**Pala Dynasty (750–1161 CE):**

* **Foundation:**Gopala was elected as the first king to end a period of anarchy in Bengal.
* **Key Rulers and Achievements:**
  + **Gopala (756–781):** Unified North and East Bengal.
  + **Dharmapala (781–821):** Expanded the kingdom to Bihar, Varanasi, and Prayag. Built famous Buddhist monasteries such as Vikramashila and Somapura Vihara (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site).
  + **Devapala (821–861):** Pala empire reached its peak; Nalanda University became a center of Buddhist learning under his patronage.
  + **Mahipala I (995–1043):** Reconstructed monuments, initiated welfare activities, and founded cities and large ponds.
* **Decline:** Began after Devapala’s reign; weak rulers and external invasions contributed to the empire’s collapse.

**2. Sena Dynasty (1161–1204 CE):**

* **Foundation:**Established by Samanta Sena, but Vijoy Sena consolidated power as the first independent ruler.
* **Key Rulers and Contributions:**
  + **Vijoy Sena (1098–1160):** Established the second capital at Vikrampura (Munshiganj).
  + **Vallal Sena (1160–1178):** Promoted Hinduism, authored “Dansagara” and “Advutsagara,” and strengthened social customs like Koulinyo.
  + **Lakhsmana Sena (1178–1205):** Expanded the empire to include regions like Magadha and Kalinga but faced invasions by Bakhtiar Khalji, leading to the dynasty’s decline.

**3. Administrative System:**

* Both the Pala and Sena rulers followed a monarchy system with administrative divisions.
* Taxes (on crops, trade, etc.), land surveys, and efficient judiciary systems were notable features.
* Pala rulers relied on feudal kings for governance, which often led to challenges during weak central leadership.

**4. Social and Economic Life:**

* **Social Structure:**
  + Society was caste-based (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras).
  + Practices like Sati, polygamy, and widowhood restrictions were common.
  + Women had limited rights but participated in cultural activities.
* **Economic Activities:**
  + Predominantly agricultural, with rice, jute, and sugarcane as main crops.
  + Bengal excelled in textile (e.g., Muslin), shipbuilding, and gold jewelry industries.
  + Trade was conducted via roadways and waterways.

**5. Art and Culture:**

* Flourished during the Pala Dynasty, with notable architectural sites like Somapura and Vikramashila Viharas.
* The Sena dynasty contributed to Sanskrit literature and Hindu cultural practices.
* Charyapadas, the earliest Bengali literary works, were created during this era.