

THE LODI DYNASTY

The Lodi/ Lodhi dynasty was an Afghan dynasty that ruled the Delhi Sultanate from 1451 to 1526. It was the fifth and final dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate, and was founded by Bahlul Khan Lodi when he replaced the Sayyid dynasty.

Bahlul Lodi (1451 -1489 A.D.)

- Bahlul Lodi was the founder of Lodi Dynasty.
- Sultanate Period ended with Lodi Dynasty.
- He was a wise statesman who knew his limits.
- He took various measures to gratify his nobles.
- Gwalior, Samthal, Sakit, Mewat was conquered by Bahlul Lodi.
- He died in 1489 A.D.
- To gain support and recognition, Bahlul Lodi never sat on the throne instead, he opted to sit on the carpet with his nobles.

Sikandar Shahi (1489-1517 A.D.)

- Sikandar Shahi was the son of Bahlul Lodi.
- He swore the title Sikandar Shah and ascended the throne.
- He set up a well-organized spy system.
- He developed agriculture and industry.
- He put severe restrictions on the Hindus.
- Sikandar Shah enjoyed “Shehnai” Music.
- A work on music names “Lahjati-Sikandar Shahi” was created during his reign.

Ibrahim Lodi (r. 1517–1526)

Ibrahim Lodi, the youngest son of Sikandar, was the last Lodi Sultan of Delhi. He had the qualities of an excellent warrior, but he was rash and impolitic in his decisions and actions. His attempt at royal absolutism was premature and his policy of sheer repression unaccompanied by measures to strengthen the administration and increase the military resources was sure to prove a failure. Ibrahim faced numerous rebellions and kept out the opposition for almost a decade. He was engaged in warfare with the Afghans and the Mughal Empire for most of his reign and died trying to keep the Lodi Dynasty from annihilation. Ibrahim was defeated in 1526 at the Battle of Panipat. This marked the end of the Lodi Dynasty and the rise of the Mughal Empire in India led by Babur (1526–1530).

First Battle of Panipat (1526)

The First Battle of Panipat (21 April 1526) fought near a small village of Panipat(Haryana), this marked the beginning of Mughal Empire in India.

The battle was fought between the invading forces of **Zahir-ud-din Babur** and the last empire of the Delhi Sultanate, **Lodi Empire during the rule of Ibrahim Lodi**.

The Military Force

- Babur's forces numbered around 15,000 men with 20 to 24 pieces of field artillery.
- The fighting force of Ibrahim Lodi was around 30,000 to 40,000 men in total, along with at least 1000 war elephants.
- Babur's army used guns which proved to be decisive in the battlefield but the Sultan lacked any field artillery.

Moreover, the sound of the cannons used by Babur's army frightened Lodi's elephants, causing them to trample Lodi's own men.

Babur's Tactics

It was not the weapons but Babur's tactics of **Tulughma and Araba** that led him to victory.

Tulughma: It meant dividing the whole army into various units, viz. the Left, the Right and the Centre. The Left and Right divisions were further subdivided into Forward and Rear divisions. Through this a small army could be used to surround the enemy from all the sides.

Araba: The centre forward division was then provided with carts (araba) which were placed in rows facing the enemy and tied to each other with animal hide ropes. Behind the Araba, cannons were placed which could be fired without any fear of being hit as they were shielded by the bullock carts which were held in place due to the hide ropes holding them together.

Result

- The Mughal forces of Babur, the Timurid ruler of Kabulistan, defeated the much larger ruling army of Ibrahim Lodi, Sultan of Delhi. The victory enabled Babur to lay the foundations for the Indian Mughal Empire.
- Ibrahim Lodi died on the field of battle, abandoned by his feudatories and generals (many of whom were mercenaries). Most of them changed their allegiance to the new master of Delhi.
- However, the fate could have been turned in the favour of Sultan Ibrahim if he had survived another hour of fighting as Babur had no reserves left and his troops were rapidly tiring.

Note: This was one of the earliest battles involving gunpowder firearms and field artillery.