

# Medieval Bengal

Socioeconomic and political  
condition

# Medieval Bengal

- ❑ Began in the **13<sup>th</sup> century**.
- ❑ Main feature: end of the Hindu and Buddhist rule and the establishment of the Muslim rule in Bengal.
- ❑ In **1203 A.D.** the Turkish hero **Bakhtiar Khalji** conquered **Bihar** near Bengal.
- ❑ The trained warrior chose to advance through the **jungle of Jharkhand** instead of the **mountain pass of Teliaghri**.

# Bakhtiar Khalij 1203-1206 CE

- ❑ Bakhtiar Khalji conquered Bihar near Bengal.
- ❑ He divided his army into small groups to conquer Nadia.
- ❑ The people of Nadia thought that a band of horse merchant has come, so nobody stopped them.
- ❑ Bakhtiar Khalji occupied the Palace of Lakhshmana Sena; who fled to East Bengal.



# Bakhtiar Khalij 1203-1206 CE

- ❑ Bakhtiar Khalji took hold of the famous capital of Sena Dynasty, Lakhsmanabati and renamed it as Lakhnauti.
- ❑ Established capital at Devakota (Dinajpur) and did not conquer Bengal any further.
- ❑ He failed in the expedition of Tibet and came back to Devakota.
- ❑ Died in 1206.



# Ali Mardan and others

**After the assassination of Bakhtiar Khalji by his own officer Ali Mardan in 1206, Bengal was administered by various Maliks belonging to the Khalji tribe till Delhi Sultan Iltutmish sent forces under his son, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, to bring Bengal under the direct control of the Delhi Sultans.**

# Bengal Under Delhi Sultanate

Rulers of Delhi tried to control Bengal by appointing governors but most of the governors revolted against Delhi sultanate.



# The Independent Sultanate (1338-1538 CE)

- ❑ **Bahram Khan** was made governor of Sonargaon and Satgaon. In 1338 Bahram Khan died.
- ❑ On his death at Sonargaon Fakhruddin captured power, proclaimed independence and assumed the title of “Sultan Fakhruddin Mobarak Shah”.
- ❑ Beginning of the Independent Sultanate that continued for two hundred years



# The Independent Sultanate (1338-1538 CE)

**Fakhruddin Mubarak** shah ruled from 1338-1349.

He extended the area of his kingdom in the North-West direction.

He conquered Chittagong and built a highway from Chandpur to Chittagong.

**Gazi Shah** ruled Sonargaon for three years after the death of Fakhruddin.



# Iliyas Shah

- ❑ **Haji Iliyas shah conquer Bengal by defeating Gazi Shah and established a Dynasty in Bengal in 1352.**
- ❑ **He was the founder of Ilyas Shahi Dynasty.**
- ❑ **Pandua was the capital of the Bengal Sultanate under his reign.**

# Sikandar Shah

He defeated Firoz Shah Tughlaq and the later acknowledged the independence of Bengal Sultanate.

- Adina Mosque was built during Sikandar Shah's reign.



# Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah

- ❑ He was the third Bengal Sultan.
- ❑ He established the diplomatic relationship with Ming dynasty (China).
- ❑ Ramayan was translated into Bengali by Krittibas Ojha during his reign.

# Ganesha Dynasty (1414-1432/35)

- ❑ Raja Ganesha a Hindu landlord of Bhaturia and Dinajpur. Ganesha became the king of Bengal by usurping power from the weak Iliyas Shahi sultans in the early 15th century. He was the founder of Ganesha Dynasty. Gaur was the capital city.
- ❑ later his son Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah succeeded the kingdom. He contributed to the reconquest of Arakan. Fatehabad (Now, Faridpur in Bangladesh) came under his control.



# Later Ilias Shahi Rulers

- The elite society became agitated because a slave had murdered his master and ascended the throne. They united attacked and killed Nasir Khan. In 1452 A.D. they placed on the throne of Bengal Nasir Shah, a descendent of Ilias Shah.

## Prominent Rulers

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah

Rukanuddin Barbak Shah

Jalaluddin Fateh Shah

# The Habshi Rule (1487-1493 A.D.)

This period was filled with-  
lawlessness,  
injustice,  
conspiracy,  
rebellion and  
despair.

## Prominent Rulers

- Barbak Shahjada
- Saifuddin Firoz Shah
- Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah II
- Shamsuddin Muzaffar Shah  
(1491-1493 A.D.)

# Hussain Shahi Dynasty (1494-1538)

## ❑ Allaudin Hussain Shah

- Bengal Sultanate-Kamata Kingdom War led to the conquer of large parts of Assam.
- After the Bengal Sultanate–Kingdom of Mrauk U War; Bengali sovereignty in Chittagong and northern Arakan was restored.

## ❑ Ghiyasuddin Muhammad Shah

- Factories were established in Chittagong and Hoogli after he permitted the Portuguese.

# Rule of Afghans

- Rule of Afghans began in Bengal in 1538 following the fall of Hossain Shahi Dynasty. At the Beginning, the period of their rule was very short, about six months (April-September, 1538).
- But the next term lasted for a long period from 1539 to 1576.
- Before the occupation of Bengal by Sher Khan (Afghan) in 1538, Afghans used to serve the Sultans of Bengal. The Sultans of Bengal had appointed them in various government departments.



# Baro-Bhuiyans

- During the **interregnum** between Afghan rule and the rise of Mughal power in Bengal, various parts of Bengal passed to the control of several military chiefs, bhuiyans and zamindars.
- These were mostly Afghan and Bengali Hindu elites, some from old ruling families and others new power grabbers.

# Baro-Bhuiyans

- They jointly, and more often severally resisted Mughal expansion and ruled their respective territories as independent or semi-independent chiefs. There was no central control, or if there was any, it was nominal.
- Taking the whole of Bengal into consideration, the number of bhuiyans must have been many more than twelve.

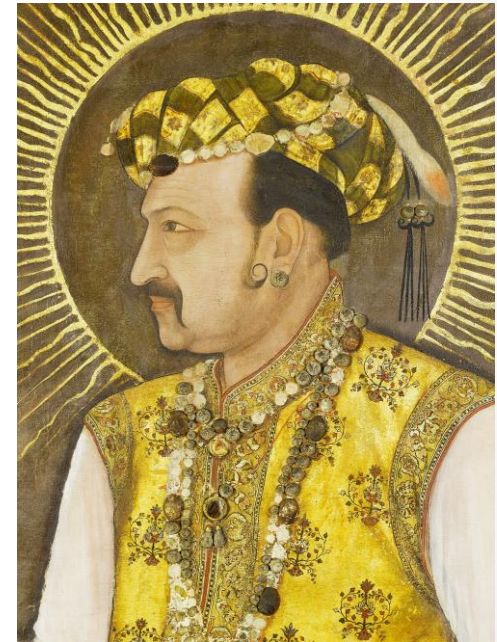
# Baro-Bhuiyans

- Isha kha was the leader of Barabhuiyan and zamindar of Sonargaon, the low land name as 'Vati' area.
- Emperor Akbar sent his soldiers several time to conquer the Bengal but they could not defeat Isha khan and zamindars.



# Mughal rule in Bengal

- Finally, in 1610, the Mughal governor fought his way east to Dhaka, which he fortified and renamed Jahangirnagar after the Mughal emperor Jahangir.
- He made Dhaka as the capital of Bengal, mainly because it was best positioned to suppress resistance in the delta and to check the growing power of the Portuguese and Arakanese in the southeast.



# Mughal rule in Bengal

- Rule of Subadar
- Rule of Nawabs

# Rule of Subadars

- ▣ The Mughal provinces were known as „Subas“.
- ▣ Bengal became a Suba after the defeat of the Barabhuynas and Islam Khan introduced the rule of the Subadars in Bengal in 1610 A.D
- ▣ Many Subadars ruled in Bengal, but no one could succeed before Mir Jumla's reign.

# Some Subadars in Bengal

Islam Khan

Kasem Khan Juini

- *Shah Suja*
- *Mir Jumla*
- Shayesta khan
- Murshidkuli khan

# Nawabs

After 1700 the influence of the Mughal imperial court over Bengal declined rapidly. A new diwan (top revenue official) by the name of Murshid Quli Khan presided over a peaceful transition to independence from Delhi and his successors would style themselves nawabs (nabaʿb), or independent princes.

He moved the provincial capital from Dhaka to Murshidabad and reformed revenue collection. By 1713 the posting of officials from Delhi stopped as the Mughal empire descended into disorder.

Although Bengal was nominally still a province, it became independent under the nawabs, who were a non-Bengali dynasty.



# Nawabs

Murshid Quli Khan

Alivardi Khan

Siraj-ud-Daulah

Some of the Nawabs of Bengal.

The last nawab of Bengal, Sirajuddaula, attempted to block unauthorised trade from the region. This led to repeated confrontations with British traders and his ultimate defeat at Polashi in 1757.

## SOCIAL LIFE OF MEDIEVAL BENGAL

### Muslim Society

- Sultans had the highest social esteem and leader of Muslim society.
- Had three tiers-upper, higher middle and lower class.
- Sayed, Ulema (experienced in Islamic education) and similar classes were influential of that time.
- The sheikhs would impart the public relations and spiritual education.
- Aristocratic community-shaped themselves as an exclusive class of people.
- Social festivals- Akika, Khatna, Marriage, Milad and so on were celebrated.
- Elite Muslims eat- Kabab, rejala, roast and so on lavish foods and common people eat plain rice, fish and vegetable.

- Pajama, panjabi, pagri, tupi, lungi weared by muslim male.
- Elite leaders used various cosmetics and gold ornaments.
- Deveopment of muktab, madrassas and boys and girls received education from here. Hindu Society.
- There were nothing change in the social system of Hindu society between medieval and ancient periods.
- Different occasions, caste system, food habit, dress code were similar with the ancient period but Kaulinyo system were existed.

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# ECONOMIC LIFE

- Main source of economic prosperity of Bengal was agriculture.
- Common crops like rice, paddy, sugarcane, vegetables, betel nut, coconut and so on were produced.
- Maximum people were farmers. Surplus products were exported to others countries.
- Commercial activities expanded also in industries and textile, sugar industry, boat making factor were set up in Bengal.
- Clothes like moslin, silk were very famous for quality and standard
- Sugar, molasses and shipping industry also spread widely spread in Bengal.
- Meta, goods made of iron , blacksmiths car[et, papers, steel, salt industries, crafts, conchindustries were widely used.
- Sea ports, rivers ports were built; expansion of trade and commerce, transactions of goods and money as well as keeping accoiunts

## Cultural Life

Architecture and the art of painting:

- o The Muslim rulers built many palaces, mosques, graveyards, dargahs etc in different places of Bengal in different times in order to establish the glory of Islam and make their conquests and regimes memorable.

- o For example: Adina Mosque(Gaur), Graveyard of Giasuddin Azam Shah, Sonarga; Eklakhi mosques(pandua); Bara sona mosque(Gaur), Choto sona mosque, The Tomb of Khan Jahan Ali (Bagerhat), Shatgombuj mosque, Kadam rasul, Bara Katra(Dhaka) and so on.

## Religious Life

### Muslim Society:

Eid-ul-Fitre, Eid-ul-Ajha main religious festivals.

Muslim would perform their prayer in five times a day and recite holy Quran Hadith regularly.

Celebrate the birthday of the Prophet(sm) with special group.

### Hindu Society:

Believe in and worship different god and goddesses.

Religious festivals like durga puja, holi, janasthami, Ganga snan and so on religious festivals were celebrated

# Administrative life

1. Sulatan, Subadars and Nawabs in different ruling ruler operated the region and hold the higher position.

2. To protect the territory, rulers established military outposts in the border area.

3. Different areas of the territory to the military chiefs for maintenance of law and order and collection of revenues. It was also their duty to look after the well being of people under their charge.

4. Building a naval power.

5. Introduced a welfare administration and led Bengal to prosperity

Thank You