

Prelims Master Program (2023-24) – Ancient, Medieval, Art and Culture

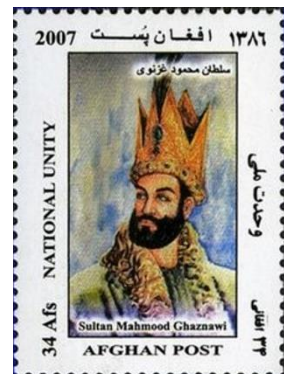
Handout 19: Turkish Invasions

Who were Turks?

- The Turks were a collection of **ethnically and religiously diverse warlike nomadic tribes** spread across the Steppes of **Central Asia**.
- They were driven out of their homeland in the 8th and 9th centuries due to the rise of other groups.
- Being excellent horsemen, they **entered the service of the growing Caliphate** in which they served as both mercenaries and regular soldiers.
 - Soon, they started to accept Islam. The gradual process of conversion, started in 8th century and was completed by 13th century.
 - Simultaneously, they rose to power under the increasingly Persianised Caliphate and spread to different parts of Central and Western Asia.
- By this time, Abbasid Caliphate had become too large to govern centrally from Baghdad. It led to the emergence of powerful Turkish warlords who established their own rule:
 - The Seljuk Sultanate of Anatolia
 - The Ghaznavid Empire of Afghanistan
 - Beginning from the 10th century, the Ghaznavids mounted several invasions of India under:
 - Alaptagin (948-973 CE)
 - He was the **founder** of the Ghaznavid Empire.
 - He expanded the Ghaznavid Empire to include parts of present-day Iran, India, and Central Asia.
 - He also made **Ghazna a center of art, culture, and learning**, attracting scholars and artists from all over the Islamic world.
 - Sabuktigin (973-998 CE)
 - Mahmud Ghazni (998-1030 CE)

Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 998-1030)

- **Loot or Empire?**
 - Also known as 'Butshikan' (idol breaker), he is said to have invaded India 17 times.
 - His first attack came in 1000 CE against **Jaipala, the Hindu Shahi ruler** of Northwestern Punjab and Southeastern Afghanistan.
 - **Mathura** was sacked and structures destroyed in 1018 CE
 - His most famous attack was on **Somnath in 1025-26 CE**.
 - At the time, the Solanki ruler of Gujarat was **Bhima I**.



- Did not want to establish an empire in India or spread Islam in India. The main motive was to plunder Indian wealth, especially temple wealth, to fund their own wars in Central Asia.
- Nonetheless he established the ground for a future Persianate state in Punjab, particularly centered on Lahore, a city he conquered.



• Cultural role

- His **capital Ghazni** evolved into a significant cultural, commercial, and intellectual centre in the Islamic world, almost rivalling the important city of Baghdad. The capital appealed to many prominent figures, such as al-Biruni and Ferdowsi.
- **Firdausi's 'Shahnameh'** is the jewel of Persian literature.
 - It consists of a mythological and historical account of Persian kings.
 - It covers both the pre-Islamic and Islamic phases of Persian history.
 - It also includes a Qaseeda (eulogy written in praise of a living subject) dedicated to Mahmud.
- Abu Rehan **Al-Biruni** (973-1050).
 - He was originally from Khwarizm, he found his way to the court of Mahmud. He was a polymath who excelled in various disciplines such as philosophy, science, mathematics, theology and linguistics.
 - After accompanying Mahmud to India, he stayed at Banaras for two years where he learnt Sanskrit and researched about India by conversing with learned men and reading ancient scriptures.
 - His work '**Kitab ul Hind**'/ '**Tahqiq-i Hind**' is regarded as a mirror of 11th century India. It is the first true historical work on India written in Persian.

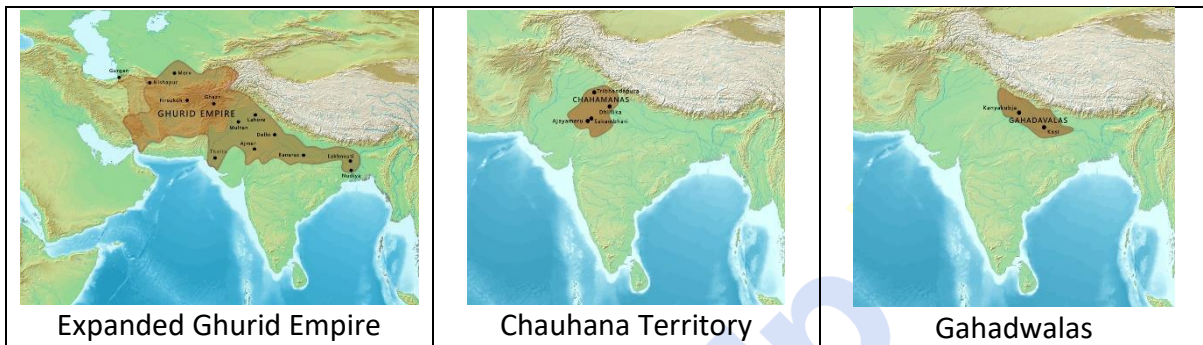
Battle of Bahraich as mentioned in **Mirat-i-Masudi** (1620s) by a Chishti saint (Abdur Rahman Chishti):

A nephew of Mahmud of Ghazni was **Salar Masud**. (later, Ghazi Sayyid Salar Masud). At the age of 16, he invaded India and conquered Delhi. Then he moved toward Kannauj. Near Bahraich in 1034, he was defeated and killed by King **Suhaldev**.

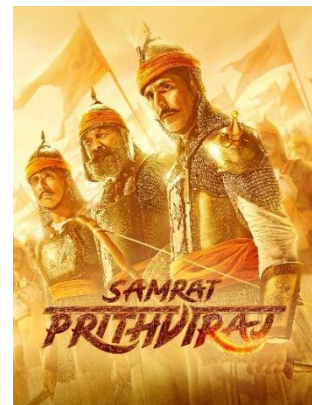


Rise of the Ghurid Empire

- After the decline of the Ghaznavid Empire two empires emerged in Central Asia to fill the vacuum:
 - Khwarizmi Empire in the western half
 - Ghurid Empire in its eastern half.
- Mohammed-bin-Sam (Mohammed Ghori r. 1173-1206) looked towards India:
 - His larger objective was to expand in Central Asia while using the resources of India. However, unlike Mahmud of Ghazni, he wanted to establish direct control over Hindustan as well.



- Initially he tried to enter India through **Bolan pass (Balochistan)**,
 - The very first invasion of India by Ghori was **against Ismaili Shias ruling in Multan**, while he himself was a Sunni.
 - However, he received a setback as he was **defeated by Bhima II** of Gujarat in 1178.
- Then he changed his way. Cross **Khyber pass** and turned towards **Punjab**, finally conquering it by 1190.
- Now, he wanted to expand further to the south-east. On the other hand, **Prithviraj Chauhan III** was looking towards the north-west.
 - Ghori was defeated in the **First Battle of Tarain (1191)** by a confederacy of Rajput Kings led by Prithviraj Chauhan III, who established his control over Bhatinda (Tabarhind).
 - But this victory did not last long. Ghori invaded again and defeated the Chauhans in the **Second Battle of Tarain (1192)**, capturing Delhi and Ajmer. Thus, Turkish Rule was established in north India.
 - Then Ghori defeated the Gahadavala ruler of Kannauj, Jaichandra in the **Battle of Chandawar (1194)**
- Ghori was unable to consolidate his Indian conquests. Also, his main interest lay in expansion in Central Asia at the cost of Khwarizm. Having laid down the foundations of an empire straddling North India, Afghanistan and Sindh, he appointed three governors:
 - Qutubuddin Aibak – Lahore
 - Tajuddin Yalduz – Ghur



- Nasiruddin Qubacha – Sind
- After Ghorī's death (1206), his empire broke apart, with each of the three governors declaring independence and competing against each other.
- Eastern campaign in Bengal - **Bakhtiyar Khalji**, a military commander (1203-1227) who was responsible for the destruction of Nalanda University. He formed a short lived Khalji dynasty of Bengal.



Two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, both Ghurid architecture examples:

	
<p>Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din built Minaret of Jam in 1194 in Ghur Province.</p>	<p>Mu'izz al-Din Muhammad (1192-1206) – his general Aibak started building Qutb Minar</p>

Impact of Turkish Rule - Several Historical Changes

- Political Changes
- Military Chances
- Economic Changes
- Socio-Cultural Changes

Political Changes

- Biggest change: **reorganization of the entire map** of north India.
- With the establishment of Turkish rule in India, the age of **feudalism ended**, and a **strong central authority** was established.
- A number of **new institutions and administrative practices** were introduced by the Turks. These systems witnessed **constant evolution**.

1. Position of the Sultan

- Theoretically, the Delhi sultanate was an absolute centralised monarchy with the Sultan at its centre.
- Different **models of kingship**:
 - Turkish model (Sultan comes from sult i.e. power)
 - Lodhis followed the Afghan theory of Kingship (king = first among equals)
- However, in practical terms, the **level of despotism varied** from ruler to ruler.
 - Strong sultans like Balban, Alauddin Khilji and Mohammed bin Tughlaq exercised absolute authority.
 - Weaker Sultans like Nasiruddin Mahmud and Feroz Shah Tughlaq had to share power with the clergy and nobility.
- Constant **conflict for Balance of power**
 - Rebellions by **provincial governors** and strong **military officials** were a regular affair, even during the reign of strong sultans.
 - **Wars of succession** were frequent as the Turks had no fixed rule of succession.

2. Departments and Portfolio Administration

- Iltutmish introduced the 'Turkan-i-Chihalgani' / 'Chalisa', giving important duties of state to his most trustworthy and capable slaves.
- However, after his death, the Chalisa became unruly and power hungry and began undermining the Sultan's authority.
- Thus, **Balban** disbanded the Chalisa and introduced the **portfolio system** of administration, under which different subjects of administration were organised into different departments. It became the backbone of the Sultanate administration.
- Different sultans introduced different departments.

Balban	Diwan-i-Wazir	Finance
	Diwan-i-Arz	Military
	Diwan-i-Risalat	Foreign affairs and religious appeals
	Diwan-i-Insha	Royal Correspondence
Alauddin Khilji	Diwan-i-Mustakhraj	Arrears
	Diwan-i-Riyasat	Market/Price Controls

MBT	Diwan-i-Amir Kohi	Agriculture
FST	Diwan-i-Ishtiaq	Relief and rehabilitation
	Diwan-i-Khairat	Charity
	Diwan-i-Bandagan	Slaves

3. Iqta System

- It was a Turkish system of tax farming, first introduced by **Ilutmish** in India.
 - Iqtas were land revenue assignments given to sultanate officials, commanders, noblemen and soldiers in lieu of cash salary.
- Iqtadars**: Iqta holders. They functioned as provincial governors.
- Wilayat**: Territory assigned to individual Iqtadar.
- Centralization
 - Iqta assignments were temporary and Iqtadars were frequently transferred.
 - They were **non-hereditary**, **transferable** but **non-sellable** in nature.
- The entire territory was divided into:
 - Khalisa** land – Crown land, whose revenue went directly to the royal treasury.
 - Paibaqi** land – land reserved to be distributed as Iqtas.
 - '**Fawazil**' was the difference between the revenue collected and the expenditure incurred within the Iqta. It was remitted to the royal treasury.
- The Iqta System also underwent significant change under different sultans.
 - Ilutmish** - Iqtadars enjoyed tax exemptions.
 - Balban** - In order to have better supervision of the income of the Iqta he appointed an officer '**Khwaja**' in the Iqtas.
 - Alauddin Khilji** - All revenue concessions and tax-free grants were abolished and all Iqtadars were required to pay tax at the normal rate.
 - Feroz Shah Tughlaq** - Iqtas became hereditary.

Turkish Sultans also made a number of **tax-free land grants** such as:

- Inam** – given as reward for service to the Sultanate.
- Milk** – hereditary titles given to scholars and priestly class.
- Waqf** – given to religious institutions such as mosques.
- Idrar** – charitable grant.

4. Provincial and sub-provincial administration

Wilayat	Province	Muqti/Wali were Iqtadars (provincial governors) with the responsibility of general administration, law and order, collecting revenue, maintaining troops.
Shiq	Districts	Shiqdar (administrative and military official)
Parganas	Revenue unit, group of villages	Headed by Amil (revenue officials)
Gaon	Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village headman: Khut (Hindu) and Muqaddam (Muslim) Patwari was the village accountant

Military Changes

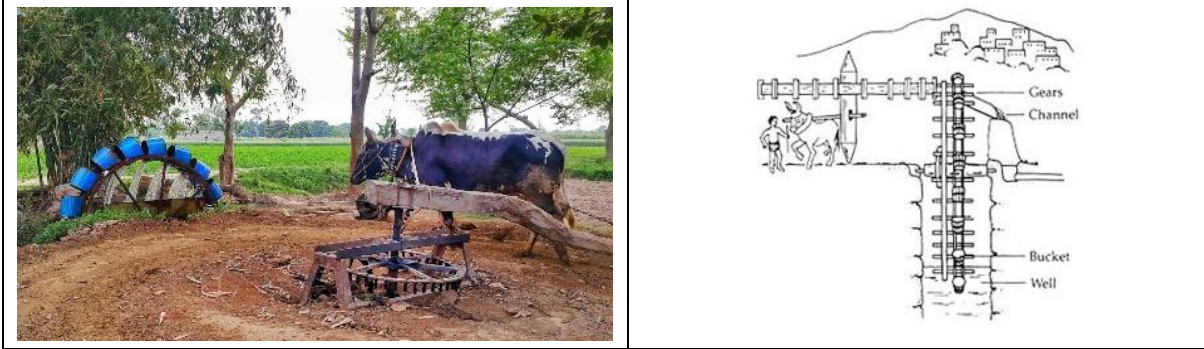
- The Turks introduced **new weapons** such as the Persian short bow '**Navak**'. They also introduced the **iron horseshoe** and **iron stirrup**.
- New **military strategies** such as maintaining a reserve force and feint attacks during military engagements were also introduced.
- They revived the tradition of maintaining a **standing army** after a long period in the Indian subcontinent.
 - **Iltutmish** introduced the practice of maintaining royal bodyguards paid directly from the imperial treasury, called the **Sar-i-Jahandar**, this was the precursor to a standing army. He also introduced the permanent cavalry called the **Hashm-i Qalb**.
 - **Balban** introduced a full-fledged standing army and created a new Department of military affairs called **Diwan-i-Arz**.
- Allauddin maintained a large standing army numbering over 3.5 lakh soldiers.
 - He also introduced the **decimal system** of military command.
 - Instead of paying soldiers with Iqta assignments, he began giving them **cash salaries**.
 - He also introduced the practice of '**Dagh**' and '**Huliya/Chehra**' to maintain the quality of horses and troops.
- '**Dagh**' and '**Huliya/Chehra**' were discarded under **Feroz Shah Tughlaq**.

Economic Changes

Contemporary Persian literature such as '**Khazain ul Futuh**' (Amir Khusro) '**Miftah ul Fuzala**' (Mohammed Daud Shadiabadi), **Farhang-i-Qawwas** (Fakhruddin Qawwas) and contemporary Chinese sources of travellers such as **Mahuan** inform us that the Turks introduced several new technologies which revolutionized the economy:

Crafts and Technology

- **Textile**
 - Superior **ginning** technique was introduced to India from Persia.
 - The Turks also brought the Persian **carding bow** '**Naddaf**'.
 - The **spinning wheel** or '**Charkha**' introduced by the Turks replaces the traditional spindle and whorl. Charkha with a handle was introduced later.
 - Pit and treadle **loom** replaced the traditional loom.
 - The technique of **block printing** was introduced from Central Asia.
- **Paper Manufacturing**
 - Before the Turks, paper was imported into India and was extremely expensive.
 - Gradually, paper manufacturing was brought to India from Central Asia under Turkish influence.
- **Irrigation**
 - The Turks brought the Persian wheel '**Saqiya**' which replaced the '**charsa**' (rope and bucket) and '**dhenkali**' (lever) mechanisms.
 - Gears were added to the Saqiya and it came to be known as the '**Rahat/ Arghatta**'. As a result, animal power could be used to lift water.



- **Navigation**
 - The Turks introduced the **Qutub Nama** (magnetic compass) to India.
- **Gunpowder**
 - They also brought gunpowder to India. However, during the Sultanate period, it was not used for warfare or mining. Rather, it was used for pyrotechny.

Third Urbanization

- India traded extensively with the Islamic world, resulting in the emergence of new cities. This phase is regarded as India's third urbanisation.

Social-Religious Changes

Interaction with Islam

- Introduction of Turkish rule was accompanied by the arrival of Islam and Islamic culture in North India. At first, it was received with **hostility** and considered to be a challenge to the indigenous way of life.
 - **Al-Biruni** informs us that Hindus viewed Islam with suspicion primarily due to the violent history of Islamic invasions.
 - The animosity also increased due to the policy of forced conversion and destruction of temples followed by some rulers.
 - Muslims and in fact all foreigners were referred to as '**Mlechhas**'. Any social contact with them was deliberately avoided.
- On the other hand, the **process of assimilation** of the Indian and Islamic cultures went on simultaneously, leading to the emergence of the typical **Indo-Islamic syncretic culture** or 'Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb' of the subcontinent.
 - The **Bhakti and Sufi movements** played an important role in this process of assimilation.
- **Caste and class relations** also underwent a radical change with the advent of Islam.
 - The idea of theoretical equality was especially attractive to the lower castes and untouchables. It allowed them to shed their historical identities and the attached stigma.
 - It also allowed them to benefit from the new economic opportunities which had emerged under Turkish rule.

Language, Literature, Music and Culture

- The Turks also introduced **Persian** and **Arabic**, which interacted with **regional dialects** to give birth to Urdu/ Rekhta/ Hindustani. Different versions of the language are spoken almost all over the subcontinent.
- **Amir Khusro** was a pioneer in this field
 - He was a prolific writer known for his Diwans (collection of short poems), Masnavis (long poems with rhyming couplets), Khamsas (5 epic poems composed in Masnavi form), dramas, chronicles and Malfuzat texts
 - Some of his important compositions include:
 - **Qiran us Sadain** - historical masnavi about the meeting of Sultan Qaiqubad and his father Sultan Nasir-ud-din (Bughra Khan).
 - **Miftah ul Futuh** - an account of Jalaluddin Khilji's victories
 - **Khazain ul Futuh** - an account of Alauddin's victories
 - **Nuh Siphir**- masnavi written in praise of Mubarak Shah Khilji
 - **Dewal Rani-Khizr Khan** - love story of Dewal Rani and Khizr Khan
 - Compositions like Chhap Tilak
 - Hasht Bihisht
 - Also:
 - **Tuti-e-Hind**
 - New form of Persian poetry called the '**Sabak-i-Hind**'.
- The Turks also introduced **a new type of historiography** to India.
 - Will be discussed in the next section.
- Great progress was also visible in the development of **Hindustani music**.
 - Amir Khusro is credited with introducing the **Khyal** and **Tarana** styles of Hindustani music.
 - Music also witnessed development within the Sufi tradition, especially **Qawwali** (devotional songs).
 - He's also sometimes regarded as the inventor of the **Tabla**. However, this factually doubtful.
 - The Turks also introduced the **Rabab** and **Sarangi**.
- With the introduction of Turkish rule, new festivals, art forms, architectural traditions, fashion and cuisine were introduced to India. Gradually, they were assimilated to create a **syncretic tradition**.