**MEDIEVAL Bengal (1204-1757)**

We know that Bakhtiar Khilji defeated Laksmansena in 1204.

Nawab Sirajuddowla was defeated by the English in 1757 AD.

* **Major sources of History:**
* **Tabaqat-i-Nasiri** a medieval text by Minhaj-i-Siraj. It is an important source book for the reconstruction of the history of foundation of Muslim rule in Bengal. The history of the first fifty years of Muslim rule in Bengal is found only in this text.
* **Riyaz-us-Salatin** the first complete history of the Muslim rule in Bengal. Written in Persian language by Ghulam Husain Salim Zaidpuri, it covers the whole Muslim rule in Bengal from [bakhtiyar](http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/B_0070.htm)’s conquest of Nadia in 1204-05 AD to the battle of palashi in 1757, though there are lacunae(gaps) in various places.
* [*tarikh-i-firuzshahi*s](http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/S_0493.htm) of Ziauddin Barani
* Abul Fazl’s [*ain-i-akbari*](http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/A_0161.htm) and [*akbarnamah*](http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/A_0172.htm)
* Badauni’s [*muntakhab-ut-tawarikh*](http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/M_0495.htm)
* Nizamuddin Bakhshi’s [*tabaqat-i-akbari*](http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/T_0001.htm)

We divided THE Medieval Bengal into Three phases:

1. **Delhi Sultanate (1204-1342):**

The **Delhi Sultanate** was a [Muslim](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Muslim.html) kingdom based mostly in [Delhi](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Delhi.html) that stretched over large parts of the [Indian subcontinent](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Indian_subcontinent.html) for 320 years (1206–1526).Five dynasties ruled over Delhi Sultanate sequentially, the first four of which were of [Turkic](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Turkic_peoples.html) origin: the [Mamluk dynasty](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Mamluk_Sultanate_(Delhi).html) (1206–90); the [Khilji dynasty](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Khilji_dynasty.html) (1290–1320); the [Tughlaq dynasty](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Tughlaq_dynasty.html) (1320–1414) the [Sayyid dynasty](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Sayyid_dynasty.html) (1414–51); and the [Afghan](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Ethnic_Afghan.html) [Lodi dynasty](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Lodi_dynasty.html) (1451–1526).

[Qutb-ud-din Aibak](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Qutb-ud-din_Aibak.html), a former slave of [Muhammad Ghori](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Muhammad_of_Ghor.html), was the first [sultan](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Sultan.html) of Delhi and his dynasty conquered large areas of northern India. Afterwards the [Khilji dynasty](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Khilji_dynasty.html) was also able to conquer most of central India, but both failed to unite the [Indian subcontinent](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Indian_subcontinent.html). This sultanate also is noted for being one of the few states to repel an attack from the [Mongol Empire](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Mongol_Empire.html), and enthroned one of the few female rulers in Islamic history, [Razia Sultana](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Razia_Sultana.html) from 1236 to 1240.[[11]](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Delhi_Sultanate.html#cite_note-11)

The Delhi Sultanate reached its peak in terms of geographical reach, during the Tughlaq dynasty, covering most of Indian subcontinent. The sultanate declined thereafter, with continuing Hindu-Muslim wars, and states such as [Vijayanagara Empire](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Vijayanagara_Empire.html) asserting their independence as well as new Muslim sultanates such as [Bengal Sultanate](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Bengal_Sultanate.html) breaking off.

The Delhi Sultanate caused destruction and desecration of politically important temples of enemy states as was the tradition in Pre-Islamic India,[]](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Delhi_Sultanate.html#cite_note-re2000-15) as well as led to the emergence of [Indo-Islamic architecture](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Indo-Islamic_architecture.html). In 1526, it fell and was replaced by the [Mughal Empire](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Mughal_Empire.html).

* **(b) Independent Sultanate (1342-1538):**
* **Rule of the independent sultans in Bangal:**
* **Fakhruddin:**

Fakhruddin was an independent Sultan of Sonargaon, Bengal experienced a period when independent Sultans ruled for nearly two centuries. During this time, significant developments took place in the art and culture of Bengal.

Fakhruddin had established himself as independent Sultan of Sonargaon and after his death in 1349 was succeeded by his son, Gazi Shah. However, more significant events were happening in Lakhnauti, where an army commander, Ali Mubrak, seized control and established an independent kingdom.

In 1342 he was overthrown and killed by his foster brother.

Haji Iliyas, who established the Iliyas Shahi Dynasty which ruled Bengal for the next hundred years.

## The Ilyas Shahi Dynasty

### The King of Bengal

**Haji Ilyas,** the founder of the Ilyas Shahi Dynasty, took control of Lakhnauti in 1342 and assumed the long title of Sultan Shamsuddin abul Muzaffar Iliyas Shah.

Some historians think that Iliyas was the first ruler who brought the three major geographical units of Satgaon, Sonargaon and Lakhnauti under a single authority. It is probably because of this that he called himself Shah-i-Bangala or the king of Bengal.

Haji Iliyas’s rise as an independent ruler in Bengal Offended the Sultan in Delhi. Sultan Firuz Tughluq invaded Bengal with an enormous army n 1353. Though Firuz had some temporary success, he could not crush Haji Iliyas who continued to rule freely.

In fact, he not only succeeded in resisting external threat to his kingdom, but he also extended his authority in Bihar, Nepal, Orissa and Assam.

So although Fakhruddin started the process of an independent Bengal in 1338, it was Haji Iliyas who the real founder.

### Continued resistance against Delhi

Haji Iliyas was succeeded by his son, Sikandar Shah, who ruled a prosperous and politically stable Bengal for about thirty years and died arougn 1390. Sultan Firuz of Delhi invaded Bengal again in 1359, but Sikandar, like his father, successfully faced the imperial army of Delhi.

After this date, the Sultans of Delhi realized the growing strength of the Sultans of Bengal and they did not try to capture Bengal for quite a long time.

### Culture and justice

Sikandar Shah was succeeded by his son, Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (1390-1410). Ghiyasuddin was an intelligent ruler. He exchanged embassies with the Chinese Emperor and maintained correspondences with the famous poet, Hafiz of Iran. He also Lavishly patronized several madrassa in Mecca and Median.

Ghiyasuddin was also famous for his respect for law and justice. It is said that he once told the Chef justice of his kingdom that though he was the sultan, he was not above the law. Ghiyasuddin was fortunate that during his reign there were no invasions by the Delhi Sultanate and so he had no wars to fight.

### Political instability

The death of Ghiyasuddin Azam was followed by political instability. His son, Saifuddin Hamza Shah, was murdered by his solace, Shihabuddin, who took control but was soon murdered himself, Taking advantage of the confusion, a Brahman noble of Dinanjpur, Raja Ganesh, assumed power in Bengal.

### Hinduism vs. Islam

Though Raja Ganesh commanded great authority. the could not stay in power for long due to constant pressures form Muslim nobles. He is said to have appointed many Hindus in high posts and persecuted many Sufis.

Sultan Ibrahim Sarki brought a force from Jainpur and Raja Gonesh was forced to abdicate the kingdom in favour of his son, Jadu, who agreed to embrace Islam and was named Jalaluddin Mohammad Shah. Jalaluddin (1415-1432) maintained good relations with the religious institutions and personalities of  Bengal who had been persecuted during the time of his father.

However, after Ibrahimn Sarki left Bengal, Ganesh reassumed power and reconverted his son to Hiduism. Only after Ganesh’s death in 1418 did Jalaluddin return to Islam.

### Bengali and Persian court languages

During Jalaluddin’s reign, Bengali became a court language alongside Persian. A New era of patronization of Bengali language and culture started and this process received momentum in the era of Hussian shahi Dynasty that followed.

### The return of the Iliyas Shahi Dynasty

Jalaluddin’s son, Shamshuddin ahmad Shah, has been described by some historiean as a just ruler and by others oppressive. He was murdered by his slave, Nasir Khan, who ascended the throne. This made the nobles outraged and they killed him and restored the Iliyas Shahi Dynasty by installing Nasiruddin Mahmood Shah, grandson of Haji Iliyas (1442 AD).

He ruled for seventeen years (1433-1459), and during his reign the boundary of Bengal was greatly extended.

Nasiruddin was succeeded by his son, Rukhunuddin barbak Shah(1459-1574). Tuknuddin had brought a large number of slaves of Ethiopian origin who became politically powerful over the time. Soon after Ruknuddin’s death, the activities of some of these Slaves created political instability. Between 1487 and 1493, four of the slaves became Sultans and were killed by rivals.

A period of unrest was finally brought to an end when a noble of Arab origin named said Hussain assumed power (1494) and entitiled himself as Aluddin Hussian Shah. Thus the Hussain Shahi Dynasty was established.

### Art and culture during the Iliyas Shahi Dynasty

With the establishment of Iliyas Shahi Dynasty, the initial unrest and political instability were brought to a minimum. Therefore the Sultans could pay more attention to the development of art and culture.

In the field of architecture, the most spectacular achievement was the famous Adina Mosque in Pandua, built by Sikandar Shah in 1375. The mosque was not only larger than the largest mosque of the Delhi Sultans of the time, but it was also the largerst mosque in the whole subcontinent of India.

Other important monuments erected during the Iliyas Shahi period were the tomb of Ghiyasuddin Azam shah at sonargaon, the Kotwali Darwaza, the dakhil Darwaza, the Nim Darwaza, the Tantipara mosque, the Kadamrasul Masjid and the Darasbari Mosque of Gaur, and the Sona Masjid of Pandua.

Under the patronage of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah, Shah Muhammad Sagir wrote his famous poem, Yusuf-Zulekha. It broght about a revolution in Bengali Literature, which was greatly enriched with the addition of the religious stories of Islam and the introduction of the romantic tale as a new theme for Bengali poets. Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah asked Krittivas to write the Ramayana in Bengali.

Ruknuddin Barbak Shah  extended his patronage to muslim and Hindu scholars alike. During his reign, Zaynuddin composed the Resulbijay and Ibrahim Qayum Faruqi composed the Safarnamah. Ruknuddin Barbak Shah equally extended his patronage to Hindu scholars and poets-during his reign, Raimukuta Brhaspati acquired fame and glory, and Barbak Shah honored Maladhar Basu, the compiler of the Srikrishnavijay, with the title of ‘Gunaraj Khan’.

## The Hussain Shahi Dynasty

### Extending the boundaries of Bengal

**Alauddin Hussain Shah** Extend the boundaries of Bengal by conquering Kamarupa and Kamta, annexing collila and Chittagong to his kingdom and sending expeditioins to Orissa. He also repulsed an attack by Sikander Lodi, the Dultan of Delhi. He gave away some of his powers to his son, Prince Nusrat  Shah, who was a skilled administrator.

### Keeping Bengal safe from Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire

After the death of Hussain Shah, Nusrat Shah (1519-1532) asended the throne of Bengal. He was an able ruler like his father. Nusrat clevcerly tried to avoid any confrontation with babur, founder of the Mughal Empire, who had appeared in the eastern Indian scene after his victory at Panipath (1526).

Nusrat prfessed neutrality and avoided having any connection with the anti-Mughal confederacy that was formed by Mahmud Lodi with Afghan Chiefs. When Babur sent an expedition to Bengal, Nusrat shah concluded a treaty which made Bengal safe.

### Independence of Bengal lost to Sher Shah, Afghan leader

Nausrat shah was killed by an Assassin in 1532 and succeeded by Alauddin Feruz Shah and then Ghiasuddin Mahmud. But they could not reverse the trend of decline of the Husain Shahi Dynasty that had started after the death of nusrat Shah.

Meanwhile, the Afghans grew stronger under the leadership so Sher Shah, who posed a great threat to the muhals in Delhi as well as the Sultans of Bengal and when he captured Gaur in 1538, the independent status of Bengal was finally lost.

### Art and culture during the Hussain Shahi Dynasty

The Hussain Shahi Dynasty was marked by a long spell of undisturbed peace, prosperity, communal harmony and the development of Bengali culture and literature. This is why the Hussain Shahi era is considered the golden age of the Bengal sultanate.

The rulers of this period took an active interest in the growth of local literature by partonising the major poets of the time. The sultans, because of their close association with the local people, gave status and dignity to the bangla language which now began to paly the role that was earlier played by Sanskrit in the pre-Muslinm period.

Kavindra Parameshvara  and Shrikara Nandi, the translators of the Mahabharata, were patronized by Paragal Khan and his son Chhuti Khan respectively, both being governors of Chittagong under Hussain shah.

Of the few writers of Vaisnava padas, Yashoraj Khan, served as an official of Husain Shah. Shyaikh Zahid composed his yougic philosophy adya parichaya in 1498-99 AD, one of the earliest specimens of Bangla poems dealing with ideas.

The period also marked the growth of secular elements in Bangla literature. Shridhara, the author of Vidya Sundara, received patronage form Prince Firuz, son of Nusrat Shah.

During the Hussain Shahi period, Bengal’s contributions to architecture and calligraphy were significant. Architecture and calligraphy were largely the product of court patronage. The case was probably similar with music, particularly its classical branch which seems to have flourished in the court.

The reign of nurse Shah witnessed a sudden flowering of pictorial art as is evidenced by the ten folio illustrations of the first part of the Sikandarnamah, known as the Sharafnamah, which details the exploits of Alexander in the East.

By the time the Hussain Shahi rulers came to power, Bengal had already developed a tradition of architecture. The Iliyas Shahi rulers had started a rich architectural tradition with an individuality of its own. Hussain Shahi architecture is a continuation of this earlier tradition.

The ruins of the Darasbarl Madrassa at Gaur (on the Bangladesh side of the medieval city) exhibit the vigour of the building art in the period. The Gumti gate, the Qadam Rasal, the Jahanian Mosque, the Bara Sona mosque and the Chota Soan mosque show the glorious brick style of Bengal developed in the Hussain shahi period.

The building built outside the metropolis. The sura mosque and Hemtabad mosque in Dinajpur, the Bagha mosque, the Navaram mosque in  Pabna, the Mijlis aulia mosque of Pathrail in Faridpur, the sankarpasha mosque of Sylhet and the Goaldi mosque in Sonargaon are some excellent examples of the period.

The bara Sona mosque and the Chhota Sona mosque have a spirit of ornamentation which most of the earlier structures lack.

In this period, we find a predominance of the stone cutters art. The architecture of the period clearly reveals local influences and gives expression to Bengal’s life and culture. The old Terracotta, which had its revival in the earlier period of Muslim rule, continued under the Hussain Shahi rulers.

The local elements, which found expression in the architecture of the period, include the curvature of the cornice and the copy of the chauchala. The Hussain Shahi artists copied the terracotta art on stones. In its rich ornamentation, the Hussain Shahi style stands in strong contrast with the rather austere style of the previous phase.

**(C ) Mughal rule (1538-1757)**

# Mughal Empire

**Babur** was the founder of Mughal Empire. He was related to Timur from his father’s side and Chengiz Khan to his mother’s side. His original name was Zahiruddin Muhammad. He defeated ibrahim lodhi in the first Battle of Panipat in 1526 and established Mughal rule in India.

He defeated Rana Sanga of Mewar in Battle of Khanua in 1527 near Agra. He then assumed the title of ‘Ghazi’. Babur also defeated the Afgans in battle of Gogra in Bihar.

Babur wrote his memoirs in Tuzuk-i-Baburi in Turki language, describing the flora and fauna of India.

## Humayun(1530-1540 AD and 1555-56 AD)

He was the eldest son of Babur and ascended the throne in 1530. He fought two battles against Sher Shah, the afgan leader at Chausa and Kannauj, where he was completely defeated. Humayun then escaped to Iran for next fifteen years.

### Sur Empire/ Interregenum(1540-1555AD)

The founder was Sher Shah. He waged wars with Rajputs expanding his empire to include Punjab, Sind, Multan, Bundelkhand. He ruled for five years but organized the administratin in a brillant manner. He began the system of local responsibility for local crimes. Land was measured and tax was collected to about 1/3rd ogf the produce.  He built Purana Qila in Delhi. He introduced new coins called as ‘dams’ which remained in circulation til 1835.

Sher Shah built roads to strengthen communication, mainly 4 important highways. From Sonargaon to Sind, From Agra to Burhampur, from Jodhpur to Chittor and from Lahore to Multan.

He also built the Mosoleum at Sasaram, one of the asterpieces of indian Architecture. He also patronized learned men like Malik muhammad Jayasi who rote Padmavar under his reign.

After Sher Shah, his successors ruled till Humayun invaded in 1555.

Humayun conquered his lost empire back from Afghans. But he died in six months after falling from stairs of his library.

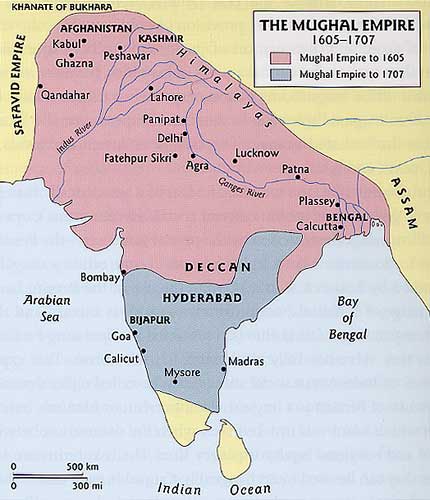
## Akbar(1556-1605 AD)

He is considered greatest monarchs of India. the Afghans marched on delhi soon after he assumed throne under Hemu. In 2nd Battle of panipat, Hemu was defeated and Mughals won. For initial five years, Bairam Khan consolidated the empire for him.

the Rajput Policy of Akbar is lauded by many historians. He married the daughter of Raja Bharmal, thus maintining friendly relations with them. Though the Ranas of Mewar remained defiantto Muslim rule. Rana Pratap was defeated by the Mughal army in 1576.

Akbar proclaimed his own religion Din-i-Ilahi, against the bigotry of orthodox Ulemas. However, the new religion did not became popular. He allowed his Hindu wives to worship their own gods. He ordered the construction f ibadat khana(House of Worship) at his capital Fatehpur Sikri. He invited scholars of all religions for consultations.

Under Akbar, the Land revenue system was established known as Zabi / BAndobast systemThis sytem was further improved by Raja Todarmal. the land revenue was fixed on the average yield of land assessed based on past ten years records. The land was divided into 4 categories: Polaj(every year cultivation), Parauti(cultivated once in 2 years), Chachar(once in 3-4 years), and Banjar( once in 5-6 years).

Akbar also introduced the Mansabdari System, where every officer was assigned a mansab(rank). This rank was not hereditary.

## Jahangir(1605-1627 AD)

His name was Salim. Jahangir’s rule was full of rebellions. he is known for his strict administration. Captain William Hawkins of East India Company came to Jahangir’s court. Sir Thomas Roe, a representative of King James I of England also came to his court seeking permission o establish trading port at Surat. He was granted permission after initial resistance.

## Shahjahan(1628-58 AD)

He faced revolts in Bundelkhand after usurping the throne after his fathers daeath. After three years of his assession ,his beloved wife died in 1631, he built the Taj Mahal in memory of his wife Mumtaj Mahal at Agra.

He promoted art and culture during his reign. the Red Fort, Jama Masjid at Delhi were built under his rule.

## Aurangzeb(1658-1707 AD)

He assumed the title of Almgir. In first ten years to his rule, he lead many military campaigns. The jats and Satnamis along with Sikhs revolted during his reign. These revolts were a result of his harsh religious policy. He had reintroduced Jaziya and pilgrim tax. He defeated the Shia Sultans of Bijapur, Golconda eliminatng the Kutb Shahi dynasty. This removed the barrier between the Maraths and the mughasl and confrontations began. His deccan policy ruined the treasury of the Mughal empire.

After Auragzeb, the Mughal empire began to decline rapidly.

Later Mughals were not very powerful or influential. Still the Mughal empire continued till the 1857 revolt. Under Bahadur Shah II, the mughal empire came to a formal end.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*