Muhammad Ghori

For Prelims: Muhammad Ghori, Battle of Tarain, Conquest of Bihar and Bengal.

For Mains: Significance of battle of Tarain, Significance of Bihar and Bengal conquest.

Who was the Muhammad Ghori?

- **About**
  - The **Ghurids** had started as **vassals of** Ghazni, but had soon thrown off their yoke.
  - **Mu'izz ad-Din Muhammad**, also known as **Muhammad of Ghor,** was the **Sultan of the Ghurid Empire** from **1173** to **1202** and as the sole ruler from **1202** to **1206.**
  - He is credited with **establishing Muslim rule** in the Indian subcontinent, which lasted for centuries.

    - **Muhammad Ghori** was of **Persian origin,**
    - He ruled over parts of modern-day **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Northern India, Pakistan, Tajikistan,** and **Turkmenistan.**
    - Ghaznavids felt threatened by the **Ghurids** so they captured and poisoned the brother of the Ghurid emperor **Alauddin Hussain Shah.**
    - Subsequently, **Alauddin Hussain Shah** captured **Ghazni by** defeating the **Ghaznavid ruler Bahram Shah.**
    - The power of the **Ghurids** increased under **Sultan Alauddin** who earned the title of the **world burner' (jahan-soz)** because during the middle of the **twelfth century** he ravaged **Ghazni** and burnt it.
    - Following **Mahmud Ghazni's death, Ghori** ascended to the **Ghazni throne.**
- **Rise of Ghurids**:
    - Towards the middle of the **twelfth century,** a group of **Turkish tribesmen**, who were partly **Buddhist** and partly **Pagan**, shattered the power of the **Seljuk Turks.**
    - In the vacuum, two new powers rose to prominence, the Khwarizmi empire based in Iran, and the **Ghurid empire** based in **Ghur** in **northwest Afghanistan.**
    - The rising power of the **Khwarizmi empire** severely limited the Central Asian ambition of the **Ghurids.**
    - **Khurasan,** which was the bone of contention between the two, was soon conquered by **Khwarizm Shah**.
    - This left no option for the **Ghurids** but to look for expansion towards India.
    - Proceeding by way of the Gomal pass, **Mu'izz ad-Din Muhammad** conquered **Multan** and **Uchch.**
    - In **1178**, he attempted to penetrate **Gujarat** by marching across the **Rajputana desert.**
    - By **1190, Muizzuddin Muhammad** had conquered **Peshawar, Lahore** and **Sialkot**, and was poised for a thrust towards **Delhi** and the **Gangetic doab.**
- **Background for Conflict between Muhammad Ghori and other Indian Rulers:**
    - **Gujarat ruler** completely routed the **Muhammad Ghori** in a battle near **Mount Abu,** and **Muizzuddin Muhammad** was lucky in escaping alive.
    - He then realized the necessity of creating a suitable base in the **Punjab** before venturing upon the conquest of India.
    - The **Chauhan power** had been steadily growing. The **Chauhan rulers** had defeated and killed a large number of Turks who had tried to invade **Rajasthan,** most probably from the **Punjab side.**
    - They had also **captured Delhi (called Dhillika)** from the **Tomars** around the **middle of the century.**

What is the Battle of Tarain?

- **First Battle of Tarain in 1191:**
    - Thus, a battle between these two ambitious rulers, **Muizzuddin Muhammad** and **Prithviraj** was inevitable.
    - The conflict started with rival claims for **Tabarhinda**. In the battle which was fought at **Tarain in 1191.**
    - The **Ghurid forces** were completely routed, **Muizzuddin Muhammad's** life being saved by a young Khalji horseman.
    - **Prithviraj** now pushed on to **Tabarhinda** and conquered it after a **twelve- month siege.**
    - Little attempt was made by **Prithviraj** to oust the **Ghurids** from the **Punjab**.
    - This gave **Muizzuddin Muhammad** time to regroup his forces and make another bid for India the following year.
    - He rejected the proposal said to be made by **Prithviraj** to leave Punjab under the possession of the **Ghurid ruler.**
- **Second Battle of Tarain in 1192:**
    - The **second Battle of Tarain in 1192** is regarded as one of the turning points in Indian history.
    - **Muizzuddin Muhammad** had made careful preparations for the contest.
    - It is said that he marched with **1,20,000 men,** including a force of **heavy cavalry,** fully equipped with steel coats and armor and **10,000** mounted archers.
    - As soon as **Prithviraj** realized the nature of the **Ghurid** threat, he appealed to all the rajas

of northern India for help.
    - **Prithviraj** fielded a force of **3,00,000** including a large body of cavalry and **300 elephants.**
    - The numerical strength of the Indian forces was probably greater, but the **Turkish army** was better organized and led.
    - The battle was mainly a battle between **cavalry.**
    - A large number of Indian soldiers lost their lives.
    - **Prithviraj** escaped, but was captured near **Saraswati (Sirsa).**
    - The Turkish armies captured the fortresses of **Hansi, Saraswati** and **Samana.** Then they attacked and captured **Ajmer.**
    - **Prithviraj** was allowed to rule over **Ajmer** for some time. Soon after, **Prithviraj** was executed on a charge of **'conspiracy'**, and **Prithviraj's son** succeeded him.
    - Delhi also was restored to its **Tomar ruler** but this policy was reversed soon after.
    - The **ruler of Delhi** was ousted and **Delhi** was made a base for further **Turkish** advance into the **Ganga valley.**
    - Following a rebellion, a **Muslim army** recaptured **Ajmer** and installed a **Turkish** general there.
    - **Prithviraj's son** moved to **Ranthambore** and founded a new powerful **Chauhan kingdom** there.
    - Thus, the Delhi area and eastern Rajasthan passed under Turkish rule.
- **Conquest of Bihar and Bengal:**
    - **Turkish** dominance was expanded over the **Ganga-Yamuna doab** and the surrounding territory including Bihar and Bengal between **1192** and **1206.**
    - In order to establish themselves in the doab, the **Turks** had first to defeat the powerful **Gahadavala kingdom** of **Kanauj.**
    - The **Gahadavala ruler Jaichandra** had been ruling over the state peacefully for two decades.
    - After **Tarain, Muizzuddin** returned to **Ghazni** leaving the affairs in India in the hands of one of his trusted slaves, **Qutbuddin Aibak.**
    - During the next two years, the **Turks overran parts of upper doab**, without any opposition from the **Gahadavalas.**
- **Battle of Chandawar:**
    - In **1194, Muizzuddin** returned to India. He crossed the Jamuna with **50,000 cavalry** and moved towards **Kanauj.**
    - A hotly contested battle between **Muizzuddin** and **Jaichandra** was fought at **Chandawar** near **Kannauj.**
    - **Jaichandra** had almost carried the day when he was killed by an arrow, and his army was totally defeated.
- **Expedition to Banaras:**
    - **Muizzuddin** now moved on to **Banaras** which was ravaged, a large number of temples there being destroyed.
    - The **Turks** established their hold over a huge territory extending up to the **borders of Bihar.**
    - Thus, the **battles of Tarain** and **Chandawar** laid the foundations of **Turkish rule in north India.**
    - **Muizzuddin** lived till **1206**. During this period, he occupied the powerful forts of **Bayana** and **Gwaliyar** to guard the **southern flank of Delhi.**
- **Aibak's Expedition:**
    - A little later, **Aibak** conquered **Kalinjar, Mahoba** and **Khajuraho** from the **Chandel rulers of the area.**
    - With a base in the **doab** the **Turks** launched a series of raids in the neighboring areas. **Aibak** defeated **Bhima III, the ruler of Gujarat**, and **Anhilwara** and a number of other towns were ravaged and plundered.
    - Though a Muslim governor was appointed to rule the place he was soon ousted.
    - This showed that the **Turks** were not yet strong enough to be able to rule over such far-flung areas.
    - The Turks, however, were more successful in the east.
- **Expedition of Bakhtiyar Khalji (1205 AD.):**
    - **Bakhtiyar Khalji,** whose uncle had fought at the **battle of Tarain,** had been appointed in

charge of some of the areas beyond **Banaras.**
    - He had taken advantage of this to make frequent raids into **Bihar,** which was at the time in the nature of a **no-man's land.**
    - During these raids, he had attacked and destroyed some of the famous **Buddhist monasteries of Bihar, Nalanda** and **Vikramasila** which had no protector left.
    - He had also accumulated much wealth and gathered many followers around him. During his raids, he also collected information about the routes to Bengal.
    - Bengal was a rich prize because its internal resources and flourishing foreign trade had given it the reputation of being fabulously rich.
    - Making careful preparations, **Bakhtiyar Khalji** marched with an army towards **Nadia,** a pilgrim center where the **Sena ruler, Lakshmana Sena**, had built a palace, and to which he had gone on **pilgrimage.**
    - Turkish horse merchants had become a common sight in those days.
    - Pretending to be a horse-merchant, **Bakhtiyar Khalji** made a sudden attack on the palace, and created a great confusion.
    - **Bakhtiyar** then marched and occupied the **Sena capital, Lakhnauti,** without any opposition.
    - **Lakshmana Sena** moved to **Sonargaon** in **south Bengal** where he and his successors continued to rule.
    - **Bakhtiyar Khalji** was formally appointed the **governor of Bengal** by **Muizzuddin.**
    - He ruled over it as a virtually independent ruler. But he was not to enjoy this position for long.

How did Muhammad Ghori Die?

- He foolishly undertook an expedition into the **Brahmaputra valley** in **Assam.**
- The **Magh rulers of Assam** retreated and allowed the **Turkish armies** to come in as far as they could.
- Finally, the fatigued and drained armies realized they couldn't go any farther and chose to retire.
- They could find no provisions on the way, and were constantly harassed by the **Assamese armies.**
- Tired and weakened by hunger and illness, the Turkish army had to face a battle in which there was a wide river in front and the Assamese army at the back.
- The **Turkish armies** suffered a total defeat.
- **Bakhtiyar Khalji** was able to come back with a few followers with the help of some mountain tribes. But his health and spirits were broken.
- Ghori was **critically ill** and confined to his bed when he was stabbed to death by one of his own amirs.

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