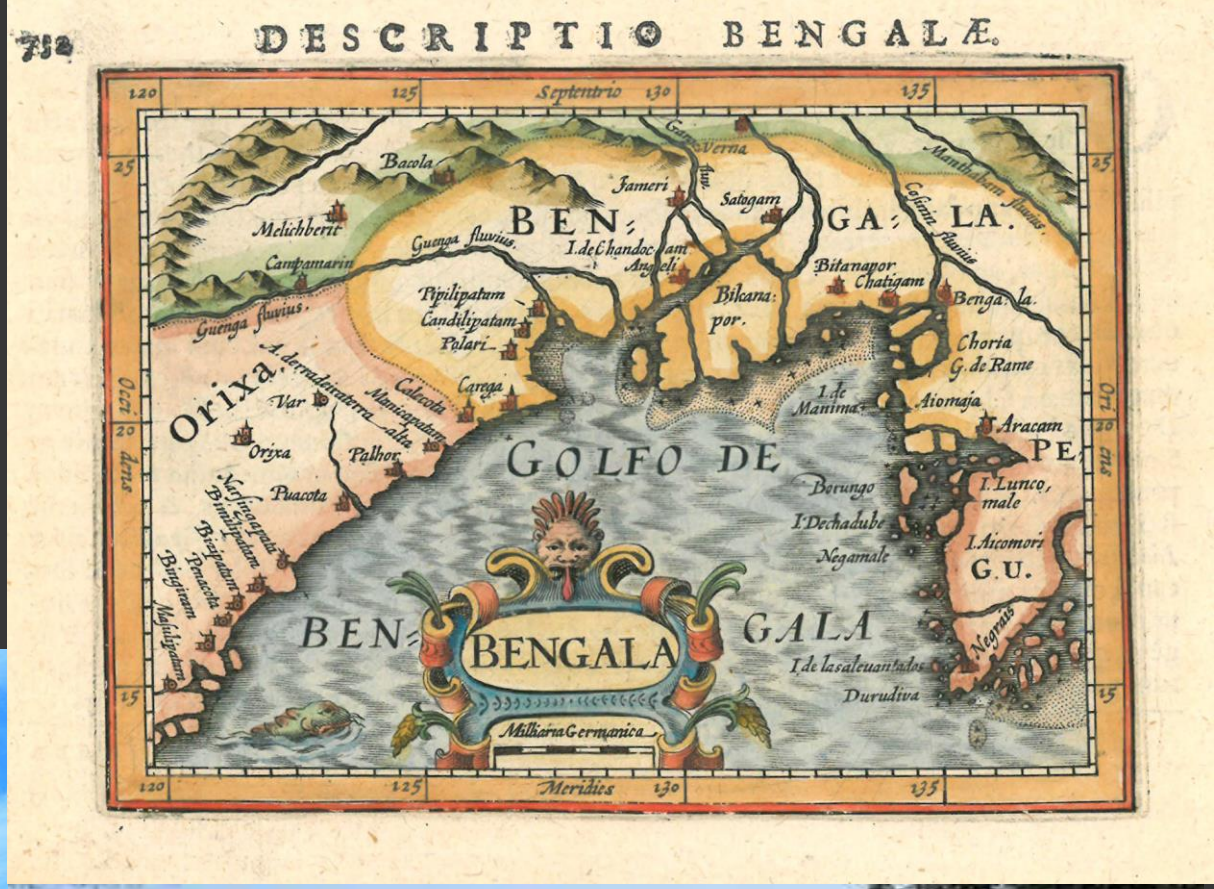
# History of Ancient and Medieval Bengal

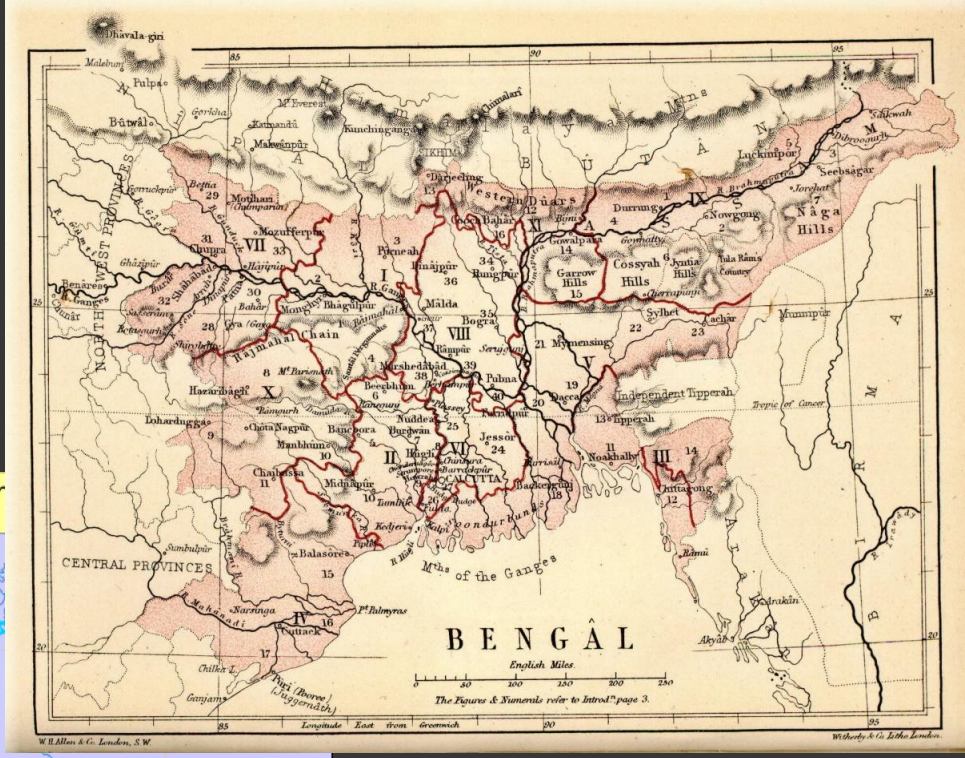







# Introduction

- Borders of modern Bangladesh coincide with the major portion of the ancient and historic region of Bengal.
- Civilization in the area dates back over four millennia, to the Chalcolithic Age.






# Anthropological Identity

**Bengali is a vastly mixed race and one of the oldest groups of humans inhabiting this region.**

**People from all the four principal races came to Bengal at one time or another.**




Among the ancient inhabitants of Bangladesh, the speakers of AUSTRIC language were the majority.



**The ethnic groups of SANTALS, in Bangladesh are related to the Proto-Australoids.**

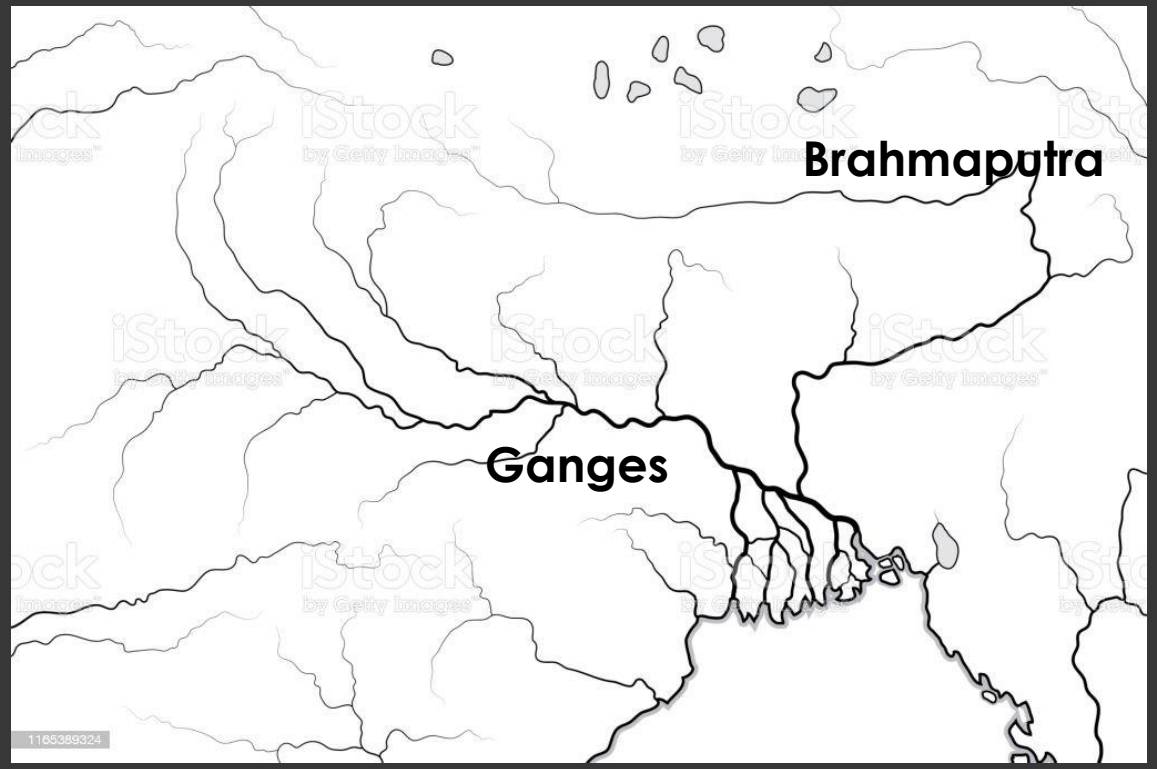
# History of Ancient Bengal
## (2000 BC to 1204 AD)

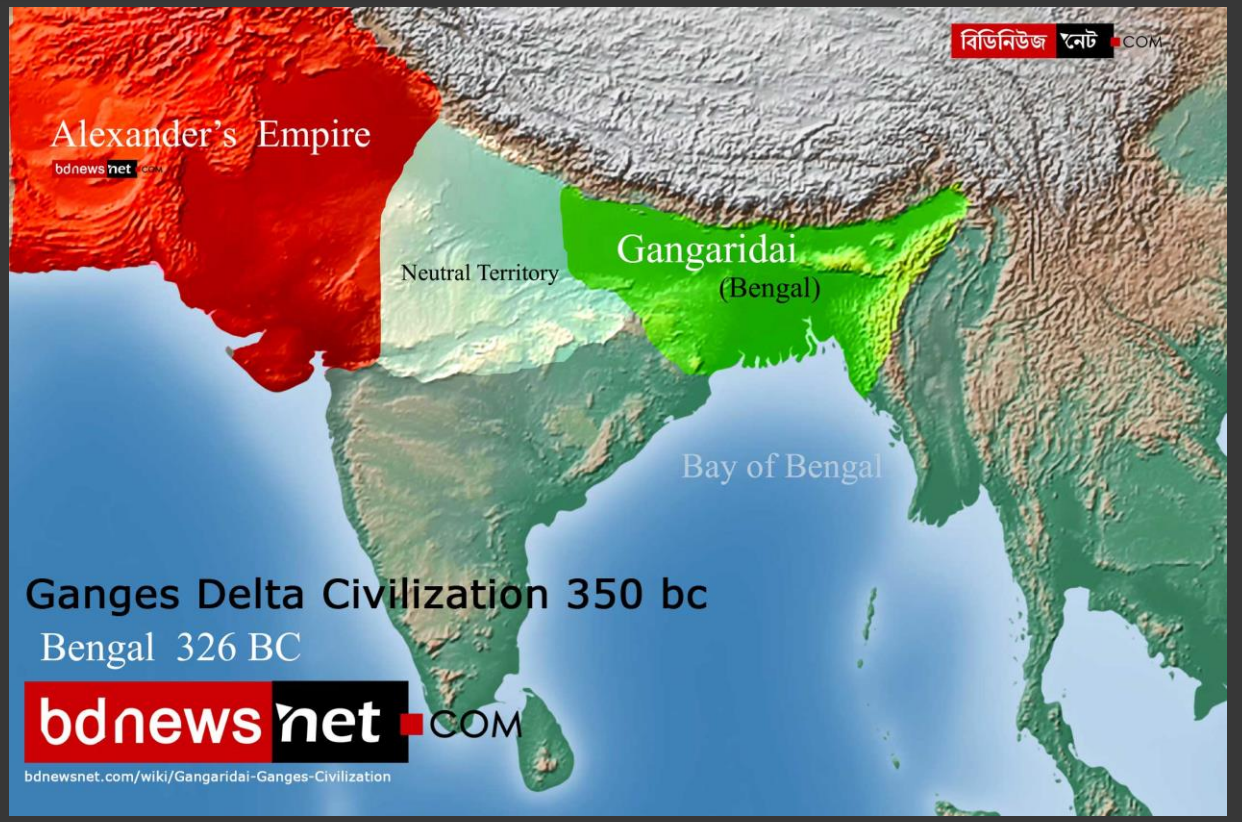
Aryans entered the Indian subcontinent sometimes around 1750 B.C., but they entered Bengal after a long time they had come to India.



# History of Ancient Bengal
## (2000 BC to 1204 AD)

The region was known to the ancient Greeks and Romans as Gangaridai.



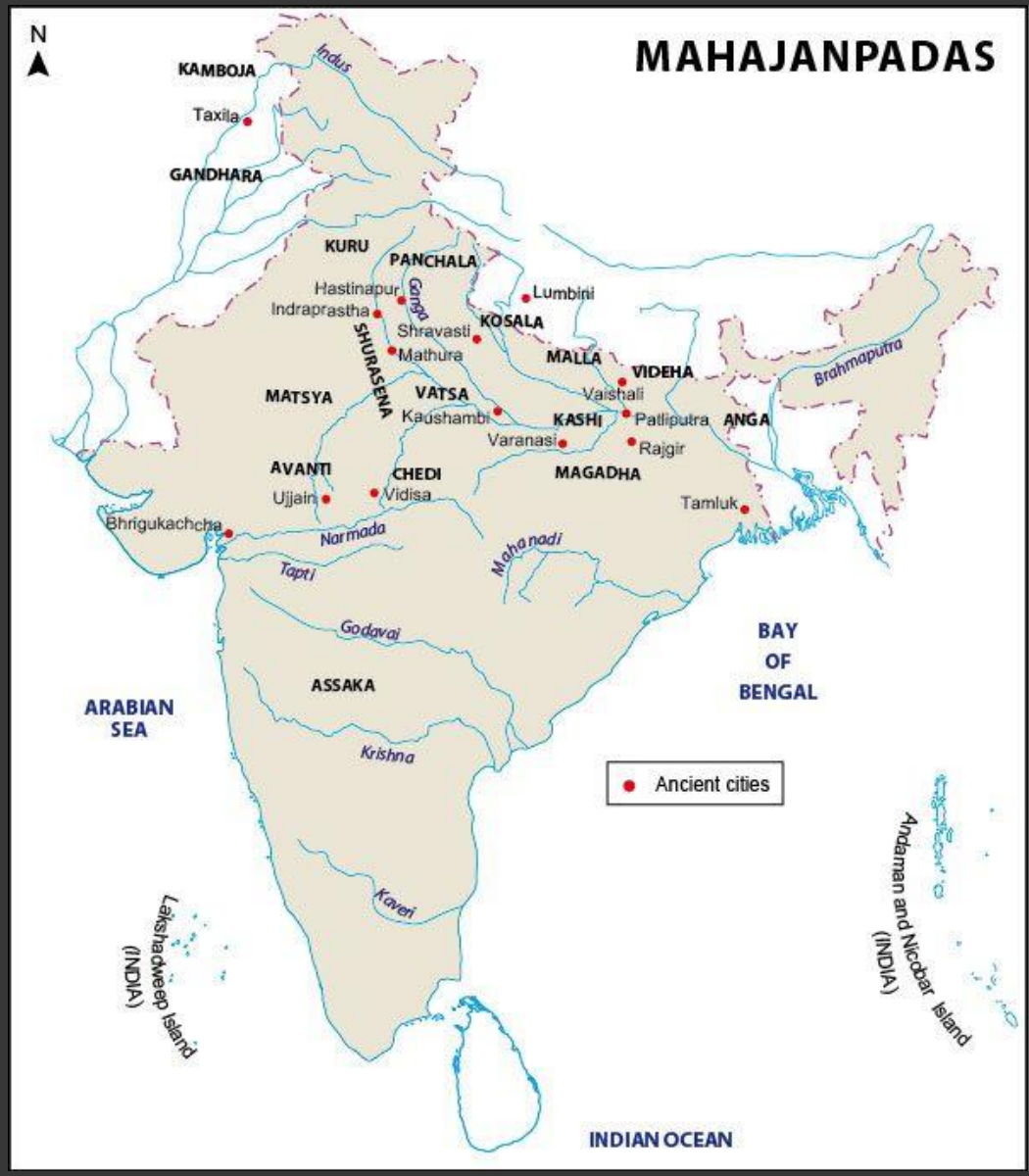

Ganges and the Brahmaputra rivers act as a geographic marker of the region.

# History of Ancient Bengal
## (2000 BC to 1204 BC)

**Several JANAPADAS in the form of small kingdoms existed in ancient Bengal from 1500 BC to 600 BC.**

**Powerful Janapadas turned into Mahajanapadas or Great States and sixteen such Mahajanapadas emerged in 600 BCE.**

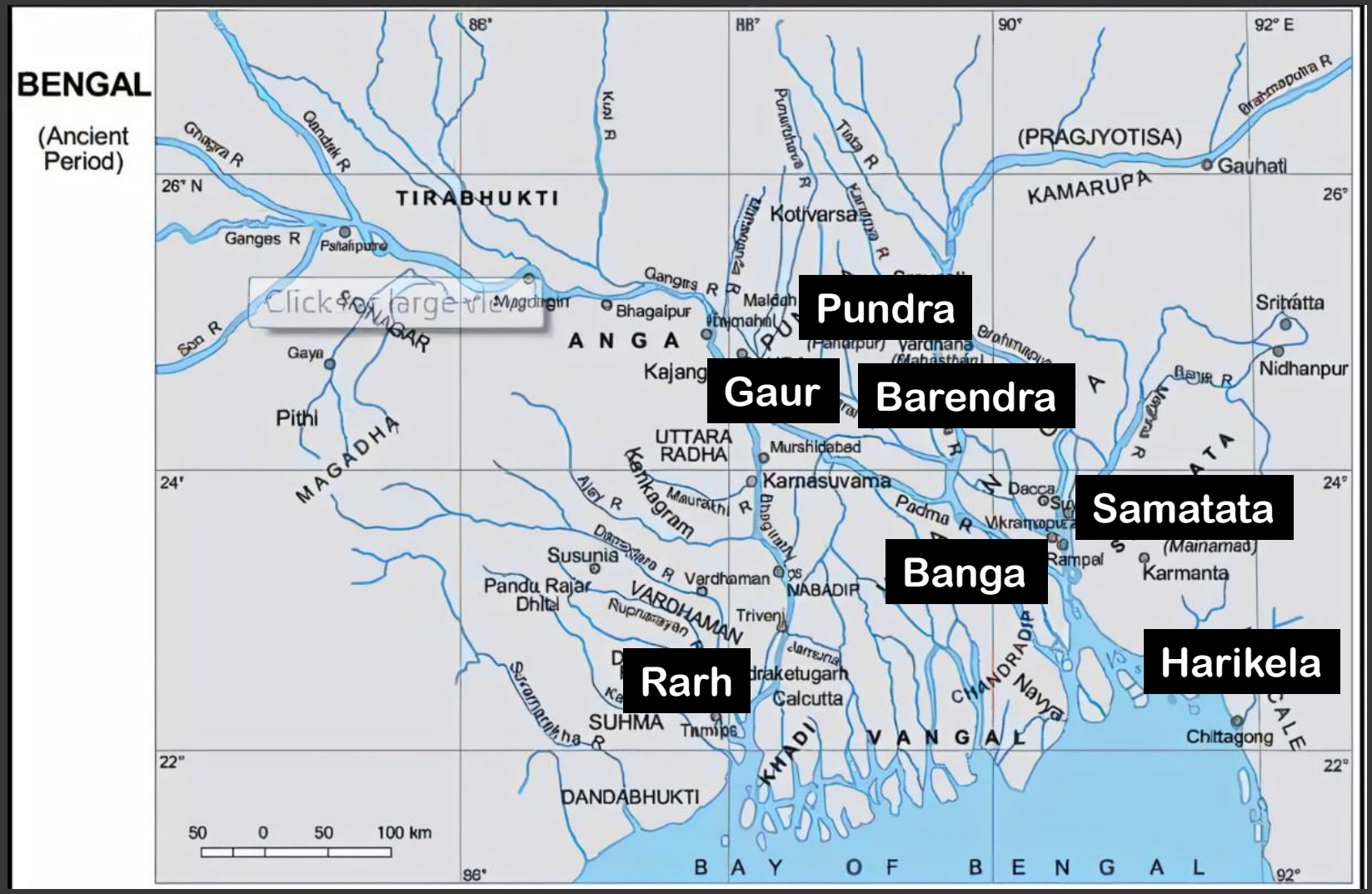
**The Eastern part of ancient India, covering much of current days Bangladesh was part of one of such mahajanapadas, the ancient kingdom of Anga.**



# History of Ancient Bengal
## (2000 BC to 1204 BC)

Some of the erstwhile Janapadas in Bengal were:

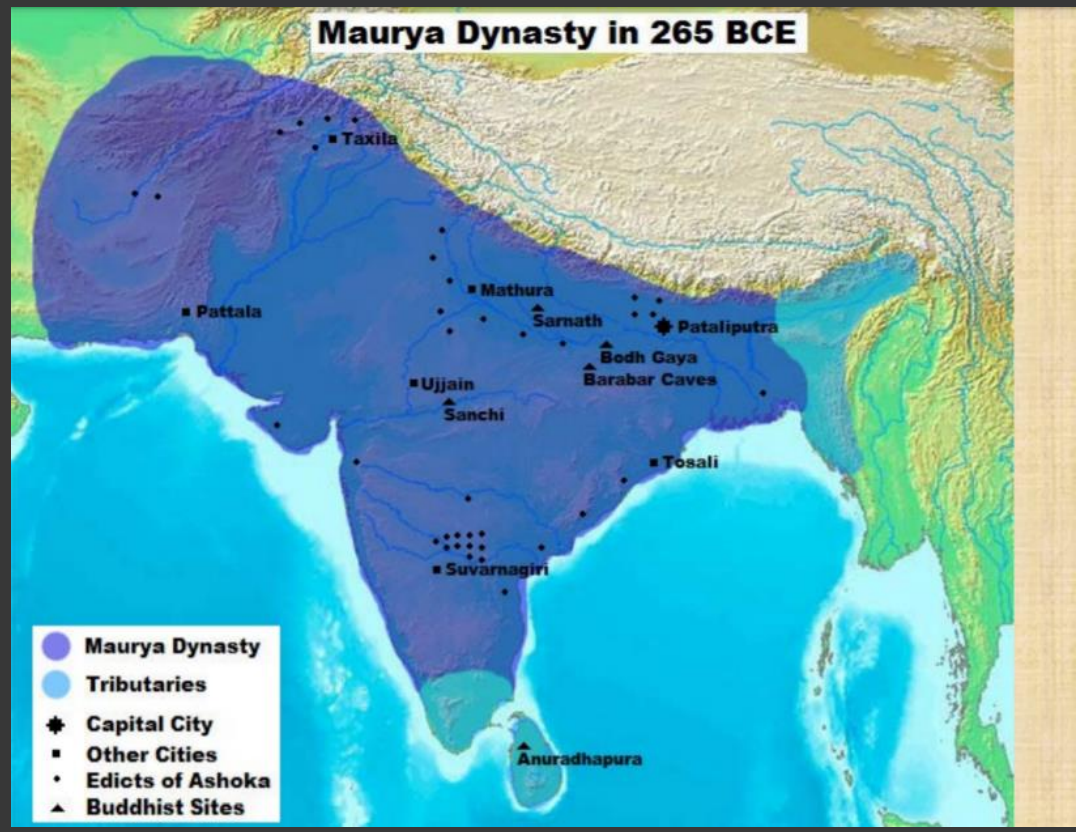
- Pundra
- Gaur
- Rarh
- Banga
- Barendra
- Harikela
- Samatata.



# Dynasties in Ancient Bengal

## Maurya Dynasty (321 B.C.- 185 B.C.)

- The Mauryan rule was established in North Bengal area during the reign of Emperor Asoka (269- 232 B.C.).
- Its capital was Pataliputra at first, but later moved to Pundranagar.
- Had a standing army and civil service.
- People mainly followed Buddhist religion but also supported Brahmanism and Jainism.
- It dissolved in 185 B.C. with the rise of the Sunga Dynasty in Magadha. Sunga Dynasty was succeeded by Kanva Dynasty (75-30 B.C.).



# Dynasties in Ancient Bengal




## Gupta Dynasty (320- 550 AD)

The founder of the Gupta Dynasty was Maharaja Sri Gupta (240- 280 A.D.), but the empire was markedly founded by Chandragupta I (320-335 A.D.).



Gold coin featuring Chandragupta



Gupta rulers spread Hinduism in their empire through building of temples and the promotion of Hindu writings and rituals.

Pinnacle of creativity in architecture.

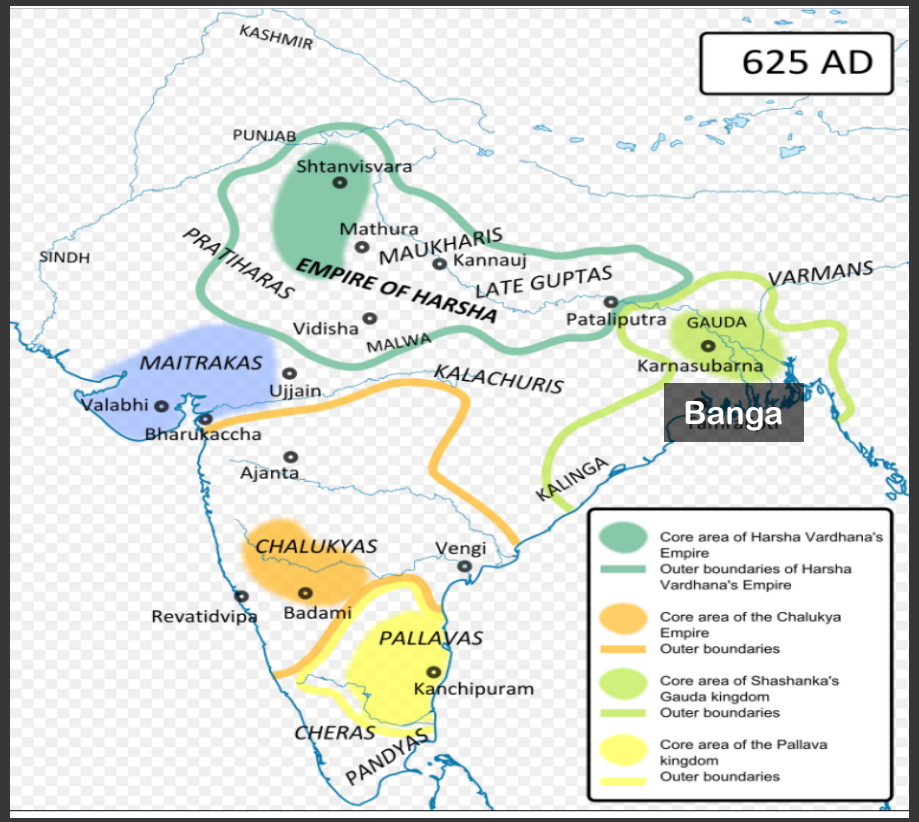


Invention of the decimal system with zero as a placeholder.

# Dynasties in Ancient Bengal

## Bengal in Post Gupta Period

**The Gupta Empire fell to pieces as a result of the attacks of a fierce mountainous tribe, the Huns.**







Two independent kingdoms came into existence – the kingdom of Banga and the kingdom of Gaur

**Pala Dynasty rose in the middle of eighth century.**

# Dynasties in Ancient Bengal

## The Pala Dynasty (750- 1160 A.D.).

- ✓ The founder of the Pala Dynasty was Gopala who was selected as the emperor of Gaur in 750.
- ✓ The proto-Bengali language was developed under Pala rule as they laid the basis for the Bengali language, including its first literary work, the Charyapada.
- ✓ Pala kings were Buddhists but they were tolerant to Hinduism.
- ✓ The administration was divided into two parts, the Central and Provincial.
- ✓ Appointment of Prime Minister by the Pala kings was an innovation



# Dynasties in Ancient Bengal

## The Independent Kingdom of South-east Bengal

**The South-East Bengal was independent most of the time during the time of the Palas. This region was in the "Banga" janapada of the ancient time.**

Many Dynasties ruled this region from the middle of the eighth century. Amongst them were:

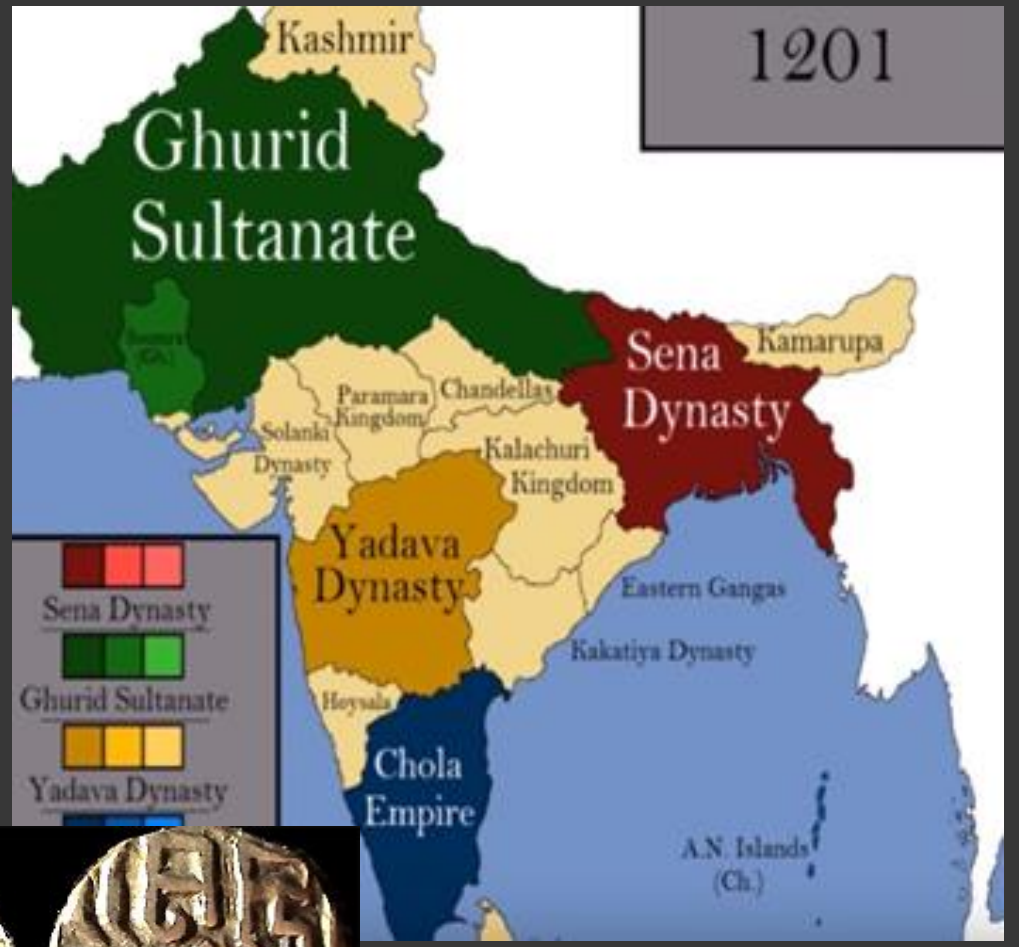
- The Kharga Dynasty
- The Deva Dynasty
- The Kingdom of Kanti Deva
- The Chandra Dynasty
- The Varmaraja Dynasty.



# Dynasties in Ancient Bengal

## Sena Dynasty (1070-1230 A.D.)

- A Hindu dynasty
- Founder was Samanta Sena, who came to Bengal in his old age and settled in the Rahr region on the bank of the river Ganges.
- The honour of being a king was given to his son Hemanta Sena.
- Their rule in Bengal continued up to 1206 AD.





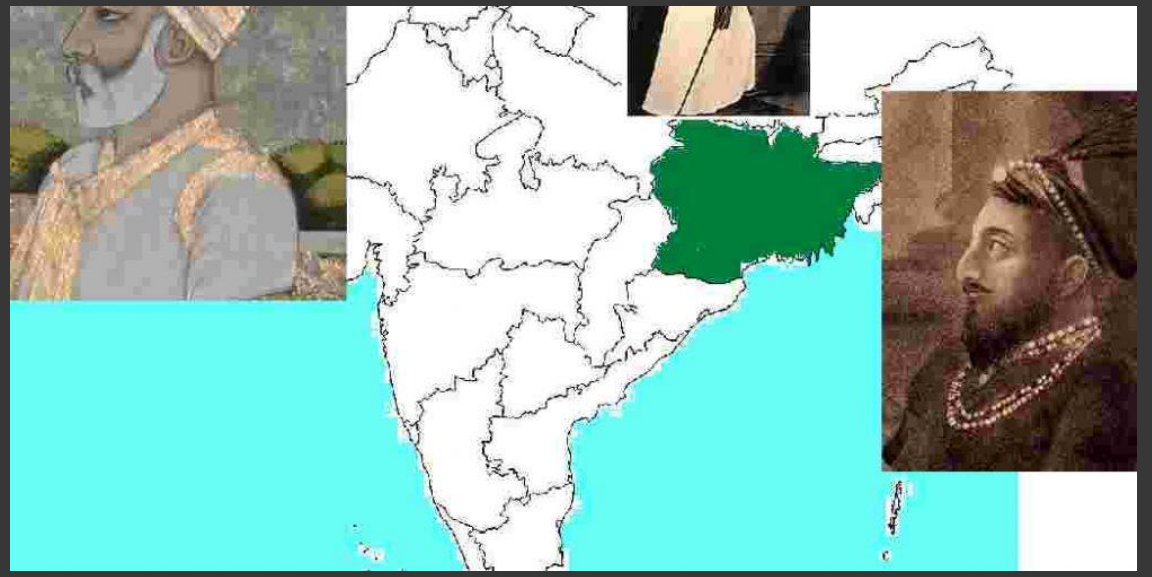
Coins of Sena Dynasty

# Medieval Age

## Time Period: 1204 AD to 1757 AD

- Coincided with Muslim rule
- Out of about 550 years of Muslim rule, Bengal was only ruled by Delhi-based All-India empires for almost 200 years

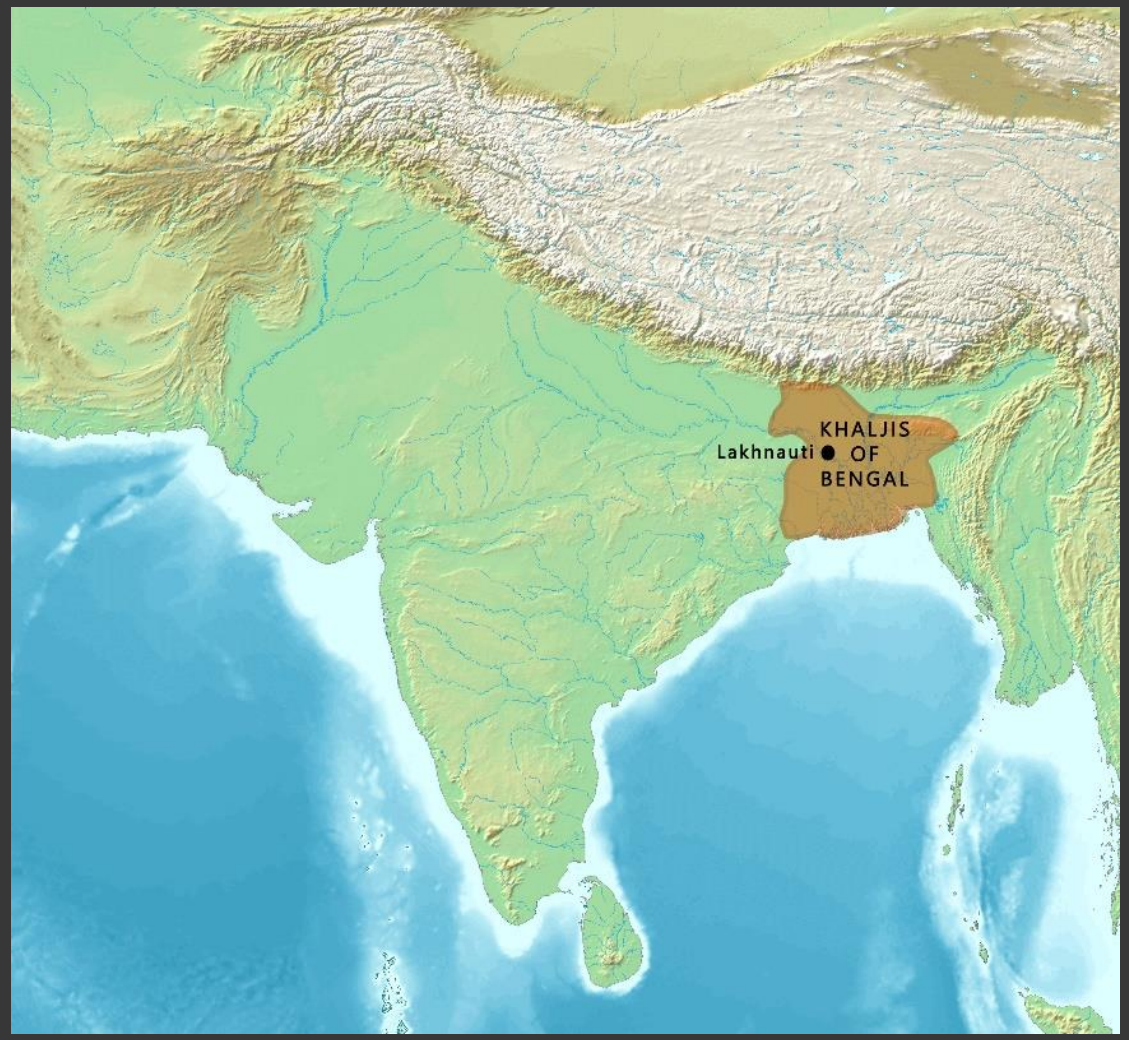




- Rest about 350 years, Bengal remained virtually independent.
- The Muslim rule of Bengal is usually divided into three phases.

# Medieval Age

## First phase: The Turkish Rule (1204-1338 AD)







In 1203 A.D. the Turkish hero Bakhtiar Khalji conquered Bihar and in 1205 A.D. he took hold of the famous capital of Sena Dynasty, Lakhsmanabati and renamed it Lakhnauti.

**The main feature of this age is the end of the Hindu and Buddhist rule and the establishment of the Muslim rule in Bengal.**

# Medieval Age

## Second Phase: The Independent Sultanate (1338-1538 A.D.)

### Ilyas Shahi Dynasty

Haji Ilyas, (Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah) established an independent Dynasty in Bengal in 1342.

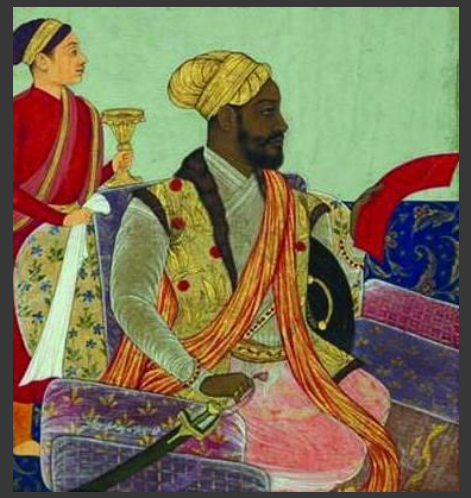
Iliyas Shah and his descendants ruled Bengal up to 1487 with an interruption of 23 years (1412-1435 AD) when Raja Ganesh and his descendants held power.



# Medieval Age

## Second Phase: The Independent Sultanate (1338-1538 A.D.)

### The Habshi Rule (1487-1493 A.D.)



- Habshis were African slaves who rose to power.
- This period was filled with lawlessness, injustice, conspiracy, rebellion and despair.
- All the four Habshi Sultans were killed during this period.

### The Hussain Shahi Dynasty (1493-1538 A.D.).

Alauddin Hussain Shah established the dynasty in 1493. Two hundred years of the independent rule of Bengal ended in 1538 with the death of Giasuddin Mahmud Shah.



Silver Coin of Alauddin Hussain Shah

# Medieval Age

## Third Phase: Bengal within the Framework of the Mughal Empire (1539 to1757)

### The Afghan Rule (1538-1576 A.D.)

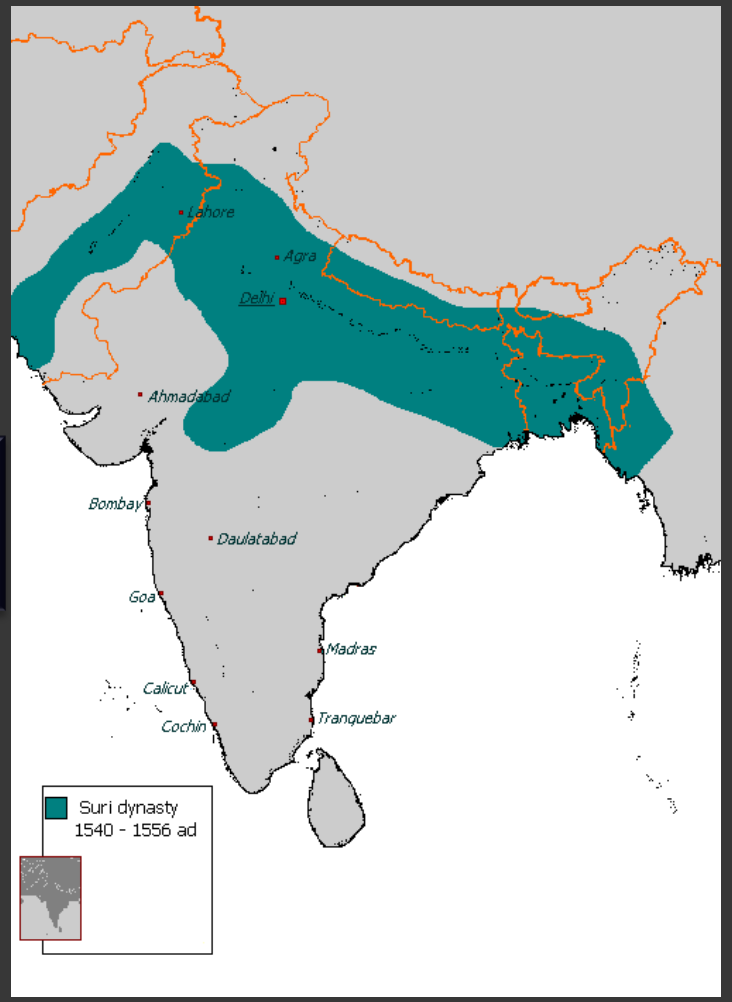
Sher Khan occupied Bengal in 1538.

He occupied the throne of Delhi in 1540

The whole Bengal up to Chittagong and Sylhet came under the domain of Sher Shah.



The term rūpee came to be used as the name for a silver coin of a standard weight of 178 grains.



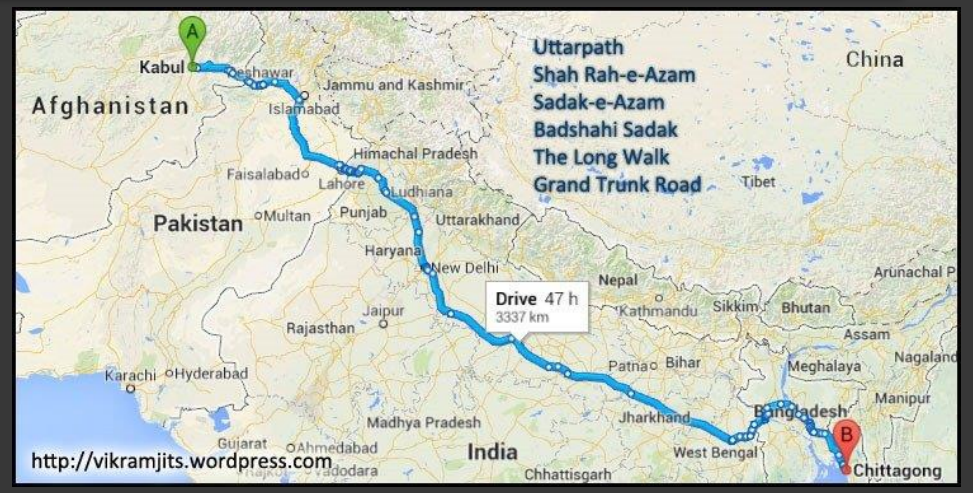
# Medieval Age

## Third Phase: Bengal within the Framework of the Mughal Empire (1539 to1757)

### The Afghan Rule (1538-1576 A.D.)

Sher Shah Suri introduced horse dak system in 1541

Rebuilding and modernizing the Grand Trunk Road






# Medieval Age

## Third Phase: Bengal within the Framework of the Mughal Empire (1539 to1757)

### The Afghan Rule (1538-1576 A.D.)

- Another two dynasties namely Muhammad Shah dynasty and Karrani dynasty ruled Bengal up to 1576.
- The Mughals annexed the region as a province in 1576 defeating Karrani dynasty.

# Medieval Age

## Third Phase: Bengal within the Framework of the Mughal Empire (1539 to1757)

### The History of Barabhuiyas

The big Zamindars of Bengal known as Barabhuyinas did not accept the subordination of the Mughals

**Barabhuyinas were subdued completely during the reign of Jahangir**

The claimant of the success was Subadar Islam Khan (1608-1613 A.D.)

Islam Khan entered Dhaka in 1610 A.D. From this time Dhaka became the capital of Bengal and was named Jahangirnagar after the Emperor



# Medieval Age

## Third Phase: Bengal within the Framework of the Mughal Empire (1539 to1757)

### The Mughal Rule in Bengal

Divided into two periods

### Rule of the Subadars

The Mughal provinces were known as ‘Subas’.

Bengal became a Suba after the defeat of the Barabhuyinas and continued up to 1727.

After Aurangzeb, the Mughal rule in Bengal became weak in the hands of his weak successors. Taking advantage of this, the Subadars of Bengal were ruling independently.

# Medieval Age

## Third Phase: Bengal within the Framework of the Mughal Empire (1539 to1757)

**The Mughal Rule in Bengal**

Divided into two periods

**Rule of the Subedars**

**Rule of the Nawabs**

The independent rule of the Subadars is known as the rule of the Nawabs. This continued up to 1757 A.D and ended with Siraj-ud-Doula the grandson of Nawab Alivardi Khan.

# Medieval Age

## Third Phase: Bengal within the Framework of the Mughal Empire (1539 to1757)

### Rule of the Nawabs

#### The Battle of Plassey

- A battle between the Nawabs and the English was inevitable.
- In 1757, the famous Battle of Plassey took place.
- Siraj-ud-Doula suffered miserable defeat due to internal conspiracy.
- Thus, Bengal lost her independence through the Battle of Plassey, which worked as the foundation of the two hundred years long European Colonization in the Indian subcontinent.

