he was made *wazir* (the **prime minister**) and was given the title of '*Khwaju-i-Jahan*.'

- He was a **learned person** and possessed a great knowledge of mathematics. He not only controlled the kingdom in an **efficient manner** but also provided **stability** to it. Gawan carried out many **internal administrative reforms** and attempted to put an end to the strife in the nobility and to increase the control of Sultan over the nobles and provinces. He divided the kingdom into eight **tarafs** or **provinces**, each governed by a **tarafdar**. In order to curb the military power of the **tarafdar**, Gawan ordered that **only one fort** of each province was to be **under the direct control** of the **provincial tarafdar**. The **remaining forts** of the province were placed **under** a **Qiladar** or commander of the forts (who was appointed by the central Government). Allowances of the nobles were also reduced who shirked their responsibility.
- He was a **military genius** and waged successful wars against Vijayanagar, Orissa, and the sea pirates on the Arabian sea. He **conquered** the **Vijayanagar territories** up to **Kanchi**. On the western coast, **Goa** and **Dabhol** were conquered. After gaining control over Goa and Dabhol, Bahmani **strengthened** its **trading relations with Iran and Iraq**.
- He **introduced** the **use of gunpowder** in the war against the Vijayanagar kings in Belgaum and invited Persian chemists to teach his soldiers the preparation and use of gunpowder.
- He also tried to **settle** the **northern frontiers** of the kingdom. With the help of the ruler of Gujarat, he **defeated Mahmud Khalji of Malwa** over the control of Berar. Thus, he expanded the Bahmani Empire through his conquests and diplomacy skills.
- He was a **great patron of arts** and made endowments to

build a college at Bidar which was built in the Persian style of architecture. Some of the most famous scholars of the time belonging to Iran and Iraq came to this madarasa.

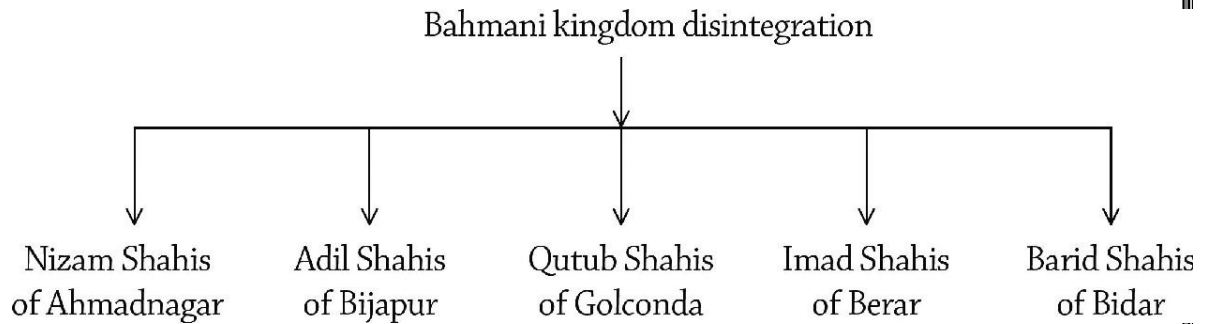
- One of the most difficult problems faced by the Bahmani kingdom was *strife among nobles*. The nobles were divided into *Deccanis* (oldtimers) and *Afaqis* (new-comers). Despite of *being an Afaqi*, Gawan was liberal and wanted a compromise between the *Afaqis* and the *Deccanis*. But unfortunately, the petty strife could not be stopped and the *Deccani* nobles *plotted against Gawan* and *induced* the young *Sultan* to punish him with a death sentence and had him *executed* in *c.1482 CE*. Later, the Sultan regretted his hasty decision and buried his Prime Minister with honours.



Madrasa of Mahmud Gawan, Bidar

- After Gawan's execution, the *Bahmani kingdom began to disintegrate* and the provincial governors declared their independence. During this period, the Vijayanagar king Krishna Deva Raya defeated the last remnant of the Bahmani Sultanate's power, after which the Bahmani Sultanate collapsed. *After c.1518 CE*, the Sultanate broke up

into five states: the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Qutb Shahis of Golconda, and the Imad Shahis of Berar and the Barid Shahis of Bidar, which are collectively known as the “Deccan Sultanates”.



1. Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar
 - Founded by Ahmad Bahri
 - Annexed by Shah Jahan
2. Adil Shahis of Bijapur
 - Founded by Yusuf Adil Shah
 - Mohd. Adil Shah built the world's second largest dome (Gol Gumbaz of Bijapur).



Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur

- Another prominent ruler was **Ibrahim Adil Shah II** (c.1580–1627 CE), the fifth king of the dynasty, **known for religious tolerance** and was given title of **Jagadguru Budshah** owing to his belief in secularism. He tried to bring in **cultural harmony** between the **Shias** and the **Sunnis** and between **Hindus** and **Muslims** through **music**. He was a great **lover** of **music**, played musical instruments, sang and composed praises of Hindu deities *Saraswati* and *Ganapati*. He wrote the book ***Kitab-E-Navras*** (Book of **Nine Rasas**) in **Dakhani**. He maintained a large number of musicians (around 4000) at his court and the **band of musicians** was known as ***Lashkar-e-Nauras*** (**Army of Nauras**) as they were paid by the government regularly.
- **Annexed** by **Aurangzeb**

3. **Imad Shahis of Berar**
 - Founded by **Fatullah Khan Imad-ul-Mulk**
 - Later **conquered** by **Nizam Shahi** rulers of Ahmadnagar.
4. **Qutub Shahis of Golconda**
 - Founded by **Quli Qutub Shah**, who built the **famous Golconda fort**.
 - **Mohd. Quli Qutub Shah**
 - **Greatest** of all **Qutub Shahi** who built the **city of Hyderabad** and ‘**Charminar**’.
 - Kingdom **annexed** by **Aurangzeb**.
5. **Barid Shahis of Bidar**
 - Founded by **Ali Barid**.
 - **Annexed** by **Adil Shahis of Bijapur**.

Of these, the kingdoms of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda played a leading role in the Deccan politics till their absorption in the Mughal Empire during the 17th century.



Conflict between the Vijayanagar kingdom and Bahmani Sultanate

There were constant conflicts between the Vijayanagar kingdom and the Bahmani Sultanate as their interests clashed in three separate and distinct areas:

- a. **Over the control of the Raichur doab (between rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra):** This area was **fertile** and **rich** in **mineral resources**. The famous **diamond mines of Golconda** were located in the eastern part of the doab region. The geography of both the kingdoms was such that expansion was possible only across Tungabhadra in the Deccan. It appears that the **battles** between the two were **not conclusive** and the **status quo** was mostly **maintained**. Sometimes, Bahmani had an advantage and sometimes, Vijayanagar had an advantage. For instance, in c.1504 CE, the Bahmanis managed to reconquer the Raichur doab. However, with the ascent of Krishna Deva Raya, the Bahmanis lost Raichur, Mudkal, Nalgonda, and other inland

towns. As we have discussed earlier too, that the Raichur doab had been the **bone of contention** between the **western Chalukyas** and the **Cholas** in the earlier period and between the **Yadavas** and the **Hoysalas** in the later period.

- b. The **Krishna–Godavari basin**: Apart from being very fertile, this region had the additional advantage of control of **foreign trade** (as this stretch of land **contained** numerous important **ports** that held the priced key of foreign trade).
- c. **Over the Marathwada region**: In the Marathwada region, the main contention was for the control of the **Konkan belt** (a narrow strip of land between the Western Ghats and the sea) and the areas which gave access to it. The Konkan belt was extremely **fertile** and included with it the **port of Goa** which was an important outlet for export as well as import (especially of horses from Iraq and Iran).

Often, the battles between the Vijayanagar and the Bahamani states are perceived as Hindu–Muslim conflicts. However, the aforementioned reasons clearly point out that the struggle was **not due to any religious differences** but **for territorial and economic motives**. These military conflicts resulted in wide spread devastation of the contested areas and the neighbouring territories and a considerable loss of life and property. Continuous warfare exhausted the resources of both the states and weakened them. Another **crucial cost** of these wars was that both the powers were so involved amongst themselves that they **never** realised the increasing power of the **Portuguese** on the coast of south India.

It is also significant to mention that despite hostilities between the two states, there were times when they also **co-operated with each other**. For instance, Krishna Deva Raya supported some claimants to power in the Sultanates and took pride in the title “*establisher of the Yavana kingdom*”. Similarly, the Sultan of Bijapur intervened to resolve succession disputes in Vijayanagar following the death of Krishna Deva Raya. There was also sharing and exchange of ideas, especially in the field of art, literature, and architecture.



Bahmani Administration

The Bahmani administrative system was well-organised. The Sultanate was divided into four (before Gawan; Gawan divided the Sultanate into eight units) administrative units called '*taraf*' or **provinces**. These provinces were **Daultabad**, **Bidar**, **Berar**, and **Gulbarga**. Muhammad I defeated the Vijayanagar kingdom and consequently Golconda was annexed to Bahmani Sultanate. Every province was under a **tarafdar** who was also called a **subedar**. In every province, a tract of land (**Khalisa**) was set apart from the jurisdiction of the tarafdar as it was used **for meeting** the **expenses of the king** and the **royal household**. Further, the salaries and obligations of every noble was fixed. Those nobles who kept 500 horses were given 1000,000 huns annually. If they were short of the stipulated troops, the tarafdar had to reimburse the amount to the central government. Nobles used to get their **salary** either **in cash** or in form of **grant of land** or '**jagir**'. The Bahmanis were familiar with the **use of firearms** and they **employed Turkish** and **Portuguese experts** to **train the soldiers** in the latest weaponry of warfare.

Bahmani rulers depended for military support on his *amirs*. There were two groups in the ranks of *amirs*: one was the **Deccanis** who were **immigrant Muslims** and had been staying for a long time in the Deccan region, and the other was the **Afaqis or Pardesis** who had come from Central Asia, Iran, and Iraq, and had **settled** in the Deccan region **recently**. There was always tension between these groups to appropriate better administrative positions. Because of their internal feuds, the stability of the Bahmani Sultanate was affected as we just discussed in the execution of Mahmud Gawan.

Key term	Meaning
a) <i>Wazir-i-kul</i>	Prime Minister
b) <i>Amir-i-kul</i>	Finance head
c) <i>Wazir ashraf</i>	Foreign affairs and royal court
d) <i>Sadar-i-jahan</i>	Head of judiciary and charities
e) <i>Tarafdar</i>	Head of province



WESTERN INDIA-GUJARAT, MALWA AND MEWAR



Gujarat

Gujarat was one of the **richest** provinces of the Delhi Sultanate on account of its **handicrafts**, **fertile lands**, and **flourishing seaports**. **Alauddin Khalji** was the first Sultan to **annex it to Delhi Sultanate** (c.1297 CE) and since then it remained under the Turkish governors of the Sultanate. *Under Firoz Tughlaq, Gujarat had a benign governor who, according to the historian **Ferishta**, was highly liberal and encouraged the Hindu religion to a great extent.* He was succeeded by **Zafar Khan**, whose father Sadharan was a Rajput who converted to Islam, and had given his sister in marriage to Firoz Tughlaq. *After Timur's invasion*, in c. 1407 CE, Zafar Khan, who was then the governor, *proclaimed* himself an *independent* ruler. He assumed the title of **Muzaffar Shah** and founded the **Muzaffarid** dynasty.

Muzaffar Shah/Zafar Khan (c.1407–1411 CE)

Ahmed Shah (c.1411–1441 CE)

- **Grandson of Muzaffar Shah**, who was the **real founder** of the kingdom of Gujarat as he not only controlled the nobility and settled the administration, but also expanded and consolidated the kingdom.
- He tried to extend his **control over Rajput states** in the **Saurashtra region** (**Gimar**), as well as those located on the **Gujarat–Rajasthan border** such as **Jhalawar**, **Bundi**, and **Dungarpur**. He also attacked **Sidhpur**, the famous Hindu pilgrimage centre, and destroyed many beautiful temples. It is rather interesting to note that even though he pertained to be an orthodox Muslim who **imposed jaziya on the Hindus** in Gujarat and destroyed several temples, quite oppositely,

he appointed Hindus to important administrative positions. For instance, his two ministers Manik Chand and Motichand both were Hindus.

- He fought equally fiercely against Hindu as well as Muslim rulers. His arch-enemies were the Muslim rulers of Malwa. The rivalry between Gujarat and Malwa was bitter and prevented both the regional states from concentrating on larger political gains in north Indian politics.
- Founded the city of Ahmedabad and made it his capital in c. 1413 CE (shifted earlier capital from Patan).
- Influenced by the Jaina architectural traditions of Gujarat (having exquisite features of slender turrets, exquisite stone-carving, and highly ornate brackets), he built beautiful buildings, like the Jami Masjid (c. 1423 CE) and Teen Darwaza, and beautified the city with gardens, palaces, and bazaars.
- He was also noted for imparting justice. For instance, he publicly executed his son-in-law who had murdered an innocent man.
- After the death of Ahmed Shah in c. 1441CE, his eldest son Muhammad Shah ascended the throne, who was also known as Zar-Baksh. However, in c.1451 CE, he was killed by conspirators. Muhammad Shah was followed by two weak rulers. Later, nobles raised Fateh Khan, a grandson of Ahmad Shah, to the throne. He took the title Mahmud Begarha and was the ablest ruler of his dynasty.

Mahmud Begarha (c.1459–1511 CE)

- The most important ruler of Gujarat, under whom the Gujarat kingdom reached its maximum limit and emerged as one of the most powerful and well administered states in the country.
- He was called ‘Begarha’ as he had captured two powerful forts or garhs, Girnar (Junagarh) in Saurashtra and the fort of Champaner from the Rajputs in south Gujarat. However, according to another version, *he was called Begarha as his*

moustaches resembled the horns of a cow.

- The strategic fort of **Girnar** was suitable not only for administering **Saurashtra** but also provided a base for operations against **Sindh**. Mahmud founded a new town called **Mustafabad** at the foot of the hill, which had many beautiful monuments and later became the **second capital** of **Gujarat**.
- Similarly, he besieged the fort of **Champaner**, which was crucial to control **Malwa** and **Khandesh**. Here too, Mahmud constructed a new town called **Muhammadabad** near Champaner and laid out many fine gardens.
- Mahmud sacked **Dwarka** primarily **to check the menace of pirates** who preyed on the pilgrims traveling to Mecca.
- In c. 1507 CE, Mahmud **led an expedition against the Portuguese** (who had settled on the western coast) to break their trade monopoly, which was causing immense harm to the Muslim traders. For this, he sought help of the ruler of Egypt **but he was unsuccessful** and finally he **had to give the Portuguese a site for a factory in Diu**.
- During his reign, trade and commerce prospered. He constructed many *caravan-sarais* and inns for the comfort of the travellers and tried to maintain roads safe for traffic.
- Though he himself had never received systematic education, yet he was a great patron of art and literature. Many **works** were **translated from Arabic to Persian** during his reign. **His court poet was the Sanskrit scholar, Udayaraja, who wrote a book called the Raja- Vinoda on Mahmud Begurha.**
- Interestingly, *Mahmud had a striking appearance as he had a flowing beard, which reached up to his waist, and his moustache was so long that he tied it over his head. According to Barbosa, “Mahmud was given some poison right from his childhood, so if a fly settled on his hand, it met instant death”.* He was also famous for his huge appetite.

Gujarat was annexed by Akbar in c.1573 CE.



Malwa

Malwa was the south-western province of the Delhi Sultanate, which was conquered by Alauddin Khalji in c. 1310 CE and remained the part of the Delhi Sultanate till the death of Firoz Tughlaq. It had a very strategic position as it was situated on the high plateau between the rivers Narmada and Tapti and hence commanded the trunk routes between Gujarat and northern India, as also between north and south India. So if any of the powerful states of the region could extend its control over Malwa, it could dominate north India.

After the invasion of Timur, in c.1401 CE, Dilawar Khan Ghorī who belonged to the court of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, threw off his allegiance to Delhi, though he did not take the royal title of ‘Sultan’. Dilawar shifted the capital from Dhar to Mandu, renaming it Shadiabad, the city of joy, which was highly defensible and which had a great deal of natural beauty. After the death of Dilawar Khan in c. 1405CE, his son Alp Khan ascended the throne and acquired the title of Hoshang Shah.

Hoshang Shah (c.1406–35 CE)

- Was the first formally appointed Islamic king of Malwa who was a bold and ambitious ruler. An interesting account of his boldness could be ascertained by his rather unconventional way of obtaining the finest elephants from Odisha in c. 1421 CE, when the King of Odisha had refused to send him the best elephants. *He himself along with a thousand soldiers reached Jajpur in Odisha and disguised themselves as merchants of other things, including the king's favourite horses. When the king came to inspect the horses, Hoshang Shah's soldiers captured him and he let him free only after the king promised to gift 100 of the very best elephants and to let him out of Odisha safely.*
- Despite being a warrior, he had a sympathetic heart and was dearly loved by his subjects. He adopted a broad policy

of religious toleration as evident from the inscription of the Lalitpur temple which belonged to this period. It specifies that no restrictions were placed on the construction of temples. He also encouraged many Rajputs to settle in Malwa and extended his patronage to the Jains who were the principal commercial merchants and bankers of the area. For instance, two of the elder brothers of Rana Mokul of Mewar were granted jagirs in Malwa, and Nardeva Soni, a successful merchant, was his treasurer and adviser.

- He is also remembered for his wonderful taste in architecture. It was he who made Mandu one of the most impregnable forts of India. Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh (earlier called Narmadapur) was founded by Hoshang Shah.

Mahmud Khalji (c.1436–1469 CE)

- Mahmud Khalji crowned himself Sultan after assassinating Mohammad, the son of the Hoshang Shah. It was under his reign that the Malwa Sultanate reached its greatest height.
- He was a restless and ambitious ruler who fought with almost all his neighbours—the ruler of Gujarat, the rajas of the Gondwana, and Orissa, the Bahmani Sultans, and even an unsuccessful campaign against the Delhi Sultanate. However, his prime targets were the south Rajputana states, specially Mewar. Mahmud Khalji fought with Rana Kumbha of Mewar, and both sides claimed victory. Rana Kumbha erected a tower of victory in Chittor, and the Sultan erected a seven-storied column at Mandu.

Ghiyas-ud-Din (c. 1469–1500 CE)

- Mahmud was succeeded by his eldest son Ghiyas-ud-Din, who was a pleasure seeker and devoted himself to women and music. He constructed the Jahaz Mahal for housing the women, numbering in thousands, of his harem.
- Ghiyas-ud-Din was defeated by Rana Raimal of Chittor.



Jahaz Mahal, Mandu

Mahmud Shah II (c. 1510–1531 CE)

- The **last ruler** of the **Khalji dynasty** of Malwa, who surrendered to **Bahadur Shah**, the sultan of Gujarat, after he lost the fort of Mandu in c.1531 CE.
- During c.1531–1537 CE, the kingdom was under the control of Bahadur Shah though the Mughal emperor **Humayun** captured it for a short period during c.1535–36 CE. In c.1537 CE, **Qadir Shah**, an ex-officer of the previous Khalji dynasty, regained control over a part of the erstwhile kingdom. But in c.1542 CE, **Sher Shah Suri** conquered the kingdom defeating him and appointed **Shujaat Khan** as the governor. His son, **Baz Bahadur**, declared himself independent in c.1555 CE.

Baz Bahadur (c.1555–1561 CE)

- Was the **last sultan of Malwa**, who was **noted for his gift of music and poetry**, and is known for his **romantic liaison with queen Roopmati**.
- In c.1561 CE, Akbar's army led by **Adham Khan** and Pir Muhammad Khan attacked Malwa and **defeated Baz Bahadur** in the **battle of Sarangpur**. *One of the reasons for Adham Khan's attack seems to be his love for Rani Roopmati. Rani Roopmati poisoned herself upon hearing of the fall of Mandu and Baz Bahadur fled to Khandesh.*

- Akbar soon recalled Adham Khan and handed over command to **Pir Muhammad**, who attacked Khandesh and proceeded up to Burhanpur, but was soon **defeated** and killed by a **coalition of three powers: Miran Mubarak Shah II** of Khandesh, **Tufal Khan** of Berar, and **Baz Bahadur**. The confederate army pursued the Mughals and drove them out of Malwa, and thus Baz Bahadur regained his kingdom for a brief period.
- However, in 1562 CE, Akbar sent another army led by **Abdullah Khan** which finally **defeated Baz Bahadur**, who fled to **Chittor**. He thus remained a fugitive at a number of courts until he surrendered in c.1570 CE to Akbar at Nagaur and **Malwa** thus **became a subah** of the Mughal empire.

Among the many buildings of splendid architectural beauty built in the fortified city of Mandu, the **Jami Masjid**, which was **planned** and **begun** by **Hoshang Shah** and **completed** by **Mahmud Khalji**, the **Hindola Mahal**, the **Jahaz Mahal**, **Hoshang Shah's tomb**, and **Baz Bahadur's** and **Rani Rupamati's palaces** are worth a visit. It is pertinent to note that unlike the Gujarat style of architecture, the **Mandu architecture** was **massive** due to **use of lofty plinth** for the buildings and there was **largescale use of coloured and glazed tiles** which provided variety to the buildings.



Mewar

Mewar or **Udaipur** Kingdom was originally called **Medhpaat** and over time, the name Medhpath became Mewar. Interestingly, the rulers of Mewar used the title **“Maharana”** (**Prime Minister** or **Custodian**) instead of the typical title “Maharaja” (King), as they believed themselves to be merely **custodians of the Hindu civilisation** epitomised in the **temple of their lord Eklingaji** (a manifestation of **Lord Shiva**), who was also called **Medhpateshwar** (Lord of Medhpath).

The rise of Mewar during the 15th century was an important factor in the political life of north India. The power of the Chauhans in Rajputana came to an end with the conquest of Ranthambhore by Alauddin Khalji.

After being overrun by the armies of **Alauddin Khalji**, Mewar had become relatively insignificant. Later in c.1335 CE, **Rana Hammira** (c.1314– 78 CE) established the Second **Guhila dynasty of Chittor** and also became the progenitor of the **Sisodia clan**, a branch of the Guhilot clan, to which every succeeding Maharana of Mewar has belonged. He was the **first ruler** who **started the use of title ‘Rana’** and also built the **Annapoorna Mata temple**, which is located in the **Chittorgarh Fort** in Rajasthan. After the assassination of Rana Hammira’s grandson, **Maharana Mokal**, his son **Rana Kumbha**, ascended the throne of Mewar in c.1433 CE.



Chittorgarh Fort with Victory Tower

Rana Kumbha (c.1433–1468 CE)

- Rana Kumbha or Kumbhakarna Singh raised Mewar to the status of a power to be reckoned with and pulled it out of obscurity. He was a **talented military commander** and ruler who made his mark in the political as well as cultural field.
- After cautiously consolidating his position with great diplomacy and **defeating his internal rivals**, Rana Kumbha conquered states like Bundi, Kota, Chatsu, Malpura, Amber, Dungepur, etc. Majority of these states accepted the suzerainty of Rana Kumbha and came under his political influence. He also annexed Sambhar, Didwana, Mandore, Nagaur, Ranthambore, Sirohi, Gagran, Ajmer,

Mandalgarh, Abu, Toda, etc. to his kingdom.

- **Rana Kumbha** and Sultan **Mahmud Khalji of Malwa** had a **history of tussle**. Rana Kumbha had given shelter to a rival of Mahmud Khalji and even attempted to install him on the throne of Malwa. In retaliation, Mahmud Khalji gave shelter and active encouragement to some of the rivals of the Rana, such as his brother Mokal. As we have discussed above, Rana Kumbha and Mahmud Khalji fought against each other, and interestingly, **both sides claimed victory**. Kumbha erected a **Victory Tower at Chittor** a mark of victory of his conquests. He also consolidated the **fortification of Chittor** and constructed a road running through its seven doors.



Victory Tower

- It is rather admirable of Rana Kumbha that although he was sorely pressed from all sides, he was largely able to maintain his position in Mewar. Though Kumbhalgarh was besieged a couple of times by Gujarat forces, and Mahmud Khalji was able to raid as far inland as Ajmer and install his own governor, Rana was able to repulse these attacks and retain possession of most of his conquests with the exception of some of the outlying areas such as Ranthambore.

- He was a great patron of art and literature and a great musician himself (he was a great *veena* player). He was acclaimed as '*Sangeet Shiromani*' and wrote an outstanding treatise on Indian music titled *Sangeet-Raj* as well as other works like *Sangeet Mimansa*, *Sangeet Ratnakar*, and *Sudprabandh*. He also patronised great scholars such as Mahesh and Atri, the composers of the inscriptions of Victory Tower.
- He constructed the city of *Basantpur*. He built several inns, palaces, ponds, schools, and temples. For the defence of the kingdom, he built five forts of *Kumbhalgarh*, *Achalgarh*, *Maddan*, *Kolana*, and *Vairat*. He also gave patronage to many craftsmen and sculptors.
- Unfortunately, he was murdered by his own son *Udai* in order to gain the throne. *Udai* was however ousted by *Maharana Raimal* who was the younger son of *Rana Kumbha*. Later, after another unfortunate, long fratricidal conflict with his brothers, *Rana Sanga* (son of *Raimal*) became the ruler of *Mewar*.

Rana Sanga (c.1508–1528 CE)

- Originally called *Sangram Singh*, the grandson of *Rana Kumbha* was a ferocious and brave Rajput ruler who fought several battles. He was a man of indomitable spirit and despite losing one arm, one eye, and numerous other grave injuries, he carried on with great valour and established his supremacy over almost all Rajput states in *Rajasthan*.
- He was more of a visionary than a warrior. After the fall of the *Gurjara–Pratihara* kingdom, Rajputs all over northern India had broken up into various factions squabbling and quarrelling among themselves but he united the various factions under his able leadership.
- After first consolidating his power at *Mewar*, *Rana Sanga* moved his army against the internally troubled neighbouring kingdom of *Malwa* (as during this period *Malwa* was disintegrating).

- The ruler of Malwa, **Mahmud II**, was wary of his rival **Rajput Wazir Medini Rai's** power, so he sought assistance from both **Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi of Delhi** and **Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Rai**, on his part, **requested Sanga** to come to his aid. Joined by Rajput rebels from within Malwa, Sanga's troops from Mewar not only **defeated Malwa's army** but also their supporting troops from Delhi. Thus, Malwa fell under Rana's military power. His chivalry was reflected when he **treated Sultan Mahmud** with **generosity** and **restored his kingdom** even when he was defeated and taken as a prisoner by Rana.
- He also defeated the Delhi **Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi** in **c.1518 CE** at **Ghatoli** (near Gwalior). Lodhi, reportedly stunned by this Rajput aggression, moved again against Sanga's army in c.1519 CE, but was **humbled again** at **Dholpur**. Lodi thus fought Sanga repeatedly, only to be defeated each time, losing much of his land in Rajputana, while the boundaries of Sanga's military influence came to extend within striking distance of Agra.
- According to some legends, it was **on the invitation of Rana Sanga** that **Babur invaded India** in **c. 1526 CE**. But just after a year, Rana Sanga fought against Babur in the famous **battle of Khanwa** near Fatehpur Sikri (c.1527 CE). The Rajput forces of Rana Sanga, supplemented by the contingents of **Hasan Khan Mewati** and the **Afghan Mahmud Lodhi** and Raja **Medini Rai of Alwar**, fought against Babur. The battle, which lasted for not more than 10 hours, was bitterly contested and became an exceedingly brutal affair. At a critical moment of battle, the defection of **Silhadi** and his contingent caused a split in the Rajput forces. Rana Sanga, while trying to rebuild his front, was wounded and fell unconscious from his horse. The Rajput army thought their leader was dead and fled in disorder, thus allowing the **Mughals to win**.
- Rana Sanga was whisked away to safety by the Rathore

contingent from Marwar. Unwilling to admit defeat, he set out once more to rebuild his military and renew war with Babur. He vowed not to set foot in Chittor till Babur was defeated by him. In c.1528 CE, he again fought Babur at Battle of Chanderi to help Medini Rai who was attacked by Babur. But, he fell sick at Kalpi and died in his camp. It is speculated that he was poisoned by some of his nobles who thought that his renewal of war with Babur was suicidal.

It is pertinent to note that poet, saint and passionate devotee of Lord Krishna, the legendary Meera Bai, was the daughter in law of Maharana Sanga, and Maharana Pratap too belonged to his lineage.



NORTH INDIA: KASHMIR

In *Rajatarangini* (a history of Kashmir written by Kalhana in the mid-12th century) it is stated that the valley of Kashmir was formerly a lake. According to Hindu mythology, *the lake was drained by the great rishi or sage, Kashyapa, son of Marichi (who in his turn was the son of Brahma), by cutting the gap in the hills at Baramulla (Varaha-mula). When Kashmir had been drained, Kashyapa asked Brahmans to settle there* and thus Kashmir valley was settled by Hindus in the initial phases. The beautiful kingdom of Kashmir was for long a forbidden land for all outsiders. Alberuni, the famous Arab traveller remarked in his work *Al-Hind* that *entry into Kashmir was not allowed even to the Hindus who were not known personally to the local nobles.*

In the 11th century, the rulers were followers of Shaivism, and Shaivism was the central religion in Kashmir. The oppressive taxation, corruption, internecine fights, and rise of the Damaras (feudal lords) during the unpopular rule of the Lohara dynasty (c. 1003–1320 CE) paved way for foreign invasions of Kashmir. In c. 1320 CE, Suhadeva, the last king of the Lohara dynasty, fled Kashmir after Zulju (Dalucha), a Turkic–Mongol chief, led a savage raid on Kashmir. Zulju massacred the civilian population on a mass scale and did a lot of destruction. The hapless Kashmir government could offer no opposition and thus lost all

credibility and public support. So, in c.1339 CE, **Shamsuddin Shah** deposed the Shaiva ruler and became the ruler of Kashmir and **from this period** onwards, **Islam started influencing the Kashmiri society**. A group of Sufi saints known as the *Rishis* propagated a religion that combined features of Hinduism and Islam. For instance, Islamic preacher **Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani**, who is traditionally revered by Hindus as *Nund Rishi*, combined elements of Kashmir Shaivism with Sufi mysticism in his discourses. Thus, in the 14th century under the influence of Sufi saints like Noorani, Islam gradually became the dominant religion in Kashmir.

Shamshuddin Shah Mir (c.1339–1342 CE)

- Was the **founder of the Shah Miri dynasty** and was the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir.

Sikandar Shah (c.1389–1413 CE)

- All other Sultans between c.1354–1470 CE were tolerant of other religions, but Sultan Sikandar was an exception who was more of an **iconoclast**. He **imposed taxes on non-Muslims, forced conversions to Islam**, and earned the title **But-Shikan** for **destroying idols**.
- The state encouragement to Islam took an extreme turn during his reign as he issued an order that all **Hindus**, especially the **Brahmanas** living in his kingdom **should embrace Islam or leave his kingdom**. (It is perceived that *these orders were issued at the instance of his minister, Suha Bhatt, who was earlier a Hindu but had converted to Islam, and was bent on harassing his former co-religionists*).
- After the death of Sikander Shah, his son **Ali Shah** (c.1413–1419 CE) ascended the throne, and after some years his brother **Shah Khan** ascended the throne under the **title** of **Zainul Abidin**.

Zain-ul-Abidin (c. 1420–1470 CE)

- Known as **Bud Shah** (the Great Sultan) and as **Akbar of Kashmir** who was benevolent, liberal, and an enlightened ruler.

- He reversed all the negative and bigoted policies of Sikandar Shah and brought back all the non-Muslims who had fled. He allowed the freedom to revert back to Hinduism to all those who were forcibly converted under any pressure. He even restored their liberties, abolished jaziya, and prohibited cow slaughter. As noted by Abul Fazal more than 100 years later, “Kashmir had one hundred and fifty majestic temples”, and it is most likely that they must have been restored under Zain-ul- Abidin.
- The Hindus occupied many high offices in his government. For instance, Sriya Bhatt was a minister of justice and court physician. Even Zainul’s first two queens were Hindus, being the daughters of the Raja of Jammu.
- Though not a great warrior, he defeated the Mongol invasion of Ladakh, conquered the Baltistan area (called Tibbat-i-Khurd) and kept control over Jammu, Rajauri, etc. and thus unified the Kashmiri kingdom.
- He paid great attention towards the economic growth of Kashmir. The Sultan not only invited artists and craftsmen from Central Asia and Persia to train local artists in Kashmir but also sent two persons to Samarkand to learn the arts of paper-making and book-binding. Under his rule, the arts of wood carving, stone-cutting and polishing, bottle-making, gold-beating, musket-making, art of manufacturing fireworks, shawl and carpet-weaving prospered.
- He contributed to the agricultural development of Kashmir by constructing dams and canals and initiated the maintenance of the agricultural records. During the period of famine and other natural calamities, relief in terms of loans and grains and fodder was provided to the peasants. He also introduced reforms in the currency, market control, and fixed prices of the commodities. The Sultan also subsidised the import of the commodities that were scarce in the state. For instance, to make up for the shortage of salt, he imported salt from Ladakh and helped the traders in

every possible way.

- He got built *Zaina Lanka*, the artificial island in the *Wular Lake* on which he built his palace and a mosque. He also founded the towns of *Zaingir*, *Zainket*, and *Zainpur*. The striking feature of the *Jama Masjid* in Kashmir completed by *Zain-ul-Abidin* is similar to Buddhist pagodas with Persian style and also includes turrets in its architecture.



Jama Masjid, Srinagar

- He himself was a great scholar of Persian, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Kashmiri language and wrote poetry under the pen name ‘Qutb’. He also gave patronage to Sanskrit and Persian scholars and under his patronage, the *Mahabharat* and *Kalhana’s Rajatarangini* were translated into Persian and many Persian and Arabic works were translated into Hindi. He was also in touch with the leading rulers in other parts of not only India but Asia also.

After him, weak rulers ascended the throne of Kashmir and there was confusion. Taking advantage of this, *Mirza Haider*, a relative of Babur,

occupied Kashmir. In c.1586 CE, Akbar conquered Kashmir and made it a part of the Mughal Empire.



EASTERN INDIA: JAUNPUR, BENGAL, ASSAM, AND ORISSA



Jaunpur

Jaunpur was a prosperous province in the eastern part of the Delhi Sultanate (near modern Varanasi on the banks of river Gomati). The governor of Jaunpur was Malik Sarwar, who was a prominent noble during Firoz Shah Tughlaq's period. In c. 1394 CE, Sultan Nasiruddin Mohammad Shah Tughlaq made him a minister and gave him the title of *Sultanu-Sharq* (the master of the east). Thereafter, he was known as *Malik Sarwar Sultanus Sharq*. After Timur's invasion and the weakening of the Delhi Sultanate, Malik Sarwar took advantage of a weak political situation and declared himself independent and extended his authority over Awadh and a large part of Ganga–Yamuna doab such as Kannauj, Kara, Sandeela, Dalmau, Bahraich, Bihar, and Tirhut. Though Malik Sarwar did not assume the title of *Sultan*, he laid down the foundation of the Sharqi Dynasty.



Atala Masjid, Jaunpur

Jaunpur evolved a **distinct architecture** that is known as the **Sharqi style of architecture**. Jaunpur was known as the **Shiraz of India**. Most notable examples of Sharqi style of architecture in Jaunpur are the **Atala Masjid**, the **Lal Darwaja Masjid**, and the **Jama Masjid**.

Malik Sarwar (c.1394–1399 CE)

- **Laid the foundation of the Sharqi** dynasty.
- His authority was recognised by the **Rai of Jajnagar** and the **ruler of Lakhnauti** too.
- After his death, he was succeeded by his adopted son Malik Qaranfal, who took the title of Mubarak Shah.

Mubarak Shah (c.1399–1402 CE)

- **First ruler of Sharqi** dynasty. During his reign, Mallu Iqbal (the powerful minister of the puppet Sultan of Delhi, Mahmud Tughlaq) tried to recover Jaunpur, but failed.

Ibrahim (c.1402–1440 CE)

- Was the younger brother of Mubarak Shah, who ruled as Shams-ud-din Ibrahim Shah and proved to be the **greatest ruler of the Sharqi dynasty**, under whom Jaunpur became an important centre of learning.
- To the east, his kingdom extended to Bihar, and to the west, to Kannauj. During his reign, the **relations between Delhi and Jaunpur became worse**. He even led an expedition against Delhi but failed. He also threatened the Sultanate of Bengal under Raja Ganesha.
- He was a **patron of Islamic learning** and **established** a number of **colleges** for this purpose. A large number of scholarly works on Islamic theology and law was produced during his reign, which include the *Hashiah-i-Hindi*, the *Bahar-ul-Mawwaj* and the *Fatwa-i-Ibrahim Shahi*.
- During his reign, one of the most famous buildings, the **Atala Masjid**, was constructed at Jaunpur. Though the foundation of the Atala Masjid was laid by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in c.1376 CE, it was completed only during the rule of Ibrahim Shah in c.1408 CE. Another mosque, the **Jhanjhiri Masjid**, was also built by Ibrahim Shah in 1430.

Mahmud Shah (c.1440 –1457 CE)

- Elder son of Ibrahim who **conquered the fort of Chunar** but could not conquer Kalpi.
- In c.1452 CE, he **invaded Delhi but was defeated by Bahlol Lodhi**. Later, he made another attempt to conquer Delhi and marched into Etawah. Finally, he agreed to a treaty that accepted the right of Bahlol Lodhi over Shamsabad. But when Bahlol tried to take possession of Shamsabad, he was opposed by the forces of Jaunpur. Around this time, Mahmud Shah died. He was succeeded by his son Bhikhan, who assumed the title of Muhammad Shah.
- The **Lal Darwaja Masjid** (c.1450 CE) was built during the reign of the Mahmud Shah.

Muhammad Shah (c.1457–1458 CE)

- On assuming power in c.1457 CE, he **made peace with**

Bahlol Lodhi and recognised his right over Shamsabad.

- In c.1458 CE, when he got his brother Hasan executed, his other brother Hussain revolted and proclaimed himself as the Sultan of Jaunpur under the title of Hussain Shah, and killed Muhammad Shah.

Hussain Shah Sharqi (c.1458– 1505 CE)

- The **last ruler of the Sharqi dynasty**, Hussain Shah, assumed the title of **Gandharva** and contributed significantly in the development of the **khayal**, a genre of **Hindustani classical music**. He also **composed** several **new ragas** (melodies). Most notable among these are *Malhar-syama*, *Gaur-syama*, *Bhopal-syama*, *Hussaini-* or *Jaunpuri-asavari* (presently known as Jaunpuri) and Jaunpuri-basant.
- It was during his reign that the **Jama Masjid** was built in c.1470 CE and also a **prolonged war with Bahlol Lodhi** started.

Finally, **Sikandar Lodhi** who succeeded Bahlol Lodhi **annexed Jaunpur**. Hussain Shah died and the Sharqi dynasty came to an end.



Bengal

Bengal was an important regional kingdom under the **Palas** in the **8th century** and the **Senas** in the **12th century**. It was the easternmost province of the Delhi Sultanate. The **long distance**, **uncomfortable climate**, and **poor means of transport and communications** (as much of its communication depended upon waterways) **made it difficult for the Delhi Sultanate to control** this province. Though Bengal was annexed to the Delhi Sultanate, a number of times it gained its independence. For instance, if we look through the pages of history, during the last decade of the 12th century CE, **Muhammad Bin Bakhtiyar** 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. Later, **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: Lakhnauti, Satgaon, and Sonargaon. However, the problems remained as such. Muhammad bin Tughlaq tried to control Bengal, but in c.1338 CE, when he was busy in suppressing rebellion in other parts of Sultanate, Bengal cut off its connection with Delhi. Finally, Bengal emerged as an independent regional state in the 14th century.

In c.1342 CE, one of the nobles, Haji Ilyas Khan, united Bengal and became its ruler and laid the foundation of the Ilyas Shah dynasty. The Bengal Sultanate (which ruled for around 125 years though in phases) established by Ilyas Shah emerged as one of the leading diplomatic, economic, and military powers in the subcontinent. Ilyas Shah and his successors embraced Indo-Aryanisation and adapted themselves to Bengali culture and society. Their kingdom was a melting pot for migrants from across the Muslim world and played a key role in the development of Bengali Muslim society. Pandua and Gaur, the capitals of Bengal were adorned with magnificent buildings. While Persian was the language of administration, Bengali developed as a regional language. The celebrated poet Maladhar Basu, compiler of Sri-Krishna-Vijaya, was patronised by the Sultans and was granted the title of Gunaraja Khan. His son was honoured with the title of Satyaraja Khan. Later, another prominent Hussain Shahi dynasty came to fore and after a brief period of 44 years, Bengal came under the authority of Sher Shah Suri, one of the most able Sur rulers who even ousted the Mughal ruler Humayun from Delhi.

Haji Shamsh-ud-din Ilyas Khan (c.1342–1357 CE)

- **Founder of Ilyas Shah dynasty.** His most important legacy is that he unified the independent kingdom of Bengal. He extended the dominions in the west from Tirhut to Champaran and Gorakhpur, and finally upto Benaras. This brought him in conflict with Firoz Shah Tughlaq and to counter his increasing influence, Firoz Shah Tughlaq took Champaran and Gorakhpur and occupied the Bengali capital Pandua, and forced Ilyas to seek shelter in the

strong fort of Ekdala. Ilyas Shah thus had to sign a treaty with Firoz Shah Tughlaq. According to this treaty, river Kosi was accepted as the boundary line between two kingdoms.

- With the establishment of friendly relations now with Delhi, Ilyas Shah was enabled to extend his control over the kingdom of Kamrupa (modern Assam). He tried to annex Bengal and raided Orissa and Tirhut and forced them to pay tribute. His campaigns were thus considered “world-conquering” in the context of medieval Bengal and Ilyas Shah has been described as the Bengali equivalent of Alexander or Napoleon.
- He was a popular ruler and organised an inclusive and pluralistic administration. It is said that when Firoz Shah Tughlaq was at Pandua, he tried to win over the inhabitants of the city to his side by giving liberal grants of land to the nobles, the clergy and other deserving people, but due to immense popularity of Ilyas Shah, Firoz Shah could not succeed.
- Haji Ilyas died in c.1357 CE and his son Sikandar succeeded the throne. During his reign too, Firoz Shah Tughlaq again tried to annex Bengal but Sikandar followed the tactics of his father and retreated to Ekdala. Firoz once again failed and had to retreat. After this, Bengal was left alone for about 200 years and was not invaded again till c.1538 CE after the Mughals had established their power at Delhi.

Ghiyasuddin Azam (c.1390–1411 CE)

- One of the important rulers of the Ilyas Shah dynasty who was known for his love for justice. It is said that once he accidentally killed a son of a widow who filed a complaint with qazi. The Sultan when summoned to the court humbly appeared and paid fine imposed by the qazi. At the end of the trial, Azam told the qazi that had he not discharged his duties honestly, he would have had him beheaded.

- Azam was a learned man and had close relations with the famous learned men of his times, including the famous Persian poet, Hafiz of Shiraz. He also maintained cordial relations with China and a prosperous trading relationship existed between Bengal and China during his reign. The port of Chittagaong was an important trading centre. He also sent and received Chinese envoy and on request from the king of China, Azam also sent Buddhist monks to China.
- There was a brief spell of Hindu rule under Raja Ganesha (c.1414– 1435 CE), but later the rule of Ilyas Shahi dynasty was restored by Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah and his successors (c.1435–1487 CE). However, for a short period of seven years, the Habshis came to rule over Bengal (c.1487–1494 CE), who were then overthrown by Alauddin Hussain Shah. He later proved to be one of the most remarkable rulers of Bengal.

Alauddin Hussain Shah (c.1494–1519 CE)

- Founder of the Hussain Shahi dynasty (c.1494–1538 CE). He is considered as the greatest of all the sultans of Bengal as under him, not only did Bengal frontiers expand but he also brought a cultural renaissance in Bengal and the Bengali language enriched a lot.
- He conquered Kamarupa, Kamata, Jajnagar, and Orissa, and extended the sultanate all the way to the port of Chittagong, which witnessed the arrival of the first Portuguese merchants.
- He was very efficient, liberal, and gave high administrative posts to Hindus. For instance his wazir, chief physician, chief bodyguard, master of mint, were all talented Hindus. He also paid great respect to the Vaishnavite saint Chaitanya. Even his private secretary Sanatan was a celebrated pious Vaishnava, as was his brother Rupa.
- He came into conflict with Sikandar Lodhi and had to make peace with him. On his death, in c.1518 CE, his son Nasib

Khan ascended the throne under the title of Nasir-ud-din Narrat Shah.

Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah (c.1518–1533 CE)

- He married Ibrahim Lodi's daughter and gave refuge to the Afghan lords. During the invasion of Babur, however, he remained neutral. Later, Nasrat Shah made a treaty with Babur and saved Bengal from a Mughal invasion.
- He continued his father's expansionist policies, adding more territory to his sultanate early on in his reign, but after c.1526 CE he had to contend with the Mughal ascendancy, and also suffered a reversal at the hands of the Ahom kingdom. He was succeeded by his son Alauddin Firuz Shah, under whose reign the Bengal army entered Assam and reached Kaliabor, but he was assassinated by his uncle Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah.

Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah (c.1533–1538 CE)

- The last Sultan of the Hussain Shahi dynasty, who ruled from Sonargaon and was a weak, pleasure-loving and easy-going ruler who according to many historians *neither had diplomatic foresight, nor any practical approach to the political problems which beset Bengal during his reign.*
- His reign was marked by rebellions, including those by Khuda Bakhsh Khan, his general and governor of the Chittagong area, and Makhdum Alam, the governor of Hajipur.
- During his reign in c.1534 CE, the Portuguese who had earlier arrived in Chittagong, were captured and sent to Gaur as prisoners on charges of misbehaviour. But, even at the position of superiority, he reconciled with them and permitted them to establish factories at Chittagong and Hughli.
- Ghiyasuddin and his Portuguese allies were defeated by Sher Shah Suri and his Afghans in c.1538 CE, as his appeals to Mughal Emperor Humayun went unanswered.

Bengal was thus annexed by Sher Shah Suri, who established the Sur

empire. Later in c.1586 CE, Akbar conquered Bengal, and made it into a *suba* (province). The establishment of Mughal control over Bengal coincided with the rise of agrarian settlements in the forested and marshy areas of south-eastern Bengal. Soon after, with the spread of rice cultivation, this area became heavily populated with the local communities of fisher folks and peasants. The Mughals established their capital in the heart of the eastern delta at Dhaka, where officials and functionaries were granted land grants and they settled there.



Assam

The history of Assam is the history of the confluence of the Tibeto-Burman (Sino-Tibetan), Indo-Aryan, and Austroasiatic cultures, as well as the confluence of people from the east, west and the north. It is noteworthy that although invaded over the centuries, it was never a vassal or a colony to an external power until the Burmese in c.1821 CE, and, subsequently, the British in c.1826 CE after the famous Treaty of Yandaboo.

The Assamese history has been derived from multiple sources. For instance, proto-history has been reconstructed from folklore epics like Mahabharata, and two medieval texts compiled in the Assam region: the Kalika Purana and the Yogini Tantra, while the historical account of Ancient Assam begins with the establishment of Pushyavarman's Varman dynasty in the 4th century in the Kamarupa kingdom, which left behind a corpus of Kamarupa inscriptions on rock, copper plates, clay; royal grants, etc. There is also a mention of Kamarupa in Samudragupta's Allahabad pillar. During the medieval period, the Buranjis, chronicles written in the Ahom and the Assamese languages by the Ahom kings offer a lot of detail about the Assam of medieval India.

Since the time of Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji (c.1207 CE as mentioned in the Kanai-boroxiboa rock inscription), the Muslim rulers of Bengal had tried to bring the Brahmaputra valley in modern Assam under their control, but had to suffer a series of disastrous defeats in this

region which was little known to them. There were two warring kingdoms in north Bengal and Assam; Kamata, also known as Kamrupa in the west, and the Ahom kingdom in the east. The Ahoms were a Mongoloid tribe from north Burma who had succeeded in establishing a powerful kingdom in the 13th century, and had become Hinduised in course of time. In fact, the name Assam is derived from them.

Ilyas Shah invaded Kamata and he could penetrate up to Gauhati, but he could not hold the area, and the river Karatoya was accepted as the north-east boundary of Bengal. Later, the rulers of Kamata were gradually able to recover many areas on the eastern bank of the Karatoya. They also fought against the Ahoms. Having made both their neighbours into enemies, the Kamata rulers sealed their doom as Alauddin Hussain Shah, with the aid of Ahoms, attacked Kamata and destroyed the city of Kamatapur (near modern Cooch Bihar) and thus annexed the kingdom to Bengal, appointing one of his sons as governor of the area. However, an attack by Alauddin's son Nusrat Shah later was repulsed with considerable losses to him.

During this time, the eastern Brahmaputra valley was under Suhungmung (c.1497–1539 CE), one of the greatest Ahom rulers. He was the first Ahom king to adopt a Hindu title, *Svarga Narayana*, indicating rapid Hinduisation of the Ahoms as well as a move towards an inclusive polity. The Ahom kings thus came to be known as the *Svarga Dev* (heaven-lord). He is also called the *Dihingia Raja*, as he made Bakata on the Dihing river his capital. He not only repulsed the Muslim attack, but also extended his kingdom in all directions. The Vaishnavite reformer, Shankardeva, belonged to his time and spread Vaishnavism in the area.



Orissa/Odisha

The Gangas of Orissa were succeeded by the Hindu Gajapati rulers (c.1435–1541 CE) during medieval times who ruled over Kalinga (present Odisha), large parts of Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal, and the eastern and central parts of Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. *Gajapati* etymologically means a king with an army of elephants. The

Gajapati dynasty was established by **Kapilendra Deva** in c.1435 CE, after the fall of the last eastern Ganga king, Bhanudeva IV. The dynasty is also known as a **Suryavamsi** dynasty. The **Suryavamsi Gajapatis** period in Odisha was marked by the **popularity of the Bhakti movement** under the **influence of Sri Chaitanya**, who arrived in the empire at the time of **King Prataparudra** and stayed for 18 long years at Puri, and by the **construction of Jagannatha temples** across the length and breadth of the empire. The *Gajapati* rulers were mainly instrumental in extending their rule in the south towards Karnataka, which brought them in conflict with Vijaynagar, the Reddis and the Bahmani Sultans. However, by the early 16th century, the *Gajapatis* lost great portions of their southern dominion to Vijayanagar and Golconda, and even the *Gajapatis* were dislodged by **Bhoi dynasty**.

Kapilendra Deva (c.1435–1466 CE)

- **First ruler of Gajapati** dynasty. During his reign, his kingdom expanded from Ganga in the north to as far as Bidar in the south.
- In about c.1450 CE, he installed his eldest son, **Hamvira Deva**, as the governor of Rajamundry and Kondavidu. He also ordered Hamvira to conquer Vijayanagar and the Bahmani Sultanate. Hamvira successfully **captured the Vijaynagar capital, Hampi**, and forced the weak ruler Mallikarjuna Raya to pay yearly taxes. In c.1460 CE Hamvira Deva's commander, Tamavupala, conquered the southern states of Udayagiri (Nellore district) and Chandragiri. **The rock edicts of Srirangam temple near Trichinapalli indicate that Hamvira Deva captured as far as Trichinapalli, Tanjore, and Arcot in south** and in the c.1464 CE **assumed the title of Dakshina Kapileswara**.
- Kapilendra Deva **patronised Vaishnavism**, expanded the Jagannath temple at Puri and constructed the **Shaivite temple of Kapileswar** in **Bhubaneswar**. He was a great patron of Vedic culture and himself wrote a **Sanskrit play** called **Parshuram Bijaya**. It was during his reign that **Odia language** was officially used as an administrative language

and the famous Odia poet Sarala Das wrote the Odia Mahabharata.

Purushottama Deva (c.1466–1497 CE)

- After the death of Kapilendra Deva, a succession war started among his sons and Purushottama Deva succeeded in securing the throne in c.1484 CE by defeating Hamvira Deva. But, during this period, significant southern parts of the empire were lost to Saluva Narasimha, the ruler of Vijayanagar. However, by the time of his death, he managed to recover some of these territories.

Prataparudra Deva (c.1497–1540 CE)

- Son of Purushottama Deva, during whose reign, Alauddin Husain Shah of Bengal attacked twice. In the latter campaign (c.1508 CE), the Bengal army marched up to Puri.
- In c.1512 CE, Krishna Deva Raya of the Vijayanagar empire invaded Kalinga and defeated the forces of the Gajapati Kingdom and in c.1522 CE, Quli Qutb Shah of Golconda ousted the Odia army from the Krishna–Godavari tract.
- Prataparudra was highly influenced by the works of Chaitanya and he gave up the military tradition as he retired himself into the life of an ascetic leaving the future of the empire uncertain.

Later, in c.1541 CE, Prataparudra Deva's minister Govinda Vidyadhara rebelled against his weak successors, and after murdering the two sons of Prataparudra Deva he established the Bhoi Dynasty. The Bhoi dynasty was short-lived and during this period the kingdom came into conflict with neighbouring kingdoms and reeled under civil wars. Later, history repeated itself as Mukunda Deva, a minister of the Bhoi dynasty came to throne in c.1559 CE in a bloody coup, after assassinating the last two Bhoi kings and declaring himself the ruler of Odisha. Mukunda Deva is considered the last independent ruler of Odisha as the region saw a steady decline afterwards. In c.1568 CE, Odisha came under the control of Sulaiman Khan Karrani of Karrani dynasty, who was the ruler of the Sultanate of Bengal. The year of c.1568 CE is important in

the history of Odisha, as Odisha never emerged as an independent kingdom again.



Questions from Last Year's Prelims

2016

1. Regarding the taxation system of Krishna Deva Raya, the ruler of Vijayanagar, consider the following statements:
 1. The tax rate on land was fixed depending on the quality of the land.
 2. Private owners of workshops paid an industries tax. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

2015

2. Which one of the following was given classical language status recently?
 - (a) Odia
 - (b) Konkani
 - (c) Bhojpuri
 - (d) Assamese

2015

3. Who of the following founded a new city on the south bank of a tributary to river Krishna and undertook to rule his new kingdom

as the agent of a deity to whom all the land south of the river Krishna was supposed to belong?

- (a) Amoghavarsha I
- (b) Ballala II
- (c) Harihara I
- (d) Prataparudra II

2014

4. In medieval India, the designations 'Mahattara' and 'Pattakila' were used for
- (a) Military officers
 - (b) Village headmen
 - (c) Specialists in Vedic rituals
 - (d) Chiefs of craft guilds

2012

5. With reference to the religious history of medieval India, the Sufi mystics were known to pursue which of following practices?
- 1. Meditation and control of breath.
 - 2. Severe ascetic exercises in a lonely place.
 - 3. Recitation of holy songs to arouse a state of ecstasy in their audience. Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3

2006

6. When Raja Wodeyar founded the kingdom of Mysore, who was the ruler of the Vijaynagar Empire?

- (a) Sadashiva
- (b) Tirumala
- (c) Ranga II
- (d) Venkata II

2004

7. Consider the following statements:
1. Narasimha Saluva ended the Sangama dynasty and seized the throne for himself and started the Saluva dynasty.
 2. Vira Narasimha deposed the last Saluva ruler and seized the throne for himself.
 3. Vira Narasimha was succeeded by his younger brother, Krishna Deva Raya
 4. Krishana Deva Raya was succeeded by his half brother, Achyuta Raya. Which of the following statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
 - (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
 - (c) 1 and 4
 - (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
8. Assertion (A): Saluva Narasimha put an end to the old dynasty and assumed the royal title.

2003

Reasoning(R): He wanted to save the kingdom from further degeneration and dis integration.

- (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A
 - (b) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A
 - (c) A is true but R is false
 - (d) A is false but R is true
9. Assertion(A): The Battle of Khanwa was certainly more decisive

and significant than the First battle of Panipat.

2001

Reasoning(R): Rana Sanga, the Rajput hero, was certainly a more formidable adversary than Ibrahim Lodhi.

- (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true but R is false
- (d) A is false but R is true.

2000

10. Which one of the following Muslim rulers was hailed as the 'Jagadguru' by his Muslim subjects because of his belief in secularism?

- (a) Husain Shah
- (b) Zain-ul-Abidin
- (c) Ibrahim Adil Shah
- (d) Mahmud II

2000

11. Match the following:

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| (A) Iqta | (i) Marathas |
| (B) Jagir | (i) Delhi Sultans |
| (C) Amaram | (iii) Mughals |
| (D) Mokasa | (iv) Vijayanagara |

- (a) (A)-iii, (B)-ii, (C)-i, (D)- iv
- (b) (A)-ii, (B)-iii, (C)-iv, (D)- i
- (c) (A)-ii, (B)-iii, (C)-i, (D)- iv
- (d) (A)-iii, (B)-ii, (C)-iv, (D)- i

12. Consider the following statements:

1999

The striking feature of the Jama Masjid in Kashmir completed by Zain-ul-Abidin include:

- i. Turret
 - ii. Similarity with the Buddhist pagodas
 - iii. Persian style
- (a) i alone
 - (b) i, ii, and iii
 - (c) ii and iii
 - (d) i and iii

1999

13. One of the consistent features found in the history of southern India was the growth of small regional kingdoms rather than large empires because of
- (a) The absence of minerals like iron.
 - (b) Too many divisions in the social structure.
 - (c) The absence of vast areas of fertile land.
 - (d) The scarcity of manpower.

1995

14. Which one of the following monuments has a dome which is said to be one of the largest in the world?
- (a) The Tomb of Sher Shah, Sasaram.
 - (b) Jama Masjid.
 - (c) Tomb of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.
 - (d) Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur.



Answers

1. (c)

2. (a)
3. (c)
4. (b)
5. (d)
6. (c)
7. (d)
8. (c)
9. (a)
10. (c)
11. (b)
12. (b)
13. (c)
- 14.



Questions from last year's Mains

1. Mention the salient features of the polity of Vijaynagar Empire under Krishna Deva Raya. (2015, History optional)
2. On the basis of contemporary sources evaluate the system of agriculture and irrigation of the Vijaynagar kingdom. (2013, History optional)



Practice Questions (Prelims)

1. Match the following:

(A) Harihara I and Bukka	(i) Tuluva dynasty
(B) Krishan Deva Raya	(ii) Founded Vijaynagar Empire
(C) Rana Khumbha	(iii) Sangeet Shiromani
(D) Deva Raya II	(iv) Famous poet Srinatha

- (a) (A)-ii, (B)-i, (C)-iii, (D)- iv
(b) (A)-i, (B)-ii, (C)-iii, (D)- iv
(c) (A)-iv, (B)-iii, (C)-ii, (D)- i
(d) (A)-iii, (B)-i, (C)-ii, (D)- iv
2. Consider the following statements and mark the option which is correct.
- (i) Alauddin Hasan was the founder of Bahmani Kingdom .
(ii) Krishna Deva Raya's court was adorned by the 'ashtadiggaja'.
(iii) During the reign of Immadi Narasimha, Vasco da Gama landed in Calicut.
- (a) i and ii
(b) All of the above
(c) ii and iii
(d) None of the above
3. Consider the following statements and mark the option which is correct.
- (i) Hamvira deva of Orissa was also known as Dakshina Kapileswara.
(ii) The Gajapati dynasty was established by Kapilendra Deva.
(iii) Suhungmung was one of the greatest Ahom rulers. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
4. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:

List I

- (a) Nizamshahis
(b) Adilshahis
(c) Imadshahis
(d) Qutubshahis

List II

1. Ahmadnagar
2. Golconda
3. Berar
4. Bijapur

Code:	A	B	C	D
(a)	2	4	3	1
(b)	2	3	4	1
(c)	1	4	3	2
(d)	1	3	4	2

5. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:

List I (Famous Book)		List II (Author)		
(a) Dharmanathapurana		1. Udayaraja		
(b) Sri-Krishna-Vijaya		2. Madhura		
(c) Haravilasam		3. Srinatha		
(d) Raja- Vinoda		4. Maladhar Basu		
Code:	A	B	C	D
(a)	2	4	3	1
(b)	2	3	4	1
(c)	1	4	3	2
(d)	1	3	4	2

6. Consider the following statements and identify the ruler:
- (1) Was known as Bud Shah.
 - (2) He abolished jaziya and prohibited cow slaughter.
 - (3) He built Zaina Lanka, the artificial island in the Wular Lake.
- (a) Mahmud Gawan
 - (b) Alauddin Khalji
 - (c) Zainul Abidin
 - (d) Ghiyasuddin Azam



Answers

1. (a)
2. (b)
3. (d)
4. (c)

5. (a)
6. (c)



Practice Questions(Mains)

1. Why was the control of Malwa important for establishing supremacy in north India? List the important rulers of Malwa and their key achievements in detail.
2. What were the main reasons of conflict between the Bahmanis and the Vijaynagar empire? Elaborate.
3. Mahmud Gawan was the chief architect of the Bahmani empire. Do you agree? Give suitable reasons.
4. Compare the Vijaynagar administration with Bahmani Sultanate's administration.

