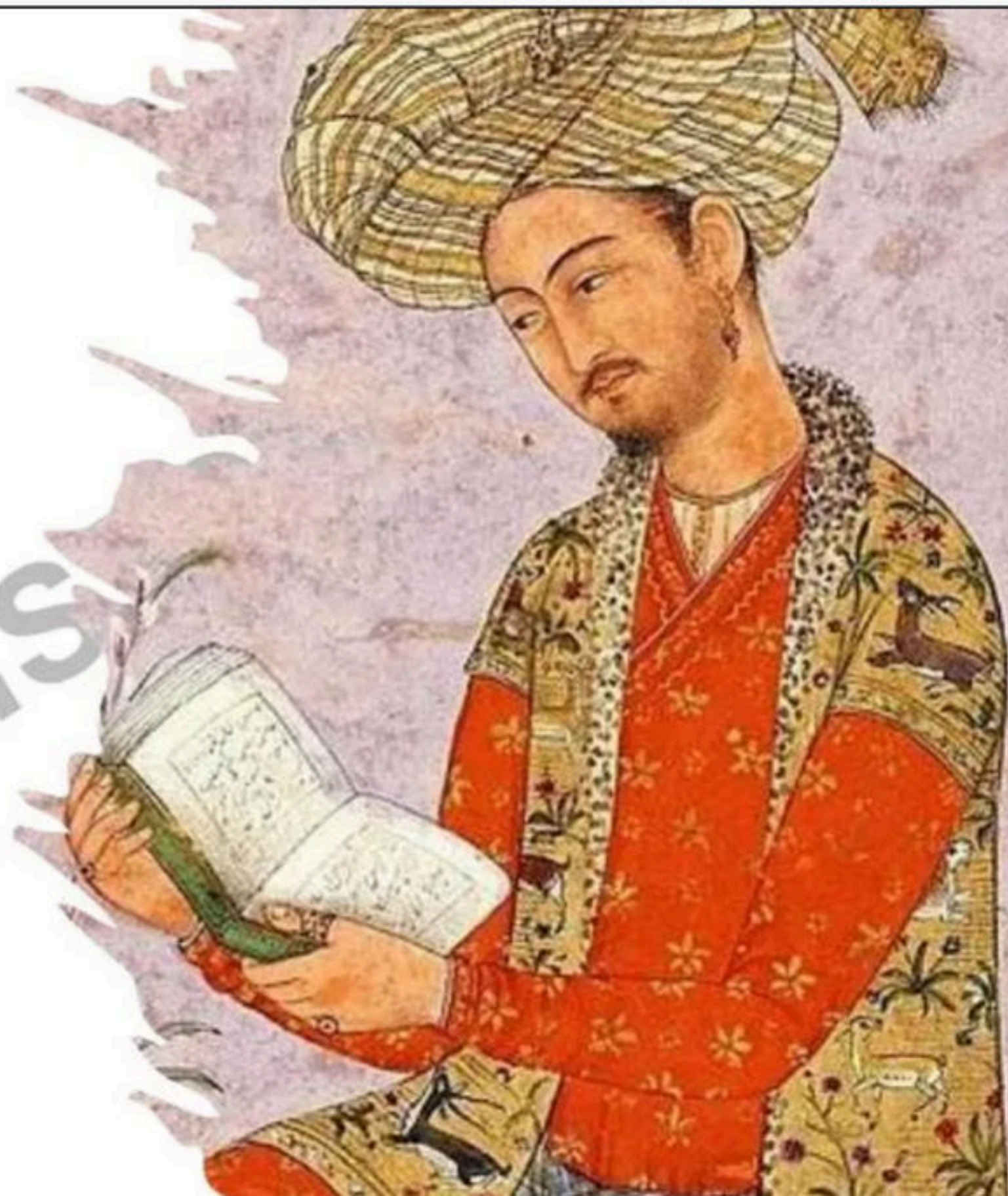


Babur

[1483-1530]

OMSHIS



Introduction

- ❑ Politically, the period between the 15th to 16th centuries saw the rise of **three very powerful empires** in the world; the **Ottomans**, the **Safavids**, and the **Mughals**.
- ❑ The rise of these three was **linked** to the **destruction of the Timurid Empire**; and the **problematic tradition of the Mongols and the Timurids to partition the empire amongst their sons**.
- ❑ The **Ottomans** used this in the **Western sector** to usurp power, whilst the **Safavids** captured the **Central part of the Timurid empire**.
- ❑ It was the ambition of the **Uzbeks** to consolidate the **Eastern sector** towards India, which **pushed Babur into the Indian subcontinent**.

Early Life

- **Babur** (14 February 1483 – 26 December 1530), born **Zahir ud-Din Muhammad**, was the **founder of the Mughal Empire and the first Emperor of the Mughal dynasty** (r. 1526–1530) in the Indian subcontinent. He was a **descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan through his father and mother**, respectively. He was also given the posthumous name of **Firdaws Makani** ('Dwelling in Paradise').
- The center point of the **struggle for Transoxiana** was the **control over Samarqand**. Samarqand had immense prestige because it had been the **capital of the Timurids for almost 140 years**. Babur was to say, "**Few towns in the whole habitable world are so pleasant as Samarqand.**" He dwells on its magnificent buildings and gardens, its trade and manufactures, the excellent meadows around it, and its fruits and wine.
- Babur ascended the small principality of **Farghana in 1494** at the age of 12, following the death of his **father, Umar Shaikh**.

- At the time Farghana was being attacked from all quarters, but mainly, by his **paternal uncle, Sultan Ahmad Mirza**, aided by his **maternal uncle, Sultan Mahmud Khan**. However, with firmness and loyalty of his subjects, Babur was able to stand up to these attacks and forced his attackers to make peace with him.
- During the **next ten years, Babur twice conquered Samarqand** to lose it again after a short spell. The first time, in 1497, when Babur was barely fifteen, he conquered Samarqand after a siege of seven months. Babur was warmly welcomed by the citizens of Samarqand. However, **he had to vacate** it soon because the **city lacked both supplies and money which Babur could not provide**.

- Babur's **serious illness and a conspiracy** against him in his dominions worsened Babur's position and forced him to leave Samarqand. Meanwhile, some of his begs had installed his younger half-brother, Jahangir Mirza, at Farghana, while some portions of the kingdom were seized by his maternal uncle, Mahmud Khan. Thus, Babur lost both Samarqand and his kingdom.
- **Cut off from Samarqand and as well as Ferghana, Babar was reduced to the position of a homeless exile** whose only territorial possession was a **small hilly tract of Khojend** where his army was then encamped.
- Through his strenuous efforts and active support of his maternal kinsmen, Babar recovered Ferghana in 1499 but, due to the selfishness and intrigues of his people – the **Chaghatai Turks, he lost it again in 1500 AD.**
- **Babar marched on Samarqand** and took its **ruler Shaibani Khan Uzbek** by Surprise; the latter retreated to the countryside and Babar acquired control of the town but only for a short while.

- However, in **Sar-i-Pul** **Shaibani Khan** inflicted a **sharp defeat on Babur (1502)**. It was in this battle that **Shaibani Khan used the wheeling tactics or tulghuma (Tulghuma meant the division of the army into the left, right, and center units)**, a well-known Uzbek device that Babur was to use against Ibrahim Lodi twenty-five years later. **Babur was again without a kingdom**. In the process, he had to suffer, as he says, "great poverty and humiliation".
- After facing a crushing defeat at the historic battle of Sar I Pul in 1502, he made a bold move crossing the Hindukush mountains in winter, **Babur attacked and conquered Kabul (1504) and Ghazni**. The importance of Kabul was fully understood by Babur and his kinsmen and begs who now rallied to him in large numbers.

Conquest of Kabul

- With the **conquest of Kabul and Ghazni**, the days of Babar's wanderings were over. Within a few years, he **consolidated his hold over the whole of Afghanistan** and won the confidence of his subjects through efficient administration.
- Babur was now afraid of an **Uzbek attack on Kabul** itself. To raise the morale of his followers, in **1506** he decided that all his **followers call him 'Padshah'**. This was also to demonstrate that the Timurid dynasty was not dead, thereby claiming the allegiance of all those Chaghtai and Mughal tribesmen, princes, and begs who felt a sense of loyalty to the Timurids. The use of the word "**Padshah**" was a common currency in Central Asia at the time. In his Memoirs, Babur himself shows that in the period following his conquest of Samarqand, on many occasions his followers called him "Padshah."
- **Babur could not reconcile himself**, however, to the **loss of his native kingdom all at once**. After the death of **Shaibani Khan Uzbek**, he planned an **invasion of central Asia** in collaboration with the Shah of Persia.

- He annexed Samarqand in 1511 albeit his success was short-lived; the Uzbegs, under the command of **Ubaidullah Khan**, a **nephew of Shaibani Khan**, **expelled him from Samarqand within a year.**
- Babar had to suffer very **heavy losses in men and materials** and returned to Kabul with disappointment. Thereafter, he never thought of reconquering his native land. **Babar's contact with Persians** acquainted him with the use of firearms and artillery. This valuable training and experience proved very useful to him in **his Indian campaigns.**

Babur's Advance Towards India

- Before invading India in 1526, **Babur had carried out four raids on the outskirts of Indian territories.** These included the following: **Bhira in 1519 and 1520, Sialkot in 1520, Lahore in 1524.**
- Babur's moves against Punjab and India after his Samarqand misadventure were also prompted by changes in the political situation in India, the revival of the power of the Uzbeks, and **Babur's growing financial difficulties.** The income from Kabul had never been sufficient to meet the requirements of Babur's begs and kinsmen. The main income from Kabul was the tamgha or cess on imports and exports. Most of the countryside was ruined, and the only way to get anything from the war-like tribes was to carry out plundering expeditions against them to which Babur had to resort.
- Afraid of a **renewed Uzbek threat to Kabul,** Babur **conquered Qandahar (1522);** he also established his control over Badakhshan. But all these required the maintenance of a large army. His financial plight is brought out by the historian, Abul Fazl, who says: "He (Babur) ruled over Badakhshan, Qandahar and Kabul which did not yield sufficient income for the requirements of the army."

- **In 1518, Babur invested and conquered the fortress of Bajaur** and then went on to capture **Bhira** which was on the river Jhelum. After the river Indus, these formed traditionally the defensive frontier of India. Babur claimed these areas as his own because they had been a part of Timur's empire. The **Bajaur expedition marks the beginning of Babur's efforts to conquer Punjab or India** if the opportunity is offered.
- Although Babur asserts that from the beginning he desired to conquer India, it is apparent that his ambitions expanded gradually. At first, his objective was merely to conquer those parts of the Punjab to which he laid a hereditary claim. Thus, after the Bhira expedition, he sent an envoy to Ibrahim Lodi asking him to cede to him the areas which had belonged to Timur.

- **The governor of Lahore, Daulat Khan Lodi**, whose jurisdiction included Bajaur and Bhira, did not allow Babur's envoy to proceed to Delhi but detained him at Lahore.
- As soon as Babur returned to Kabul, Daulat Khan Lodi proceeded to **expel Hindu Beg** and the other officers whom Babur had appointed over the areas he claimed. In the following years, Babur made several incursions into the tribal areas of the North-West, and the Punjab.
- In **1520, he recaptured Bhira** and advanced up to Sialkot, but had to return to Kabul following an attack from the Afghan rulers of Qandahar who were allied with Iran. He captured Qandahar and Badakhshan in the following years.
- After settling the Kandahar affairs, Babar began to make large-scale preparations for the invasion of India. During his 4th onslaught of India sometime in the winter of 1524, Babar commanded an army of about 12000 men and the best of his field guns.

- When Daulat Khan Lodhi heard this, he hastened to make a compromise with Babar and sent his son Dilawar Khan to welcome him. He offered his services to Babar in the conquest of Delhi in return for a promise that the foreigner would permit him to retain the Punjab as his vassal.
- Babur was aware of the political situation in **North India and that Afghan nobles** were not happy with Ibrahim Lodhi, he took advantage of this situation diplomatically and left for Lahore with high hopes.
- Meanwhile, the fort of Lahore, which was under the control of Ibrahim Lodhi's army, was captured and Ibrahim Lodhi's army was withdrawn from Punjab After Lahore, Babur refused to rest and marched on Dipalpur and captured it.

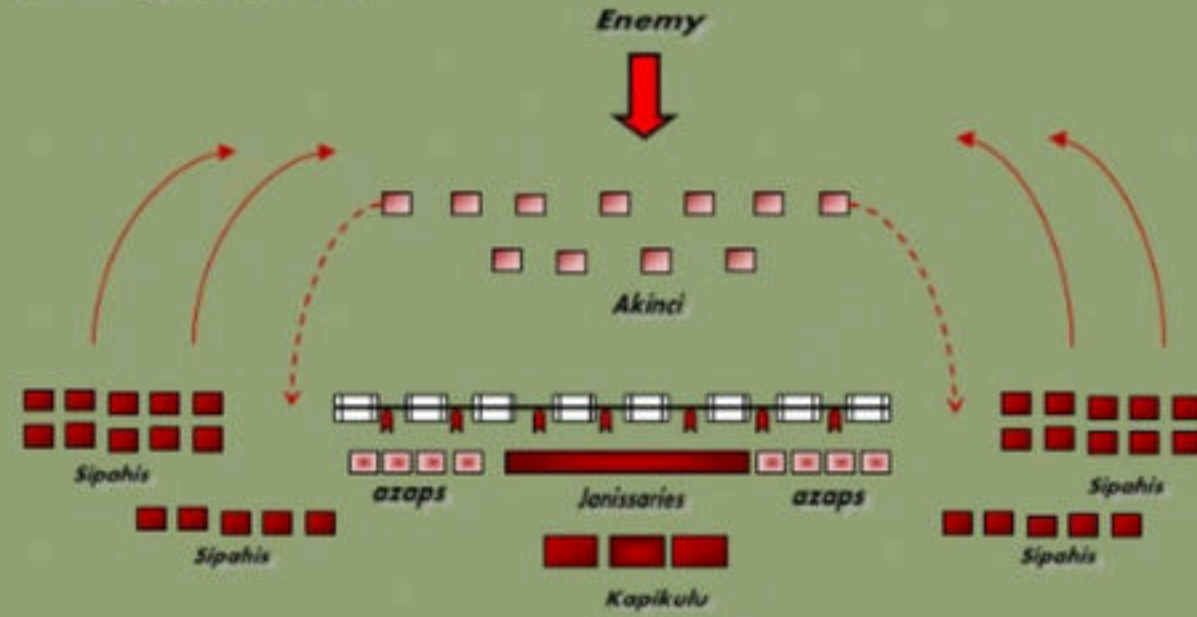
- Daulat Khan and his 2 sons met Babur here to pay their respects. Babur gave him a warm welcome but instead of giving him control of the Punjab, Alam Khan, who was given the charge of the districts of Jalandhar and Sultanpur as a reward for his friendship, was appointed to the charge of Dipalpur.
- **After settling the affairs of the Punjab, Babur returned to Kabul to make preparations for the conquest of Delhi, but soon after his return the Punjab again came completely under the control of Daulat Khan Lodhi.**
- **Babur invaded India for the 5th and final time** in November 1525. He had 12000 troops under him, and Humayun's army, which was later joined from Badakhshan by many Mughal troops in Peshawar, Lahore, and Sialkot around.

- He conquered Punjab with little effort. Most of Daulat Khan Lodhi's soldiers and officers joined Babur's party and consolidated their position. Meanwhile, secret messages of support were also being received from disgruntled and opportunistic nobles in Ibrahim's court.
- About this time **Rana Sang of Mewar was also reported to have sent an invitation for a joint attack on Delhi to partition the Lodhi kingdom** after the liquidation of Ibrahim Lodhi. While Babur needed no invitation to attack India, the arrival of these envoys convinced him that the situation was ripe for undertaking the conquest of India.

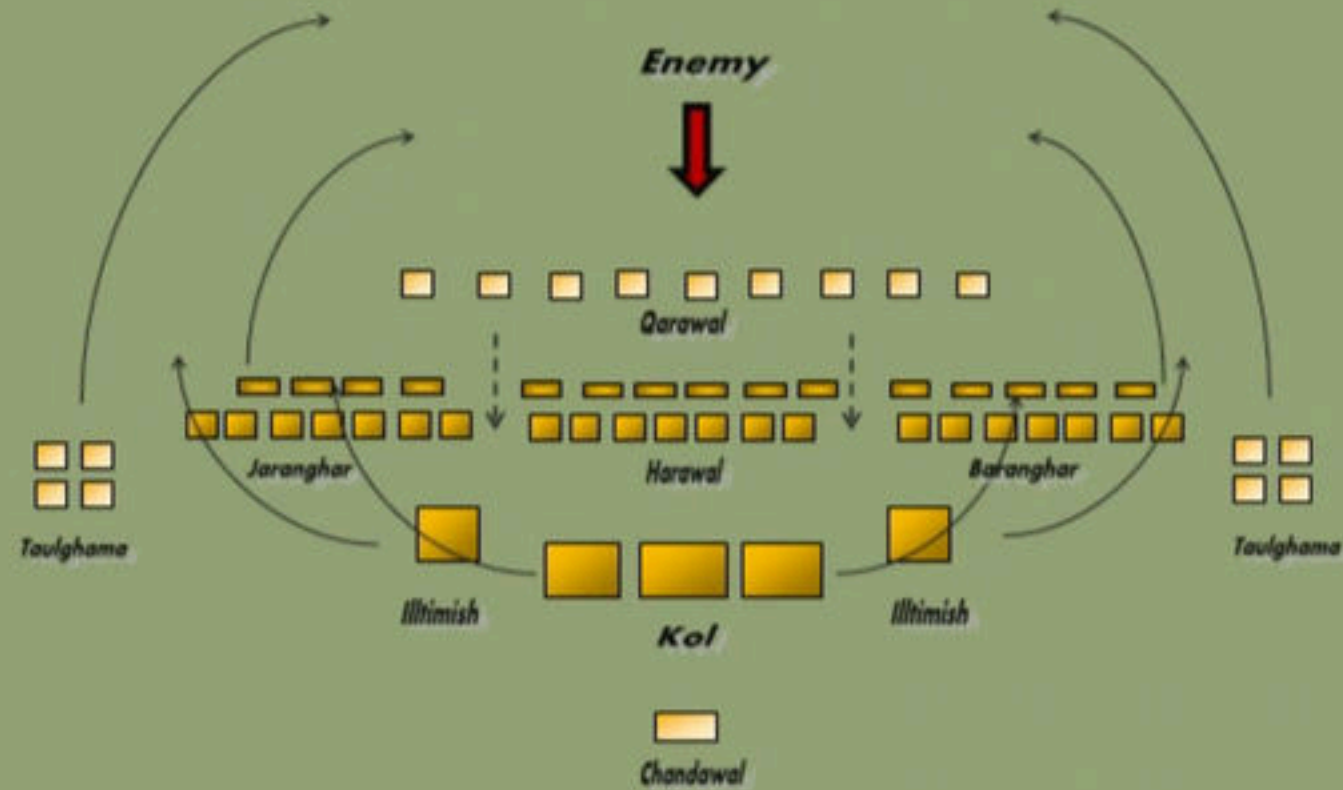
Battle of Panipat (1526)

- Ibrahim Lodhi was also preparing himself to meet the challenge. To divert the enemy and gain some time, he directed Hamid Khan, the shiqdar of Hisar-Firoza to stall the enemy with his contingent.
- Prince Humayun inflicted a crushing defeat on this army in 1526 and sent his army to plunder the city of Hisar–Firoza. Babur treated it as a favor and gave Humayun the district of Hisar-Firoza. This brought the forces of Babur and Ibrahim together on the mainland of Panipat.
- The **battle of Panipat** between **Ibrahim Lodi and Babur** was not a sudden development but was the culmination of the struggle between the two which had started earlier.
- Babur constructed a great strategy to defeat the Afghan army, his guns being manned by **Ustad Ali-Quli** and **Mustafa**, two of the **most famous gunners in Central Asia**.

Tabur Cengi Formation



Mughul Tulughma Formation



- The artillery was supported by an advanced cavalry guard led by Kukul Dash and Muhammad Ali. Tulughm's right wing was commanded by Humayun, while Babur commanded the center (Ghul) of the army. Ibrahim Lodhi's army was no match in the face of Babur's artillery and tactics and was finally defeated by the Mughal army.
- **The battle of Panipat was undoubtedly one of the decisive battles of Indian history.**
- It smashed the power of the Lodis and opened up the entire territory up to Jaunpur to Babur's control. The rich treasures stored by the Lodi Sultans at Agra relieved Babur of his financial difficulties. However, Babur had to wage two hard-fought battles, one against Rana Sanga of Mewar, and the other against the eastern Afghans before he could consolidate his position. Thus, politically the battle of Panipat was not as decisive as it was militarily. However, it marks a new phase in the struggle for the establishment of a hegemonic political power in north India.

Babur & Guru Nanak

- **Guru Nanak in his famous epic, "Babarvani"** describes the atrocities of Babar and his men in Punjab.
- Babarvani (Babar's command or sway) is how the four hymns by Guru Nanak alluding to the invasions by Babar (1483-1530), are collectively known in Sikh literature.
- **Guru Nanak was an eyewitness to the havoc created during these invasions. The Janam Sakhis mention that Guru Nanak himself was taken captive at Saidpur.**
- A little of his, outside of Babarwani hymns, indicates that he may have been present in Lahore when the city was given up to plunder.
- The mention in one of the Babarvani hymns of the use of guns by the Mughals against the Afghan defense relying mainly upon their war - elephants may well be a reference to the historic battle of Panipat which sealed the fate of the Afghan king, Ibrahim Lodhi.

- **The Sikh tradition strongly subscribes to a meeting in 1520 between Guru Nanak and Babar during the latter's invasion of Saidpur, in the Gujranwala district of Pakistan.**
- The town was taken by assault, the garrison put to the sword and the inhabitants carried into captivity.
- According to the Puratan Janam Sakhi, Guru Nanak, and Mardana, also among the captives, were ordered to be taken to prison as slaves. The Guru was given a load to carry and Mardana a horse to lead.
- But Mir Khan, says the Janam Sakhi, saw that the Guru's bundle was carried without any support and Mardana's horse followed him without the reins. **He reported this to Sultan Babar who remarked, "If there was such a holy man here, the town should not have been destroyed."**

- **The Janam Sakhis continue, "Babbar kissed his (Guru Nanak's) feet. He said, 'On the face of this fair one, one sees God himself.'**
- Then all the people, Hindus, and Musalmans, began to make their salutations. The king spoke again, 'O dervish, accept something'.
- The Guru answered, 'I take nothing, but you must release all the prisoners of Saidpur and restore their property to them'. King Babbar ordered, 'Those who are in detention be released and their property be returned to them'. All the prisoners of Saidpur were set at liberty".

- Babarvani hymns are not a narrative of historical events like Guru Gobind Singh's Bachitra Natak, nor are they an indictment of Babar as his Zafarnamah was that of Aurangzeb.
- They are the outpourings of a compassionate soul touched by scenes of human misery and by the cruelty perpetrated by the invaders. The sufferings of the people are rendered here in accents of intense power and protest. The events are placed in the larger social and historical perspective where a decline in moral standards must lead to chaos.

Problems faced by Babur

- Babur had many serious problems to face after his victory at Panipat. His first concern was to **seize the rich treasures hoarded by the Lodis at Delhi and Agra**. He sent parties to ride fast and light to occupy Delhi and Agra, and mount guard over the treasures located there.
- **Humayun headed the party sent to Agra**. After **having the khutba read in his name at Delhi**, Babur also reached Agra. His first act after seizing the treasures hoarded there was to make lavish gifts to Humayun and his brothers.
- A silver coin (shahrukhi) was given to every soul—men, women, children, bond or freemen in Kabul and the Badakhshan valley.
- This generosity was a part of Babur's character and a part of his philosophy. He believed that Ibrahim Lodi could not keep his nobles on his side because he was miserly and more concerned with collecting treasure.

- However, the immediate result of these lavish gifts was contrary to what Babur might have expected. **Many of his begs and army men thought that their struggles had been amply rewarded and that it was time to return home.**
- Babur took firm steps to quell this discontent. He called a Council and roundly declared that they had not endured the hardships for years, deadly slaughter in battle to abandon without cause the countries taken. **He refused to return to Kabul, "the spot of harsh poverty," and sternly forbade his well-wishers to raise the matter again. However, he permitted those who were determined to leave to do so.**
- Ultimately, only **one of his leading begs, Khwaja Kalan**, a favorite of Babur, left for Kabul. To save appearances, he was asked to look after Kabul and Ghazni, and a pargana in the Punjab was also assigned to him for his expenses.

Babur and Rajput Kingdoms

- The **two biggest dangers Babur faced** were, first, from the **side of Rana Sanga** and **second, from the eastern Afghans.**
- Rana Sanga's conflict with Ibrahim Lodi for the control of Malwa and eastern Rajasthan was the cause of the negotiations between Sanga and Babur for collusion against Ibrahim Lodi.
- **Sanga may have imagined that like Timur, Babur would withdraw once he had seized the treasures of Delhi and Agra.** But the entire context changed once he realized that Babur intended to stay in India and establish a new empire. Such an empire, from Sanga's point of view, was an even bigger danger for him than the Lodis. Hence, after the battle of Panipat, Sanga began to make efforts to gather a grand coalition that would either compel Babur to leave India or confine him to Punjab.

- By early 1527, Sanga's preparations had been more or less completed, and Babur began to hear reports of his advance towards Agra. Hence, Babur hastily recalled Humayun from the east and sent detachments for the conquest of Dholpur, Gwaliyar, and Bayana. These powerful forts, which formed the outer bastion of Agra, and also guarded the routes to Malwa and Eastern Rajasthan, were under the control of independent Muslim commanders. Hearing of Sanga's advance, **the commanders of Dholpur and Gwaliyar accepted the generous terms offered by Babur and surrendered the forts to him.**
- However, **Nizam Khan, the commander of Bayana,** opened **negotiations with both sides.** To forestall the Rana, Babur sent a detachment to Bayana which was defeated and scattered by the Rana's forces. Babur's forces were already demoralized, hearing news of the valor of the Rajputs, and the formidable force he had collected.
- This setback further disheartened them. **The forces under the command of Rana were far larger than those commanded by Babur.**

Battle of Khanwa (1527)

- The battle between **Babur and Rana Sanga at Khanwa**, near Fatehpur-Sikri, 1527.
- The Rana was joined by almost all the leading Rajput Rajas from Rajasthan — such as **Harauti, Jalor, Sirohi, and Dungarpur from South and West Rajasthan, and Dhundhar and Amber** from the East. **Rao Ganga of Mewar** did not join himself but sent a contingent. Rao Medini Rao of Chanderi in Malwa also joined, including Mahmud Lodi, the younger son of Sikandar Lodi, whom the Afghans had proclaimed their Sultan. Hasan Khan Mewati, who was the virtual ruler of Mewat, had also joined.
- **Babur denounces the Afghans who opposed him as kafirs and mulhids** (i.e. those who had apostatized from Islam). This shows that these words were often used in a political as well as a religious sense.
- Thus, Sanga represented a Rajput-Afghan alliance, the proclaimed objective of which was to expel Babur and to restore the Lodi empire. Hence, **the battle at Khanua can hardly be seen as a religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims**, or even as a Rajput bid to establish a Rajput hegemony over North India.

- It does not seem that Sanga had learned anything from the tactics adopted at Panipat by Babur. He was proud of his elephants and swordsmen and, in the usual fashion, delivered a furious attack on Babur's right. He would have broken through but for timely reinforcements dispatched by Babur. Once the advance of the Rajputs and their Afghan allies had been contained, **Babur's wheeling parties came into play**. The carts and matchlockmen were also ordered to advance. The Rana and his allies were hemmed in. Despite gallant resistance, the **Rana suffered a disastrous defeat**.
- **Sanga escaped to Chittor** but the grand alliance he had built collapsed as quickly as it had been built.
- After his victory, **Babur thought of marching to Chittor** but gave it up on account of heat and lack of water on the way. **Babur then returned to Agra**.

Battle of Chanderi (1528)

- Khanua completed the battle of Panipat, and Babur's position in the Gangetic doab was made largely secure.
- Leaving Agra early in December 1527, Babur reached Chanderi **whose chief, Medini Rao**, had been a close ally of Sanga.
- Babur offered it to **Medini Rao** Shamsabad in exchange for Chanderi. But Medini Rao spurned the offer, and preferred to die fighting, after performing the fearful Jauhar ceremonial. However, two of Medini Rao's daughters fell in Babur's hands, and he gave them to Humayun and Kamran.
- After Chanderi, Babur had plans of campaigning against Raisin, Bhilsa, and Sarangpur.
- He also wanted to march against Rana Sanga in Chittor, not knowing that **Rana had died earlier** (1528), apparently **poisoned by his sardars** who considered his plans to renew conflict with Babur to be suicidal.
- Meanwhile, Babur was receiving **alarming news about the activities of the Afghans** in east U.P.

Babar and the Afghans

- The Afghans formed a large segment among the Muslims of India and were spread over not only in the towns but the countryside in different regions. They were particularly strong and numerous in the eastern parts of modern U.P., and Bihar.
- After Panipat, Babur was face to face with the problem of dealing with the powerful body of Afghans in the country. To understand Babur's policy towards the Afghans, four aspects need to be kept in mind.
- **First**, there were the Afghan iqtadars, or commanders of forts, towns, and the countryside. They assumed full control of the forts and the surrounding areas after the fall of Ibrahim Lodi. Babur adopted a policy of force and conciliation towards them.

- An effort was made to win over some of the leading Afghan nobles of Ibrahim Lodi. These included Shaikh Bayazid, younger brother of Mustafa Farmuli, of Awadh, and several others who had fought the rebel Afghans of East U.P. during the reign of Ibrahim Lodi.
- **Second** were the Afghans of eastern U.P., around Jaunpur. These elements had been in rebellion during Ibrahim Lodi's reign, and Ibrahim Lodi had sent forces against these elements under Bahar Khan Lodi, Mustafa Farmuli and others.
- Since Babur considered that he had inherited the entire Lodi kingdom upto Bihar by virtue of his victory over Ibrahim Lodi, he was not prepared to give any quarter to these rebels. Right at the beginning, Babur had sent Humayun against the eastern Afghans. They were not able to withstand Humayun who quickly occupied the area upto Jaunpur.

- **The third aspect was Bihar and the fourth was Bengal.** Bihar had for long been a kind of no-man's land between the kingdoms of Bengal and the Sharqi kingdom of Jaunpur. The position had become even more uncertain after the fall of the kingdom of Jaunpur.
- Nusrat Shah, of Bengal, who was an ambitious ruler, was also keen to extend his rule over Bihar. Taking advantage of Babur's preoccupation with Sanga, he had extended his dominion from Tirhut to Ballia and placed it under his brothers-in-law, **Alauddin, and Makhdum-i-Alam.**
- The latter established himself at Hajipur across the Ganga near the then non-existing Patna. He expanded his rule on both sides of the river Ghagra up to Azamgarh.

- These Afghan rebels, though based mainly in Jaunpur, looked upon Bihar as a sanctuary into which they could retreat in case of Mughal pressure. This was the situation Babur was faced with while he was in Malwa. He quickly returned and **marched straight to Kannauj.**
- Despite the opposition of the Afghans, he built a bridge on the Ganges, using his cannons, mortars, and matchlocks to meet the Afghan opposition. Forging the river, he occupied the area up to Jaunpur. But the Afghan rebels slipped across the Ghagra. Babur was not inclined to stay in the area any longer, and putting it under the **charge of Askari**, returned to Agra.
- **Babur wanted to detach Bengal from the side of the eastern Afghans** and wanted free passage across the river Ghagra. However, no agreement could be reached. The point at issue was Bihar. Perhaps, the Bengal ruler wanted recognition of his existing position in Bihar which Babur was reluctant to concede.

Battle of Ghagra (May 6, 1529)

- A **joint force** of the **Bengal king and the Afghan rebels** was led by Mahmud Lodhi, the younger brother of Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi and claimant to the throne of Delhi against Babur.
- Babar challenged them at the confluence of the Ghagra and Ganges on May 6, 1529, after a brief encounter, the Afghans melted away and **Babar won an easy victory.**
- Babar acquired control of Bihar and permitted the local Afghan chieftains to retain their estates. He entered into a friendly treaty with Nusrat Shah based on equality of status, according to which the 2 monarchs agreed to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other's dominions and promised not to support or give shelter to their respective enemies.

- **Large numbers of Afghans surrendered to Babur, including seven to eight thousand Nuhanis.** Maruf Farmuli also surrendered, but Biban and Bayazid escaped across the Ghagra along with Mahmud Lodi, and besieged Lucknow.
- Babur ousted Biban and Bayazid from Lucknow, and they fled to Mahoba in Kalinjar. Babur knew that he had not solved the Afghan problem. Bearing in mind the nature of the Afghan social set up, and their military potential, the solution to the Afghan problem needed considerable time and effort.

Memoirs and Cultural Contribution

- **Babur's Tuzuk or Memoirs** is rightly classified as a classic of world literature. Written in Chaghtai Turkish, his chaste style made him, along with Ali Sher Navai, the founder of modern Uzbeki Turkish.
- Babur wrote his memoirs, and these form the main source for details of his life. They are known as the **Baburnama** and were written in **Chaghatai Turkic**, his mother tongue, though his prose was highly Persianized in its sentence structure, morphology, and vocabulary. **Baburnama** was translated into Persian during the rule of Babur's grandson Akbar.



مکتبہ اسلامیہ

On India

- The country of Hindustan is extensive, full of men, and full of produce. On the east, south, and even on the west, it ends at its great enclosing ocean. On the north it has mountains which connect with those of Hindu-kush, Kafiristan and Kashmir. North-west of it He Kabul, Ghazni and Qandahar. Dihli is held to be the capital of the whole of Hindustan. From the death of Shihabu'd-din Ghuri (d. 602 AH.—1206 AD.) to the latter part of the reign of Sl. Firiiz Shah (Tughluq Turk d. 790 AH.—1388 AD.), the greater part of Hindustan must have been under the rule of the sultans of Dihli.
- Hindustan is of the first climate, the second climate, and the third climate ; of the fourth climate it has none. It is a wonderful country. Compared with our countries it is a different world ; its mountains, rivers, jungles and deserts, its towns, its cultivated lands, its animals and plants, its peoples and their tongues, its rains, and its winds, are all different. In some respects the hot-country {garm-sit) that depends on Kabul, is like Hindustan, but in others, it is different. Once the water of Sind is crossed, everything is in the Hindustan way land, water, tree, rock, people and horde, opinion and custom.

The towns and country of Hindustan are greatly wanting in charm. Its towns and lands are all of one sort ; there are no walls to the orchards, and most places are on the dead level plain. Under the monsoon-rains the banks of some of its rivers and torrents are worn into deep channels, difficult and troublesome to pass through anywhere. In many parts of the plains thorny jungle grows, behind the good defence of which the people of the pargana become stubbornly rebellious and pay no taxes.

Except for the rivers and here and there standing-waters, there is little “running-water”. So much so is this that towns and countries subsist on the water of wells or on such as collects in tanks during the rains.

In Hindustan hamlets and villages, towns indeed, are depopulated and set up in a moment ! If the people of a large town, one inhabited for years even, flee from it, they do it in such a way that not a sign or trace of them remains in a day or a day and a half. On the other hand, if they fix their eyes on a place in which to settle, they need not dig water-courses or construct dams because their crops are all rain-grown, and as the population of Hindustan is unlimited, it swarms in. They make a tank or dig a well ; they need not build houses or set up walls—khas-grass abounds, wood is unlimited, huts are made, and straightway there is a village or a town !

On a Great Diamond, a Possible Reference to the Koh-i-Noor in Baburnama

- Bikramajit's children and family were in Agra at the time of Ibrahim's defeat. When Humayun reached Agra, they must have been planning to flee, but his postings of men (to watch the roads) prevented this and guard was kept over them. Humayun himself did not let them go. They made him a voluntary offering of a mass of jewels and valuables amongst which was the famous diamond which Alau'u'd-din must have brought. Its reputation is that every appraiser has estimated its value at two and a half days' food for the whole world. Apparently it weighs 8 misqals. Humayun offered it to me when I arrived at Agra ; I just gave it him back.

- During the reign of emperor Akbar, the work was translated into Persian, the usual literary language of the Mughal court, by a Mughal courtier, **Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khanan**.
- **Babur introduced a new concept of the state which, resting on the Turko-Mongol theory of suzerainty**, based itself on the strength and prestige of the Crown, the absence of religious and sectarian bigotry, and the fostering of fine arts and the promotion of culture in a broad perspective. This included the hammams (public and private baths), and gardens with running water of which he was very fond.

Conclusion

- ❑ **Babur died at Agra on 30 December 1530 after a short illness.** Although a romantic web has been woven around his death, linking it to his offer to sacrifice his life for the sake of Humayun's recovery, Babur's health had been failing for the past several years due to hard campaigning, and the hot climate of India to which he was not accustomed.
- ❑ **The control of Babur and his successors over Afghanistan made India a player in Central Asian politics.** Powerful rulers of the area — Turan, Iran, Ottoman Turkey, and others kept close diplomatic contact with India and sought its support on occasions. On their part, Babur and the succeeding Mughal rulers kept a close watch on political developments in Central and West Asia by means of a constant exchange of envoys.
- ❑ Thus, with **the arrival of Babur, a new phase begins in India's foreign policy and strategic perception.** Babur not only tried hard to maintain Mughal influence on Badakhshan beyond the Hindukush mountains but even up to river Oxus.

Humayun

(1508-1556)

OMSHIS



Introduction

- **Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad (1508 – 1556)**, better known by his regnal name, **Humayun**, was the **second emperor of the Mughal Empire**.
- He ruled over **territory comprising Afghanistan, Pakistan, Northern India, and Bangladesh** from 1530 to 1540 and again from 1555 to 1556.
- He was the **eldest of the four sons of Babur**, the other 3 being **Kamran, Askari, and Hindal**.
- Humayun received his **1st important assignment as governor of Badakshan** when he was hardly a boy of 12 years.
- Humayun's mother, who was a highly educated, intelligent, and broad-minded lady, stayed with his son during his official assignments and looked to his comforts in the days of his apprenticeship in the art of governance.
- He **accompanied his father** and established himself as a **soldier in the battles of Panipat and Khanwa**. He was assigned the **estate of Sambhal to meet his expenses**.
- He was sent back to Badakshan, after the battle of Khanwa, to take charge of its administration and defense albeit he returned to India in 1529, without the permission of his father, and stayed at Sambhal for some time.

Humayun's problem with Begg

- Humayun had to grapple with several serious problems, some of them having been left behind by Babur, and some which had arisen following his death in December 1530.
- A **major problem** was the unsettled state of the administration and **the ambitions of the begs** who wanted to assert themselves.
- The desire of the begs to re-assert themselves is hinted at by a strange type of conspiracy or intrigue which is said to have taken place towards the end of Babur's reign.
- Babur's wakil, **Khalifa Nizamuddin**, who was a great favorite of Babur, wanted to set aside Humayun and his brothers and put on the throne **Mehdi Khwaja** who came from a distinguished family and was **married to Babur's elder sister, Khanazadah Begum**.
- The scheme could hardly hope to succeed because **Mehdi Khwaja was not a Timurid**, and there was **little chance of the begs accepting a non-Timurid**.

Partitioning of Empire

- The desire of some of Babur's brothers and Timurid princes to re-assert in India the Central Asian Timurid tradition of the partitioning of the empire.
- At the time of Babur's death, Humayun's younger brother, **Kamran, oversaw Kabul and Qandahar, while Badakhshan was under Sulaiman Mirza**. It was only natural that Kamran should remain in charge of these areas when Humayun succeeded at Agra. However, not satisfied with Kabul and Qandahar, Kamran advanced on Lahore, occupied the fort, and established his control over Punjab up to the river Sutlej.
- He then sent an embassy to Humayun, praying to be confirmed in the territories he had seized. Humayun was in a difficult position. The Afghans of eastern U.P. had already become active, and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat was displaying far-reaching ambitions that could pose a problem. Hence, he graciously confirmed Kamran's possession of the Punjab and granted him Hissar-Firuzabad in Jagir.

- On his part, **Kamran** observed outer forms and **allowed the khutba and Sikka** to remain **in Humayun's name**.
- It has been argued that by **leaving the recruiting grounds of Afghanistan and Punjab** in Kamran's hands, **Humayun cut himself off from the hardy and loyal soldiers of the area**.
- On the other hand, because of **Kamran's control over Afghanistan and Punjab**, **Humayun was saved from addressing himself to the problems of West and Central Asia**, specifically those of Qandahar and Badakhshan.
- This encouraged the expectation that **Humayun's other two brothers, Askari and Hindal**, who had been **allotted Sambhal and Mewat in Jagir** could also justifiably stake claims for suzerainty whenever an occasion arose. It also encouraged some of the other Timurids who had joined Babur after their expulsion by the Uzbeks to defy Humayun and press their claims for dominion.
- Along with these internal difficulties, the **most serious external problem Humayun** faced was that of **the Afghans of the east U.P. and Bihar**, and that of **Bahadur Shah of Gujarat**.

Humayun's Campaigns

Seize of Kalinjar (1531)

- Against Chandelas.
- Chandelas had a reputation for bravery but surrendered to Humayun.
- Humayun allowed him to continue under his sovereignty.

Effect: Seize of Kalinjar led to countering the growing influence of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat who captured Mandu at that time.

Seize of Chunar (1532)

- Against **Afghan Sardar** (Sher Khan, also called Sher Shah Suri).
- Sher Khan: He also served under Babur and captured the fort of Chunar.
- Humayun marched from Kalinjar to Chunar and asked Sher Shah to give it back as a result **Sher Khan offered to serve Humayun with a contingent of 500 troops under his son** (Qutb Khan). Humayun accepted the offer.

Battle of Dadrah or Daurah (1532)

Against Biban & Bayazid of Jaunpur.

Events :

- **Biban & Bayazid** re-established their position in Jaunpur.
- They expelled the “**Mughal governor**”, **Junaid Barlas**.
- Humayun met the Afghans at Dadrah on the river Gomti and inflicted a crushing defeat on them. Shaikh Bayazid was killed, and the back of the Afghan opposition was broken.

New Capital: Din Panah

The second Mughal emperor Humayun ascended the throne in 1530 and in 1533 he founded a new city, Din Panah, on the banks of the Yamuna River.

1530



1540

But in 1540 Sher Shah defeated Humayun and destroyed Din Panah to the ground and built his new capital, the Sher Shahi, now known as Purana Qila fort, in southeastern Delhi.

Humayun & Bahadur Shah of Gujarat

- After consolidating his position, Humayun turned towards the west to give attention to the problems of Malwa, Rajasthan & Gujarat.
- **Bahadur Shah**, who ascended to the throne in 1526, overran and conquered Malwa before moving on to Rajasthan and besieging Chittor, where he quickly abridged the Rajput defenders.
- **Karanwati, the Rajamata of Mewar**, sent Humayun a rakhi and asked for his help as a brother. **Since none of the contemporary sources mention this, little credit can be given to this story.**
- Humayun went to **Chittor** but later changed his mind and did not attack Bahadur Shah.
- Chittor was captured by Bahadur Shah after ten days and freely looted for three days.
- Humayun then proceeded to **Mandasor**, 60 miles from Chittor, and checked the route of Bahadur Shah's return.
- Humayun kept his army out of range of Bahadur Shah's artillery and cut off his supplies.
- Bahadur Shah fled without a fight on the night of April 25, 1535, AD, and sought refuge in the **fort of Mandu**.
- Bahadur Shah fled from **Mandu to Champaner, then to Cambay**, and finally to Diu.

- Humayun pursued Bahadur Shah up to Cambay before returning to besiege the **Champaner fort**, leaving the task of pursuing Bahadur Shah to his nobles.
- Humayun appointed his brother **Askari as governor** of Gujarat and then returned to Mandu.
- However, **Askari** failed to manage the affairs of Gujarat and decided to retire to the Champaner Fort and then to **Agra**.
- Bahadur Shah took full advantage of the situation and conquered Gujarat.
- The Mughals lost both Malwa and Gujarat within a year. The primary reasons for the Mughals' defeat were Askari's incompetence and Humayun's neglect of personal attention to the affairs of Gujarat and Malwa.
- The loss of these two territories lowered Humayun's prestige.

The Bengal Campaign

- While **Humayun** was planning for another Gujarat campaign, he heard about the **growing assertiveness of Sher Shah**, he had become the master of south Bihar, owned the strong fort of Chunar, and most of the Afghan nobles had gathered under his banner. In Bengal, Nusrat Shah had died, and his successor Mahmud Shah proved an incapable ruler, which gave the further opportunity to Sher Khan to strengthen his power at the cost of Bengal. He **attacked Bengal in 1536 A.D. and besieged its capital, Gaur.**
- In July **1537 A.D.**, **Humayun proceeded towards Bihar and first laid the siege of Chunargarh.** Humayun was able to capture the fort after six months. In the meantime, Sher Khan had captured Gaur and looted all its treasure which he kept safe at the fort of Rohtasgarh. **Humayun, thus, lost valuable time in the siege of Chunargarh.**

- **Humayun reached Banaras** and started negotiations with Sher Khan for peace. It was agreed that the **province of Bengal would be handed over to Sher Khan under the suzerainty of the Mughals and he would pay ten lakh rupees annually while Bihar would be taken over by the Mughals.** But before the treaty could be signed, a messenger of Mahmud Shah arrived and requested Humayun to attack Bengal to save his master.
- Humayun broke off the negotiations with Sher Khan and proceeded towards Bengal. Sher Khan deputed his son Jalal Khan to delay the advance of Humayun. Jalal Khan successfully achieved his mission and returned to his father who had successfully finished his campaign in Bengal and returned to Bihar. Humayun, therefore, faced no difficulty in capturing Bengal.
- During these months, **Sher Khan captured Kara, Banaras, Sambhal, etc., and laid siege to Chunargarh and Jaunpur. He virtually blocked the way of return of Humayun to Agra.** After some months, news of the activities of Sher Khan and also that of **his brother Hindal who declared himself emperor at Agra were received by Humayun.** He left Jahangir Quli Beg with five hundred soldiers in Bengal and **proceeded towards Agra** in March 1539 A.D.

Battle of Chausa (1539)

- **Humayun took the route of the Grand Trunk Road** which passed through south Bihar which was under the complete control of Sher Khan.
- **Humayun** reached Chausa, a place at the boundary between **Bihar and Uttar Pradesh**. Sher Khan also reached there. The two armies remained there facing each other for three months (April to June 1539 A.D.). **Negotiations of peace were carried on, but nothing came out of them.**
- **Sher Khan delayed the battle deliberately.** He waited for the rains which would create problems for the Mughal army which was camping in the lowland between the rivers Ganges and Karmanasa.
- The Mughals were completely surprised, and the entire army was destroyed. **Humayun just saved his life by plunging himself into the river Ganges and crossing it with the help of a water carrier, Nizam. Sher Khan declared himself the Sultan and assumed the title of Sher Shah** after this battle. He captured Bengal as well and then **returned to Kannauj.**

Battle of Kannauj/ Bilgram (1540)

- While **Sher Shah was consolidating his position in the east**, Humayun and his brothers wasted their time at Agra. Humayun had generously pardoned his brother Hindal & the rebel Sultan Mirza. Yet the brothers could not unite among themselves.
- The **Mughals defeated the Afghan army in Malwa which was sent by Sher Shah under his son Qutb Khan**, however, they failed to take any effective measures against Sher Shah. Humayun finally moved towards the east and reached Kannauj where Sher Shah had already encamped himself.
- This time too the two armies faced each other for more than a month and again the rains started. On 17 May 1540 A.D when the Mughals were shifting themselves to a higher plain, Sher Shah attacked them. **The Mughals fought valiantly but were defeated. Humayun again fled away.**
- The **battle of Bilgram was the decisive battle between Humayun and Sher Shah**. Humayun could reach Agra but had to fly from there as Sher Shah was pursuing him. Sher Shah captured Delhi and Agra and, thus, the Afghans snatched the throne of Delhi from the hands of the Mughals. Humayun first went to **Lahore, then to Sindh, and, finally, left India to seek refuge at the court of Shah of Persia.**

Humayun in Exile (1540-1555 A.D.)

- Humayun remained in exile for nearly **fifteen years** after his defeat at the battle of Kannauj.
- **Shah Tahmasp**, the ruler of Persia, welcomed Humayun and agreed to help him with money and soldiers in 1544 A.D.

Effects:

- The **culture & political influence of Persia** in the Mughal Empire increased.
- Revenue collection: Both the Persian and Delhi Sultanate models were adopted.
- Persian method of governance in Kashmir under Humayun's reign.
- **Persian art dominated & Persian-style miniatures** were produced at Mughal.

Restoration of the Mughal Empire

- **Sher Shah Suri died in 1545; his son and successor Islam Shah died too, in 1554.** These two deaths left the dynasty reeling and disintegrating. Three rivals for the throne all marched on Delhi, while in many cities leaders tried to stake a claim for independence. This was a perfect opportunity for the Mughals to march back to India.
- **The Mughal Emperor Humayun, gathered a vast army under the able leadership of Bairam Khan and attempted the challenging task of retaking the throne in Delhi.** This was a wise move given Humayun's record of military ineptitude, and Bairam was to prove himself a great tactician.
- **But he didn't live long after it, falling from the top floor of his library. Humayun, with his arms full of books, was descending the staircase from his library when the muezzin announced the Adhan (the call to prayer He died three days later.** They say, 'he tumbled in life and finally tumbled out of it too'. His death marked the end of one phase, and the beginning of another one in Mughal history.

The Afghan Interlude

OMSHISTORY

- The rise of Sher Shah from the position of a petty leader of troops to being the ruler of one of the biggest empires which had risen in north India since the death of Muhammad bin Tughlaq in the middle of the 14th century is a saga of courage and determination which has, rightfully, aroused a lot of admiration.



Early Life

- We have hardly any reliable details of Sher Shah's family and his early life or rise to power. Sher Shah's grand-father, *Ibrahim Sur*, who was probably a petty horse-trader, came from Afghanistan to India towards the end of Ibrahim Lodi's reign. One of his early patrons, **Jamal Khan Lodi Sarangkhani**, assigned a few villages in Hissar-Firuzabad in modern Haryana to him for the upkeep of 40 troopers.
- Both *Ibrahim* and his son, *Hasan*, emerged as leaders of Afghan free-booters whose services were utilized by Raimal, the chief of Shekhawati, so that following the death of his father, Hasan was placed in charge of the entire pargana of **Narnaul**.
- After the final conquest of Jaunpur, **Sikandar Lodi** appointed as governor of **Jaunpur, Jamal Khan Sarangkhani** who had supported him in his struggle of succession to the throne. At the death of *Jamal Khan*, his son *Khan-i-Azam Ahmad Khan Sarangkhani* succeeded with a rank of 20,000 sawars.
- Ahmad Khan appointed **Hasan Sur** to the iqta of Sahsaram and Khawaspur-Tanda with a rank of 500 sawars (c.1510)

-
- We do not know precisely when and where **Farid**, later Sher Shah, was born. The consensus of opinion among modern scholars is that he was born in Narnaul in 1486 or so, during the reign of Bahlol Lodi (d. 1489).
 - We know little about the early education of Farid except that, angry at his father's neglect of his mother in preference to a younger wife-an Indian slave-girl, Farid came to Jaunpur, and spent a couple of years studying religious works, Arabic, history etc. at one of the well-known madrasahs there.
 - After some time, he was reconciled to his father who gave him administrative charges of the two parganas held by him (1515-16). This gave young Farid first hand experience of the functioning of administration at the pargana and village levels.

-
- After 3-4 years (1519), due to the intrigues of his step-mother, Farid was displaced from his charge. Angry and without a job, Farid took to brigandage, robbing the Hindu rajas and zamindars of north and east Bihar. After some time, however, he joined the service of Taj Khan Sarangkhani, the commander of Chunar, and then of Nasir Khan Nuhani, the muqta of sarkar Ghazipur.
 - A little later, we find him at Agra where he entered the service of Darya Khan naib. He submitted a petition to the then ruler, Ibrahim Lodi, through his patron, to dismiss his father from his jagir of Sahsaram as he was too old and under the influence of his Indian slave-girl.

-
- Armed with Ibrahim Lodi's farman, Farid came to Sahsaram and ousted his step-brothers who had taken possession of his father's property and jagir in his absence. There now began the usual tale of family intrigue. Farid's brothers repaired to Muhammad Khan Sur, the powerful jagirdar of Chaund, who offered to mediate between Farid and his step brothers.
 - To counter this, Farid, sought the help of **Behar Khan**, son of ***Daulat Khan Nuhani*** who was the governor of Bihar.
 - Following the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat, **Behar Khan** declared himself king, under the name **Sultan Muhammad Shah**. Many Afghans who were close to him were honoured. Among these was Farid, who according to a modern historian **K.R. Qanungo**, was awarded the title of Sher Khan either on this occasion or earlier for services rendered rather than for killing a tiger (sher), as the Afghan historians would have us believe.
 - Thus, by 1526, by the time Babur established himself in India, Sher Khan had risen to the position of being an important figure in the politics of Bihar. He was about forty years at the time, and his rise was by no means a sudden one.

-
- After the death of Sultan Muhammad, his widow *Dudu* had joined the Bengal king, Sultan Nusrat Shah who had already acquired a dominating position in Bihar, having extended his control from Tirhut to Ballia. To counter this, Babur restored the Nuhani kingdom, only asking Jalal to pay him one crore of tankas annually.
 - Since Dudu, the Queen mother, was unable to manage the affairs herself, she appointed Sher Khan as *naib* (deputy) and tutor to her minor son, **Jalal**, and left all affairs of state in his hands, making him the virtual ruler of Bihar. Sher Khan devoted himself in improving the administration of Bihar, and centralising power in his hands till the Nuhani chiefs became jealous, and began to intrigue against him.

- It was the conflict between Bihar and Bengal, and Babur's reluctance to be drawn into it, keeping out of Bihar, that gave Sher Khan the first opening in his scheme of dominating Bihar. Renewal of the conflict between Bihar and Bengal gave him the next chance. Afraid of the growing power of Sher Khan, the ruler of Bihar, Jalal Khan after the death of his mother fled for protection of **Sultan Nusrat Shah** of Bengal who found this a good excuse to invade Bihar and crush Sher Khan.
- However, the invasion failed, and only added to the wealth and power of Sher Khan. Also, from now on, the Nuhanis dynasty was no longer in the picture in Bihar, but had become the agent of an enemy power.

-
- Sultan Nusrat died in 1535, but the attempt to conquer Bihar was continued by his brother, Sultan Mahmud.
 - Sultan Mahmud now made a bid to conquer Bihar. He sent a large force which was joined by the Nuhanis. But Sher Khan won a decisive victory against this combined force at Surajgarh (1534).
 - Although this ended the Bengali threat to Bihar, Sher Khan was not prepared to take any chances. In the following year, he invaded Bengal, and forced Sultan Mahmud to cede territory upto Sikrighali and to pay a huge indemnity.

- Sultan Mahmud now tried to seek the support of the Portuguese, almost like Sultan Bahadur in Gujarat. To counter this, in 1537, Sher Khan's son, Jalal Khan, invaded and captured Gaur after a siege. This meant the virtual end of Sultan Mahmud's dynasty. It also ended the danger of Portuguese encroachments on east Bengal.
- Thus, the fluid position in eastern U.P. and Bihar which lasted for a considerable period due to Mughal pre-occupations elsewhere, the socio-political position inside Bihar and east U.P., and the continuing Bihar-Bengal conflict played a definite role in the rise of Sher Khan.

The Sur Empire (1540-56)

- After his victory over Humayun at Kannauj, Sher Shah formally crowned himself(1540). His first task was to hound the Mughals out of India, and to ensure that they were not able to return. He was able to do this without much difficulty on account of the deep division in the Mughal camp.
- Sher Shah did not extend his dominion beyond Sindh, however, as a protective measure, Sher Shah thoroughly subdued the Gakhars who lived in the Salt Ranges, and put up a new powerful fort at Rohtas to control them, and to interpose a check on any possible Mughal incursion into India. The task of completing this work was entrusted to **Todar Mal Khatri**.
- As a part of Humayun's pursuit, Sher Shah had sent an army to Multan, and himself spent some time there. This was to put pressure on the rulers of Sindh not to support Humayun, but to capture him. Multan, which was considered to be a part of Punjab, was brought under Sher Shah's control, but no effort was made at this stage to enter upper Sindh, and to pursue Humayun any further. As it was, with the dispersal of the Mughal forces, Humayun was no longer a threat to Sher Shah.

-
- Having secured his position in Punjab and the North West, Sher Shah had time to building up a sound system of administration, rather than to engage himself in a career of constant conquest, as was the current ideal. Thus,,apart from pinpricks, no serious effort was made to dislodge Mirza Haider Dughlat from Kashmir, even though he had proclaimed Humayun as the sovereign by having the khutba and sikka in his name.
 - In the east Sher Khan crushed a revolt in Bengal (1541) and brought it under direct control. Sher Khan annexed the fort of Gwalior in 1542, and invaded Malwa which was then ruled by Mallu Khan, who had become an independent Sultan after the death of Bahadur Shah and styled himself as sultan Qadir Shah.

- After restoring civil administration in Malwa, Sher Shah returned to Agra. On the way he received submission from the native ruler of Ranthambhor as well.
- In 1543, Sher Shah laid seige in **Raisen** in central India; its ruler **Rai Puran Mall Chauhan** was falsely accused of ill-treatment of the muslim subjects of his principality. The Rajputs fought gallantly, but, when defeat stared them in the face, they agreed to vacate the fort on the express promise made by Sher Shah that their life and property would be safeguarded. But the promise was not kept and all were slaughtered.
- Shershah also captured Jodhpur, the capital of Marwar, from its ruler Maldeo Rathor by creating dissension in his ranks. Maldeo continued the struggle, however, and recovered his lost dominions from the clutches of the Afghans in July 1545 soon after the death of Sher Shah.

-
- After Jodhpur, many other states of Rajasthan like Mewar also accepted the suzerainty of Sher Shah.
 - In Nov. 1544, Sher Shah laid siege to the fort of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand, which was then ruled by Raja Kirat Singh; the seige lingere on for about a year.
 - On May 22, 1545, while directing the operations of his artillery, Sher Shah was seriously wounded by the sudden outbreak of fire in the munition; he could not survive the accident, but before breathing his last, he had received the happy news of the conquest of the fortress by his men.

- Sher Shah was succeeded by his second son, Jalal Khan, who took the title of Islam Shah. Islam Shah's reign of almost nine years was spent mostly in the civil war with his elder brother, Adil Khan, and in struggle with the nobility.
- Although Islam Shah had been a noted warrior in Sher Shah's time, he was both harsh and deeply suspicious, specially in his dealings with those nobles who had been close to his father, and who had helped to build the empire.
- At the same time, Islam Shah tried to assert the superior position of the monarchy, treating the nobles as servitors instead of being considered partners in the kingdom, as was the Afghan tradition.
- He also tried to exercise greater financial control over the iqtas or jagirs of the nobles which led to the charge that he wanted to bring all the jagirs under imperial control (khalisa). He also tried to pay cash salaries to the soldiers, instead of jagirs.
- All these steps led to resentment on the part of the Afghan nobles which burst forth after the death of Islam Shah in 1553, and led to the speedy disintegration of the Sur empire. This gave an opportunity to the Mughals to reassert themselves.

Administrative and Land Reforms

OMSHIJS
STORY

- Although Sher Shah ruled only for about five years, he has many contributions to his credit. Sher Shah's foremost contribution was the establishment of law and order over the length and breadth of the empire.
- Sher Shah laid great emphasis on making the roads safe, and took stern action against robbers and dacoits. He was convinced that the safety of the roads could only be ensured if the zamindars, some of whom were in league with the robbers, were kept under control.
- Sher Shah laid great emphasis on improving roads and the system of communications, both to help military movements and to foster trade and commerce. The roads also ensured greater control over the countryside. Thus, he restored the old imperial road from the river Indus in the west to Sonargaon in Bengal. He also built a road from Agra to Jodhpur and Chittor, which must have linked up with the roads leading to the sea-ports of Gujarat.

- For ensuring safety on the roads and for extending comforts to the travellers, he built sarais on the highway at a distance of two karohs (4 miles). Separate apartments were built for the Hindus and the Muslims where they could get beds and cooked food, and Muslim and Brahman cooks were appointed for the purpose. There also was provision for uncooked food-supplies being given to Hindus who had their own caste rules.
- According to Abbas Khan, Sher Shah made a rule to the effect that " whoever came to the sarai was to be served with food out of government money according to one's rank and his pony was given grain and drink."
- A custodian (shahna) was appointed in each sarai to safeguard the goods of the merchants, and rent-free lands were allotted in the neighbourhood for their expenses, and for the expenses of the imam and the muezzin for the mosque which was built in each sarai.

- The sarais were also used for dak chowkis (postal service) for which two horses were kept at every sarai. By this means, by relays of horses news from a distance of 300 kos could reach in a day.
- Sher Shah adopted other measures, too, to promote trade and commerce. He struck fine coins of silver and copper of uniform standard in place of the debased coins of mixed metals of earlier times. His silver rupee remained a standard coin for a long time. He also made some effort to standardize weights and measures.
- In Sher Shah's empire, goods paid customs duty only two times—at the place of entry and at the time of sale. Abbas Sarwani goes on to say, " No one dared to levy other customs, either on the road or at the ferries, in town or village."
- For the safety and tranquility of the roads Sher Shah made it a rule to make the muqaddams (headmen of villages) and zamindars responsible for apprehending the culprits if the theft took place within their charge, or to make good the loss if they were unable to do so. If murder had been carried out, and the murderer not traced, the muqaddams themselves were to be put to death.
- Sher Shah's approach appear to have yielded good results so that Abbas Sarwani uses the traditional metaphor for the situation that " In the days of the rule of Sher Khan if an old white-haired woman proceeded on the road with a basket full of good and ornaments on her head, none of the thieves and night patrols, out of dread of Sher Khan, could even go near her."

- Sher Shah also urged the local and other officials not to injure the travellers and the merchants, and not to lay their hands on the property of the merchants if any one of them should die by accident and without heirs. Also, officials were to purchase goods from the merchants only at their market price.
- It has been said that the most striking contribution of Sher Shah was his reform of the revenue system. He was well qualified to do so because he was fully acquainted with the prevailing revenue system as incharge of his father's jagir, and as the virtual ruler of Bihar for ten years after 1530.
- Sher Shah wanted that the assessment of land-revenue should not be based on cropsharing or estimation. Nor should the village head-men and zamindars be allowed to pass their burden on to the shoulders of the weaker sections. Hence, as a ruler, he insisted upon the system of measurement (zabt).

- Under Sher Shah, lands were divided into three categories — good, bad and middling, and the average yield computed. One-third of the average yield was the share of the state.
- On this basis, a crop-rate (ray) was drawn up, so that as soon as the sown field was measured, the share of the state could be determined. This could then be converted into rupees on the basis of local rates. The peasants were given the option of paying in cash or kind, though Sher Khan preferred cash.
- Multan was excluded from measurement on account of special circumstances, the old system continuing there, with the state share being only one-fourth. He also laid down the charges to be paid to the measuring parties.

- The measurement of fields was to be carried out every year. As a safeguard against famine which was a recurrent feature, a cess at the rate of two and a half seers per bigha was also levied.
- The amount each peasant had to pay was written down on a paper called patta, and each one was informed of it. No one was allowed to charge anything extra.

"I know that the humble raiyat are the pivot of agriculture. If they are happy the cultivation will thrive. If the raiyat are in a bad condition, the agricultural output will diminish."

Administration

- It does not seem that Sher Shah made any changes in the system of government in the country.
- The lowest unit was the pargana which comprised a number of villages. Each village had a headman (muqaddam) who looked after law and order, and a patwari who kept accounts. Neither of them were government servants, but were entitled to a share in the produce. The pargana was under the charge of a shiqdar who looked after law and order and general administration, and a munsif or amil whose responsibility was to measure the land for land-revenue. Both these officials were responsible for the collection of land-revenue. They were assisted by two clerks who maintained accounts both in Persian and the local language (Hindavi).

- There was also a khazanadar or poddar who kept the cash and the money collected. Sher Shah considered the posts of amils to be profitable ones, and changed the amils every two years so that others close to him could also benefit.
- Above the pargana was the shiq to which the word sarkar had begun to be used increasingly from the time of the Lodis. Although we are told that the sarkar was headed by a shiqdar-i-shiqdaran, no persons with such a title is found anywhere.
- The word used for the head of the sarkar was the faujdar or the muqta, and he was assisted by a munsif or munsif-i-munsifan who was responsible for the assessment of land revenue.

- There has been a lot of controversy whether Sher Shah had a system of provincial organization or not. Recent research shows that in the Sultanate there was no provincial organization as such but sometimes a number of shiqs were grouped together, and called khitta or vilayat.
- This generally happened in frontier areas such as Bengal or Punjab, or some of the more turbulent areas. It appears that Sher Shah more or less maintained the same system.
- Thus, provincial governments evolved only under the Mughals. Sher Shah's contribution was to stabilize and further consolidate the boundaries and structure of the shiqs or sarkars which remained the real unit of administration even under the Mughals.
- We know very little about the structure of the central government under Sher Shah. We are told that Sher Shah did not like the Mughal system of government in which large powers were left in the hands of the ministers who were corrupt. Hence, he looked into everything himself, and devoted himself to work unremittingly, and constantly toured the country.
- This type of personal administration is supposed to be typified by his army organization. He introduced the branding system (dagh) of the horses and descriptive-rolls (chehra) which had fallen into disuse. He imposed it very harshly. Descriptive rolls of even sweepers and female slaves in the palace were recorded. We are told that he used to personally interview every soldier and fixed his pay before he was inducted into the army, and had the horses branded in his own presence.

- However, howsoever hard an individual might work, it was impossible for him to personally supervise the administration of a vast country such as Hindustan. I
- It seems that there was a revenue department and a department of the ariz which looked after the army.
- There also was a sadr who looked after the revenue-free grants made to religious people, scholars, etc., the sadr being asked to review all the grants made earlier.
- Thus, the traditional departments must have continued, but those at their head were perhaps allowed little power or authority.
- Sher Shah gave great emphasis on justice. He used to say, " Justice is the most excellent of religious rites, and is approved alike by the king of infidels and of the faithful." Also that " None of the devotions and prayers can be equated with justice and here all the sections of infidels and Islam are one on the point." " Justice implied making no distinction between men of his own tribe and near relations and others in awarding punishment, and to prevent oppression by those in power, i.e. the high grandees and others to " avert the sighs of the injured and the oppressed."
- It is difficult to say how effective he was in practice in this sphere, despite the presence of a large number of spies who reported on everything. Qazis were appointed throughout the kingdom to dispense justice though we know little about their working. Panchayats and caste bodies must have continued to provide civil law to the Hindus, while zamindars and shiqdars were also involved in providing criminal justice.

- Sher Shah's reputation as a builder rests largely on the magnificent mosoleum he had built for himself at Sahsaram which was in a class by itself for strength, stability and harmony.
- He built a city at Delhi on the bank of the Jamuna the only surviving parts of which are the Old Fort with its massive battlements, and the magnificent mosque inside it. These examples suffice to show that Sher Shah had great understanding and sensibility for architecture.
- Although Sher Shah was generous in providing support and patronage to religious divines and scholars, the Sur period was too brief to produce any remarkable work of note, the only exception being the Hindi work Padmavat by Malik Muhammad of Jais in east U.P.













Nature of State

- Sher Shah's state is said to be " a compromise between the Afghan and Turkish theories of sovereignty."
- The Afghan sardars were not supposed to be partners in the kingdom, but like Sher Shah himself, any of them could aspire to suzerainty.
- Although Sher Shah was a despot, and kept the nobles under strict control with the help of spies, he paid attention to the susceptibilities and needs of his nobles and the soldiers.
- He paid special attention to the recruitment of Afghans who rallied around him. Large jagirs or iqta were given to the nobles. Khawas Khan, a favourite and leading noble of Sher Khan, had the whole sarkar of Sirhind as his maintenance iqta which he placed under the charge of his slave, Bhagwant.
- The nobility under Sher Shah and Islam Khan was predominantly Afghan. Recent research has shown that Barmazid Kur who was a close confidant of Sher Shah, and who had been appointed in charge of the sarkar of Ajmer after its conquest whom K.R. Qanungo had wrongly identified as Brahmajit Gaur as a brahman from east U.P., was in fact a Sur and was called as such by some of the Afghan historians of the time.

- Sher Shah tempered his despotism by generosity and benevolence. He is reported to have ordered his high officials to maintain records of all the disabled and handicapped persons in different towns, cities and territories.
- All of them received maintenance allowances as well as cash grants. He maintained a large langar khana (free kitchen) for the poor and the needy and this example was followed by some of his nobles.
- Sher Shah was an orthodox Muslim and observed his prayers regularly.
- He was well acquainted with religious sciences, and constantly associated with learned men and religious divines. However, he was not bigoted.

- Although jizyah continued to be collected, it is called a city tax which implies that it was collected in the countryside as a part of land-revenue.
- There are no reference to destruction of temples. There are a few references to grant of rent-free lands not only to Muslims and foreign scholars, but also to brahmans, temples and maths. Thus, when Sher Shah was leading the expedition to Kalinjar, he met a brahman and was impressed by his frankness in speaking and gave him in grant one entire village in sarkar Kalpi and five hundred rupees in cash.

- Islam Shah took an important step in limiting the influence of the ulama. He issued detailed orders not only on administration and revenue matters which had to be followed in every sarkar, but also in religious matters, without bothering whether they were in conformity of the sharia or not, and " none could dare refer any of these orders to the qazi or the mufti."
- As the administration tightened, more and more Hindus were appointed to the revenue department, to the discomfiture of the Afghans.
- Opportunities for the Hindus broadened till under Adali, a successors of Islam Shah, Hemu, who had started official life as a shuhna of the market at Delhi, rose to the highest position of wazir.
- Although this happened in a period of disintegration, it showed a trend whereby the Afghans state set up by Sher Shah was slowly opening out and the social base of the ruling class becoming broader. But a basic change had to await the arrival of Akbar.

Thank You.

**Telegram:
OMSHISTORY**