

DELHI SULTANATE : SLAVE DYNASTY

The establishment of Delhi Sultanate began with the invasion of Muhammad Ghori. He had brought a large number of slaves and appointed them as officers. When he died in AD 1206 resulted in a scramble for supremacy among his three generals- Qutub-ud-din Aibek (Commander of his army), Tajuddin Yalduz (ruled Karman and Sankuran between Afghanistan and Sind) and Nasiruddin Qubacha (held).

Five dynasties ruled over the Delhi Sultanate sequentially: the Mamluk/Slave dynasty (1206–1290), the Khalji dynasty (1290–1320), the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414), the Sayyid dynasty (1414–1451), and the Lodi dynasty (1451–1526). It covered large swathes of territory in modern-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh as well as some parts of southern Nepal.

Mamluk Origins

- Mamluk Dynasty is also called the Slave Dynasty. Mamluk literally means 'owned' and it refers to a powerful military caste called Mamluks which originated in the 9th century CE in the Islamic Empire of the Abbasid caliphs.
- The Mamluks wielded military and political power in Egypt, Iraq and India. Although they were slaves, they were held in high regard by their masters, and they were mostly generals and soldiers who fought for their masters.
- Mamluk Dynasty was established in Delhi by Qutb ud-Din Aibak.

Qutb ud-Din Aibak (Reign: 1206 – 1210)

- The first ruler of the Mamluk Dynasty.
- Born to a Turkish family in Central Asia.
- Sold as a slave to Muhammad Ghori, the ruler of Ghor in Afghanistan.
- Aibak rose up the ranks and became Ghori's trusted general and commander.
- He was given the charge of Ghori's Indian possessions after 1192.
- When Ghori was assassinated, Aibak declared himself Sultan of Delhi in 1206.
- Started construction of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in Delhi. This is one of the first Islamic monuments in northern India.
- He began the construction of Qutb Minar in Delhi.
- He was also known as Lakh Baksh (Giver of Lakhs) for his generosity. However, he was also responsible for the destruction and desecration of many Hindu temples.
- He reigned till his death in 1210. He was said to have been trampled to death by a horse.

- He was succeeded by Aram Shah.

Iltutmish (Reign: 1211 – 1236)

- Aram Shah was a weak ruler. It is not clear whether he was a son of Aibak or not. He was conspired against by a group of nobles who invited Shamsuddin Iltutmish to be the ruler.
- Iltutmish was the son-in-law of Aibak. He ruled Ghurid regions of northern India.
- He was a Turkic slave born in Central Asia.
- Iltutmish was the greatest of the slave rulers of Delhi. He shifted his capital from Lahore to Delhi.

Invasions & Policies

- Iltutmish's forces captured Bihar in the 1210s and invaded Bengal in 1225.
- During the first half of the 1220s, Iltutmish neglected Indus River Valley, which was contested between the Mongols, the Khwarazm kings, and Qabacha. Post the decline of the Mongol and the Khwarazmian threat, Qabacha took over the region, but Iltutmish invaded his territory during 1228-1229.
- He defended his empire against Mongol invaders and also resisted the Rajputs.
- In 1221, he stopped an invasion led by Genghis Khan.
- He completed the construction of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and the Qutb Minar.
- He set up administrative machinery for the kingdom.
- He built mosques, waterworks and other amenities at Delhi, making it fit to be the seat of power.
- He introduced the two coins of the Sultanate, the silver *tanka* and the copper *jital*.
- Also introduced the Iqtadari system in which the kingdom was divided into Iqtas which were assigned to nobles in exchange of salary.
- He died in 1236 and was succeeded by his daughter Razia Sultana as he did not consider his sons equal to the task.

Razia Sultana (Reign: 1236 – 1240)

- Born in 1205 as Iltutmish's daughter.
- Was given a sound education by her father.
- She was the first and last Muslim woman to rule over Delhi.
- Also known as Razia al-Din.

- Before ascending to the throne of Delhi after her father's death, the reign was briefly handed over to her half-brother Rukn-ud-din Firuz. But after Firuz's assassination within 6 months of his ascendancy, the nobles agreed to place Razia on the throne.
- She was known as an efficient and just ruler.
- She was married to Malik Ikhtiar-ud-din Altunia, the governor of Bathinda.
- She was reportedly killed by her brother's forces.
- Her brother Muizuddin Bahram Shah succeeded her.

Nasir-ud-din Mahmud (AD 1246-1266)

Nasir-ud-din was the son of Iltutmish. He was very gentle, studious and pious, and on account of his simple habits is known in history as the **Darvesh King**. He did not take a single pie from the state treasury for his own use and earned his living by writing copies of holy Koran and selling them.

- In the struggle between monarchy and Chahalgani, the Turkish chief Balban became the real ruler of the state.
- He got one of his daughter married to the young Sultan which further strengthened his position.
- He was assigned the post of **Naib-i-Mamlakat** (vice-regent) and got the title of Ulugh Khan.
- Balban replaced Imaduddin Raihan to the post of "wazir" during Mongolian invasion. He served the sultan for twenty years and kept the empire intact. In 1266, when Nasir-ud-din died, Balban succeeded to the throne of Delhi.
- Historians like Isami in Fatuhat-us-Salatin and Ibn Batuta states that the sultan was murdered by Balban.

Ghias-ud-Din Balban (AD 1266-1287)

Balban was an Ilbari-turk. His original name was Bahauddin. He was the slave of Iltutmish and gradually he occupied the throne of sultan.

- In order to destroy the power of the **Turk-e- Chihalgani** and to increase the prestige and power of the monarchy, he propounded a new theory of kingship.
- He refused to appoint **low-born Muslim Kamal Amaya** on the post of the **Khwaja**. He administered justice with extreme impartiality and even poisoned his cousin Sher Khan to break his power. An official Amir-e-Hajib was appointed to regularise the proceedings of the court.

- His theory of kingship was based on power, prestige and justice. According to him the three essentials of kingship were **army, treasury and nobles** and the means of success was **justice, beneficence, pomp and show**.
- He adopted two pronged strategies against the Mongols. Firstly, he exchanged embassies by the Mongol courts. Secondly, he created two defense lines. The first across the region of Lahore, Multan and Dipalpur under Prince Muhammad. The second line was laid in Sunam, Samana and Bhatinda under his youngest son, Prince Bughra Khan.
- The law and order situation in and around Delhi had deteriorated. The Mewati Rajputs plundered the country and had made life, property and trade unsafe in the Doab.
- To deal with these elements Balban adopted a policy of blood and iron. The jungles were cut down and several forts got constructed in the area. Afghan mercenaries were appointed there. The fortress at Gopalgir guarded the city's South-Western entrance.
- The most important event of the reign of Balban was the suppression of the Bengal revolt. Tughril Khan the Governor of Bengal, declared his independence under the impression that the king was very old and his province is far away from Delhi. He even defeated two royal armies sent against him.
- At last Balban himself marched with Bughra Khan towards Bengal. Tughril Khan left his capital, Lakhnauti, and fled to the forest of Jajnar (Orissa), but was defeated and killed along with his family. Balban now appointed his son, Bughra Khan, as the Governor of Bengal.
- In order to strengthen the monarchy, Balban reorganised the central military department, Diwan-i-Arz. For better supervision of the income of the Iqta, he appointed an officer Khwaja in Iqta.
- Likewise, he organised the espionage department under an officer Barid-I-Mumalik. Thus, began an era of strong, centralised government.
- In AD 1285, Prince Muhammad was killed in a battle against the Mongol leader, Tamar. The terrible shock of the death of his favourite son proved too much for the Sultan and he died in AD 1287, in Delhi. He is considered to be the real consolidator of Delhi Sultanate.

Kaiqubad (AD 1287-1290)

- He was the grandson of Balban and the son of Bughra Khan (Governor of Bengal).
- He was very indolent and luxury-loving.

- In 1290, Firoz Shah, the Governor of Punjab, got him killed and became king under the title of Jalal-ud-din Khilji. Thus, the Khilji dynasty began in Delhi.