

# Ancient Bengal

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# Gangaridai

Gangaridai, an ancient kingdom situated in eastern India (covering modern-day Bengal).

It has started flourishing from around 400 BC.



# Other names

"Gandaridae"

"Gandrīdae"

"Gaṅgā-rāṣṭra"

"Gaṅgā-rāḍha"

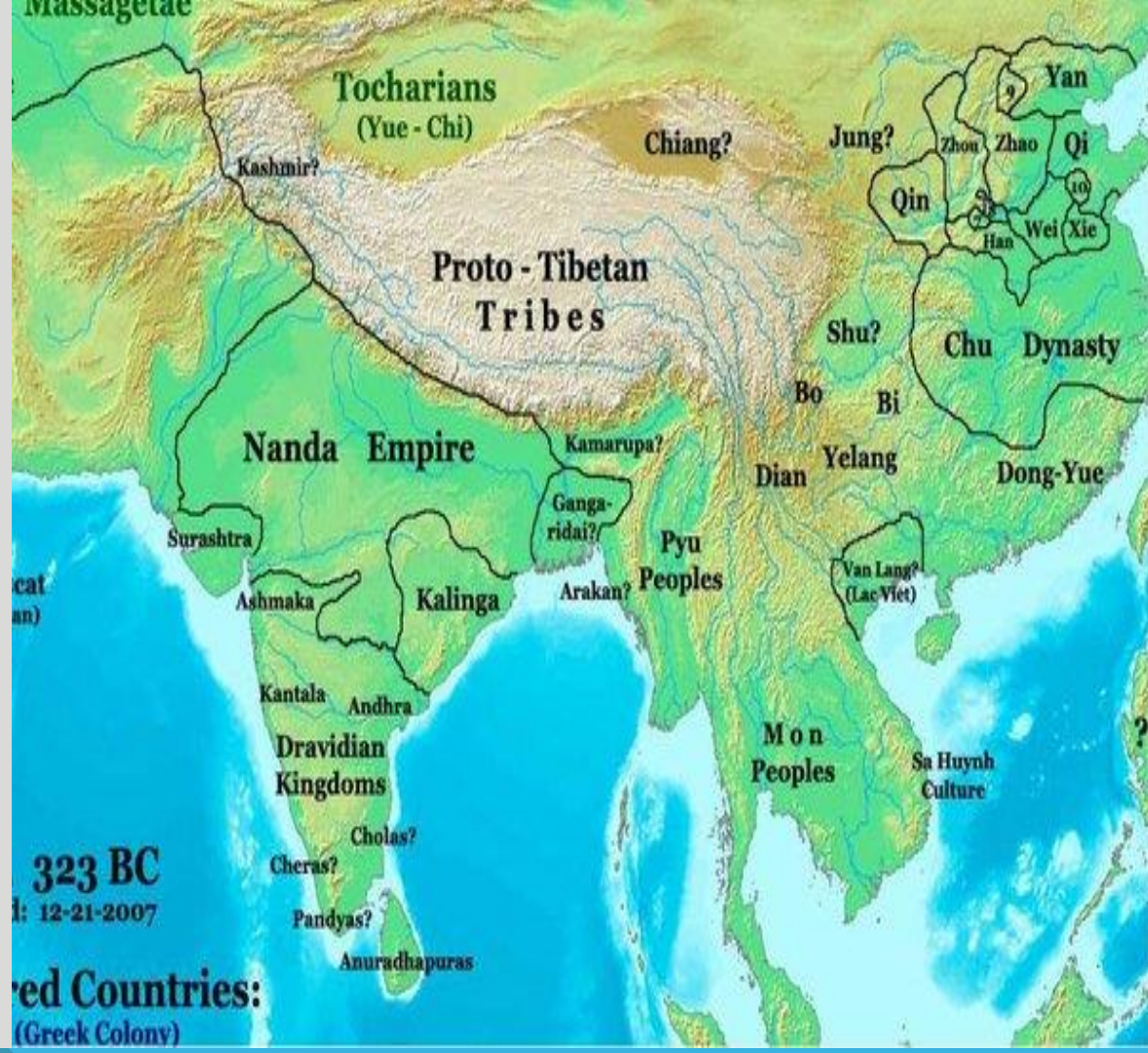
"Gaṅgā-hrdaya".

Gangarid is a Greek formation of the Indian word "Ganga-hṛd", meaning 'the land with the Ganges at its heart'.



# Gangaridai

Writers variously mention the Gangaridai as a distinct tribe, or a nation within a larger kingdom (presumably the Nanda empire).



# Gangaridai

**How do we know about Gangaridai?**

**From Greek and Roman Historians, Alexander's soldiers.**

- Diodorus (69 BC-16 AD) mentions about two powerful nations Prasioi and the Gangaridai.
- Quintus Curtius Rufus tells us that two peoples, the Gangaridai and the Pharrisii, inhabited the further banks of the Ganges.

# Gangaridai

## How do we know about Gangaridai?

- Pliny (1st century AD) writes that the final part of the Ganges flowed through the country of the Gangarides.
- Ptolemy ( 2nd century AD) writes that Gangaridai occupies the entire region about the five mouths of the Ganges.

## **Powerful nation**

Some of the Greek writers state that Alexander the Great withdrew from the Indian subcontinent because of the strong war elephant force and the formidable army of Gangaridai.

## **Powerful nation**

....the Gandaridae, whose king was Xandrames. He had twenty thousand cavalry, two hundred thousand infantry, two thousand chariots, and four thousand elephants equipped for war. "

– Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca historica.

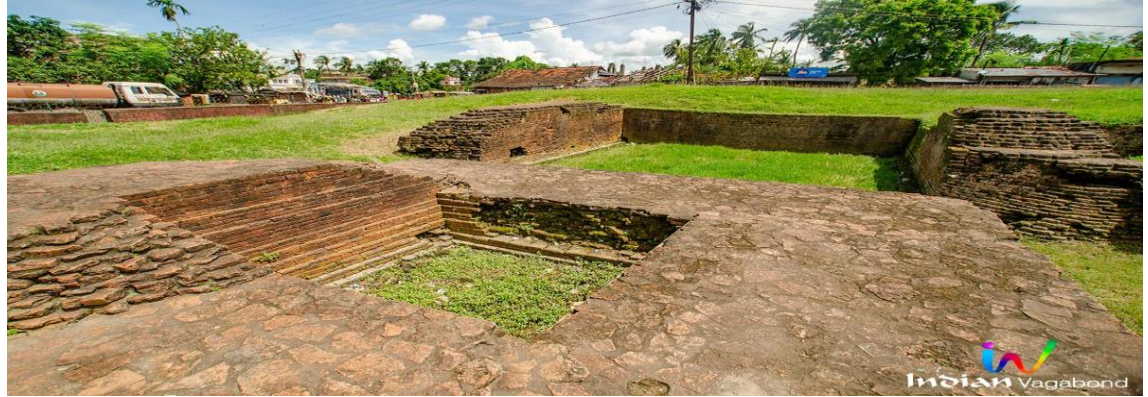


## Powerful nation



For the kings of the Gandaritai and the Prasiai were reported to be waiting for Alexander with an army of 80,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 8,000 war-chariots, and 6,000 fighting elephants."  
– Plutarch, 46-120 CE.

## Capital at present



Archaeologists have considered Chandraketugarh as the ancient city of Gange, the capital of Gangaridai.

The Wari-Bateshwar of Bangladesh have also been identified as a part of Gangaridai.

## King

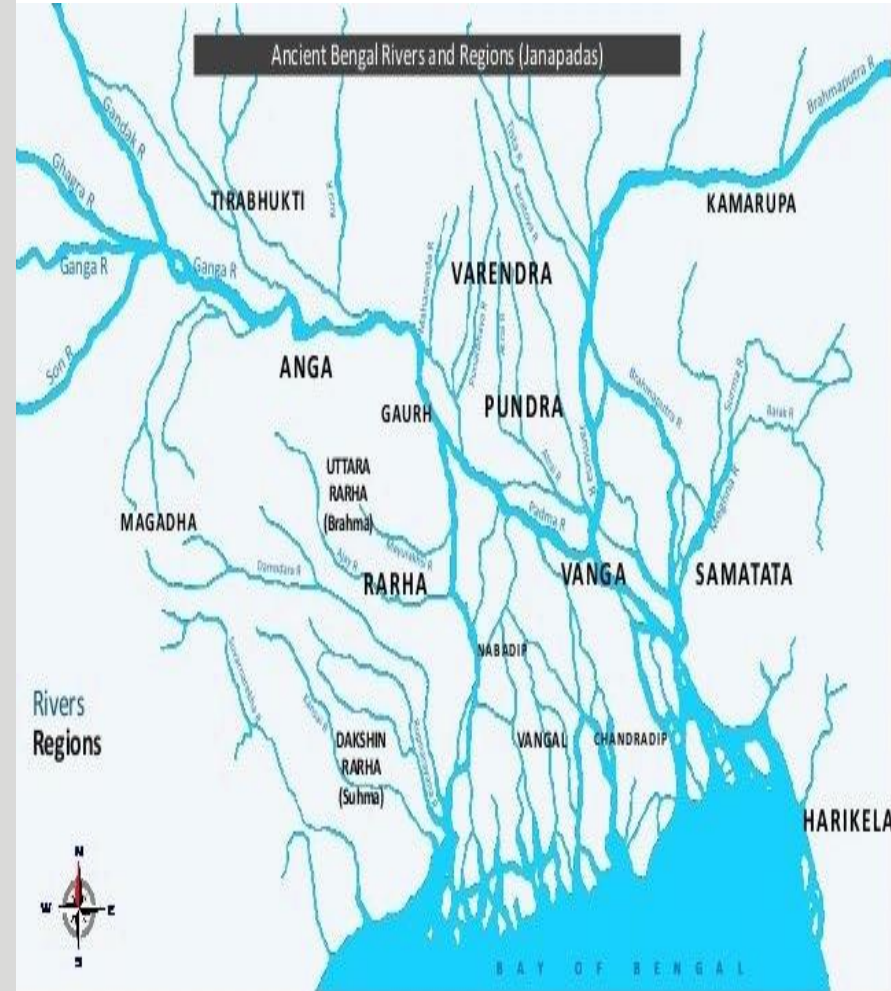
Diodorus mentions Gangaridai and Prasii as one nation, naming Xandramas as the king of this nation. Diodorus calls them "two nations under one king."

Modern historian Hemchandra Ray Chowdhury writes: "about the time of Alexander's invasion, the Gangaridai were a very powerful nation, and either formed a dual monarchy with the Pasioi [Prasii], or were closely associated with them on equal terms in a common cause against the foreign invader."

# Janapada

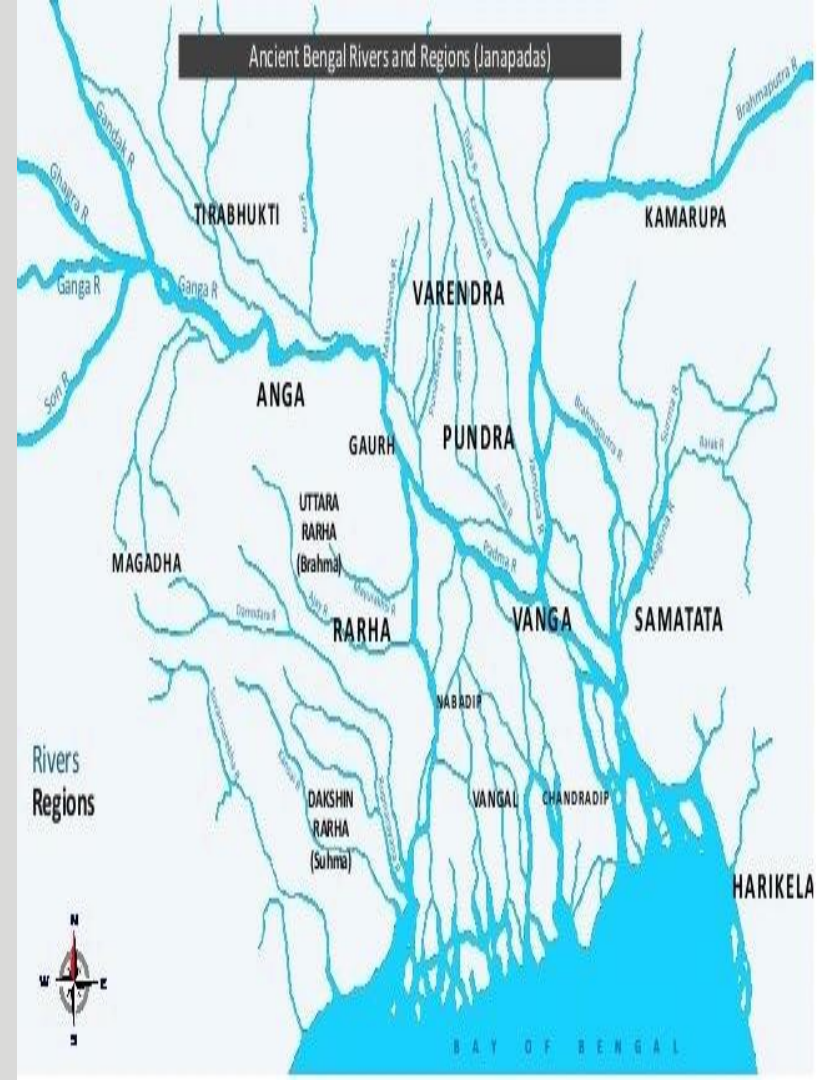
Ancient Bengal was not a unique or sovereign state like present Bangladesh.

Different parts of Bengal were divided in many small regions in their own way. These regions of bengal were collectively named as 'Janapadas'.



# Janapada

From different inscriptions and literary works, we came to know about sixteen Janapadas of Bengal.





# Gaura

- No clear evidence about the location.
- In the 7th century, Sasanka was called the Gaurraj (King of Gaur). Its capital was Karnasubarna. Gaur was situated at the present Murshidabad.
- Maldah was called Gaur at the beginning of the Muslim period.



# Banga

A Janapada named Banga was built to the east and the south-east of present Bangladesh.

It is surmised that a nation named 'Banga' lived here.

The old stone inscriptions, validate two parts of Bangla. One was Vikrampura and the other was Navya.

It is thought that the Faridpur, Barisal and Patuakhali are included in this Navya' region. The old Banga was a very powerful region.

# Pundra

It is said that a nation called Pundra built up this Janapada.

Pundra of that time was extended at least across the regions of Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Rajshahi.

Pundranagar was the name of the capital of the Pundras. Subsequently it became known as Mahasthangar



# Harikela

The writers of the seventh century have also described another region called Harikela.

Harikela was situated at the end of eastern Bengal.

It can be assumed that Harikela spread from Sylhet to Chittagong at the present time.

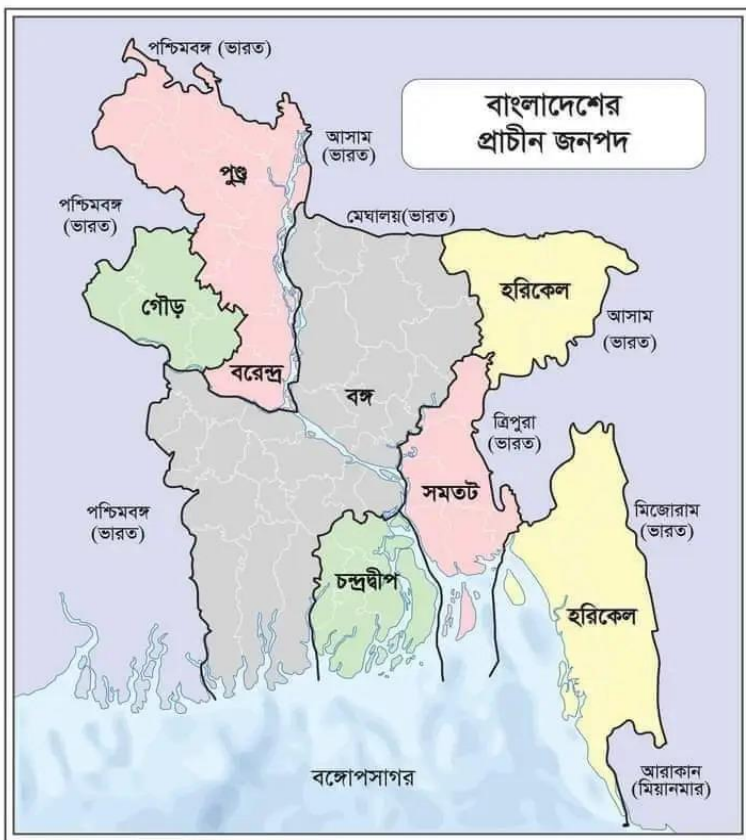
# Samatata

Samatata was situated in the East and South-east Bengal as a neighboring Janapada of Banga.

Some think that Samatata was the ancient name of present Cumilla.

In the seventh century its capital was the place named Bara Kamta, 12 miles west of Cumilla city. Some ancient remnants have been found at Mainamati, Cumilla. The Shalbana Bihara is one of them.

# Barendra



Another Janapada of ancient Bengal could be known in the name of Barendree, Barendra or Barendra Bhumi.

It was also a Janapada of North Bengal. It is thought that Barendra was located in the vast area of Pundra.

The Barendra region was extended across a vast area of Bogra, Dinajpur and Rajshahi region as well as probably of Pabna region.

# Chandradeep

Another tinier Janapada in ancient Bengal was Chandradeep.

The very Barisal region of today was the mainland and the heart of Chandradeep.



Radha- Howrah, Hughli and Burdwan in West Bengal are some areas of ancient Radha.

Tamralipta- Present Medinipur was the heart of Tamralipta.

**Thank You**