
UNIT 14 ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSOLIDATION

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14.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will know:

- the political and socio-economic condition of India during the centuries preceding the Turkish conquest,
- the stages in which Northern India was conquered,
- the 'causes' of Turkish success; and
- the conflicts, nature, and basis of power of the class that ran the Sultanate.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last Unit, we took an overview of the region called 'Central Asia', its peculiar environment, and its volatile population of nomad warriors. These nomads set out of their steppe habitat in great numbers and came into contact and collision with the surrounding civilizations of China, Europe, West Asia and India.

The empires of the Ghaznavids and the Seljuqs were built on the ruins of the Abbasid Caliphate. In the final analysis, both these states were products of the acculturation of the Turks in the institutions of settled societies. The latter, too, saw considerable changes in their own mode of organisation and direction after coming into contact with the Mongols.

Under the Seljuq umbrella, the Turks had expanded into the Mediterranean and Byzantine territories. Anatolia (modern Turkey) was conquered and settled by the 'Ottoman Turks'. The Seljuq empire which warded off pressure from incoming tribes was itself engulfed by political developments drawing upon nomadic movements. The Khwarizmian empire which undermined the Seljuqs, was swept away by the Mongols. These cataclysmic and cyclical developments converted the 'Old World' into a vast melting pot.

In this Unit we will be looking at the conquest of India by the Turks, leading to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate at the beginning of the 13th century.

14.2 INDIA FROM 7TH TO 12TH CENTURY: AN OVERVIEW

We have already discussed the political, social and economic conditions of India during this period in Blocks 1 to 3 of this course. In this section, we will recapitulate in brief the conditions prevalent in India during this period. It will help you in understanding this Unit.

Politico-economic Order, A.D. 700-1200

The five centuries or so preceding the Turkish invasions have been described by Indian historians as 'feudal'. Though the use of this concept in characterising the era has been subjected to some criticism, the political and socio-economic realities of India during this time answer to many of the general, and some of the specific, features of feudalism.

The central essential feature of feudalism in India (as in other parts of the world where it came into vogue) was the grant of land by the king among his officers and certain sections of society. In return, the grantees (or feudatories, vassals) were under obligation to serve the king and supply him with men and materials whenever he called for them. A portion of the revenue collected by the feudatory went to the king by way of annual tribute. The remainder was used by them to maintain armed levies which were put at the disposal of the king in times of war.

The more powerful feudatories were permitted to grant land, in turn, thus creating their own sub-feudatories and in the process giving birth to a hierarchy of commands and obligations. In India, the feudatories came to adopt various titles. The more important ones called themselves **mahasamantas**, **mahamandaleshvara**, etc. The lesser ones took the titles of **raja**, **ranaka**, **samanta**, **thakura**, **bhoghika**, etc.

The origins of this system—the alienation of rights over land by the king—have been traced back to the land grants made to **Brahmans** from the 2nd century onwards. These **Brahmans**, who were the beneficiaries of these grants not only collected the land tax, but also looked to the maintenance of law and order. From the 7th century onwards, the practice was extended to other sections of society also. In particular, the officers of the king were granted land in lieu of cash salaries. With time there was a tendency for these grants to become hereditary, leading to the disappearance of the distinction between royal officials and 'feudatories', hereditary feudatories being appointed to royal offices, and officials being granted the titles and, presumably, the privileges of feudatories.

From 7th century the ruling class was inevitably ruralised. The tendency reinforced an environment in which urban life had steadily declined (since the Mauryas) along with commerce as witnessed by the extreme paucity of coins for the period under consideration. In such conditions, the officials and aristocracies 'lived off the land'. Dislocation of centralised political power, the appearance of landed magnates and crystallisation of warrior castes, notably the Rajputs, were the natural fallout of this environment.

14.3 INITIAL CONQUESTS UP TO CIRCA 1190 A.D.

The period between the 9th and 11th century saw the emergence of 'warrior castes'—military ruling clans which ultimately coalesced into a single caste, that of the Rajputs, the term being derived from the Sanskrit word **rajaputra**. The four Rajput clans that claimed a special status during his time, were the Pratiharas, the Chalukyas, the Chauhans (also called Chahamanas), and the Solankis.

1) Mahmud of Ghazni

In political and military terms, the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni were the actual precursors of the Delhi Sultanate. Beginning in A.D. 1000, when the Shahiya king,

Establishment of Delhi Sultanate

Jaypala was routed, the incursions became almost an annual feature of Mahmud and came to an end only with his death in A.D. 1030. After taking Multan, he occupied Punjab. Later, Mahmud made incursions into the Ganga-Yamuna doab. The major interest of Mahmud in India was its fabulous wealth, vast quantities of which (in the form of cash, jewellery, and golden images) had been deposited in temples. From 1010 to 1026, the invasions were thus directed to the temple-towns of Thaneshwar, Mathura, Kannauj and finally Somnath. The ultimate result was the breakdown of Indian resistance, paving the way for Turkish conquests in the future. More importantly, the aftermath of the campaigns had exposed the inadequacy of Indian politics to offer a united defence against external threats.

Within a short time of Mahmud's death, his empire met the fate of other empires. Newly emerging centres of powers, formed around growing clusters of Turkish soldier-adventurers, replaced the older ones. The Ghaznavid possessions in Khurasan and Transoxiana were thus annexed, first by the Seljuqs (Unit 13), and later by the Khwarizm Shah. In their own homeland, Afghanistan, their hegemony was brought to an end by the principality of Ghor under the Shansabani dynasty. However, in the midst of these buffetings, the Ghaznavid rule survived in Punjab and Sind till about A.D. 1175.

The extent of the Ghaznavid territory in the north-west India is difficult to ascertain. Towards the north, it included Sialkot and probably, Peshawar. The southern limits were steadily pushed back by the Chauhan Rajputs who re-established control over portions of Punjab.

In the initial phase of invasions, Muhammad Ghori's military objective was to gain control over Punjab and Sind. Unlike earlier invaders, he decided to enter the Indus plains through the Gomial pass and not through the more common Khyber pass further north. By 1179, Peshawar, Uchh and Multan were seized. Later, Lahore was attacked. Muhammad Ghori now pressed his conquests further into India. Within a short time, military operations came to be directed against the Rajput kingdoms controlling the Gangetic plains. The Chauhans faced the most acute pressure as they ruled the territory from Ajmer to Delhi—the gateway to Hindustan. Bhatinda was besieged in 1191. The garrison quickly surrendered, but the Chauhans, under Prithviraj, speedily retrieved it after inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Ghorians. In the following year, Muhammad Ghori returned with a larger force. At the famous battle of Tarain, fought in 1192, he conclusively defeated the Chauhans. All places of military importance—Hansi, Kuhram, Sarsuti—were immediately occupied and garrisoned. Muhammad Ghori returned to his projects in Central Asia, leaving behind 'an occupation army at Indraprasth (near Delhi) under the command of Outbuddin Aibak'. The latter was given wide powers to extend and consolidate the conquests.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What were Mahmud Ghazni's main objectives for invading India?

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- 2) Briefly mention the initial conquests of Muhammad Ghori in India.

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14.4 THE GHORIAN INVASIONS: 1192-1206

way for the ascendancy of the Turks. From this date onwards, the Rajput power entered the phase of irreversible decay. For some time to come, the Ghorians did not think it convenient to immediately take over the administration of all the conquered territories. Wherever it seemed feasible, they allowed the Rajputs to continue, provided Turkish suzerainty was acknowledged. Thus Ajmer, for instance, was allowed to be retained by Prithviraj's son as a vassal ruler. This uneasy balance, however, was often disturbed by the recurrent conflicts between the imperial designs of the Ghorians and local rulers.

Under Aibak's leadership, the Turks continued to make territorial advance in all directions. After having refortified Hansi towards the end of 1192, Aibak crossed the Yamuna to establish a military base in the upper Doab, Meerut and Baran (modern Bulandshahr) capitulated in 1192. In 1193 Delhi was occupied. Its location and historical tradition made it most suitable as a capital for Turkish power in India. It was both close to the Ghorid stronghold in Punjab as well as conveniently placed for sending expeditions towards the east. In 1194 Aibak crossed the Yamuna for the second time and captured Kol (Aligarh).

The above military successes encouraged Muhammad Ghori to confront king Jayachandra of the Gahadavala dynasty in the vicinity of Chandwar (between Etah and Kanpur). Jayachandra, eventually lost. Afterwards, Turkish military stations were placed at Banaras, Asni and other important towns. However, the capital city of Kannauj could not be occupied until 1198-99.

The other important areas over which the Ghorians were able to extend their sway were Bayana, Gwalior and Anhilwara in 1195-96, and Badaun in 1197-98. The opening of the 13th century saw action against the 'last surviving imperial Rajputs'—the Chandellas of Bundelkhand. Around 1202, Kalinjar, Mahoba and Khajuraho were occupied and grouped into a military division.

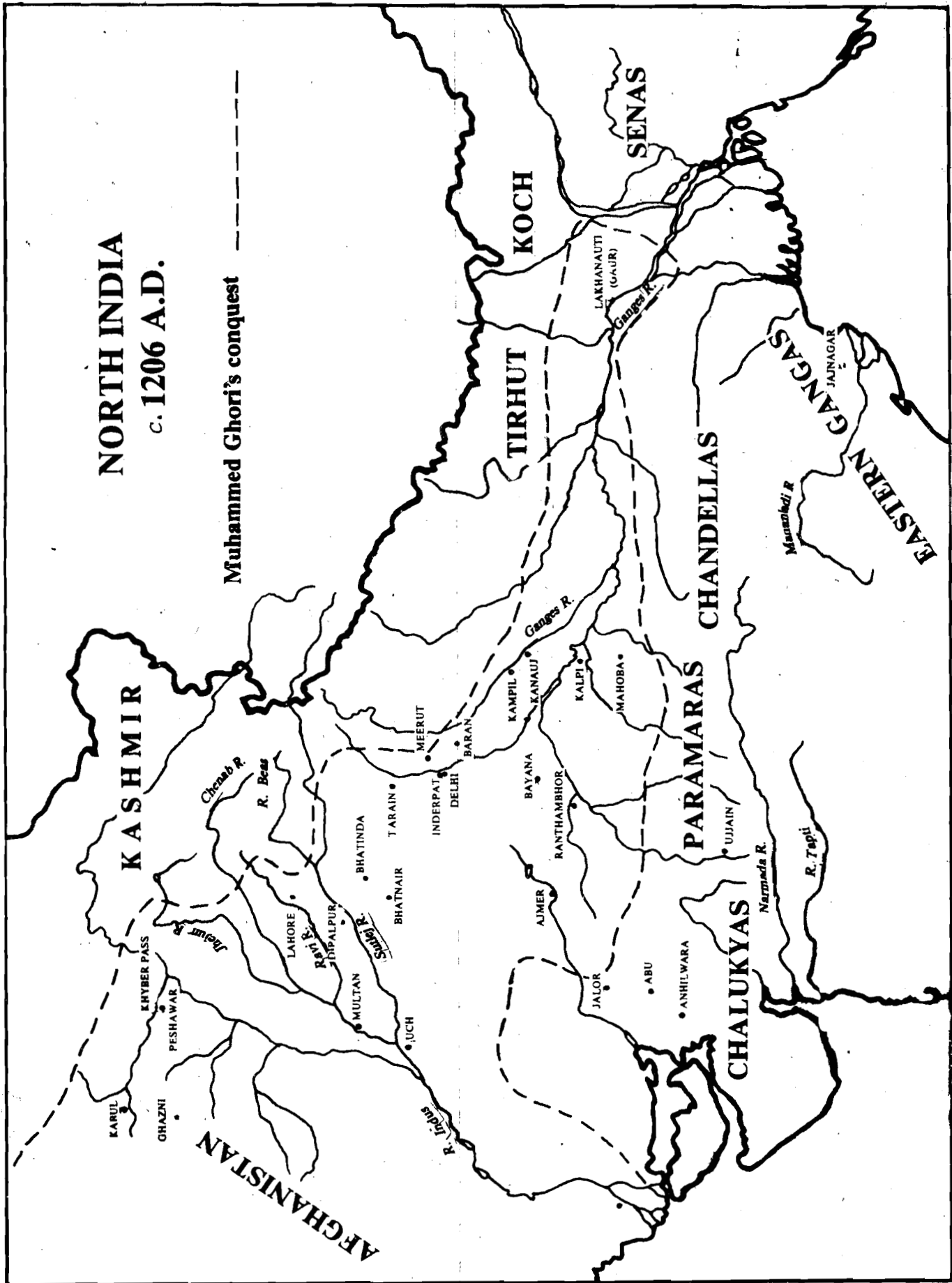
From 1203 onwards, the Turks made forays into the eastern provinces of the Indian subcontinent with varying degrees of success. Magadha was conquered for the 'Sultanate' by Bakhtiyar Khalji and his tribesmen. Under him, the Turkish intrusions could also penetrate Bengal (ruled by the Lakshmanas).

In general, during this phase, the Ghorians were able to extend their hegemony over a very considerable part of Northern India. But, as yet, they stood on shaky ground. Areas once conquered tended to slip out of control. It took several decades before their control found firm ground.

14.5 WHY THE TURKS SUCCEEDED ?

Various reasons have been assigned for the success of the Turkish conquests of North India. Many of the contemporary chroniclers do not go beyond the standard explanation of attributing this major event to the 'Will of God'. Some British historians, who initiated the study of Indian history in greater depth, accounted for the success of the Turks as follows: The Ghorian armies were drawn from the warlike tribes inhabiting the difficult region lying between the Indus and the Oxus. They had gathered military powers and expertise fighting the Seljuq armies and other fierce tribes of Central Asia. On the other hand, the Indians were pacifist and not given to war. Moreover, they were divided into small states which hampered expansionist ambitions.

The explanation is inadequate and unbalanced insofar as it leaves out of consideration well-known facts of Indian history as well as the history of countries from where the invaders came. It should be remembered that the large-scale conquest and destruction of the so-called warlike Islamic regions by the Mongols in 1218-19 was carried out without any real resistance. On the other hand, the Rajputs, whom the Turks conquered, were not lacking in bravery and martial spirit. The period from the 8th to the 12th century is one long story of warfare and violent internal struggles. It is, therefore, hardly worthwhile to emphasise the peaceful or docile temperament of the Indian populations as the cause of the Turkish success.



Some Indian historians have traced the Turkish success to the peculiar social structure created by Islam. Jadunath Sarkar, for instance, lays stress on three unique characteristics which Islam imparted to the Arabs, Berbers, Pathans, and Turks: first complete equality and social solidarity as regards legal and religious status. Unlike India, the Turks were not divided into castes that were exclusive of each other. Secondly, an absolute faith in God and his will which gave them drive and a sense of mission. Finally, Islam secured the Turkish conquerors from drunkenness which, according to Sarkar, was the ruin of the Rajputs, Marathas, and other Indian rulers. Whatever partial truth it might contain, this explanation, too, seems insufficiently grounded in history.

A more comprehensive view of the Indian debacle must perhaps take into account at least two major factors: the prevailing socio-political system in India and her military preparedness.

After the fall of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire, no single state took its place. Instead, there arose small independent powers like Gahadavalas in Kannauj, Parmaras in Malwa, Chalukyas in Gujarat, Chauhans in Ajmer, Tomars in Delhi, Chandellas in Bundelkhand, etc. Far from being united, they tended to operate within the confines of small territories and were in a state of perpetual internal conflicts. Lack of centralized power was an important factor in emasculating the strength and efficiency of the armed forces. Fakhir Mudabbir in his *Adab-ul Harb wa al-Shuja't* mentions that Indian forces consisted of 'feudal levies'. Each military contingent was under the command of its immediate overlord/chief and not that of the king. Thus, the army lacked 'Unity of Command'. Besides, since only few castes and clans took military profession, the bulk of the population was excluded from military training. This made the general population of the country totally detached from the defence of the country; when the Turks came, we find the Indian masses hardly came to the rescue of their kings. The concept of physical pollution (*Chhut*) also hampered military efficiency since it made the division of labour impossible; the soldiers had to do all their work on their own, from fighting to the fetching of water.

Another important reason for the success of the Turks was their superior military technology and art of war. These nomads from the steppes could be credited with introducing the age of the horse'. The Turks used iron stirrup and horse-shoes that reinforced their striking power and the stamina of the cavalry, while horse-shoes provided greater mobility to the horse, stirrup gave the soldiers a distinct advantage.

The popular notion that the Indians were defeated on account of the use of elephants does not seem plausible now, we do not find any evidence in the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* or other sources in support of this view. Jayapala's case is an exception where his elephants took to flight. Such examples are hard to come by. In fact, Mahmud of Ghazni is reported to have maintained large number of elephants that he took to his Kingdom from India and employed them with success.

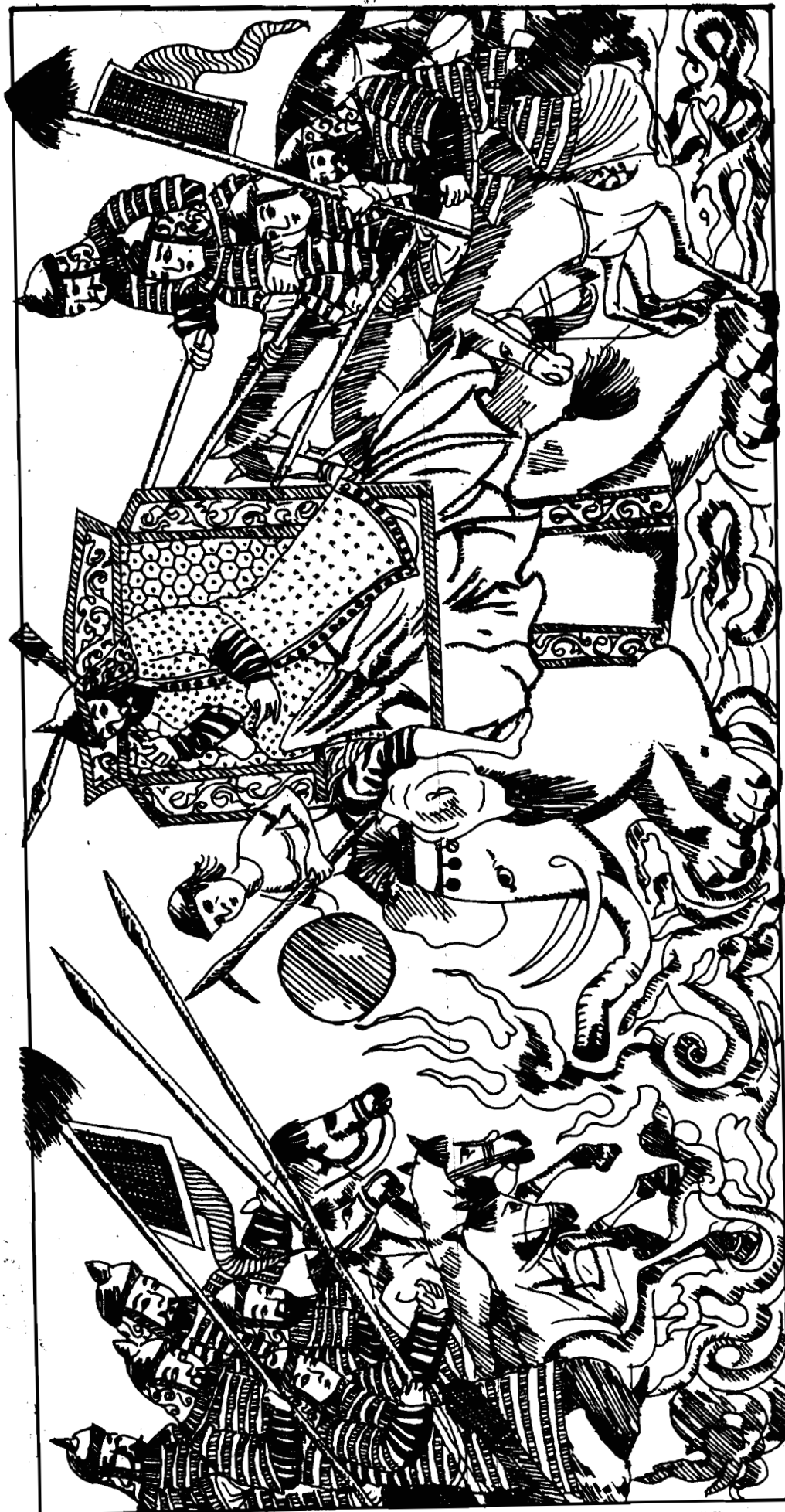
Check Your Progress 2

i) Match the following:

| A | B |
|---------------|-------------|
| Battle | Year |
| i) Kol | 1193 |
| Tarain | 1194 |
| Delhi | 1198-99 |
| Anhilwara | 1192 |
| Kannauj | 195-96 |

ii) Match the following:

| A | B |
|----------------|--------------|
| Dynasty | Place |
| Gahadavalas | Bundelkhand |
| Chauhans | Delhi |
| Tomars | Ajmer |
| Chalukyas | Kannauj |
| Chandellas | Gujarat |



2. War between Mahmud and Ismail, sons of Sebuktegin. This drawing indicates that in the battles of Central Asia also the elephants were successfully employed by Muslim rulers.

2) Write in about ten lines the causes for the Turkish Success.

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14.6 CONFLICT AND CONSOLIDATION, 1206-1290

The period from 1206 to 1290 constitutes the formative and the most challenging period in the history of the Delhi Sultanate. It was marked by a prolonged, multi-cornered conflict within the Ghorian ruling class as well as against the renewed Rajput resurgence.

Muhammad Ghori's sudden death in 1206 resulted in a tussle for supremacy among his three important generals, Tajuddin Yalduz, Nasiruddin Qubacha and Qutbuddin Aibak. Yalduz held Karman and Sankuran on the route between Afghanistan and upper Sind. Qubacha held the important charge of Uchh, while Aibak had already been deputed as the 'viceroy' of Muhammad Ghori and the over all commander of the army in India. Though, technically still a slave, the title of **sultan** was conferred upon him soon after the death of his master. The formal establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, as an entity in its own rights, is traced back to this event. Subsequent developments made this a reality.

Early in his brief reign of four years, Aibak (d. 1210) moved his capital to Lahore in order to frustrate Yalduz's ambition of annexing Punjab. With the Khwarizm Shah steadily advancing on Ghor, there was partly a compulsion in Yalduz's attempt to establish himself in India.

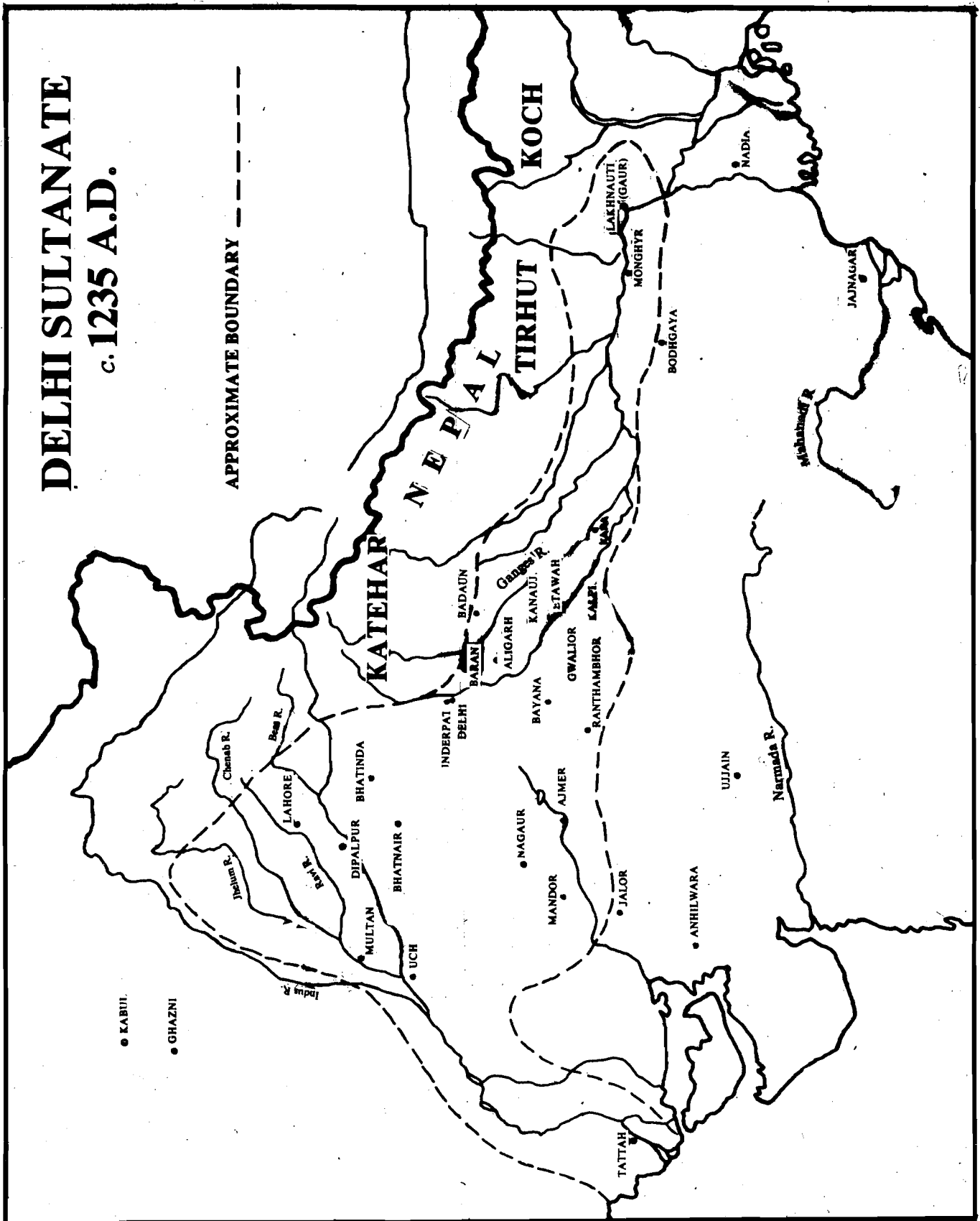
Aibak was succeeded on the throne by his son-in-law Iltutmish who brought back the capital to Delhi. Large portions of the territories conquered by the Turks had slipped out of control and subjugated Rajput chieftain had 'withheld tribute and repudiated allegiance'. Iltutmish's quarter century reign (1210-1236) was distinguished by a concerted drive to re-establish the Sultanate's authority on areas that had been lost. In 1215, Yalduz was defeated at Tarain and in 1217 Iltutmish wrested the province of Lahore from Qubacha and placed it under his own governor.

Within three years of this event, the Mongols, under Chengiz Khan's leadership, appeared on the banks of the Indus in pursuit of Jalaluddin Mangbarni (the son of the Khwarizmian ruler) who had taken refuge in Punjab. In Unit 13, we have discussed the destruction of Islamic lands by the Mongols. Henceforth, the Mongols remained a constant factor among the concerns of Delhi Sultans. We will discuss Mongol intrusions during the 13-14th century in the subsequent section.

Though the Mongol presence had upset Iltutmish's plan of consolidation on the north-west, it also created conditions for the destruction of Qubacha who held Uchh and faced the brunt of Mangbarni's invasion. As a consequence, Iltutmish was able to seize Bhatinda, Kuhram, and Sarsuti. About 1228, he launched a two-pronged attack on Multan and Uchh. Defeated, Qubacha drowned himself in the Indus. Unified control over the north-west now became possible for the Delhi Sultanate. In Rajputana, the Turks were able to reclaim Ranthambhor, Mandor, Jalor, Bayana and

DELHI SULTANATE c. 1235 A.D.

APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY - - - - -



Thangir. After 1225, Iltutmish could turn towards the east. Apart from sporadic military successes, however, Lakhnauti (in Bengal) and Bihar continued to evade the authority of the Sultanate. A modern historian assesses the Sultan's achievement as follows:

“to him the Sultanate owed the first outline of its administrative system. He laid the foundations of an absolutist monarchy that was to serve later as the instrument of a military imperialism under the Khaljis. Aibak outlined the Delhi Sultanate and its sovereign status; Iltutmish was unquestionably its first king.”

Iltutmish's death saw more sharpened factionalism and intrigue among the Turks. In a period of some thirty years, four rulers, (descendants of Iltutmish) occupied the throne. The most prominent group to decide the course of high politics during these years is identified as the **turkan-i chihilgani bandagan Shamsi** (the 'forty' Turkish slave "officers" of Iltutmish). The fourteenth century historian, Ziauddin Barani, has left behind concise and insightful account of these critical years:

“During the reign of Shamsuddin — (Iltutmish),.... owing to the presence of peerless **maliks, wazirs**....educated, wise and capable, the court of the Sultan (Shamsuddin) had become stable....But after the death of the Sultan....his 'forty' Turkish slaves got the upper hand....So owing to the supremacy of the Turkish slave officers, all these men of noble birth....were destroyed under various pretexts during the reigns of the successors of Shamsuddin....”.

In the main, Barani's account is borne out by contemporary developments. Between 1235-1265 political developments revolved round a conflict between the crown and a military aristocracy determined to retain its privileged position with the balance often increasingly tilting in favour of the latter.

In these circumstances, the very survival of the Sultanate was under question. Political instability was exacerbated by the recalcitrance of smaller Rajput chiefs and local leaders. Moreover, the Mongols were constantly active in and around Punjab.

The accession of Balban in 1265 provided the Sultanate with an iron-willed ruler. Balban addressed himself to two major objectives:

i) to raise the prestige of the crown through elaborate court ceremonials, and inculcation of Sassanian traditions that distanced the ruler from ordinary folks, converting him into a symbol of awe; (ii) consolidating Turkish power: rebellions were put down with determination and administrative procedures were streamlined.

After the death of Balban, struggle for the throne started. Balban had nominated Kai Khusrau, son of Muhammad (Balban's eldest son) but the nobles helped Kaiqubad, son of Bughra Khan, to ascend the throne. Intrigues continued for more than two years. Finally, Jalaluddin Khalji, who was a prominent noble during this period, managed to capture the throne which was strongly resented because it was thought that the Khaljis were not Turks but belonged to a different race. Barani does not specify the race to which the Khaljis belonged. The Khaljis had been occupying important positions during the period 1206-1290. For example, Bakhtiyar Khalji was the **muqti** of Bengal. Even Jalaluddin Khalji was the **muqti** of Sunam in Western Punjab.

Jalaluddin Khalji started consolidating his kingdom but was killed in 1296 by his nephew Alauddin Khalji who captured the throne. For almost 20 years, the Sultanate under Alauddin Khalji followed a policy of conquests. You will read about this in Unit 15.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Write in five lines how Qutbuddin succeeded in crushing the power of Yalduz.

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2) Iltutmish was the real founder of the Turkish rule in India. Explain.

14.7 THE MONGOL PROBLEM

We have already discussed the rise of the Mongol power in Central Asia and Persia in Unit 13. Here our emphasis would be on the Mongol threat on the north-west border of India and its repercussions.

For the Delhi Sultans, control over Kabul-Ghazni-Qandahar line flanked by the Hindukush, was important not only for stabilizing the 'scientific frontier' but also for the fact that it connected India with the major silk-route passing from China through Central Asia and Persia. But the development in Central and West-Asia did not permit the newly founded Turkish state to do the job. The situation on account of the Mongol onslaught (as you would see) compelled the Delhi Sultans to take comfort along the Chenab, while the cis-Sutlej region became the cock-pit of confrontations. Thus, the "Indus remained only the cultural boundary of India," and for all practical purposes the line of control was confined to the west of the Indus only.

Professor K.A. Nizami has categorised the response of the Sultanate towards, the Mongol challenge into three distinct phases: (i) **aloofness**, (ii) **appeasement**, and (iii) **resistance**.

Iltutmish followed the policy of '**aloofness**'. The Delhi Sultans had to face the Mongol threat as early as A.D. 1221 when, after destroying the Khwarizmi empire, Chengiz Khan reached the Indian frontiers in pursuit of the crown-prince Jalaluddin Mangbarni. The latter seeing no alternative, crossed the Indus and entered the cis-Indus region.

Iltutmish had to take note of the Mongols who were knocking at the Indian frontier, but equally prime was the presence of Mangbarni in the cis-Indus region. The Sultan feared a possible alliance of Qubacha and the Khokhars with Mangbarni. But, Qubacha and Mangbarni locked their horns for political ascendancy, and meanwhile bonds of friendship developed between Mangbarni and the Khokhars through a matrimonial alliance. This strengthened the position of Mangbarni in the north-west. Ata Malik Juwaini in his *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha* decisively opines that Iltutmish smelt danger from Mangbarni who might "gain an ascendancy over him and involve him in ruin." Besides, Iltutmish was also aware of the weaknesses of the Sultanate. These factors compelled Iltutmish to follow the policy of '**aloofness**'.

Chengiz Khan is reported to have sent his envoy to Iltutmish's court. It is difficult to say anything about the Sultan's response, but so long as Chengiz Khan was alive (d. A.D. 1227), Iltutmish did not adopt an expansionist policy in the north-west region. An understanding of non-aggression against each other might have possibly been arrived at. Iltutmish shrewdly avoided any political alliance with the Khwarizm Prince. The latter sent his envoy Ain-ul Mulk to Iltutmish's court requesting for asylum which Iltutmish denied by saying that the climate was not congenial for his stay. On the other hand, he put the envoy to death. Minhaj Siraj mentions that Iltutmish led an expedition against Mangbarni but the latter avoided any confrontation and finally left the Indian soil in A.D. 1224.

A shift from Iltutmish's policy of '**aloofness**' to '**appeasement**' was the result of the extension of the Sultanate frontier up to Lahore and Multan which exposed the

Sultanate directly to the Mongol incursions with no buffer state left between them. Raziya's discouraging response to anti-Mongol alliance, proposed by Hasan Qarlugh of Bamyan is the indicator of her **appeasement** policy. We must bear in mind that this policy of **non-aggression** was due primarily to the partitioning of the Chengiz's empire among his sons which weakened their power; and also on account of the Mongol pre-occupations in West-Asia.

At any rate, between 1240-66, the Mongols for the first time embarked upon the policy of annexation of India and the golden phase of mutual '**non-aggression pact**' with Delhi ended. During this phase, the Sultanate remained under serious Mongol threat. The main reason was the change in the situation in Central Asia. The Mongol Khan of Transoxiana found it difficult to face the might of the Persian Khanate and, thus, was left with no alternative except to try his luck in India.

In 1241, Tair Bahadur invaded Lahore and completely destroyed the city. It was followed by two successive invasions in A.D. 1245-46. In spite of the best efforts of Balban during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, the Sultanate frontier during A.D. 1241-66 stood at Beas. And, yet, the **appeasement** policy continued for sometime. In A.D. 1260 Halagu's envoy to Delhi was well received and this diplomatic gesture was reciprocated by Halagu also.

A distinct change in Delhi Sultan's policy can be seen from Balban's reign onwards. On the whole, it was the phase of '**resistance**'. By and large, Balban remained in Delhi and his energies concentrated mainly in keeping away the Mongols, at least from the Beas. Barani mentions, when the two nobles Tamir Khan and Adil Khan suggested the conquest of Malwa and Gujarat and advised him to pursue an expansionist policy Balban replied:

"When the Mongols have occupied all lands of Islam, devastated Lahore and made it a point to invade our country once in every year....If I move out of the capital the Mongols are sure to avail themselves of the opportunity by sacking Delhi and ravaging the Doab. Making peace and consolidating our power in our own kingdom is far better than invading foreign territories while our own kingdom is insecure."

Balban used both 'force and diplomacy' against the Mongols. He took some measures to strengthen his line of defence. Forts at Bhatinda, Sunam and Samana were reinforced to check any Mongol advance beyond Beas. Balban succeeded in occupying Multan and Uchh but his forces remained under heavy Mongol pressure in Punjab. Every year Prince Muhammad, Balban's son, led expeditions against the Mongols. The Prince died in A.D. 1285 while defending Multan. Actually, till A.D. 1295, the Mongols did not show much enthusiasm to occupy Delhi.

During Alauddin Khalji's reign, the Mongol incursions extended further and they attempted to ravage Delhi for the first time in A.D. 1299 under Qutlugh Khwaja. Since then, Delhi became a regular target of the Mongols. For the second time, Qutlugh Khwaja in A.D. 1303 attacked Delhi when Alauddin Khalji was busy in his Chittor campaign. The attack was so severe that the Mongols inflicted large-scale destruction and so long as the Mongols besieged Delhi, Alauddin could not enter the city.

Constant Mongol attacks pressed Alauddin to think of a permanent solution. He recruited a huge standing army and strengthened the frontier forts. As a result, the Mongols, were repulsed in 1306 and 1308. Another reason for the Mongol reversal was the death of Dawa Khan in 1306, followed by civil war in the Mongol Khanate. It weakened the Mongols greatly, and they ceased to remain a power to reckon with. This situation helped the Delhi Sultans to extend their frontier as far as the Salt Range. The last significant Mongol invasion was under the leadership of Tarmashirin during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq.

Thus, the Delhi Sultans succeeded in tackling the Mongol problem and succeeded in keeping their kingdom intact. It shows the strength of the Sultanate. Besides, the Mongol destruction of Central and West-Asia resulted in large-scale migration of scholars, mystics, artisans and others to Delhi, which transformed it into a great town of Islamic culture-area

14.8 POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE TURKISH CONQUEST OF INDIA

The Turkish conquest of India brought about some far reaching changes in the political economic and social conditions of India.

Its first major consequence was to replace the 'feudal', multi-centred, polity of the country by a centralised state, in which the king enjoyed practically unlimited powers. The 'Sultanate' which we briefly referred to in Unit 16, was the form in which this power was expressed.

The chief institution which made the Sultanate possible was that of the *iqta*: transferable revenue assignments, an institution which the Seljuqs found in operation in the Abbasid ruled areas and which they updated in the light of their own requirements. In Block 5 and 6, you will be reading the history of the *iqta* system in India in greater detail. Here we will simply touch upon its principal features to illustrate how it provided the basis of a different polity. Under this system, the officers of the king were assigned territories to realise revenue and maintain troops and cavalry contingents. The holders of such assignments were known as *muqti*. Unlike the pre-Turkish system wherein the land grantees had acquired permanent rights of ownership, the *iqta*-holders were regularly transferred and their tenure in particular places or localities was normally for 3 to 4 years.

Taking the Delhi Sultanate as a whole, such a system made the assignee dependent on the central authority to a far greater extent than it was possible under the earlier Indian politics. While the *rais*, *ranas* and *thakuras* failed to unite the country, the Turks succeeded in establishing an "all-India administration by bringing the chief cities and the great routes under the control of the government of Delhi."

Much as the *iqta* system provided the base for a despotic state, it was also a means of extracting the agricultural surplus. The Turks had brought with them the tradition of living in the cities and, as a result, the large surplus produce of the countryside found its way into the cities in the form of land tax. This led to a considerable growth of urban economy. Turks also brought with them the Persian wheel and the spinning wheel. The former helped greatly in increasing the agricultural production (for further details see Block 6, Unit 22).

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) **Aloofness, appeasement and resistance** were the three weapons used by the Delhi Sultans to face the Mongol challenge. Explain in ten lines.

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- 2) Match the following

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| A | B |
| i) Fakhir Mudabbir | Tarikh-i Feroz Shahi |
| Ata Malik Juwaini | Tabaqat-i Nasiri |
| Minhaj Siraj | Adab-ul Harb wa al-Shuja't |
| Ziyyuddin Barani | Tarikh-i Jahangir |

| A | B |
|-------------------------------|------|
| ii) Chengiz Khan's death | 1241 |
| Jalaluddin Mangbarni's return | 1260 |
| Halagu's envoy to India | 1227 |
| Tair Bahadur's attack | 1224 |

3) Briefly discuss the political consequences of the Turkish conquest.

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14.9 LET US SUM UP

This Unit began with the description of Indian political scenario on the eve of Turkish invasion. India was not a unified political unit but divided into number of small states ruled by kings and autonomous chiefs. Muhammad Ghori tried to subjugate them, the culmination of which may be seen in the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan at the battle of Tarain. This laid the foundation of the Turkish rule in India. After Muhammad Ghori's departure one of his commanders, Qutbuddin Aibak got busy in establishing the Turkish power in India. In the process he suppressed Yalduz, the Muizi slave who had rival claims to the Muizi throne in India. But, he failed to suppress Qubacha. The task was left to Iltutmish. Iltutmish not only expanded the Muizi empire but also organised and strengthened the administrative machinery with the help of the group of nobles called—the 'Forty'. He also introduced certain Sassanid institutions like iqta that helped greatly in centralizing the administration. This Unit has also covered the factors behind the Turkish success and its consequences. Turks succeeded primarily because of their superior military technology and on account of the fact that Indian armies mainly consisted of 'feudal levies'. Turkish conquest was not, simply the change of one dynasty by another. It had a far reaching affect on Indian society, economy and polity. You will study about these aspects in Blocks 5 to 8.

14.10 KEY WORDS

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|------------------------|--|
| Bandgan Shamsi: | Iltutmish's Turkish officers' group (Turkan-i Chihilgami) (popularly called 'the forty') |
| Berbers: | A tribe in Central Asia |
| Buffetings: | Shocks |
| Cataclysmic: | Sudden violent change |
| Forays: | Sudden attacks |
| Horseshoe: | Horses were nailed to protect their hoofs (Persian nal) |
| Iron-stirrup: | D-shaped iron foot-supports hanging down from a horse's saddle. |
| Persian-wheel: | A water-lifting device used to lift the water from some depth. For details See Block 6 |
| Spinning Wheel: | Device for spinning the cotton. This was moved with the help of crank-handle and had six spindles. |

14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Sec. 14.3
- 2) See Sec. 14.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) i) 1194, 1192, 1193, 1195-96, 1198-99
ii) Kannauj, Ajmer, Delhi, Gujarat, Bundelkhand
- 2) See Sec. 14.5

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See Sec. 14.6
- 2) See Sec. 14.6

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See Sec. 14.7
- 2) i) *Adab-ul Harb wa al-Shuja't*, *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha*, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*,
Tarikh-i Feroz Shahi.
ii) 1227, 1224, 1260, 1241
- 3) See Sec. 14.8