

41st International Film Festival of India 2010 Awards

The 41st International Film Festival of India (IFFI) concluded in the Goa's capital of Panaji on December 2, 2010 evening with the Bengali filmmaker Gautam Ghose's "Moner Manush" winning the Golden Peacock award.

Danish filmmaker Susanne Bier's "In a Better World" got the Silver Peacock award for the best director. Guven Kirac, who acted in the Turkish film "The Crossing", won the Silver Peacock for the best actor, while Magdalena Boczarska won the Silver Peacock for the best actress for her performance in the Polish film "Little Rose".

The special jury award was split between the film "Just Another Love Story" from India and "Boy" from New Zealand.

Award winner details are given below:

Golden Peacock Award (Best Film)

Film: "Moner Manush"

Award Winner (Director): Shri Gautam Ghosh's

Silver Peacock Award

Film: "In a Better World"

Best Director

Award Winner (Director): Susanne Bier

Special Jury Award

Film: 'Just Another Love Story' (India) & "Boy" (New Zealand)

Film: "The Crossing" (Turkish)

Best Actor Award

Film: "The Crossing" (Turkish)

Award Winner: Guven Kirac (Actor)

Best Actress Award

Film: "Little Rose". (Poland)

Award Winner: Magdalena Boczarska (Actress)

IMF describes India's high economic growth amazing

International Monetary Fund described India's high economic growth amazing but warned that it had the potential to fuel inflation and widen current account deficit. IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss Kahn told reporters in New Delhi that the growth figures so far indicate that India will achieve the target of 9% growth this fiscal. He added India is growing at a pace forecast by IMF and that gave him the confidence to say that India would have more influence on global economy in the times to come. He, however, cautioned that India needed a lot to do in terms of infrastructure development and fight against inequality. To a question on whether European economy was in a deep crisis, he said situation in Europe is serious but expressed the hope that Ireland's economy would come back on track soon. He suggested that someone from outside United States and Europe to take over as his successor and also to head the World Bank.

Attacks against WikiLeaks, Julian Assange and The Guardian website

As "massive" cyberwarfare against the WikiLeaks website continue, the website is forced to change its web address after EveryDNS kills its domain due to the disruption caused to its other customers by the attacks. United States authorities are accused of carrying out the cyber attacks against the website. (The Guardian) (BBC). Spokesperson Julian Assange calls for Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper's former chief of staff Tom Flanagan to be charged with "incitement to commit murder" after Flanagan urged Barack Obama to "put out a contract" and "assassinate" Assange. Assange speaks of the precautions he has to take against such threats of death, with American politician Mike Huckabee also calling for executions to be carried out. (Toronto Star) (Al Jazeera)

Julian Assange gives a live question and answer session on the website of The Guardian newspaper. (The Guardian) (Al Jazeera)

The Guardian's web servers are "crippled" as the session is going live. (The Wall Street Journal)

The French government places political pressure on its internet use governing body, warning of "consequences" for anyone assisting WikiLeaks in the country. OVH responds, saying "it's not up to politicians or OVH to decide the site's closure" and seeks legal advice from a judge. (The Guardian) (AFP via France24). A court in Lahore dismisses a petition seeking a ban on the WikiLeaks website, with the judge ruling such a ban to be "unmaintainable" and that "We must bear the truth, no matter how harmful it is". (DAWN). U.S. Congressman Ron Paul of Texas calls for WikiLeaks to receive similar protections to mainstream media, saying when "truth becomes treason, then we're in big trouble".

History of India and Indian National Movement

The history of India begins with evidence of human activity of *Homo sapiens* as long as 75,000 years ago, or with earlier hominids including *Homo erectus* from about 500,000 years ago. The Indus Valley Civilization, which spread and flourished in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent from c. 3300 to 1300 BCE, was the first major civilization in India. A sophisticated and technologically advanced urban culture developed in the Mature Harappan period, from 2600 to 1900 BCE. This Bronze Age civilization collapsed before the end of the second millennium BCE and was followed by the Iron Age Vedic Civilization, which extended over much of the Indo-Gangetic plain and which witnessed the rise of major polities known as the Mahajanapadas. In one of these kingdoms, Magadha, Mahavira and Gautama Buddha were born in the 6th or 5th century BCE and propagated their *āramanic* philosophies.

Almost all of the subcontinent was conquered by the Maurya Empire during the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE. It subsequently became fragmented, with various parts ruled by numerous Middle kingdoms for the next 1,500 years. This is known as the classical period of Indian history, during which India has sometimes been estimated to have had the largest economy of the ancient and medieval world, controlling between one third and one fourth of the world's wealth up to the 18th century.

Much of northern and central India was once again united in the 4th century CE, and remained so for two centuries thereafter, under the Gupta Empire. This period, witnessing a Hindu religious and intellectual resurgence, is known among its admirers as the "Golden Age of India". During the same time, and for several centuries afterwards, southern India, under the rule of the Chalukyas, Cholas, Pallavas, and Pandyas, experienced its own golden age. During this period, aspects of Indian civilization, administration, culture, and religion (Hinduism and Buddhism) spread to much of Asia.

The southern state of Kerala had maritime business links with the Roman Empire from around 77 CE. Islam was introduced in Kerala through this route by Muslim traders. Muslim rule in the subcontinent began in 712 CE when the Arab general Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sindh and Multan in southern Punjab,^[1] setting the stage for several successive invasions from Central Asia between the 10th and 15th centuries CE, leading to the formation of Muslim empires in the Indian subcontinent such as the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire.

Mughal rule came to cover most of the northern parts of the subcontinent. Mughal rulers introduced Middle Eastern art and architecture to India. In addition to the Mughals and various Rajput kingdoms, several independent Hindu states, such as the Vijayanagara Empire, the Maratha Empire, and the Ahom Kingdom, flourished contemporaneously in southern, western, and northeastern India respectively. The Mughal Empire suffered a gradual decline in the early 18th century, which provided opportunities for the Afghans, Balochis, Sikhs, and Marathas to exercise control over large areas in the northwest of the subcontinent until the British East India Company gained ascendancy over South Asia.

Beginning in the mid-18th century and over the next century, India was gradually annexed by the British East India Company. Dissatisfaction with Company rule led to the Indian Rebellion of 1857, after which India was directly administered by the British Crown and witnessed a period of both rapid development of infrastructure and economic decline. During the first half of the 20th century, a nationwide struggle for independence was launched by the Indian National Congress and later joined by the Muslim League. The subcontinent gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, after being partitioned into the dominions of India and Pakistan.

Ancient History

India's history and culture is dynamic, spanning back to the beginning of human civilization. It begins with a mysterious culture along the Indus River and in farming communities in the southern lands of India. The history of India is punctuated by

constant integration of migrating people with the diverse cultures that surround India. Available evidence suggests that the use of iron, copper and other metals was widely prevalent in the Indian sub-continent at a fairly early period, which is indicative of the progress that this part of the world had made. By the end of the fourth millennium BC, India had emerged as a region of highly developed civilization.

The Indus Valley Civilization

The History of India begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization, more precisely known as Harappan Civilization. It flourished around 2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia, what today is Pakistan and Western India. The Indus Valley was home to the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China. Nothing was known about this civilization till 1920s when the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. Mohenjodaro and Harappa were unearthed. The ruins of buildings and other things like household articles, weapons of war, gold and silver ornaments, seals, toys, pottery wares, etc., show that some four to five thousand years ago a highly developed Civilization flourished in this region.

The Indus valley civilization was basically an urban civilization and the people lived in well-planned and well-built towns, which were also the centers for trade. The ruins of Mohenjodaro and Harappa show that these were magnificent merchant cities-well planned, scientifically laid, and well looked after. They had wide roads and a well-developed drainage system. The houses were made of baked bricks and had two or more storeys.

The highly civilized Harappans knew the art of growing cereals, and wheat and barley constituted their staple food. They consumed vegetables and fruits and ate mutton, pork and eggs as well. Evidences also show that they wore cotton as well as woollen garments. By 1500 BC, the Harappan culture came to an end. Among various causes ascribed to the decay of Indus Valley Civilization are the invasion by the Aryans, the recurrent floods and other natural causes like earthquake, etc.

Pre-Historic era

Stone Age

Isolated remains of *Homo erectus* in Hathnora in the Narmada Valley in central India indicate that India might have been inhabited since at least the Middle Pleistocene era, somewhere between 500,000 and 200,000 years ago. Recent finds in Tamil Nadu (at c. 75,000 years ago, before and after the explosion of the Toba volcano) indicate the presence of the first anatomically modern humans in the area.

Tools crafted by proto-humans that have been dated back two million years have been discovered in the northwestern part of the subcontinent. The ancient history of the region includes some of South Asia's oldest settlements and some of its major civilizations. The earliest archaeological site in the subcontinent is the palaeolithic hominid site in the Soan River valley. Soanian sites are found in the Sivalik region across what are now India, Pakistan, and Nepal.

The Mesolithic period in the Indian subcontinent was followed by the Neolithic period, when more extensive settlement of the subcontinent occurred after the end of the last Ice Age approximately 12,000 years ago. The first confirmed semipermanent settlements appeared 9,000 years ago in the Bhimbetka rock shelters in modern Madhya Pradesh, India.

Early Neolithic culture in South Asia is represented by the Mehrgarh findings (7000 BCE onwards) in present-day Balochistan, Pakistan.^[12] Traces of a Neolithic culture have been alleged to be submerged in the Gulf of Khambhat in India, radiocarbon dated to 7500 BCE. However, the one dredged piece of wood in question was found in an area of strong ocean currents. Neolithic agriculture cultures sprang up in the

Indus Valley region around 5000 BCE, in the lower Gangetic valley around 3000 BCE, and in later South India, spreading southwards and also northwards into Malwa around 1800 BCE. The first urban civilization of the region began with the Indus Valley Civilization.

Bronze Age

The Bronze Age in the Indian subcontinent began around 3300 BCE with the early Indus Valley Civilization. It was centered on the Indus River and its tributaries which extended into the Ghaggar-Hakra River valley, the Ganges-Yamuna Doab, Gujarat, and southeastern Afghanistan.

The civilization is primarily located in modern-day India (Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan provinces) and Pakistan (Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan provinces). Historically part of Ancient India, it is one of the world’s earliest urban civilizations, along with Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt. Inhabitants of the ancient Indus river valley, the Harappans, developed new techniques in metallurgy and handicraft (carneol products, seal carving), and produced copper, bronze, lead, and tin.

The Mature Indus civilization flourished from about 2600 to 1900 BCE, marking the beginning of the urban civilization on the subcontinent. The civilization included urban centers such as Dholavira, Kalibangan, Rupar, Rakhigarhi, and Lothal in modern-day India, and Harappa, Ganeriwala, and Mohenjo-daro in modern-day Pakistan. The civilization is noted for its cities built of brick, roadside drainage system, and multistoried houses.

Early historic period

Vedic civilization

The Vedic civilization is the earliest civilization in the history of ancient India associated with the coming of Aryans. It is named after the Vedas, the early literature of the Hindu people. The Vedic Civilization flourished along the river Saraswati, in a region that now consists of the modern Indian states of Haryana and Punjab. Vedic is synonymous with Aryans and Hinduism, which is another name for religious and spiritual thought that has evolved from the Vedas. The largely accepted view is that a section of Aryans reached the frontiers of the Indian subcontinent around 2000 BC and first settled in Punjab and it is here, in this land, where the hymns of Rigveda were composed.

The Aryans lived in tribes and spoke Sanskrit, which belonged to the Indo-European group of languages. Gradually, the Aryans intermingled with the local people and a historic synthesis was worked out between the Aryan tribes and the original inhabitants. This synthesis broadly came to be known as Hinduism. The Ramayana and Mahabharata were the two great epics of this period.

The Buddhist Era

During the life time of Lord Gautam Buddha, sixteen great powers (Mahajanpadas) existed in the 7th and early 6th centuries BC. Among the more important republics were the Sakyas of Kapilavastu and the Licchavis of Vaishali. Besides the republics, there were monarchical states, among which the important ones were Kaushambi (Vatsa), Magadha, Kosala and Avanti. These states were ruled by vigorous personalities who had embarked upon the policies of aggrandisement and absorption of neighbouring states. However, there were distinct signs of the republican states while those under the monarchs were expanding.

Buddha was born in BC 560 and died at the age of eighty in BC 480. The place of his birth was a grove known as Lumbini, near the city of Kapilavastu, at the foot of Mount Palpa in the Himalayan ranges within Nepal. Buddha, whose original name was Siddhartha Gautama, was the founder of Buddhism, the religion and the philosophical system that evolved into a great culture throughout much of southern and eastern Asia.

Mahajanapadas

The Mahajanapadas were the sixteen most powerful kingdoms and republics of the era, located mainly across the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains, however there were a number of smaller kingdoms stretching the length and breadth of Ancient India.

In the later Vedic Age, a number of small kingdoms or city states had covered the subcontinent, many mentioned in Vedic, early Buddhist and Jaina literature as far

back as 1000 BCE. By 500 BCE, sixteen monarchies and “republics” known as the Mahajanapadas — Kasi, Kosala, Anga, Magadha, Vajji (or Vriji), Malla, Chedi, Vatsa (or Vamsa), Kuru, Panchala, Matsya (or Machcha), Surasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhara, and Kamboja — stretched across the Indo-Gangetic Plain from modern-day Afghanistan to Bengal and Maharastra. This period saw the second major rise of urbanism in India after the Indus Valley Civilization.

Many smaller clans mentioned within early literature seem to have been present across the rest of the subcontinent. Some of these kings were hereditary; other states elected their rulers. The educated speech at that time was Sanskrit, while the languages of the general population of northern India are referred to as Prakrits. Many of the sixteen kingdoms had coalesced to four major ones by 500/400 BCE, by the time of Siddhartha Gautama. These four were Vatsa, Avanti, Kosala, and Magadha.

Hindu rituals at that time were complicated and conducted by the priestly class. It is thought that the Upanishads, late Vedic texts dealing mainly with philosophy, were composed in the later Vedic Age and early in this period of the Mahajanapadas (from about 600 to 400 BCE). The Upanishads had a substantial effect on Indian philosophy and were contemporary with the development of Buddhism and Jainism, indicating a golden age of thought in this period.

It is believed that in 537 BCE, that Siddhartha Gautama attained the state of “enlightenment” and became known as the “Buddha” - the enlightened one. Around the same time, Mahavira (the 24th Jain *tirthankar* according to Jains) propagated a similar theology that was to later become Jainism.^[24] However, Jain orthodoxy believes it predates all known time. The Vedas are believed to have documented a few Jain *tirthankars* and an ascetic order similar to the *sramana* movement.

The Buddha’s teachings and Jainism had doctrines inclined toward asceticism, and they were preached in Prakrit, which helped them gain acceptance amongst the masses. They have profoundly influenced practices that Hinduism and Indian spiritual orders are associated with, including vegetarianism, prohibition of animal slaughter and *ahimsa* (non-violence). While the geographic impact of Jainism was limited to India, Buddhist nuns and monks eventually spread the teachings of Buddha to Central Asia, East Asia, Tibet, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.

Persian and Greek conquests

Much of the northwestern subcontinent (present-day eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan) came under the rule of the Persian Achaemenid Empire in c. 520 BCE, during the reign of Darius the Great, and remained so for two centuries. In 326 BCE, Alexander the Great conquered Asia Minor and the Achaemenid Empire, reaching the northwest frontiers of the Indian subcontinent. There he defeated King Porus in the Battle of the Hydaspes (near modern-day Jhelum, Pakistan) and conquered much of the Punjab. Alexander’s march east put him in confrontation with the Nanda Empire of Magadha and the Gangaridai Empire of Bengal. His army, exhausted and frightened by the prospect of facing larger Indian armies at the Ganges River, mutinied at the Hyphasis (modern Beas River) and refused to march further East. Alexander, after the meeting with his officer, Coenus, was convinced that it was better to return. The Persian and Greek invasions had important repercussions on Indian civilization. The political systems of the Persians were to influence future forms of governance on the subcontinent, including the administration of the Mauryan dynasty. In addition, the region of Gandhara, or present-day eastern Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan, became a melting pot of Indian, Persian, Central Asian, and Greek cultures and gave rise to a hybrid culture, Greco-Buddhism, which lasted until the 5th century CE and influenced the artistic development of Mahayana Buddhism.

Alexander’s Invasion

In 326 BC, Alexander invaded India, after crossing the river Indus he advanced towards Taxila. He then challenged king Porus , ruler of the kingdom between the rivers Jhelum and Chenab. The Indians were defeated in the fierce battle, even though they fought with elephants, which the Macedonians had never before seen. Alexander captured Porus and, like the other local rulers he had defeated, allowed him to continue to govern his territory.

During this trip to rivers Hydaspes and Indus in the south, Alexander sought out the Indian philosophers, the Brahmins, who were famous for their wisdom, and debated

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with them on philosophical issues. He became legendary for centuries in India for being both, a wise philosopher and a fearless conqueror.

One of the villages in which the army halted belonged to the Mallis, who were said to be one of the most warlike of the Indian tribes. Alexander was wounded several times in this attack, most seriously when an arrow pierced his breastplate and his ribcage. The Macedonian officers rescued him in a narrow escape from the village.

Alexander and his army reached the mouth of the Indus in July 325 BC, and turned westward for home.

The Mauryan Empire

The period of the Mauryan Empire (322 BC-185 BC) marked a new epoch in the history of India. It is said to be a period when chronology became definite. It was a period when politics, art, trade and commerce elevated India to a glorious height. It was a period of unification of the territories which lay as fragmented kingdoms. Moreover, Indian contact with the outside world was established effectively during this period.

The confusion following the death of Alexander gave Chandragupta Maurya an opportunity to liberate the countries from the yoke of the Greeks, and thus occupy the provinces of Punjab and Sindh. He later overthrew the power of Nandas at Magadha with the aid of Kautilya, and founded a glorious Mauryan empire in 322 BC. Chandragupta, who ruled from 324 to 301 BC, thus, earned the title of liberator and the first emperor of Bharata.

At a higher age, Chandragupta got interested in religion and left his throne to his son Bindusar in 301 BC. Bindusar conquered the Highland of Deccan during his reign of 28 years and gave his throne to his son Ashoka in 273 BC. Ashoka emerged not only as the most famous king of the Maurya dynasty, but is also regarded as one of the greatest king of India and the world.

His empire covered the whole territory from Hindu Kush to Bengal and extended over Afghanistan, Baluchistan and the whole of India with the exception of a small area in the farthest south. The valleys of Nepal and Kashmir were also included in his empire.

The most important event of Ashoka’s reign was the conquest of Kalinga (modern Orissa) which proved to be the turning point of his life. The Kalinga war witnessed terrible manslaughter and destruction. The sufferings and atrocities of the battlefield lacerated the heart of Ashoka. He made a resolve not to wage war any more. He realised the wickedness of worldly conquest and the beauty of moral and spiritual triumph. He was drawn to the teachings of Buddha and devoted his life to the conquest of men’s heart by the law of duty or piety. He evolved a policy of Dharma Vijaya, ‘Conquest by Piety’.

End of the Mauryan Empire

Ashoka was succeeded by weak rulers, which encouraged the provinces to proclaim their independence. The arduous task of administering such a vast empire could not be executed by the weak rulers. The mutual quarrel among the successors also contributed to the decline of the Mauryan Empire.

In the beginning of the 1st century A.D., the Kushanas established their authority over the north-west frontier of India. The most famous among the Kushana kings was Kanishka (125 A.D.-162 A.D.), who was the third in the Kushana dynasty. The Kushana rule continued till the middle of 3rd century A.D. The most notable achievement of their rule was the development of Gandhara School of Art and further spread of Buddhism into distant regions of Asia.

Early Middle Kingdoms — the Golden Age

The middle period was a time of notable cultural development. The Satavahana dynasty, also known as the Andhras, ruled in southern and central India after around 230 BC. Satakarni, the sixth ruler of the Satvahana dynasty, defeated the Sunga Empire of north India. Afterwards, Kharavela, the warrior king of Kalinga, ruled a vast empire and was responsible for the propagation of Jainism in the Indian subcontinent. The Kharavelan Jain empire included a formidable maritime empire with trading routes linking it to Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Borneo, Bali, Sumatra, and Java. Colonists from Kalinga settled in Sri Lanka, Burma, as well as the Maldives and the Malay Archipelago. The Kuninda Kingdom was a small Himalayan state that survived from around the 2nd century BCE to

roughly the 3rd century CE. The Kushanas migrated from Central Asia into northwestern India in the middle of the 1st century CE and founded an empire that eventually stretched from Tajikistan to the middle Ganges. The Western Satraps (35-405 CE) were Saka rulers of the western and central part of India. They were the successors of the Indo-Scythians and contemporaries of the Kushans who ruled the northern part of the Indian subcontinent and the Satavahana (Andhra) who ruled in central and southern India.

Different dynasties such as the Pandyan, Cholas, Cheras, Kadambas, Western Gangas, Pallavas, and Chalukyas, dominated the southern part of the Indian peninsula at different periods of time. Several southern kingdoms formed overseas empires that stretched into Southeast Asia. The kingdoms warred with each other and the Deccan states for domination of the south. The Kalabhras, a Buddhist dynasty, briefly interrupted the usual domination of the Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas in the south.

Northwestern hybrid cultures

The northwestern hybrid cultures of the subcontinent included the *Indo-Greeks*, the *Indo-Scythians*, the *Indo-Parthians*, and the *Indo-Sassinids*. The first of these, the Indo-Greek kingdom Kingdom, was founded when the Greco-Bactrian king Demetrius invaded the region in 180 BCE, extending his rule over various parts of present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan. Lasting for almost two centuries, the kingdom was ruled by a succession of more than 30 Greek kings, who were often in conflict with each other. The Indo-Scythians were a branch of the Indo-European Sakas (Scythians) who migrated from southern Siberia, first into Bactria, subsequently into Sogdiana, Kashmir, Arachosia, and Gandhara, and finally into India. Their kingdom lasted from the middle of the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century BCE. Yet another kingdom, the Indo-Parthians (also known as the Pahlavas), came to control most of present-day Afghanistan and northern Pakistan, after fighting many local rulers such as the Kushan ruler Kujula Kadphises, in the Gandhara region. The Sassanid empire of Persia, who was contemporaneous with the Gupta Empire, expanded into the region of present-day Pakistan, where the mingling of Indian culture and the culture of Iran gave birth to a hybrid culture under the Indo-Sassanids.

Roman trade with India

Roman trade with India started around 1 CE, during the reign of Augustus and following his conquest of Egypt, which had been India’s biggest trade partner in the West.

The trade started by Eudoxus of Cyzicus in 130 BCE kept increasing, and according to Strabo, by the time of Augustus, up to 120 ships set sail every year from Myos Hormos on the Red Sea to India. So much gold was used for this trade, and apparently recycled by the Kushans for their own coinage, that Pliny the Elder (NH VI.101) complained about the drain of specie to India:

“India, China and the Arabian peninsula take one hundred million sesterces from our empire per annum at a conservative estimate: that is what our luxuries and women cost us. For what percentage of these imports is intended for sacrifices to the gods or the spirits of the dead?” —Pliny, *Historia Naturae* 12.41.84.

These trade routes and harbour are described in detail in the 1st century CE Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.

Classical Age

The Classical Age refers to the period when much of the Indian subcontinent was reunited under the Gupta Empire (ca. 320–550 CE). This period has been called the Golden Age of India and was marked by extensive achievements in science, technology, engineering, art, dialectic, literature, logic, mathematics, astronomy, religion, and philosophy that crystallized the elements of what is generally known as Hindu culture. The decimal numeral system, including the concept of zero, was invented in India during this period. The peace and prosperity created under leadership of Guptas enabled the pursuit of scientific and artistic endeavors in India.

Gupta Dynasty

After the Kushanas, the Guptas were the most important dynasty. The Gupta period has been described as the Golden Age of Indian history. The first famous king of the

Strategic Power struggle in Sri Lanka

Chitra Singh Rajput

After decades of strong-arming tiny neighbors Sri Lanka, India finds itself jostling for influence, as its power has blunted by the island nation's growing ties with Pakistan and China, with the end of civil war. While domestic political sensitivities over the fate of Sri Lanka's Tamils forced India to ease its leverage, China and Pakistan stepped into the breach, offering Colombo military assistance in its war against the Tamil Tiger rebels.

China in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has achieved military victory over Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This fight against the LTTE has had different connotations for both India and China. In the current scenario India had to be neutral as this definitely would have had repercussions on Indian soil. The involvement of Tamil's had put to test the Indian internal security. And thus the Indian government had to decide not to supply arms and ammunitions to the Sri Lankan government in its fight against the LTTE, but this neutral stand by the Indian government provided China with an opportunity to make headway into Sri Lanka and there is an urgent need for India to take note of this growing Chinese influence in Sri Lanka and in the Indian Ocean. In the past few years a number of high level meetings took place between China and Sri Lanka. Today China is heavily investing in the Sri Lankan domestic economy and thus driving the Sri Lankan economy. The Chinese are investing heavily in the field of infrastructure like the Norochcholai power plant which is set to be completed by the year 2010 and would be able to meet the Sri Lanka's power requirements to a very large extent. Apart from this China is also extensively involved in building the Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port. This will be significant in connecting the southern most part of the island with the existing shipping lanes. This will also provide China a firm ground in the Indian Ocean and in turn reduce its dependence on the existing routes. China still has unsolved issues in the South China Sea and this new port can help it reduce its dependence on that. When this port is completed it expected to have a container port, a bunkering system, an oil

refinery, an airport in addition to other facilities that are expected to transform it into a major transshipment location. This in addition to other ports which China is developing will be helpful for the Chinese navy for the purposes of repair and refuelling.

China also provided Colombo with arms sales including fighter jets, sophisticated radar and anti-aircraft guns. In 2008 Sri Lanka signed an arms deal with Beijing worth US \$ 37.6 million. China has also sold Jian-7 fighters, anti-aircraft guns and JY-11 3D air surveillance radars to the resurgent Sri Lankan Army, as it seeks to finish one of Asia's longest-running wars by squeezing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fighters in a shrinking patch of the jungle in the north. This has proved to be beneficial for Colombo in its war against the LTTE.

China has also used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to block the discussion on steps undertaken by the Sri Lankan government in its fight against the LTTE. This was welcomed by Colombo with claims that these moves in the UN, "have been shot down by Sri Lanka's steadfast ally in its war on terrorism, i.e. China." Well it would not be wrong to conclude that this step was taken by Beijing in order to strengthen its influence in the region.

It has been Beijing's policy to not interfere in the domestic matters of any country. But in this regard it did go out of its way to show its support for the Sri Lankan government's policies. With this backdrop both India need to take note of the growing Chinese influence in Sri Lanka. Thus out of humanitarian concern, India has sent a military medical team to Sri Lanka.

This increasing closeness between Colombo and Beijing is a reason for concern for New Delhi. During the construction of the port a large number of Chinese experts are to be expected to be present in the region and this is proving to be a security concern for the Indian side.

Another outcome of Chinese diplomacy is that Beijing has decided to grant Sri Lanka dialogue partner status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organiza-

tion (SCO).

This growing Chinese interest in the Indian Ocean has made it quite clear that Beijing is following a planned strategy to encircle India in the sub-continent. The 'all weather friendship' between Pakistan and China has been a cause of concern for India for a long time. But with the passage of time China has successfully undermined Indian influence in countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. China is also trying to increase its influence in Afghanistan as well. And with such warming ties between Colombo and Beijing it is quite obvious that China has been successful in diplomatically making India the second most important player in its own region.

India's role in Sri Lanka India has been limited by its insistence on protection of Sri Lanka's Tamils, who are closely linked to 60 million Tamils in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, across a narrow strait from Sri Lanka. The shine has somewhat gone off from the leverage India has over Sri Lanka, partly because India has allowed it to happen.

India trained and armed Tamil Tiger rebels in the early 1980s and followed it up a disastrous 1987-1990 peacekeeping foray into Sri Lanka, which has cast a long shadow over the war and made Sri Lanka wary of its giant neighbour. National Security Adviser MK Narayanan asked Sri Lanka to stop seeking arms from China or Pakistan last year, saying India as the regional power would still meet its defence requirements.

Narayanan made an unscheduled visit to Colombo last year to ensure Sri Lanka did not become a cockpit of regional rivalry, as with Afghanistan where Islamabad feared Indian influence. Short while ago Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee visited Sri Lanka and meets President Mahinda Rajapaksa and discussed safety measures for Tamils trapped in fighting between the army and Tamil Tigers separatists and post-war reconstruction. The visit was also to cool tensions with Tamil Nadu politicians in India's ruling coalition who were sympathetic to the Tigers and demanded India

broker a ceasefire.

Pakistan in Sri Lanka

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari make a maiden visit to Sri Lanka. During the tour he discussed with his counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksha cooperation on security and trade issues. Zardari become the first head of state to visit Sri Lanka after President Rajapaksha assumes duties for his second term of office on 19th November. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi will be accompanying Zardari. A trade and business delegation will be a part of the Pakistani delegation. Pakistan is a key supplier of small arms to Sri Lanka and also offers training to its security personnel. Rajapaksa has regularly praised Pakistan for the support the country has extended in the military campaign against Tiger rebels. Leading players in Pakistan's business and industry had expressed interest to invest in various projects in Sri Lanka. Some of them want to explore the possibility of establishing projects in east Sri Lanka besides other locations. Pakistan also supplied the army small arms and multi-barrel rocket launchers and trained the Sri Lankan air force in precision-guided attacks against the rebels.

Summary

The strategic battle in Sri Lanka is seen as part of a wider power struggle in South Asia, involving not only India and Pakistan but also China, which seeks to gain influence in the important economic region. China has made strides developing strategic assets, like the Gwadar port in Pakistan, the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota and assets in Yangon, part of a strategy to protect shipping lanes. Sri Lanka sits next to shipping lanes that feed 80 percent of China's and 65 percent of India's oil needs. There is a convergence of strategic interest in Sri Lanka among regional powers. But ignoring India may be hard for Sri Lanka, as the war appears to draw to a close; the focus is turning to the state of Sri Lanka's \$32 billion economy. Sri Lanka is suffering from costly short-term foreign debt. The war is expected to cost nearly \$2 billion this year. Indian investments in Sri Lanka have grown.



What is Hacking

Hacking is the process of achieving access to a computer or computer network without legal authorization. It is the most common activity amongst teenagers and young adults. Many hackers are keen to learn about computers and consider hacking as an art. They want to build programs to display their problem solving skills and not to harm others.

A hacker first tries their skills on easy targets and then after successful professional attacks on more secured sites. Their goal is to have complete access on any computer so that they can delete, edit or comply any files or directory and also can install any program.

Computer hackers are employed by many companies to get complete access on the computer so that they can delete, edit, copy any file or install as their technical staff. These hackers use their skills to find faults in company's security system so that it can be repaired quickly. Sometimes hacking also prevents serious identity related crimes.

It is an offence if hackers steal private information or changes some financial or personal data. All the types of unauthorized access can lead the hacker towards the prison for 20 years.

One way of hacking is to get a copy of password file which stores all usernames and password in encrypted form or they can also use brute-force attack trying all the possible combinations of letters. Hacking is also done by emailing a program to anyone that runs automatically when clicked on some link or attachment. In this way you can install a program on a computer that can give you access of that computer. Another method of hacking is IP spoofing. IP spoofing is the creation of internet protocol packets with the fake IP address in order to conceal the identity of the sender. To protect your computer from hacking, you should install firewalls or other antivirus programs on the computer and also check for the updating of the machine at regular intervals.

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Gupta dynasty was Ghatotkacha’s son Chandragupta I. He married Kumaradevi, the daughter of the chief of the Licchavis. This marriage was a turning point in the life of Chandragupta I. He got Pataliputra in dowry from the Lichhavis. From Pataliputra, he laid the foundation of his empire and started conquering many neighbouring states with the help of the Licchavis. He ruled over Magadha (Bihar), Prayaga and Saketa (east Uttar Pradesh). His kingdom extended from the river Ganges to Allahabad. Chandragupta I also got the title of Maharajadhiraja (King of Kings) and ruled for about fifteen years.

Chandragupta I was succeeded by Samudragupta in about 330 A.D., who reigned for about fifty years. He was a great military genius and is said to have commanded a military campaign across the Deccan, and also subdued the forest tribes of the Vindhya region.

Samudragupta’s successor Chandragupta II, also known as Vikramaditya, conquered the extensive territories of Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawar. This provided exceptional wealth, which added to the prosperity of the Guptas. The Guptas in this period engaged in sea trade with the countries of the west. It was most probably during his reign that Kalidas, the greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist, as well as many other scientist and scholars flourished.

The high points of this cultural creativity are magnificent architecture, sculpture, and painting. The Gupta period produced scholars such as Kalidasa, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Vishnu Sharma, and Vatsyayana who made great advancements in many academic fields. Science and political administration reached new heights during the Gupta era. Strong trade ties also made the region an important cultural center and established it as a base that would influence nearby kingdoms and regions in Burma, Sri Lanka, the Malay Archipelago, and Indochina.

The Gupta period marked a watershed of Indian culture: the Guptas performed Vedic sacrifices to legitimize their rule, but they also patronized Buddhism, which continued to provide an alternative to Brahmanical orthodoxy. The military exploits of the first three rulers—Chandragupta I (ca. 319–335), Samudragupta (ca. 335–376), and Chandragupta II (ca. 376–415) —brought much of India under their leadership. They successfully resisted the northwestern kingdoms until the arrival of the Hunas, who established themselves in Afghanistan by the first half of the 5th century, with their capital at Bamiyan. However, much of the Deccan and southern India were largely unaffected by these events in the north.

Harshavardhana

With the commencement of the 7th century, Harshavardhana (606-647 A.D.) ascended the throne of Thaneshwar and Kannauj on the death of his brother, Rajyavardhana. By 612 Harshavardhana consolidated his kingdom in northern India.

In 620 A.D. Harshavardhana invaded the Chalukya kingdom in the Deccan, which was then ruled by Pulakesin II. But the Chalukya resistance proved tough for Harshavardhana and he was defeated. Harshavardhana is well known for his religious toleration, able administration and diplomatic relations. He maintained diplomatic relations with China and sent envoys, who exchanged ideas of the Chinese rulers and developed their knowledge about each other.

The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, who visited India during his reign, has given a vivid description of the social, economic and religious conditions, under the rule of Harsha spoke highly of the king. Harsha’s death, once again, left India without any central paramount power.

The Chalukyas of Badami

The Chalukyas were a great power in southern India between 6th and 8th century A.D. Pulakesin I, the first great ruler of this dynasty ascended the throne in 540 A.D. and having made many splendid victories, established a mighty empire. His sons Kirtivarman and Mangalesa further extended the kingdom by waging many successful wars against the neighbours including the Mauryans of the Konkans.

Pulakesin II, the son of Kirtivarman, was one of the greatest ruler of the Chalukya dynasty. He ruled for almost 34 years. In this long reign, he consolidated his authority in Maharashtra and conquered large parts of the Deccan. His greatest achievement was his victory in the defensive war against Harshavardhana.

However, Pulakesin was defeated and killed by the Pallav king Narasimhavarman in 642 A.D. His son Vikramaditya, who was also as great a ruler as his father,

succeeded him. He renewed the struggle against his southern enemies. He recovered the former glory of the Chalukyas to a great extent. Even his great grandson, Vikramaditya II was also a great warrior. In 753 A.D., Vikramaditya and his son were overthrown by a chief named Dantidurga who laid the foundation of the next great empire of Karnataka and Maharashtra called Rashtrakutas.

The Pallavas of Kanchi

In the last quarter of the 6th century A.D. the Pallava king Sinhavishnu rose to power and conquered the area between the rivers Krishna and Cauveri. His son and successor Mahendravarman was a versatile genius, who unfortunately lost the northern parts of his dominion to the Chalukya king, Pulekesin II. But his son, Narsinhavarman I, crushed the power of Chalukyas. The Pallava power reached its glorious heights during the reign of Narsinhavarman II, who is well known for his architectural achievements. He built many temples, and art and literature flourished in his times. Dandin, the great Sanskrit scholar, lived in his court. However, after his death, the Pallava Empire began to decline and in course of time they were reduced to a mere local tribal power. Ultimately, the Cholas defeated the Pallava king Aparajita and took over their kingdom towards the close of the 9th century A.D.

The ancient history of India has seen the rise and downfall of several dynasties, which have left their legacies still resounding in the golden book of Indian history. With the end of the 9th century A.D., the medieval history of India started with the rise of empires such as the Palas, the Senas, the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas, and so on.

The Palas

Between 8th and 10th centuries A.D., a number of powerful empires dominated the eastern and northern parts of India. The Pala king Dharmapala, son of Gopala reigned from the late 8th century A.D. to early 9th century A.D. Nalanda University and Vikramashila University were founded by Dharmapala.

The Senas

After the decline of the Palas, the Sena dynasty established its rule in Bengal. The founder of the dynasty was Samantasena. The greatest ruler of the dynasty was Vijaysena. He conquered the whole of Bengal and was succeeded by his son Ballalasena. He reigned peacefully but kept his dominions intact. He was a great scholar and wrote four works including one on astronomy. The last ruler of this dynasty was Lakshmanasena under whose reign the Muslims invaded Bengal, and the empire fell.

The Pratihara

The greatest ruler of the Pratihara dynasty was Mihir Bhoja. He recovered Kanauj (Kanyakubja) by 836, and it remained the capital of the Pratiharas for almost a century. He built the city Bhojpal (Bhopal). Raja Bhoja and other valiant Gujara kings faced and defeated many attacks of the Arabs from west.

Between 915-918 A.D, Kanauj was attacked by a Rashtrakuta king, who devastated the city leading to the weakening of the Pratihara Empire. In 1018, Kannauj then ruled by Rajyapala Pratihara was sacked by Mahmud of Ghazni. The empire broke into independent Rajput states.

The Rashtrakutas

This dynasty, which ruled from Karnataka, is illustrious for several reasons. They ruled the territory vaster than that of any other dynasty. They were great patrons of art and literature. The encouragement that several Rashtrakuta kings provided to education and literature is unique, and the religious tolerance exercised by them was exemplary.

The Chola Empire of the South

It emerged in the middle of the 9th century A.D., covered a large part of Indian peninsula, as well as parts of Sri Lanka and the Maldives Islands.

The first important ruler to emerge from the dynasty was Rajaraja Chola I and his son and successor Rajendra Chola. Rajaraja carried forward the annexation policy of his father. He led armed expedition to distant lands of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

The successors of Rajendra I, Rajadhiraj and Rajendra II were brave rulers who fought fiercely against the later Chalukya kings, but could not check the decline of

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Chola Empire. The later Chola kings were weak and incompetent rulers. The Chola Empire thus lingered on for another century and a half, and finally came to an end with the invasion of Malik Kafur in the early 14th century A.D.

Medieval History

The Rise of Islam in South-Asia

The initial entry of Islam into South Asia came in the first century after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. The Umayyad caliph in Damascus sent an expedition to Baluchistan and Sindh in 711 led by Muhammad bin Qasim. He captured Sindh and Multan. Three hundred years after his death Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, the ferocious leader, led a series of raids against Rajput kingdoms and rich Hindu temples, and established a base in Punjab for future incursions. In 1024, the Sultan set out on his last famous expedition to the southern coast of Kathiawar along the Arabian Sea, where he sacked the city of Somnath and its renowned Hindu temple.

Muslim Invasion In India

Muhammad Ghori invaded India in 1175 A.D. After the conquest of Multan and Punjab, he advanced towards Delhi. The brave Rajput chiefs of northern India headed by Prithvi Raj Chauhan defeated him in the First Battle of Terrain in 1191 A.D. After about a year, Muhammad Ghori came again to avenge his defeat. A furious battle was fought again in Terrain in 1192 A.D. in which the Rajputs were defeated and Prithvi Raj Chauhan was captured and put to death. The Second Battle of Terrain, however, proved to be a decisive battle that laid the foundations of Muslim rule in northern India.

The Delhi Sultanate

The period between 1206 A.D. and 1526 A.D. in India's history is known as the Delhi Sultanate period. During this period of over three hundred years, five dynasties ruled in Delhi. These were: the Slave dynasty (1206-90), Khilji dynasty (1290-1320), Tughlaq dynasty (1320-1413), Sayyid dynasty (1414-51), and Lodhi dynasty (1451-1526).

After conquering Persia, the Islamic Caliphate incorporated parts of what is now Pakistan around 720 CE. The Muslim rulers were keen to invade India, which was a rich region, with a flourishing international trade and the only known diamond mines in the world. After several wars over three centuries between various north Indian kingdoms and the Caliphate, short-lived Islamic kingdoms (sultanates) were established across the northern subcontinent over a period of a few centuries. Additionally, Muslim trading communities had flourished throughout coastal south India, particularly in Kerala, where Muslim traders arrived in small numbers, mainly from the Arabian peninsula. This had marked the introduction of a third Abrahamic Middle Eastern religion, following Judaism and Christianity, often in puritanical form. Later, the Bahmani Sultanate and Deccan sultanates flourished in the south.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, Turks and Pashtuns invaded parts of northern India and established the Delhi Sultanate in the former Rajput holdings. The subsequent Slave dynasty of Delhi managed to conquer large areas of northern India, approximately equal in extent to the ancient Gupta Empire, while the Khilji dynasty was also able to conquer most of central India, but were ultimately unsuccessful in conquering and uniting the subcontinent. The Sultanate ushered in a period of Indian cultural renaissance. The resulting "Indo-Muslim" fusion of cultures left lasting syncretic monuments in architecture, music, literature, religion, and clothing. It is surmised that the language of Urdu (literally meaning "horde" or "camp" in various Turkic dialects) was born during the Delhi Sultanate period as a result of the intermingling of the local speakers of Sanskrit Prakrits with immigrants speaking Persian, Turkic, and Arabic under the Muslim rulers. The Delhi Sultanate is the only Indo-Islamic empire to have enthroned one of the few female rulers in India, Razia Sultana (1236–1240).

A Turco-Mongol conqueror in Central Asia, Timur (Tamerlane), attacked the reigning Sultan Nasir-u Din Mehmud of the Tughlaq Dynasty in the north Indian city of Delhi. The Sultan's army was defeated on December 17, 1398. Timur entered Delhi and the city was sacked, destroyed, and left in ruins, after Timur's army had killed and plundered for three days and nights. He ordered the whole city to be sacked except for the sayyids, scholars, and the other Muslims,; 100,000 war prisoners, mostly Hindus, were put to death in one day.

The Mughal era

In 1526, Babur, a Timurid descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan, swept across the Khyber Pass and established the Mughal Empire. However, his son Humayun was defeated by the Afghan warrior Sher Shah Suri in the year 1540, and Humayun was

forced to retreat to Kabul. After Sher Shah's death, his son Islam Shah Suri and the Hindu king Samrat Hem Chandra Vikramaditya, who had won 22 battles from Punjab to Bengal and had established a secular Hindu Raj, ruled North India from Delhi till 1556, when Akbar's forces defeated and killed Hemu in the Second Battle of Panipat on 6 November 1556.

The Mughal dynasty ruled most of the Indian subcontinent by 1600; it went into a slow decline after 1707 and was finally defeated during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, also called the 1857 War of Independence. This period marked vast social change in the subcontinent as the Hindu majority were ruled over by the Mughal emperors, most of whom showed religious tolerance, liberally patronising Hindu culture. The famous emperor Akbar, who was the grandson of Babar, tried to establish a good relationship with the Hindus. However, later emperors such as Aurangazeb tried to establish complete Muslim dominance, and as a result several historical temples were destroyed during this period and taxes imposed on non-Muslims. During the decline of the Mughal Empire, which at its peak occupied an area similar to the ancient Maurya Empire, several smaller states rose to fill the power vacuum and themselves were contributing factors to the decline. In 1739, Nader Shah, emperor of Iran, defeated the Mughal army at the huge Battle of Karnal. After this victory, Nader captured and sacked Delhi, carrying away many treasures, including the Peacock Throne.

The Mughals were perhaps the richest single dynasty to have ever existed. During the Mughal era, the dominant political forces consisted of the Mughal Empire and its tributaries and, later on, the rising successor states - including the Maratha confederacy - which fought an increasingly weak Mughal dynasty. The Mughals, while often employing brutal tactics to subjugate their empire, had a policy of integration with Indian culture, which is what made them successful where the short-lived Sultanates of Delhi had failed. Akbar the Great was particularly famed for this. Akbar declared "Amari" or non-killing of animals in the holy days of Jainism. He rolled back the *jizya* tax for non-Muslims. The Mughal emperors married local royalty, allied themselves with local *maharajas*, and attempted to fuse their Turko-Persian culture with ancient Indian styles, creating a unique Indo-Saracenic architecture. It was the erosion of this tradition coupled with increased brutality and centralization that played a large part in the dynasty's downfall after Aurangzeb, who unlike previous emperors, imposed relatively non-pluralistic policies on the general population, which often inflamed the majority Hindu population.

The Slave Dynasty

The concept of equality in Islam and Muslim traditions reached its climax in the history of South Asia when slaves were raised to the status of Sultan. The Slave Dynasty ruled the Sub-continent for about 84 years. It was the first Muslim dynasty that ruled India. Qutub-ud-din Aibak, a slave of Muhammad Ghori, who became the ruler after the death of his master, founded the Slave Dynasty. He was a great builder who built the majestic 238 feet high stone tower known as Qutub Minar in Delhi.

The next important king of the Slave dynasty was Shams-ud-din Iltutmush, who himself was a slave of Qutub-ud-din Aibak. Iltutmush ruled for around 26 years from 1211 to 1236 and was responsible for setting the Sultanate of Delhi on strong footings. Razia Begum, the capable daughter of Iltutmush, was the first and the only Muslim lady who ever adorned the throne of Delhi. She fought valiantly, but was defeated and killed.

Finally, the youngest son of Iltutmush, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud became Sultan in 1245. Though Mahmud ruled India for around 20 years, but throughout his tenure the main power remained in the hands of Balban, his Prime Minister. On death of Mahmud, Balban directly took over the throne and ruled Delhi. During his rule from 1266 to 1287, Balban consolidated the administrative set up of the empire and completed the work started by Iltutmush.

The Mughal Empire

In India, the Mughal Empire was one of the greatest empires ever. The Mughal Empire ruled hundreds of millions of people. India became united under one rule, and had very prosperous cultural and political years during the Mughal rule. There were many Muslim and Hindu kingdoms split all throughout India until the founders of the Mughal Empire came. There were some men such as Babar, grandson to the Great Asian conqueror Tamerlane and the conqueror Genghis Khan from the northern region of Ganges, river valley, who decided to take over Khyber, and eventually, all of India.

Babar (1526-1530): the great grandson of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan, was the first Mughal emperor in India. He confronted and defeated Lodhi in 1526 at the first

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battle of Panipat, and so came to establish the Mughal Empire in India. Babar ruled until 1530, and was succeeded by his son Humayun.

Humayun (1530-1540 and 1555-1556): the eldest son of Babar, succeeded his father and became the second emperor of the Mughal Empire. He ruled India for nearly a decade but was ousted by Sher Shah Suri, the Afghan ruler. Humayun wandered for about 15 years after his defeat. Meanwhile, Sher Shah Suri died and Humayun was able to defeat his successor, Sikandar Suri and regain his crown of the Hindustan. However, soon after, he died in 1556 at a young age of 48 years.

Sher Shah Suri (1540-1545): was an Afghan leader who took over the Mughal Empire after defeating Humayun in 1540. Sher Shah occupied the throne of Delhi for not more than five years, but his reign proved to be a landmark in the Sub-continent. As a king, he has several achievements in his credit. He established an efficient public administration. He set up a revenue collection system based on the measurement of land. Justice was provided to the common man. Numerous civil works were carried out during his short reign; planting of trees, wells and building of Sarai (inns) for travellers was done. Roads were laid; it was under his rule that the Grand Trunk road from Delhi to Kabul was built. The currency was also changed to finely minted silver coins called Dam. However, Sher Shah did not survive long after his accession on the throne and died in 1545 after a short reign of five years.

Akbar (1556-1605): Humayun’s heir, Akbar, was born in exile and was only 13 years old when his father died. Akbar’s reign holds a certain prominence in history; he was the ruler who actually fortified the foundations of the Mughal Empire. After a series of conquests, he managed to subdue most of India. Areas not under the empire were designated as tributaries. He also adopted a conciliatory policy towards the Rajputs, hence reducing any threat from them. Akbar was not only a great conqueror, but a capable organizer and a great administrator as well. He set up a host of institutions that proved to be the foundation of an administrative system that operated even in British India. Akbar’s rule also stands out due to his liberal policies towards the non-Muslims, his religious innovations, the land revenue system and his famous Mansabdari system. Akbar’s Mansabdari system became the basis of Mughal military organization and civil administration.

Akbar died in 1605, nearly 50 years after his ascension to the throne, and was buried outside of Agra at Sikandra. His son Jehangir then assumed the throne.

Jehangir: Akbar was succeeded by his son, Salim, who took the title of Jehangir, meaning “Conqueror of the World”. He married Mehr-un-Nisa whom he gave the title of Nur Jahan (light of the world). He loved her with blind passion and handed over the complete reins of administration to her. He expanded the empire through the addition of Kangra and Kistwar and consolidated the Mughal rule in Bengal. Jehangir lacked the political enterprise of his father Akbar. But he was an honest man and a tolerant ruler. He strived to reform society and was tolerant towards Hindus, Christians and Jews. However, relations with Sikhs were strained, and the fifth of the ten Sikh gurus, Arjun Dev, was executed at Jehangir’s orders for giving aid and comfort to Khusrav, Jehangir’s rebellious son. Art, literature, and architecture prospered under Jehangir’s rule, and the Mughal gardens in Srinagar remain an enduring testimony to his artistic taste. He died in 1627.

Shah Jahan: Jehangir was succeeded by his second son Khurram in 1628. Khurram took the name of Shah Jahan, i.e. the Emperor of the World. He further expanded his Empire to Kandhar in the north and conquered most of Southern India. The Mughal Empire was at its zenith during Shah Jahan’s rule. This was due to almost 100 years of unparalleled prosperity and peace. As a result, during this reign, the world witnessed the unique development of arts and culture of the Mughal Empire. Shah Jahan has been called the “architect king”. The Red Fort and the Jama Masjid, both in Delhi, stand out as towering achievements of both civil engineering and art. Yet above all else, Shah Jahan is remembered today for the Taj Mahal, the massive white marble mausoleum constructed for his wife Mumtaz Mahal along the banks of the Yamuna River in Agra.

Aurangzeb: Aurangzeb ascended the throne in 1658 and ruled supreme till 1707. Thus Aurangzeb ruled for 50 years, matching Akbar’s reign in longevity. But unfortunately he kept his five sons away from the royal court with the result that none of them was trained in the art of government. This proved to be very damaging for the Mughals later on. During his 50 years of rule, Aurangzeb tried to fulfill his ambition of bringing the entire Sub-continent under one rule. It was under him that the Mughal Empire reached its peak in matter of area. He worked hard for years but

his health broke down in the end. He left behind no personal wealth when he died in 1707, at the age of 90 years. With his death, the forces of disintegration set in and the mighty Mughal empire started collapsing.

The Khilji Dynasty

Following the death of Balban, the Sultanate became weak and there were number of revolts. This was the period when the nobles placed Jalal-ud-din Khilji on the throne. This marked the beginning of Khilji dynasty. The rule of this dynasty started in 1290 A.D. Ala-ud-din Khilji, a nephew of Jalal-ud-din Khilji hatched a conspiracy and got Sultan Jalal-ud-din killed and proclaimed himself as the Sultan in 1296. Ala-ud-din Khilji was the first Muslim ruler whose empire covered almost whole of India up to its extreme south. He fought many battles, conquered Gujarat, Ranthambhor, Chittor, Malwa, and Deccan. During his reign of 20 years, Mongols invaded the country several times but were successfully repulsed. From these invasion Alla-ud-din Khilji learnt the lessons of keeping himself prepared, by fortifying and organizing his armed forces. Alla-ud-din died in 1316 A.D., and with his death, the Khilji dynasty came to an end.

The Tughlaq Dynasty

Ghyasuddin Tughlaq, who was the Governor of Punjab during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khilji, ascended the throne in 1320 A.D. and founded the Tughlaq dynasty. He conquered Warrangal and put down a revolt in Bengal. Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq succeeded his father and extended the kingdom beyond India, into Central Asia. Mongols invaded India during Tughlaq rule, and were defeated this time too.

Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq first shifted his capital from Delhi to Devagiri in Deccan. However, it had to be shifted back within two years. He inherited a massive empire but lost many of its provinces, more particularly Deccan and Bengal. He died in 1351 A.D. and his cousin, Feroz Tughlaq succeeded him.

Feroz Tughlaq did not contribute much to expand the territories of the empire, which he inherited. He devoted much of his energy to the betterment of the people. After his death in 1388, the Tughlaq dynasty came virtually to an end. Although the Tughlaqs continued to reign till 1412, the invasion of Delhi by Timur in 1398 may be said to mark the end of the Tughlaq empire.

Timur’s Invasion

It was during the reign of the last king of the Tughlaq dynasty that the mighty king Timur or Tamerlane invaded India in 1398 A.D. He crossed Indus and captured Multan, and just walked over to Delhi without much resistance.

Sayyid Dynasty

Then came the Sayyid dynasty founded by Khizar Khan. The Sayyids ruled from about 1414 A.D. to 1450 A.D. Khizar Khan ruled for about 37 years. Last in Sayyid dynasty was Muhammad-bin-Farid. During his reign there was confusion and revolts. The empire came to an end in 1451 A.D. with his death.

Lodhi Dynasty

Bahlul Khan Lodhi (1451-1489 A.D.)

He was the first king and the founder of the Lodhi dynasty. With a view to restoring the Delhi Sultanate its past glory, he conquered many territories including the powerful kingdom of Jaunpur. Bahlul Khan extended his territories over Gwalior, Jaunpur and Uttar Pradesh.

Sikander Khan Lodhi (1489-1517 A.D.)

After Bahlul Khan’s death, his second son Nizam Shah was proclaimed the king, under the title of Sultan Sikander Shah, in 1489. He made all efforts to strengthen his kingdom and extended his kingdom from Punjab to Bihar. He was a good administrator and a patron of arts and letters. He died in 1517 A.D.

Ibrahim Khan Lodhi (1489-1517 A.D.)

After the death of Sikandar, his son Ibrahim ascended the throne. Ibrahim Lodhi did not prove to be an able ruler. He became more and more strict with the nobles. He used to insult them. Thus, to take revenge of their insults, Daulat Khan Lodhi, governor of Lahore and Alam Khan, an uncle of Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi, invited Babar, the ruler of Kabul, to invade India. Ibrahim Lodhi was killed at Panipat in 1526 A.D. by Babar’s army. Thus came the final collapse of Delhi Sultanate and paved the establishment of Mughal Empire in India.

.....Continue in next issue

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