

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 Vikramapura (Munshiganj).
 - **Vallal Sena (1160–1178):** Promoted Hinduism, authored “Dansagara” and “Advutsagara,” and strengthened social customs like Koulinyo.
 - **Lakshmana 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.