
WEST BENGAL
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
2022

**USEFUL FOR WBCS, WBSSC & OTHER
STATE LEVEL EXAMINATIONS**

Preface

Hello Aspirants!

I feel glad in presenting the first edition of West Bengal General Knowledge. It has been designed and prepared as per the standard, syllabus and pattern based on WBCS, WBSSC & Other state levels exams. Sincere and rigorous efforts have been made to make this possible. It will immensely help to hit your target. Hopefully, this book will become a medium of success for the candidates appearing in competitive examinations.

All the best!

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Chapter 1. Introduction of West Bengal

Located in Eastern India, the fourth most populous state in the country is widely considered the Melting pot of Cultures. Bordered by five different states, its capital Kolkata is often termed as the cultural capital of India. West Bengal offers a unique flavour to the richness of India with its synthesis of various languages, religions, customs, traditions, cuisines and lifestyle. Bound by the grandeur of the Himalayan ranges in the north and sweetened by the sea in the south, Bengal has everything a state needs to flourish.

Nestled in a cosy cluster in the North, one of the most magnificent hill stations in the world, Darjeeling is often dubbed as the Queen of the Hills. Renowned for its tea plantations, Darjeeling tea is one of the most sought after in the world. Down south, Bengal boasts an extremely rich flora and fauna. With its broad network of rivers and geographical features, West Bengal is celebrated for having the largest mangrove forest in the world in the Sunderbans. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Sunderbans is universally acclaimed for housing globally endangered species such as the Royal Bengal Tiger. Apart from

possessing some of the finest hill stations, Bengal also offers some of the best beach front locations. Places like Digha and Mandarmani are perfect getaways which offer pristine beaches and accommodation for every traveller.

The Multiracial and Multilingual amalgamation of cultures can be felt at hotspots like Kolkata, the prime city in the state of West Bengal. Once the capital of British India, Kolkata is a blend of Western and Indian culture. Home to a plethora of historical sites, it houses Hindu temples, mosques, churches, as well as British monuments like the Victoria Memorial. The people of different caste, race and colour all live in perfect harmony, celebrating festivals like Id, Christmas and the Pujas in equal fervour and enjoying cuisines of different kinds.

After India gained independence from the British, Bengal played the most important role in emerging renaissance in the field of social, cultural, political and educational reforms. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

were at the forefront of the freedom movement. West Bengal has also been a home to world famous figures like Mother Teresa who is described as a metaphor for selfless devotion and holiness by the Vatican. Satyajit Ray, the first academy award winner in India and winner of 32 National Film awards, changed the face of cinema around the globe. Rabindranath Tagore who won the Noble prize in 1913 and showcased Bengali Literature to the world.

Basic Information about West Bengal

- Capital :- Kolkata
- District :- 23
- Formed on :- 26 Jan, 1950
- Vidhan Sabha Seats :-295
- Loksabha Seats :-42
- Rajya Sabha Seats :-16
- Cheif Minister :-Mamta Banerjee
- Governer :-Jagdeep Dhankar
- High Court :-Kolkata
- Secretariat :-Nabanna (Howrah)
- Geographical Area:-88752km²
- Latitude :-85°30' to 89°53' East
- Longitude :- 21°38' to 27°10' North

Chapter 2. State Symbols of West Bengal

STATE ANIMAL : FISHING CAT

The fishing cat (Scientific Name: *Prionailurus viverrinus*) in Bengal is known as ‘Mach-baghrol’ or ‘Bagh-dasha’ or ‘Mecho-bagh’ or ‘Mecho-biral’. “Mach” means fish and “Bagh” means tiger. It is a medium-sized wild cat generally found in South and South-East Asia. It is the biggest cat among the Prionailurus cats. Its coarse fur is olive-grey to ashy-grey in colour along with darker stripes on the shoulder. Additionally, roundish or oval-shaped spots found on its flanks and sides. It has a short tail compared to its body. It is about twice in size related to the domestic cat. Its habitat is in swampy and marshy areas. At present, their existence is threatened by the destruction of wetlands. In 2018, the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural resources) declared them as an Endangered animal.

STATE BIRD : WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHERS

White-throated kingfishers (Scientific Name: *Halcyon smyrnensis*) are common in Bengal and their main feature is the presence of shiny blue back, Additionally, they have bright red large legs. They have thick, reddish-orange bills and darkish chocolate-coloured heads, bellies, and shoulders. Sometimes, a brilliant white patch found on the throat, sometimes on the breast. In Bengal, this bird is popular as ‘Dhola-Gola Machranga’. They are carnivorous in nature. They are fast-flying birds and their flight is direct.

STATE FLOWER : NIGHT FLOWERING JASMINE

The state flower of West Bengal is Night Flowering Jasmine (Scientific Name: *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*). It is commonly known as ‘Shephali’ or ‘Shiuli’ or ‘Parijat’. Jasmine is a shrub type of tree and It bears magnificent flowers with a scintillating perfume. The flowers grow in clusters of two or seven, they open at nightfall and closes at daybreak. The flowers are primarily utilized for commercial purposes for preparing yellow dye

and perfume as a natural resource.

STATE TREE : CHATIM

The state tree of West Bengal is Chatian or Chatim (Scientific Name: *Alstonia scholaris*). They are an evergreen tree and they can grow up to 100 feet. They produce small flowers greenish-yellow in colour. They have large leaves organized in clusters of seven. They have many medicinal values. However, they are a significant contributor to the paper.

STATE EMBLEM : OFFICIAL SEAL

The Emblem of West Bengal is the official seal of the government. It consists of a circle depicting a globe with the state of West Bengal highlighted by a representation of the Bengali alphabet. The National Emblem of India appears above the globe and the emblem includes the name of the state in the English i.e West Bengal and Bengali languages i.e “Paschim Banga”. The central element of the emblem was also used by the Biswa Bangla campaign to promote the sale of traditional West Bengali handicrafts and textiles.

Chapter 3.

West Bengal, situated in Eastern India, is one of the major states in the country. When we talk about the history of Bengal, we cannot consider West Bengal in isolation. It will comprise of origin of Bengal as a whole, including West Bengal and East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Bengal territory has been an important region since ancient times. The first mention of this province can be found in the great epic of Mahabharata. Due to its strategic location by the sea, different sects of people came and established here, including Aryans in the post-Vedic period. Thus, today, it demonstrates a prolific mixture of five distinct racial strains. Different dynasties, right from the Palas to the Guptas and the Sena, have ruled over the territory of Bengal. Thereafter, it was the time of the Muslim reign, which began with Qutub-ud-din Aibak and ended only after the Battle of Plassey. Then, came the British. The 200-year long tryst of Bengal with British left some inextricable influences on the culture of the state. After gaining independence in 1947, India retained West Bengal, while East Bengal became a part of the Pakistani territory. Today,

History of West Bengal

East Bengal has formed itself into an independent state, called Bangladesh, and West Bengal is a part of the Republic of India.

Ancient History of Bengal

The history of Bengal includes Bengal as a whole, i.e. both West Bengal and East Bengal (now Bangladesh). The first mention of Bengal can be found in Mahabharata. Different dynasties have ruled over its region. The history of Bengal goes way back to the period of Aryan invasion of India. Bengal is known as Gauda or Vanga in ancient Sanskrit literature. Some of the evidences excavated in various parts of West Bengal reveals information about the settlement and pre-historic stone implements. The region of Bengal was also known to the ancient Greeks and Romans as Gangaridai. Some scholars believed that the origin of name 'Banga' is derived from 'Bong tribe'.

Origin of People in West Bengal

The Bengalees are an Indo-Aryan ethnic group who mainly lives in Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Jharkhand. They are not the de-

scendants of Aryans. Some primitive settlers in this region were Kola, Sabara, Pulinda, Hadi, Dom and Chandala. There are anthropological and archaeological evidences to indicate that the Bengalispeaking people belong to several racial elements with different ethnic origins. There were three major racial elements which came together to form the Bengalee race. These were the Dravidians, the Mangolian tribes and the Aryans.

Some scholars also emphasise on the concept that people in Bengal are descendants of Homo-alpinus, which resided in the parts of Pamir and Taklamakan regions. The first scientific investigation on the origin of Indian people was done by Sir Herbert Risley. He was the first to trace the relation of the round head of Bengali people with Mongoloid characteristics. He considered these people as a common descendants of Dravidians and Mongoloid people. His view was strongly opposed by RP Chanda who argued in favour of the Bengalee race originating from the Homo-alpinus type of people that came from the Pamir region and spoke in an Indo-European language.

Pre-historic Period

The pre-history of West Bengal includes the Palaeolithic period, Mesolithic period,

Neolithic period and Chalcolithic period. These are discussed below:

Palaeolithic Period

There are 162 lower Palaeolithic sites in this state. The majority of the lower Palaeolithic sites have been reported from Radh plain and are located on the foothills, valley slopes and river banks. The tools in this region were mainly made by pebbles of quartz and quartzite. Some important sites are Egara Mail (Burdwan), Parihati, Mohanpur, Satbati, Tarapheni reservoir bridge (all in Midnapore), Nakbindhi, Patina, Jibdharipur (Birbhum), Jagannathpuri, etc.

A total of 41 sites of Middle-Palaeolithic period have been reported from West Bengal which are located in Bankura, Midnapore, Birbhum and Burdwan districts. The presence of flake tools mark the middle Palaeoliths of this region. A total of 10 Upper Palaeolithic sites have been found in West Bengal. These are in Midnapore, Bankura and Burdwan district. Upper Palaeolithic tools of West Bengal are characterised by backed blades, spear heads, etc and were made by green quartzite, chert, quartz, sandstone, etc.

Mesolithic Period

Only three sites, namely Birbhanpur in Burdwan district, Paruldanga in Birbhum district and Chamargora in Midnapore district have been excavated. Mesolithic sites of this region have yielded lithic (related to stone) collection of both non-geometric and geometric types. Artefacts include spears, scrapers, agricultural tools, etc and were made of quartz, quartzite, fossil wood, etc.

Neolithic Period

A total of 84 Neolithic sites have been identified in West Bengal. The nature and distribution of Neolithic records in West Bengal suggest two focal areas of Neolithic culture with opposite patterns of developments. They are the Himalayan foothills comprising Kalimpong and adjacent Sikkim state and the plateau fringe area comprising the districts of Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia, Burdwan and Birbhum. Neolithic tools with a distinct grey and pale ceramics are characterised the Neolithic culture of the plateau area whereas in bHimalayan foothill area, Neolithic culture is characterised by Neolithic tools without ceramics.

Chalcolithic Period

In 1954-57, during the excavation done by BB Lal and Pandu Rajar Dhibi, the first Chalcolithic or Copper Age site was discovered on the bank of Ajay river in the East Bardhaman district of West Bengal. It dates back to 1600 BC. These discoveries revealed that the people of West Bengal had a clear idea about the importance of town planning and its formulation. They built well-planned towns. The roads were made of stones, gravels and clay with the combination of water. The streets were attached with small channels that drained the water to a common point. Pre-historic people used copper in making hand tools and implements, which were used for agriculture and hunting. Agriculture and trade was the strength of their economy. They cultivated rice and other such seasonal crops. Besides this, they tamed the domestic animals as a livestock and for milk. Pre-historic sites have been found concentrated in South-Western part of West Bengal.

Vedic Period

There is clear evidence through archaeological research that there was a highly developed culture in Bengal before the Aryan settlement. There is no reference to Bengal

in the Rigveda. Some references indicate that the primitive people in Bengal were different in ethnicity and culture from the vedic people beyond the boundary of Aryavarta and the people who were classed as Dasyus (Pundras). Scriptures suggest that Bengal was divided into many small kingdoms. These kingdoms were Vanga (Southern Bengal), Pundra (Northern Bengal), Suhma (Western Bengal), Anga, Harikela and Samatata kingdoms. The Mahabharata speaks of Bengali kings who were defeated by Bhima. Kalidasa mentions that Raghu defeated a coalition of 'Vanga' kings.

PostVedic Period

Post-Vedic era starts from the time when the Aryans settled on the land of Bengal. Subsequently, the 16 Mahajanapadas were consolidating themselves in the Post-Vedic period. The term 'Janapada' means 'the foothold of a tribe'. These were the 16 great nations which are quoted in Buddhist text called Anguttara Nikaya. These Janapadas are also mentioned in Mahabharata. These 16 Janapadas are Anga, Kosala, Kashi, Magadha, Videha, Malla, Chedi, Vatsa, Kuru, Panchal, Matsya, Surasena, Asmaka, Avanti, Gandhara and Kamboja. Out of these 16, the Anga and Magadha were sited

in Bengal and symbolise the Post-Vedic era in Bengal. These two are mentioned in Atharvaveda.

Ancient Kingdoms/Dynasties of West Bengal

Ancient Kingdoms/Dynasties of West Bengal There were various ancient kingdoms/dynasties in West Bengal. Some of these are discussed below:

Vanga Kingdom

The Vanga kingdom was an ancient kingdom during the Post-Vedic period on the Indian sub-continent, which originated in the region of Bengal. It was referred by epic Mahabharata. Its neighbouring states included Suhma, Anga, Pundravardhana, Samatata or Harikela. In Mahabharata, it was referred that Vanga army was skilled in handling war elephants and they sided with the Kauravas. The boundary of the Vanga kingdom was formed by the Padma and Bhagirathi river in the West, North and East and the South was bounded by the Bay of Bengal. The founders of Angas, Vangas, Kalingas, Pundras and Suhmas shared a common ancestry. They were all adopted sons of a king named Vali or Bali, born by a sage named Gautama Dirghatamas. There

is a little bit of information about Vanga.

Anga Kingdom

Anga was an early kingdom covering parts of Bengal and modern central Bihar state. Its capital was Champa (formerly known as Malini). Anga rulers were all descended from King Bali. According to the Mahabharata, Duryodhana made his friend Karna King of Anga. The Ramayana mentions Anga as the place in which Lord Shiva burned Kamadeva, the god of love to death.

Pundra Kingdom

It was an Eastern kingdom located in West Bengal. This group of people was led by King Pundravardhana who had his territory from North Bengal to the land which is now under Bangladesh. Pundra, referred to as a realm of Bharata Varsha or India, belonged to the warrior Kshatriya tribes. The Pundra dynasty did not conform to the Vedic culture of the period. One of the legendary leaders of Pundra dynasty was Paundraka Vasudeva. He united the three regions, i.e. Pundra, Vanga and Kirata and further entered into an alliance with Jarasandha of Magadha.

Suhmas Kingdom

The earliest reference to the Suhmas and

their country is found in the Acharanga Sutra of the Jainas belonging to the 6th century BCE. Regarding the origins of the Suhmas, there are many traditional and mythical stories recorded in the early texts. In the Mahabharata, it is stated that the Suhmas originated from Suhma, the son of Bali. Suhmas were spread over a large territory which included parts of the area covered by the modern districts of Burdwan, Hooghly, Midnapore, Nadia, portions of Murshidabad and also of 24-Parganas, i.e. extending upto the sea. In other words, the land lying on West of the Bhagirathi extending upto the sea was included within the territorial jurisdiction of the Suhma country wherein lived the Suhmas.

Harikela Kingdom

Harikela was a kingdom in ancient Bengal encompassing much of the Eastern regions of the Indian sub-continent. There are numerous references to the kingdom in historical texts as well as archeological artefacts including silver coinage. Arab traders recognised Harikela (known as Harkand in Arabic) as the coastal regions of Bengal in the early period. In 10th century CE, Harikela rulers were defeated by Chandra rulers.

Samatata Kingdom

Samatata was an ancient Indian region in South-Eastern Bengal. Its earliest reference is found in the Allahabad Prashasti. Samatata boundaries were well defined by the mountains of Tripura and Arakan in the East and the Meghna (the combined waters of the Padma, Meghna, and Brahmaputra rivers) in the West. Not much is known about this kingdom. It was ruled by Buddhist kings in the late 7th century. Chinese travellers like Xuanzang and Yijing and Roman geographer Ptolemy mentioned about this kingdom in their writings.

Gauda Kingdom

Gauda kingdom was a Hindu power during the late classical period on the Indian sub-continent, which originated in the present-day region of Bengal. The citadel of Gauda served as the capital of the Gauda kingdom. King Shashanka, first created the separate political entity in a unified Bengal called Gauda. Shashanka was a strong ruler who developed Bengal's architecture and calendar. He is famous for oppressing Buddhist communities and driving them out of Bengal. Shashanka's capital Karnasuvarna is now known as Murshidabad. It was during the rule of Shashanka

that Bengal witnessed a flourishing period. After his death, Shashanka was succeeded by his son, Manava who ruled only for eight months.

Nanda Dynasty

The Nanda dynasty originated from the region of Magadha in ancient India during the 4th century BCE and lasted between 345-321 BCE. At its greatest extent, the empire ruled by the Nanda dynasty extended from Bengal in the East, to the Punjab region in the West. The rulers of this dynasty were famed for the great wealth which they accumulated. Jaina, Buddhist and Puranic sources stated that the Nanda Kings were nine in all. Mahapadma Nanda and Dhana Nanda were famous rulers of this dynasty.

Mauryan Dynasty

It came into existence in 322 BCE when Chandragupta Maurya established his rule around Magadha. The Mauryan empire was one of the world's largest empires in its time, and the largest ever in the Indian sub-continent including Bengal. The empire was expanded into India's Central and Southern regions by the emperors Chandragupt and Bindusara. Entire region of Bengal came under the Mauryan empire.

After the Kalinga War, the empire experienced nearly half a century of peace and security under Ashoka.

Gupta Dynasty

The Gupta Dynasty (320 to 550 CE) was an ancient Indian empire, founded by Srigupta covered much of the Indian subcontinent including Bengal. A portion of Northern or Central Bengal have been the home of Guptas at that time which is evident from the writings of Buddhist Monk Yijing of around 690 CE. The Poona copper inscription of Prabhavati Gupta, daughter of Chandragupta, describes Maharaja Srigupta as the founder of the Gupta dynasty. Ghatotkacha was a pre-imperial Gupta King in Northern India, the son of Maharaja Srigupta, who started the Gupta dynasty. He ruled from 280-319 CE. Chandragupta I was a major king of the Gupta empire around 320 CE. As the ruler of the Gupta empire, he is known for forging alliances with many powerful families in the Ganges region. Samudragupta was the ruler of the Gupta empire and successor to Chandragupta I. His empire included whole Bengal and Assam. He was the third ruler of the Gupta dynasty who ushered in the Golden Age of India. He was perhaps the greatest king of Gupta dynasty.

Chandragupta II was also known as Vikramaditya and was one of the most powerful emperors of the Gupta empire in India. His rule spanned 380-415 CE during which the Gupta empire reached its peak.

Malla Dynasty

It came into existence in 694 CE. The Western district (Bankura) in modern day West Bengal was once known as Mallabhum, the land of the Mallas. The Malla kings ruled the Western provinces of Bengal from the 7th century and their dynasty can be traced to this date. Some prominent Malla kings are Adi Malla (694-710), Jay Malla (710-720), Benu Malla (720-733), Kinu Malla (733-742), Indra Malla (742-757), etc. Mallabhum was the kingdom ruled by the Malla kings of Bishnupur. Their last king Kalipada Singha Thakur became the king of Mallabhum in 1930 and ruled till his death in 1983.

Medieval History of West Bengal

Many dynasties exercised their control over Bengal when monarchy came in fashion in India. In about 3rd century, The medieval history of Bengal witnessed disturbance in the law and order for more than a century. But in 8th century, the political structure of Northern and Eastern India including Bengal changed. The rule of Pala dynasty from about the middle of 8th century mark a new era in the history of West Bengal. *Early Medieval History of Bengal* Medieval history of Bengal included invasions, cultural reforms and architectural experts by different Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim rulers. The main rulers of medieval period were as follows:

Pala Empire

The Pala Empire (750- 1120) was the first independent Buddhist dynasty of Bengal. The Pala dynasty lasted for four centuries and ushered in a period of stability and prosperity in Bengal. They created many temples and works of art as well as supported the important ancient higher-learning institutions of Nalanda and Vikramashila. It was during the Pala period Bengal became the main center of Buddhist as well as secular learning.

Gopala I was the founder of the Pala dynasty of medieval Bengal. He came to power in 750 CE in the Gauda. Gopala reigned from about AD 750-770 and consolidated his position by extending his control over all of Bengal. Gopala's empire was greatly expanded by Dharmapala and Devapala.

Dharmapala was the second ruler of the Pala empire of Bengal region in the Indian sub-continent. He was the son and successor of Gopala. He adopted the title Paramesvara Paramabhattacharya Maharajadhiraja. He ruled from 770 to 810 CE. He built Somapura Mahavihara in Paharpur (Naogaon district, now in Bangladesh) which is one of the greatest Viharas in the Indian sub-continent. Devapala was the third king in the line and had succeeded his father Dharmapala. He is regarded as the most powerful Pala ruler. He ruled from 810 to 850 CE. Like his father, Devapala was a great patron of Buddhism and his fame spread to many Buddhist countries outside India.

Chandra Dynasty

From the beginning of the 10th century CE they ruled over the kingdom of Harikela in

Eastern Bengal. Their empire was ruled from their capital, Vikrampur (modern Munshiganj) and was powerful enough to militarily oppose the Pala Empire to the North-West. The rule of Chandra dynasty came to end after the last ruler of the Chandra dynasty Govindachandra was defeated by the South Indian Emperor Rajendra Chola I of the Chola dynasty in the 11th century.

Sena Dynasty

The Sena rulers were descendend of the Karnataka migrants. They established their rule in Bengal after Chandra dynasty. The founder of the dynasty was Samantasena. His son Hemanta flourished in the last quarter of the 11th century AD who took advantage of the unstable political situation of Bengal. His son Vijayasena brought the family into limelight during his long reign of more than sixty years. The greatest ruler of the dynasty was Vijayasena (1095-1158 CE). He conquered nearly the whole of Bengal and was succeeded by his son Ballala Sena (1158-1179 CE). Ballala Sena conquered Gauda from the Pala and became the ruler of the Bengal delta and made Nabadwip his capital. Ballala Sena was the author of *Danasagara*, a work on Smriti and *Adbhuta Sagara*, a work on astronomy.

Ballala Sena is assigned with an important social movement known as Kulinism by which the nobility of birth and purity of blood were carefully protected. Ballala Sena's succeeded by his son Lakshmana Sena. Some scholars regard him as the founder of the Lakshmana Sena era of 1119 CE. On coming to the throne, he established himself as a conqueror and a patron of learning. He conquered Kalinga, Kamarupa and Benares. Lakshmana Sena's court was adorned with literary personalities like Jayadeva, the author of *Gita Govindam*, Halayudha, the linguist and Dhoyi, the poet of *Pavanadutam*. In 1203 CE, Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji attacked the capital Nabadwip, capture the capital city Gaud and annexed much of Bengal.

Deva Dynasty

It was a Hindu dynasty of medieval Bengal that ruled over Eastern Bengal after the collapse Sena Empire. The capital of this dynasty was Chittagaung in present-day Munshiganj district of Bangladesh. The inscriptional evidences show that this kingdom was extended up to the present-day Comilla-Noakhali-Chittagong region. Four rulers of this dynasty are known from the inscriptions:

Shantideva, Viradeva, Anandadeva and

Bhavadeva. The rules of the Devas was indeed a period of peace, prosperity and creative excellence, Damodardeva (1231-1243) was the most powerful ruler of this dynasty. He took the title of Ariraja-Danuja-Madhava Dasharathadeva and extended his kingdom to cover much of East Bengal. He made an alliance with Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban in 1281. His brother Bikramaditya Deva later moved to the Eastern side of the kingdom in 1294.

The *late medieval history of Bengal* started from the advent of Turk-Afghan rule in Bengal in the 13th century to the rule of Mughal Nawabs of 18th century CE in Bengal.

Turk-Afghan Rule

Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji's invasion to Bengal marked the advent of Turk-Afghan rule in Bengal. Khilji's rule in Bengal lasted from 1203 to 1213 CE. From the 13th century CE onwards Bengal region was controlled by the Bengal Sultanate, Hindu Rajas and Baro Bhuyan or warrior chiefs and landlords.

In 14th century, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (1320-25 CE) of Tughlaq dynasty turned his attention towards Bengal. After annexing Bengal in 1324, CE he placed

Nasiruddin on the throne of Bengal. He attempted to ensure the loyalty of Bengal by dividing it into three administrative divisions with capitals at Lakhnauti (North Bengal), Sonargaon (East Bengal) and Satgaon (South Bengal); but his measures failed. After the end of Turk-Afghan, Ilyas Shahi Dynasty started and Bengal came under the rule of Ilyas Shah.

Ilyas Shahi Dynasty

Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah founded the Ilyas Shahi dynasty which lasted from 1352-1414 CE in Bengal. They were patrons of art and literature. The massive Adina Masjid and Darasbari Masjid was built during this period. They encourage Bengali culture and literature. Ilyas Shahi dynasty was interrupted by an uprising by the Hindus under Raja Ganesha.

Ganesha Dynasty

This dynasty was founded in the Bengal region by Raja Ganesha in 1414 CE. Other kings of this dynasty were Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah and Shamsuddin Ahmad Shah who were originally Hindu but converted to Islam. They were son and grandson of Raja Ganesha respectively.

Hussain Shahi Dynasty

Alauddin Hussain Shah established this dynasty after defeating the Arabs in 1494 CE. He was an unbeatable warrior and his generosity to both Hindus and Muslims was legendary. Alauddin Hussain Shah (AD-1493-1519) is regarded as the greatest independent Muslim ruler of Bengal who brought cultural renaissance in Bengal. During his reign, Chaitanya preached Vaishnavism in Bengal.

Alauddin Hussain Shah was a prominent personality of Bengali literature. The Hindus honoured him as an avatar of Krishna, 'Nripati Tilak' (Crown of Kings) and 'Jagat Bhushan' (Adornment of the Universe). Hussain Shah's son, Nusrat Shah (AD 1519-32) succeeded him. He kept the kingdom intact but his hold on the Trans-Gandak region weakened due to the Mughal invasion.

Afghan Rule

Sher Shah established Afghan rule in Bengal by killing Ghiyasuddin Mahmud Shah the last independent Sultan of Bengal in 1538 CE. He extended Grand Trunk Road from Chittagong in the frontiers of the province of Bengal in North-East India to Kabul in Afghanistan. After Sher Shah's successor, Afghan rule in Bengal was carried

by Karrani family, who were among the principal ministers and officials of Sher Shah.

Karrani Dynasty

The Karrani dynasty was founded in 1564 CE by Taj Khan Karrani. It was the last dynasty to rule the Sultanate of Bengal. Taj Khan was formerly an employee of the Afghan Emperor Sher Shah Suri. From 1562 to 1564 CE, Taj Khan captured South-Eastern Bihar and Western part of Bengal. After the assassination of the last Muhammed Shahi ruler, he seized all of Bengal. Bengal had its capital at Sonargaon. Other prominent Karrani rulers were Sulaiman Khan Karrani and Daud Khan Karrani.

Mughal Rule in Bengal

After the defeat and death of Daud Khan Karrani, Bengal was made one of the Subas of Mughal empire by Akbar and Khan-i-Jahan was made the Subedar who ruled ably for over three years before his death in 1578 CE. Man Singh, appointed as Governor of Bengal in 1594 CE, strengthened the Mughal rule in Bengal. During the reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir, Bengal was finally integrated as a Mughal province. During this time Bengal witnessed many

revolts by powerful zamindars, prominent among which were the revolts of Musa Khan, Satarajit, Raja Pratapaditya, Ramchandra, etc. On the whole, peace and prosperity prevailed in Bengal from 1628 to 1707 CE during the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. During this long period, Bengal did not have any separate identity and its history merely formed a part of the history of the Mughal empire. Bengal remained under Mughal control till the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 CE. Taking privilege of Aurangzeb's death, his Governor Murshid Quli Khan declared himself Nawab making Murshidabad his capital.

Nawabs of Bengal

Nawab is the title given by Muslim Emperor to the Muslim rulers of the Princely States. They were given primary duty to administer their province.

Murshid Quli Khan

The first of the Nawabs, who was appointed by Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar as the Nawab of Bengal in 1717 CE, reigned over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from his capital Murshidabad which he had transferred from Dacca. He changed Jagirdari system to the Mal Jasmani system, later which transformed into Zamindari system. He sent revenues from the state to the Mughal empire. He also opened a mint and introduced the 'Zurbe Murshidabad' coin. Murshid Quli Khan had built the magnificent Katra Masjid. After his death in 1727 CE, he was buried under the steps of Katra Masjid.

Sarfaraz Khan

Sarfaraz Khan (1739-1740 CE) was the son of Shuja-ud-Din and grandson of Mursid Quli Khan. He received the imperial titles of 'Motamul-ul-Mulk' and 'Ala-ud-Din Haridar Jung'. His throne ended in 1740 CE only after 13 months of reign, when he was defeated in the 'Battle of Giria' on 10th April, 1740 by Alivardi Khan. The Nasiri dynasty of Murshid Quli Khan ended with the death of Sarfaraz Khan.