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of INDIA Simplified

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SAMPLE



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- PYQs for UPSC Prelims & Mains

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UPSC Prelims & Mains (GS-I & Optional Paper) PYQs **204-208**

This sample book is prepared from the book "**Medieval History of India Simplified for UPSC & State PSC Civil Services Exams | 4 color Book Powered with Infographics, Mindmaps, Pictures & Tables**".



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Section A: Early Medieval India

Topic - 1

Age of Regional Configuration (c. 600 - 1300 CE)

Introduction

The intermediate transition period between the ancient and the medieval is referred to as the "early medieval".

Early Medieval period follows the decline of the Gupta Empire.

It is divided into two phases: AD 750-AD 1000, and AD 1000-AD 1300.

In north India, the period from c. 600 - 750 CE was ruled by Pushyabhutis and the Maukharis.

The corresponding period in south India consisted of three major states - the Pallavas, the Chalukyas and the Pandyas.

- Rise of three major powers: Gurjara Pratiharas (north), Palas (east), Rashtrakutas (south).
- "Tripartite Struggle" for control over the Gangetic region.

**First Phase
(AD 750-AD 1000)**

Second Phase (AD 1000-AD 1300)

- Disintegration of earlier powers.
- Emergence of Rajput states in the north (Chahmanas, Chandellas, Paramaras etc.).
- Chola dominance in south India (c. 850 - 1200 CE).

Tripartite Struggle (9th Century AD)

Participants: Pratihara Empire, Pala Empire, Rashtrakuta Empire.

Conflict: Phase I (790-810 CE)

Dharmapala (Pala) clashed with Vatsaraja (Pratihara) at Prayaga.

Vatsaraja won.

Dhruva (Rashtrakuta) defeated Vatsaraja, halting Pratihara control over Kannauj.

Conflict: Phase II (810-836 CE)

Dharmapala recaptured Kannauj, installing Chakrayudha as vassal.

Nagabhatta II (Pratihara) defeated Dharmapala and regained Kannauj.

Govinda III (Rashtrakuta) briefly took Kannauj but retreated, allowing Pratihara dominance.

Historical Evidences

1

Ellora Record of Dantidurga, Samangarh Inscription, Navsari Grant: Provide historical insights into the Rashtrakuta dynasty.

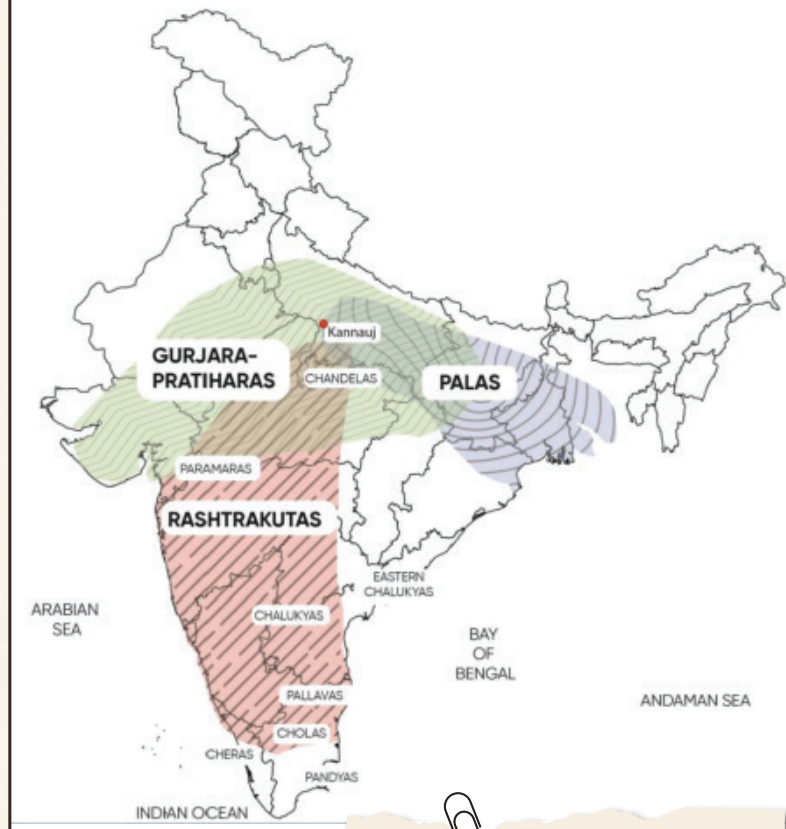
2

Gwalior Prashasti, Barah Copper Plate: Celebrate the achievements of Mihir Bhoja.

3

Badal Inscription: Mentions Pala ruler Devapala's victories.

Kannauj Triangle (Tripartite struggle)



Note

“ Tripartite Struggle Contributed to political disintegration aiding Islamic invaders in establishing empires in India ”

1. Strategic Importance of Kannauj:

- Capital of Harshavardhana, disintegrated after his death.
- Key location on the Ganga trade route, connected to the Silk Route.

2. Weak Rulers:

- Kannauj was ruled by weak kings like Indrayudha, Vijrayudha, and Chakrayudha, making it vulnerable.

3. Desire for Dominance:

- Rashtrakutas sought the title "Sakala Uttarathanatha" (Lord of Northern India).
- Palas aimed to become "Uttarpathaswami" (Lord of the Northern Region).

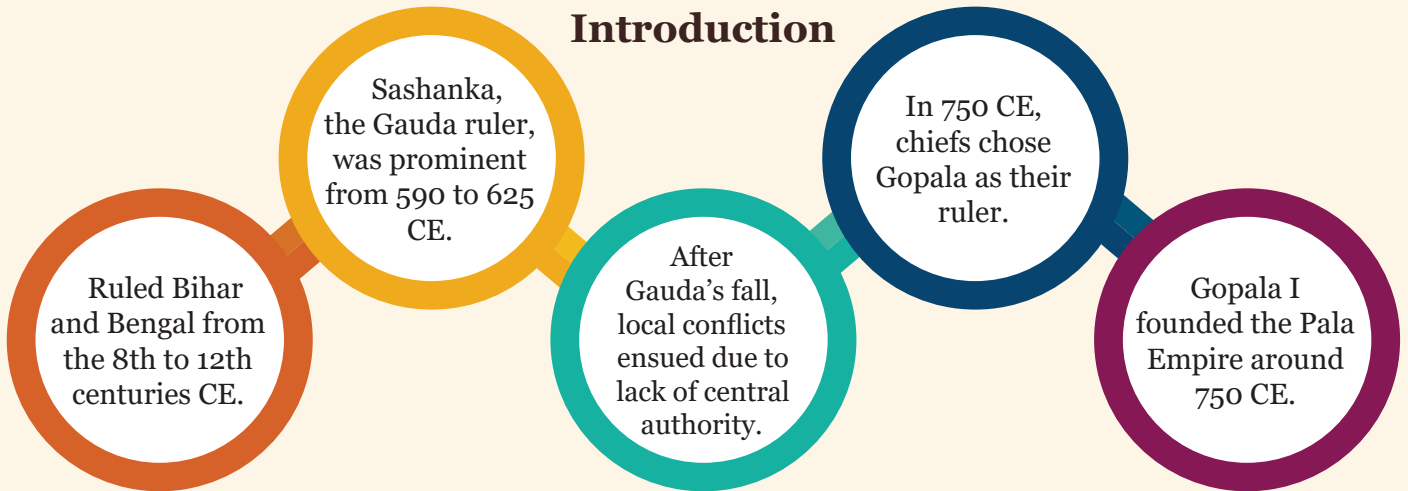
Reasons for conflict

Consequences of the Tripartite Struggle

- Nagabhata II (Pratihara) ultimately secured Kannauj, making it the Pratihara capital.
- Pratihara dominance lasted nearly three centuries.
- The prolonged struggle weakened all three dynasties.

Topic - 3 Pala Dynasty

Introduction



Gopala (750–770 AD)

- Founded the Pala dynasty and unified Bengal.
- Brought Magadha (Bihar) under his control.
- Established the monastery at Odantapuri, Bihar.
- First Buddhist monarch of Bengal.
- His reign saw conflict with the Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas over Kanauj and North India.

Dharmapala (770–810 AD)

- Succeeded Gopala and was his son.
- Engaged in battles against the Pratiharas and Rashtrakutas.
- Captured Kanauj and held a grand darbar.
- Took titles such as Paramabhattacharya, Paramesvara, and Maharajadhiraja.



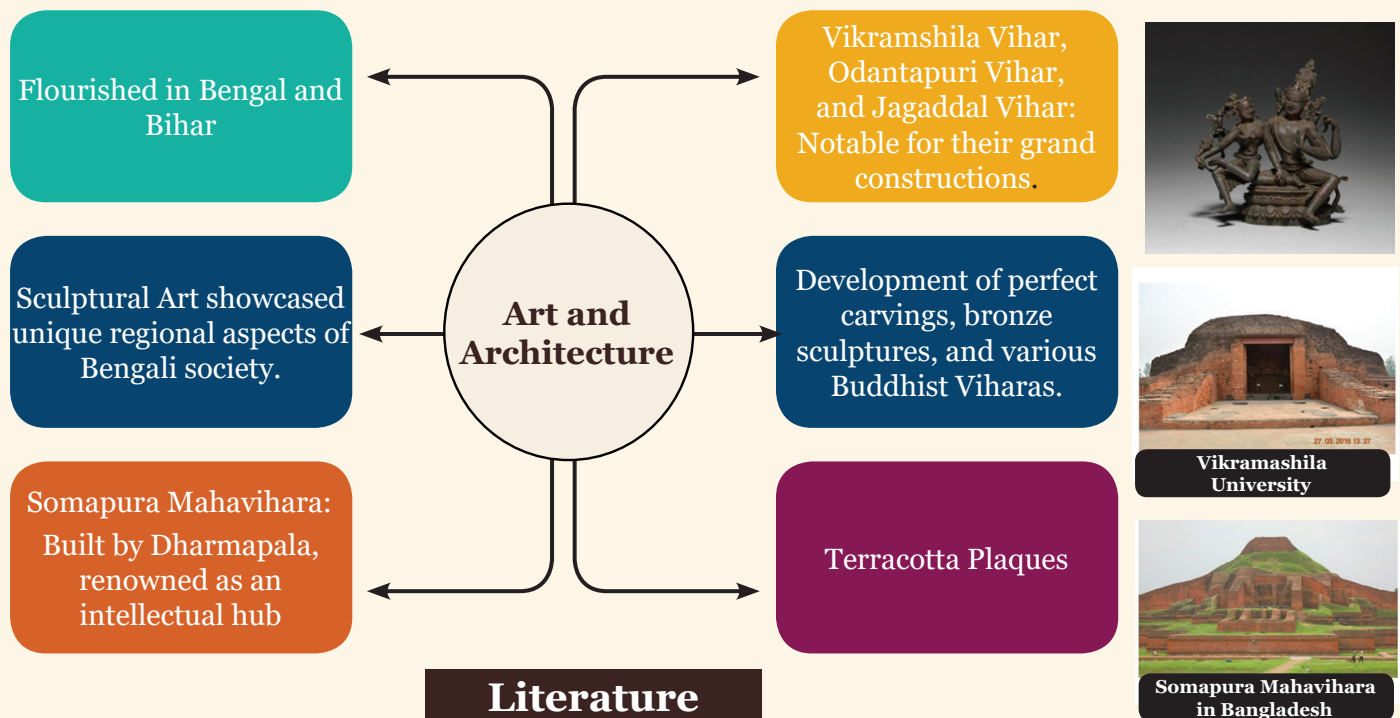
Devapala (810–850 AD)

- Son of Dharmapala and Rannadevi (Rashtrakuta princess).
- Expanded the empire to Assam, Odisha, and Kamarupa.

Mahipala I (988 AD)

- Ascended the throne and revitalized the Pala kingdom.
- Reclaimed northern and eastern Bengal and Bihar.
- Likely conquered Varanasi with his brothers Stirapala and Vasantapala.

Administration of the Pala Dynasty



- a** Pala kings supported Sanskrit and Buddhist scholars.
- b** The Gauda riti style developed under their rule
- c** Notable scholars: Jimutavahana, Sandhyakar Nandi, Madhavakara, Suresvara, Chakrapani Datta.
- d** Buddhist Tantric works influenced Tibet
- e** Proto-Bengali appears in the Charyapadas.

Topic - 26

Imperialist Policy of Alauddin Khilji



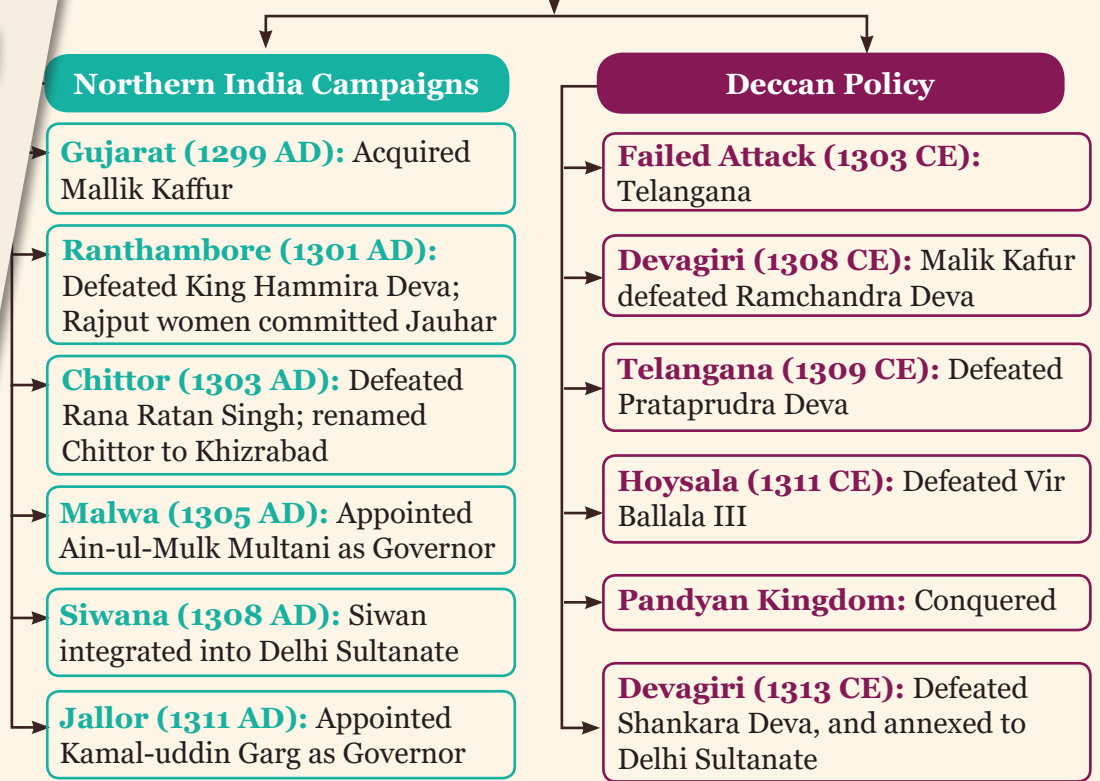
Note

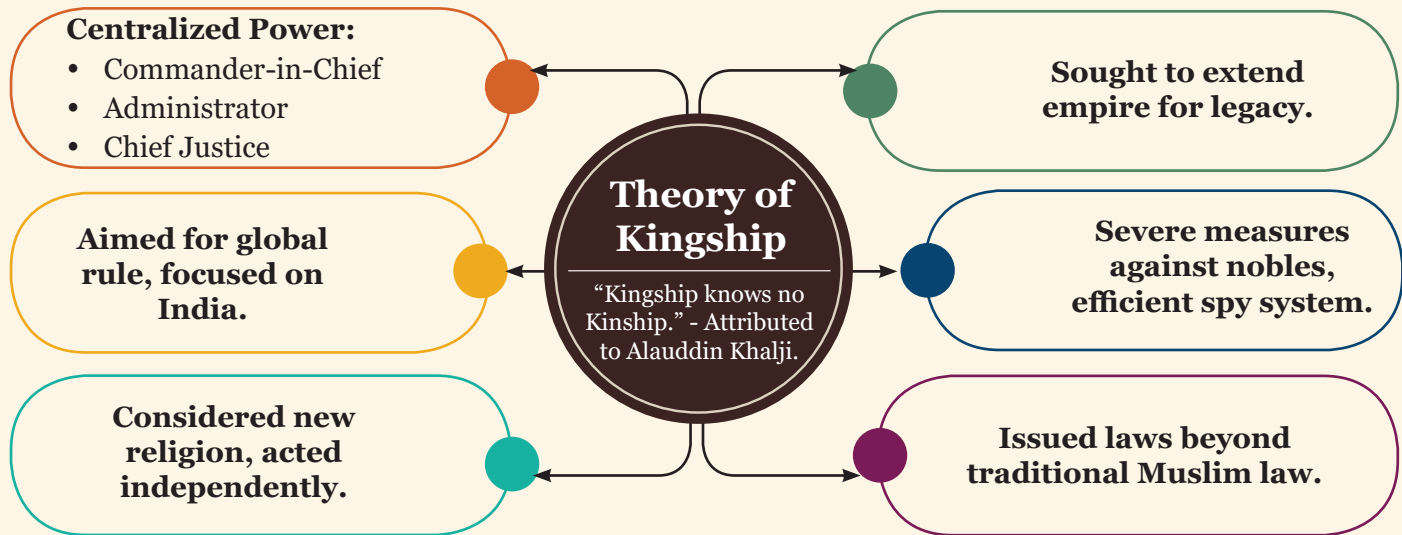
“ First Delhi Sultan to succeed in South India; exploited wealth, accepted suzerainty, but did not annex kingdoms. ”

Note

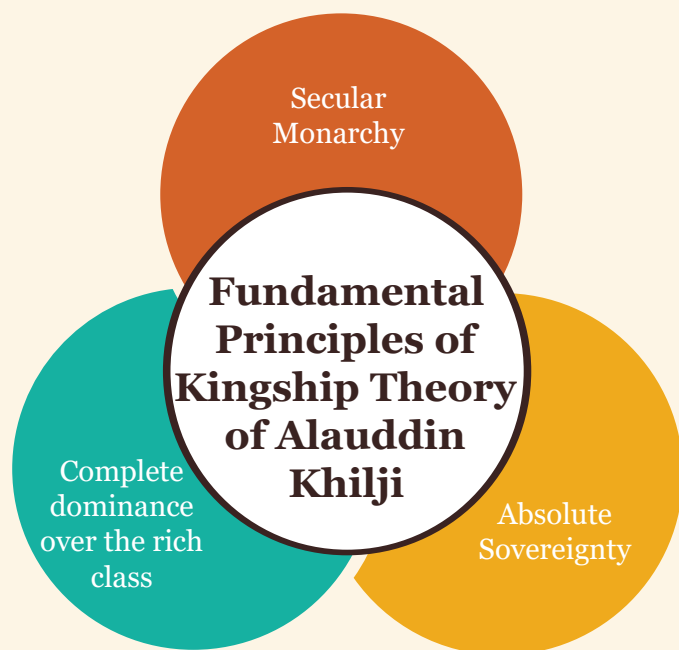
“ Alauddin Khilji's imperialist policy seems to depend more on economic rather than political reasons. ”

Imperialist Policy





Theory of Kingship	
Balban	Alauddin Khalji
Semi-divine, Zil-i-Allah (Shadow of God)	Followed
Emphasized Persian-style ceremonial respect	Followed
"Blood and iron" policy	Revived and continued Balban's ruthless governance
Autocratic rule	Followed with some changes
Maintained a splendid Persian-style court	Followed
Strong control over nobles and Ulema	Distanced from Ulema, focused on practical state governance
Genealogy register	Not followed
Defensive policy	Imperialist approach
Supremacy of the crown	Followed



Military Reforms by Alauddin Khalji

- Established a large, powerful standing army. Based on the Turkish model.
- Instituted horse branding (dagh) Complete military registration to prevent fraud.
- Paid soldiers' salaries in cash
- Military appointments managed by the Ariz-i-Mumalik.
- Created an efficient spy system for intelligence gathering.
- Set up workshops and factories for manufacturing weapons and war material.

Topic - 93

18th Century Dynamics

Marathas after Shivaji

1

Weakened Kingdom (Early 18th Century)

- Internal and external factors led to decline.
- Civil war between Shahu (grandson of Shivaji) and Tarabai (Rajaram's widow).

2

Rise of the Peshwa

- Balaji Viswanath strengthened the Peshwa's position.
- Baji Rao I (1720-1740) further consolidated power.
- Balaji Bajirao (Nana) served as Peshwa (1740-1761), marking peak Maratha glory.

3

Post-Battle of Panipat (1761)

- Madhav Rao became Peshwa after the third battle.
- Civil strife followed Madhav Rao's death in 1772.
- Raghunath Rao's failed power grab led to the 1st Anglo-Maratha War.

4

Decline

- Baji Rao II succeeded Madhav Rao in 1794.
- End of the 3rd Anglo-Maratha War resulted in the Peshwa's dethronement.
- Other Maratha states reduced to subsidiary status.

Note

“ The word 'Peshwa' probably originated in Persian, meaning 'foremost', and was introduced in Deccan by the Muslim rulers. ”

Third Battle of Panipat (1761)

The Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 was fought between the Marathas, led by **Sadashivrao Bhau**, and the Durranis under **Ahmed Shah Abdali**. It stemmed from the weakness of Mughal emperors and the ambitions of both parties. The battle ended Maratha aspirations to succeed the Mughals, resulting in a devastating defeat that led to 40 years of anarchy in north-western India. This turmoil paved the way for the rise of British rule, significantly altering the political landscape of the subcontinent.



UPSC Prelims Medieval History Questions

2024

1. Who of the following rulers of medieval India gave permission to the Portuguese to build a fort at Bhatkal?

- a. Krishnadevaraya b. Narasimha Saluva
c. Muhammad Shah III d. Yusuf Adil Shah

Answer: (a)

2023

1. Consider the following dynasties:

1. Hoysala 2. Gahadavala
3. Kakatiya 4. Yadava

How many of the above dynasties established their kingdoms in early eighth century AD?

- a. Only one b. Only two
c. Only three d. None

Answer: (d)

2. Who among the following rulers of Vijayanagara Empire constructed a large dam across Tungabhadra River and canalcum- aqueduct several a kilometres long from the river to the capital city?

- a. Devaraya I b. Mallikarjuna
c. Vira Vijaya d. Virupaksha

Answer: (a)

2022

1. Consider the following pairs:

King		Dynasty
1. Nannuka	—	Chandela
2. Jayashakti	—	Paramara
3. Nagabhata II	—	Gurjara-Pratihara
4. Bhoja	—	Rashtrakuta

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a. Only one pair b. Only two pairs
c. Only three pairs d. All four pairs

Answer: (b)

2. "Yogavasistha" was translated into Persian by Nizamuddin Panipati during the reign of:

- a. Akbar b. Humayun
c. Shahjahan d. Aurangzeb

Answer: (a)

3. The world's second tallest statue in sitting pose of Ramanuja was inaugurated by the correctly represents the teachings of Ramanuja? Prime Minister of India at Hyderabad recently. Which one of the following statements correctly represents the teaching of Ramanuja?

- a. The best means of salvation was devotion.
b. Vedas are eternal, self-existent and wholly authoritative.

c. Logical arguments were essential means for the highest bliss

d. Salvation was to be obtained through meditation.

Answer: (a)

4. In medieval India, the term "Fanam" referred to:

- a. Clothing b. Coins
c. Ornaments d. Weapons

Answer: (b)

5. With reference to Indian history, consider the following statements:

1. The first Mongol invasion of India happened during the reign of Jalal-ud-din Khalji.
2. During the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji, one Mongol assault marched up to Delhi and besieged the city.
3. Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq temporarily lost portions of north-west of his kingdom to Mongols.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 b. 2 only
c. 1 and 3 d. 3 only

Answer: (b)

6. With reference to Indian history, who of the following were known as "Kulah-Daran"?

- a. Arab merchants b. Qalandars
c. Persian calligraphists d. Sayyids

Answer: (d)

2021

1. With reference to medieval India, which one of the following is the correct sequence in ascending order in terms of size?

- a. Paragana – Sarkar – Suba
b. Sarkar – Paragana – Suba
c. Suba – Sarkar – Paragana
d. Paragana – Suba – Sarkar

Answer: (a)

2. According to Portuguese writer Nuniz, the women in the Vijayanagara Empire were experts in which of the following areas?

1. Wrestling 2. Astrology
3. Accounting 4. Soothsaying

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1, 2 and 3 only b. 1, 3 and 4 only
c. 2 and 4 only d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (d)

3. Consider the following statements:

1. It was during the reign of Iltutmish that Chengiz Khan reached the Indus in pursuit of the fugitive Khwarezm prince.
2. It was during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq that

Taimur occupied Multan and crossed the Indus.
3. It was during the reign of Deva Raya II of Vijayanagara Empire that Vasco da Gama reached the coast of Kerala.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2
- c. 3 only
- d. 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

2020

1. Consider the following events in the history of India:

- 1. Rise of Pratiharas under King Bhoja
- 2. Establishment of Pallava power under Mahendravarman-I
- 3. Establishment of Chola power by Parantaka-I
- 4. Pala dynasty founded by Gopala

What is the correct chronological order of the above events, starting from the earliest time?

- a. 2 - 1 - 4 - 3
- b. 3 - 1 - 4 - 2
- c. 2 - 4 - 1 - 3
- d. 3 - 4 - 1 - 2

Answer: (c)

2019

1. With reference to Mughal India, what is/are the difference/differences between Jagirdar and Zamindar?

- 1. Jagirdars were holders of land assignments in lieu of judicial and police duties, whereas Zamindars were holders of revenue rights without obligation to perform any duty other than revenue collection.
- 2. Land assignments to Jagirdars were hereditary and revenue rights of Zamindars were not hereditary.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d)

2. Building 'Kalyana Mandapas' was a notable feature in the temple construction in the kingdom of

- a. Chalukya
- b. Chandela
- c. Rashtrakuta
- d. Vijayanagara

Answer: (d)

3. Consider the following statements:

- 1. In the revenue administration of Delhi Sultanate, the in-charge of revenue collection was known as 'Amil'.
- 2. The Iqta system of Sultans of Delhi was an ancient indigenous institution.
- 3. The office of 'Mir Bakshi' came into existence during the reign of Khalji Sultans of Delhi.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

4. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Saint Nimbarka was a contemporary of Akbar.
- 2. Saint Kabir was greatly influenced by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d)

5. With reference to Mian Tansen, which one of the following statements is not correct?

- a. Tansen was the title given to him by Emperor Akbar.
- b. Tansen composed Dhrupads on Hindu gods and goddesses.
- c. Tansen composed songs on his patrons.
- d. Tansen invented many Ragas.

Answer: (a)

6. Who among the following Mughal Emperors shifted emphasis from illustrated manuscripts to album and individual portrait?

- a. Humayun
- b. Akbar
- c. Jahangir
- d. Shah Jahan

Answer: (c)

2018

1. Which reference to the religious practices in India, the "Sthanakvasi" sect belongs to

- a. Buddhism
- b. Jainism
- c. Vaishnavism
- d. Shaivism

Answer: (b)

2016

1. "Regarding the taxation system of Krishna Deva, the ruler of Vijayanagar, consider the following statements:

- 1. The tax rate on land was fixed depending on the quality of the land.
- 2. Private owners of workshops paid an industries tax.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

2. With reference to the cultural history of medieval India, consider the following statements:

- 1. Siddhas (Sittars) of the Tamil region were monotheistic and condemned idolatry.
- 2. Lingayats of the Kannada region questioned the theory of rebirth and rejected the caste hierarchy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

3. Banjaras during the medieval period of Indian history were generally

- a. agriculturists
- b. warriors
- c. weavers
- d. traders

Answer: (d)

4. With reference to the economic history of medieval India, the term 'Araghatta' refers to

- bonded labour
- land grant made to military officers
- waterwheel used in the irrigation of land
- wasteland converted to cultivated land

Answer: (c)

5. With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and epic tales was the profession of who of the following?

- Shramana
- Parivraajaka
- Agrahaarika
- Maagadha

Answer: (d)

2015

1. Consider the following:

The arrival of Babur into India led to the

- introduction of gunpowder in the subcontinent
- introduction of the arch and dome in the region's architecture
- establishment of Timurid dynasty in the region

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 and 2 only
- 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

2. Kalamkari painting refers to

- a hand-painted cotton textile in South India
- a handmade drawing on bamboo handicrafts in North-East India
- a block-painted woolen cloth in Western Himalayan region of India
- a hand-painted decorative silk cloth in North-Western India

Answer: (a)

2014

1. Consider the following languages:

- Gujarati
- Kannada
- Telugu

Which of the above has/have been declared as a 'Classical Language/Languages' by the Government?

- 1 and 2 only
- 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

2. In Medieval India, the designations 'Mahattara' and 'Pattakila' were used for

- military officers
- village headmen
- specialists in Vedic rituals
- chiefs of craft guilds

Answer: (b)

UPSC Mains GS I Previous Year Questions (2024 - 2015) of Medieval History

Year	Medieval History PYQs
2024	Estimate the contribution of Pallavas of Kanchi for the development of art and literature of South India.
2023	What were the major technological changes introduced during the Sultanate period? How did those technological changes influence Indian society?
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the main contributions of the Gupta period and the Chola period to Indian heritage and culture. Analyse the salience of 'sect' in Indian society vis-a-vis caste, region and religion.
2021	Evaluate the nature of Bhakti Literature and its contribution to Indian culture.
2020	Persian literary sources of mediaeval India reflect the spirit of the age. Comment.
2019	Highlight the Central Asian and Greco-Bactrian elements in Gandhara art.
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the importance of the accounts of the Chinese and Arab travellers in the reconstruction of the history of India. Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. The Bhakti movement received a remarkable re-orientation with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Discuss.
2016	Krishnadeva Raya, the King of Vijayanagar, was not only an accomplished scholar himself but was also a great patron of learning and literature. Discuss.
2015	Mesolithic rock cut architecture of India not only reflects the cultural life of the times but also a fine aesthetic sense comparable to modern painting. Critically evaluate this comment.

Previous Year UPSC Mains Questions of Medieval History from History Optional Paper-1 (2024-2020):

Year	Questions of Medieval History from History Optional Paper-1
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the contributions of Aryabhata, Varahamihira, and Brahmagupta in the fields of Astronomy and Mathematics. • Examine the course of Pallava-Chalukya conflicts between the sixth and eighth centuries CE. • Examine the role played by Agraharas in the promotion of education in early medieval India. • Evaluate Firuz Shah Tughluq's economic policies. • Evaluate the contribution of Qalandariyyah to medieval Indian culture. • Discuss the main features of the Malwa school of painting with examples. • Analyze the contributions of Acharya Triumvirate to Indian Vedanta. • Compare and contrast the position of Hindu and Muslim women in 13th and 14th century India. • Examine the causes and consequences of peasant uprisings during the reign of Aurangzeb. • "Instead of bringing credit, the Ibadat Khana brought growing discredit to Akbar." Comment. • How did the Maratha guerilla warfare tactics contribute to their military successes against larger and more established armies? • Examine the role of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty in the political transformation of the State of Hyderabad. • Discuss the contributions of Bahmani Sultans to the development of Indo-Islamic architecture. • Evaluate the impact of the Third Battle of Panipat on the political economy of 18th-century India.
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the tenets, spread and impact of the Bhakti Movement. • How far temple architecture under the Cholas became more refined and grandiose as compared to the early South Indian temple architect are style? • Discuss the various proponents of Indian feudalism. • Examine the defects in Alberuni's assessment of Indian society. • Discuss the importance of Sufi literature as an important source of history. • What factors do you attribute for the decline of the Delhi Sultanate? • The motive of Alauddin Khilji's agrarian policy was to curb the powers of the intermediaries. Examine the measures which he adopted to achieve his objective. • Discuss the role of Nur Jahan in the Mughal court politics during the reign of Jahangir. • Why did Balban prefer 'consolidation over 'expansion' of the Delhi Sultanate? • What features of European paintings were incorporated in the Mughal Miniature painting? • The Marathas posed a significant threat to the integrity of the Mughal Empire. Discuss. • "Haider Ali was born to build an empire, and Tipu Sultan to lose one." Comment. • Analyze the rise of the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh. • Mughal architecture was syncretic in character. Comment. • The economy of India was not stagnant in the eighteenth century. Discuss. • Discuss the nature of the Mughal State under Akbar.
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the importance of tripartite struggle for the domination over North India during the eighth and ninth centuries. • Throw light on the chief characteristics of Tamil Bhakti Movement during the early medieval period. • Kalhana's Rajatarangini is the best example of history writing tradition in early India. Discuss. • What were 'Brahmadeya' grants? How do you account for the large number of such grants in the early medieval period? • The establishment of large number of urban settlements in North India in the thirteenth century was principally owing to the deployment or Turkish garrisons across the lands. Comment. • Much of the political instability after the death of Iltutmish was the doing of the Chahalgan. Elucidate. • The Rajput school of painting was Mughal in style and Rajput in its content. Comment. • Account for the rise of the Maratha power in the eighteenth century.

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2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the nature of the Manasabdari system during the reign of Akbar. • Chola maritime expansion was driven largely by concerns of overseas commerce. Elucidate. • The various Gharanas of Hindustani classical music were outcomes of patronage by regional princely courts, rather than central imperial ones. Discuss. • Trade and commerce in the Mughal Empire brought about the integration of the Indian subcontinent into a single market. Comment. • Aurangzeb's Deccan policy was a major factor in Mughal decline. Discuss.
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you consider Sultan Iltutmish to be the real founder of the Delhi Sultanate? Discuss. • Identify the different categories of Persian literature which emerged during the Delhi Sultanate. • Examine the causes of Babur's success against Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat. • Discuss the attitude of Chishti saints towards the state. How were the Suhrawardi saints different in their attitude towards the government? • Discuss the transformation of Sikh community from a Nirguna Bhakti sect into a politico-military organization. • Give your assessment of Bahlul Lodi's relation with his nobility. • Examine the basic features of Mughal tomb architecture with special reference to the Taj Mahal. • Discuss the importance of Iqta system. How did it help in centralization of administration of the Delhi Sultanate? • Why is the reign of the Khaljis known as the 'Khalji Revolution'? • The late seventeenth century Mughal India is considered to be a period of Jagirdari crisis. Discuss. • "The Chola rulers were not only mighty conquerors, efficient administrators but also builders of fine temples." Comment. • Discuss with relevant illustrations the relations between Akbar and the Rajput states. • How far is it justified to consider the states like Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad as 'successor states' of the Mughal state?
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Sanskrit literature of classical Gupta Age set standards for the early medieval India.' Evaluate the statement with representative examples. • Describe the evolution and development of regional temple architecture of South India with special reference to Pallavas. • Critically evaluate the Muslim Nobility during the period of Tughlaq dynasty. • Describe in detail about the foreign travellers' accounts which gave information of Vijayanagar kingdom. • How did international trade support urbanisation in North India during the 13-14th century CE. • Evaluate the aim and impact of the translation of Sanskrit scriptures into Persian language during Mughal period. • Examine the sources of the history of Chhatrapati Shivaji with special reference to Shivabharat and Sabhasad Bakhar. • Assess the causes of the defeat of Northern Indian States against the Turkish invasion. • Amuktamalyada dwells much upon the relationship of fort, Brahmanas and dispersed tribal groups. Comment. • Elaborate upon the agrarian reforms of Alauddin Khilji. • Describe village polity and economy of medieval Deccan. • Some new crafts production were introduced by the Turks. Comment. • The mission of Kabir was to preach a religion of love which would unite all castes and creeds. Explain. • Evaluate the contribution of Sher Shah towards trade and commerce, administration and agricultural reforms..