

# **Delhi Sultanate**

## **Razia Sultan (1236-40 AD):**

- She was the daughter of Iltutmish and was nominated by him as his successor. However the members of Chahalgani made Rukunuddin, one of the sons of Iltutmish and an incompetent prince, as the Sultan of Delhi.
- Rukunuddin ruled Delhi for 6 months and was then dethroned by Razia, becoming the first lady Sultan of India.
- The driving force behind the appointment of Razia was the support from the general public.

## **Challenges faced by Razia:**

- From the very beginning of her reign, Razia faced stiff opposition from nobles of Turkish origin.
- The wazirs and provincial governors refused to accept her ascension and were keen to replace her with Rukunuddin whom they could control and influence.
- Razia attempted to offset the power of the Turkish nobility by creating a class of non-Turkish nobles, which led to further opposition from the Turkish nobles.
- The orthodox Muslims were offended by the enthronement of a woman as a Sultan.
- The other sons of Iltutmish had their own supporters and partisans among the nobles and people of Delhi.
- The Rajput kings, taking advantage of the prevailing situation, started rebelling against the sultanate.

## **Initiatives of Razia:**

- Immediately after ascending the throne, Razia adopted a number of measures to strengthen her position and to increase her power.

- Razia made several important appointments and distributed important offices amongst her supporters.
- Razia's first military campaign was an invasion of Ranthambore, in which she defeated the wazir, Nizam-ul-Mulk Junaidi, who opposed her elevation.
- She conquered Ranthambore after this campaign.

### **Fall of Razia:**

- Her policy to appoint non-Turkish nobles led to the rise of conspiracy against her, especially Turkish nobles.
- The main conspirators were Aitgin holding the office of amir-i-hijab (Queen's Chamberlain), Malik Altunia- Governor of Bhatinda and Kabir Khan- Governor of Lahore.
- The Turkish nobles of Delhi dethroned Razia and made Bahram Shah, her brother, as the Sultan, while she was away from Delhi trying to restrain rebellious Turkish governor of Bhatinda.
- Razia married Altunia and marched with him towards Delhi.
- She was defeated by her brother, Bahram on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1240 and was put to death along with Altunia near Kaithal (Haryana).
- Razia was succeeded by her brother Bahram and nephew Ala-ud-din Masood.
- Both were dethroned on account of being incompetent.
- Nasir-ud-din was then established as the Sultan.

### **Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (1246-65 AD):**

- He was the youngest son of Iltutmish and was made Sultan by Chahalgani.
- He was the 8<sup>th</sup> Sultan of Mamluk dynasty.
- The 'Tabaqat-i-Nasiri', written by the court historian Minhaj-i-Siraj, is dedicated to Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud.

- It is the only available contemporary source of history of his reign and thus the most reliable source.
- Mahmud was known to be very religious, spending most of his time in prayer and copying the Quran. Because of this he is also known as the Darvesh King.
- Balban, one of the 'Corps of Forty', primarily dealt with the state affairs.
- Balban married his daughter to the young prince and further strengthened his position.
- He held the post of Naib-i-Mamlakat and earned the title of Ulugh Khan.
- After Mahmud's death in 1265, Balban rose to power as Mahmud had no children to be his heir.

### **Ghiyas-ud-din Balban (1265-87 AD):**

- Balban, a slave of Iltutmish was a Ilbari Turk.
- His original name was Bahauddin.
- At a young age he was captured by Mongols, taken to Ghazni and sold to Khwaja Jamal-ud-din of Basra, a Sufi.
- Jamal-ud-din then brought him to Delhi in 1232 along with other slaves, and all of them were purchased by Iltutmish.
- Balban belonged to the famous group of 40 Turkic slaves of Iltutmish.
- Iltutmish placed him among the Bhistis (water bearers).
- He became one of the most notable of the forty Turkish nobles. During the reign of Razia, he was the amir-i-shikar (chief huntsman).
- After she was dethroned, he made rapid strides in the subsequent reigns, earning the province of Rewari (Haryana) under Bahram Shah, and later became the governor of Hansi (Haryana).
- He served Nasir-ud-din for 20 years and dealt with state affairs, rebellions, plots and Mongol incursions.
- He extended his control over different organs of the administration by appointing his close relatives and partisans to key posts.
- Balban also installed Kishlu Khan, his younger brother, as amir-i-hijab and appointed his cousin, Sher Khan, governor of Lahore and Bhatinda.

## **Initiatives undertaken by Balban:**

- Divinity theory:
  1. To enhance the power and prestige of the monarchy he maintained that the Sultan was the Shadow of God (Niyabat-i-Khudai) and it was next only to prophethood therefore his actions could not be judged by any noble or people i.e. he has no equal among mankind.
  2. He introduced rigorous court discipline.
  3. He expressed these views to his son Bughra Khan. He emphasised two main points regarding his theory-
    - a. The Monarchy was divinely ordained.
    - b. It was necessary for the Sultan to be an authoritarian.
- Balban established a pattern of court etiquette, traditions and customs. He gave up drinking wine, kept himself aloof and maintained his dignity. He banned drinking of wine by his nobles and officials, prescribed a special attire and fixed ceremonial forms.
- Balban also introduced the practice of Sijda and Paibos, traditions common in Persian courts.
- Balban also introduced the annual celebration of Persian new year, Nauroz.
- He promoted Turkish nobility as he granted important posts to only those who belonged to the noble family.
- As Balban believed that position of the Sultan is next to the God and his actions are not answerable to anyone, he tore down the 'Corps of Forty'.
- Balban established an efficient espionage system to keep himself informed of all the happenings in his sultanate. The spies were called 'Barids'. Barids were only answerable to the Sultan.
- Balban abolished the post of Naik and created a new department of military affairs known as 'Diwan-i-Arz' due to the threat of Mongol invasions. The head of this department was Arz-i-Mamluk. He appointed Imad-ul-Mulk as Arz-i-Mamluk.
- After the death of Iltutmish the law and order situations in areas around Delhi and the Doab deteriorated significantly. He took strong measures and suppressed the bandits.

➤ **Mongol Invasions:**

1. The Mongol invasions increased during Balban's rule but were met with great resistance. But Lahore, Multan and Sindh region of the sultanate were exposed to the repeated incursions.
2. To deal with this problem Balban set up a line of Garrisons along the north-west frontier and placed Sher Khan, his cousin in charge of the region. He resisted Mongols for quite some time and ultimately died.
3. In 1270, the command of the north-western frontier Garrison was shared between Mohammad Khan and Bughra Khan, the two sons of Balban. In 1285, Mohammad was killed in one of the invasions of Mongols but ultimately the Mongols were also defeated.

### **Death, Legacy and Succession:**

- Balban ruled as the Sultan from 1265 until his death in 1287. Tomb of Sultan lies within the Mehrauli Archaeological Park in Delhi.
- Balban's heir was his older son, Mohammad but he died in a battle against the Mongols in 1285.
- His other son, Bughra Khan, was reluctant to assume the throne and sought to remain the ruler of Bengal instead.
- Balban, therefore, chose his grandson, Kaikhusrau, son of Prince Mohammad, as his heir. However, after his death his nobles nominated Qaiqubad as Sultan.
- Qaiqubad ruled from 1287-90, but he proved very weak and incompetent and eventually died.
- The rule was then passed to his three years old son, Shamsuddin Kayumars, who was eventually dethroned by his guardian, Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khilji in 1290, bringing an end to the slave dynasty.