

## Unit -2

# Emergence of New Kingdoms in North India



### Learning Objectives

- ❖ To acquire knowledge about the kingdoms of Rajputs and their counterparts in North India
- ❖ To assess the contributions of Rajputs and Palas to Indian culture
- ❖ To know about the early military expeditions of Arabs and Turks



### Introduction:

There are plenty of stories that speak of the valour and chivalry of Rajputs. Rajput states formed a collective entity that was called Rajputana. Chittor was prominent and had become the rallying point for all Rajput clans. It was small compared to Malwa and Gujarat. Yet the Rajputs ruled over these states. In commemoration of the victory of Rana of Chittor over Malwa, the *Jaya Stambha*, the tower of victory, was built in Chittor. The Pratiharas and the Palas had established their powerful kingdoms in western India and in eastern India respectively. By the 9th century, the Pratihara dynasty had progressed to such an extent that it called itself the sovereigns of Rajasthan and Kanauj. The decline of Pratihara kingdom led to the rise of Palas in Bengal and Chauhans in north-western India. India's Islamic period might have begun in the immediate context of Arabs' conquest

of Sind (A.D. (CE)712) rather than in A.D. (CE)1200. But the resistance shown by the kings of Kanauj, especially of Yasovarman (A.D. (CE)736) and later by the Rajput chiefs and kings who held Kanauj and most of northern India until the middle of the 10th century made it impossible.



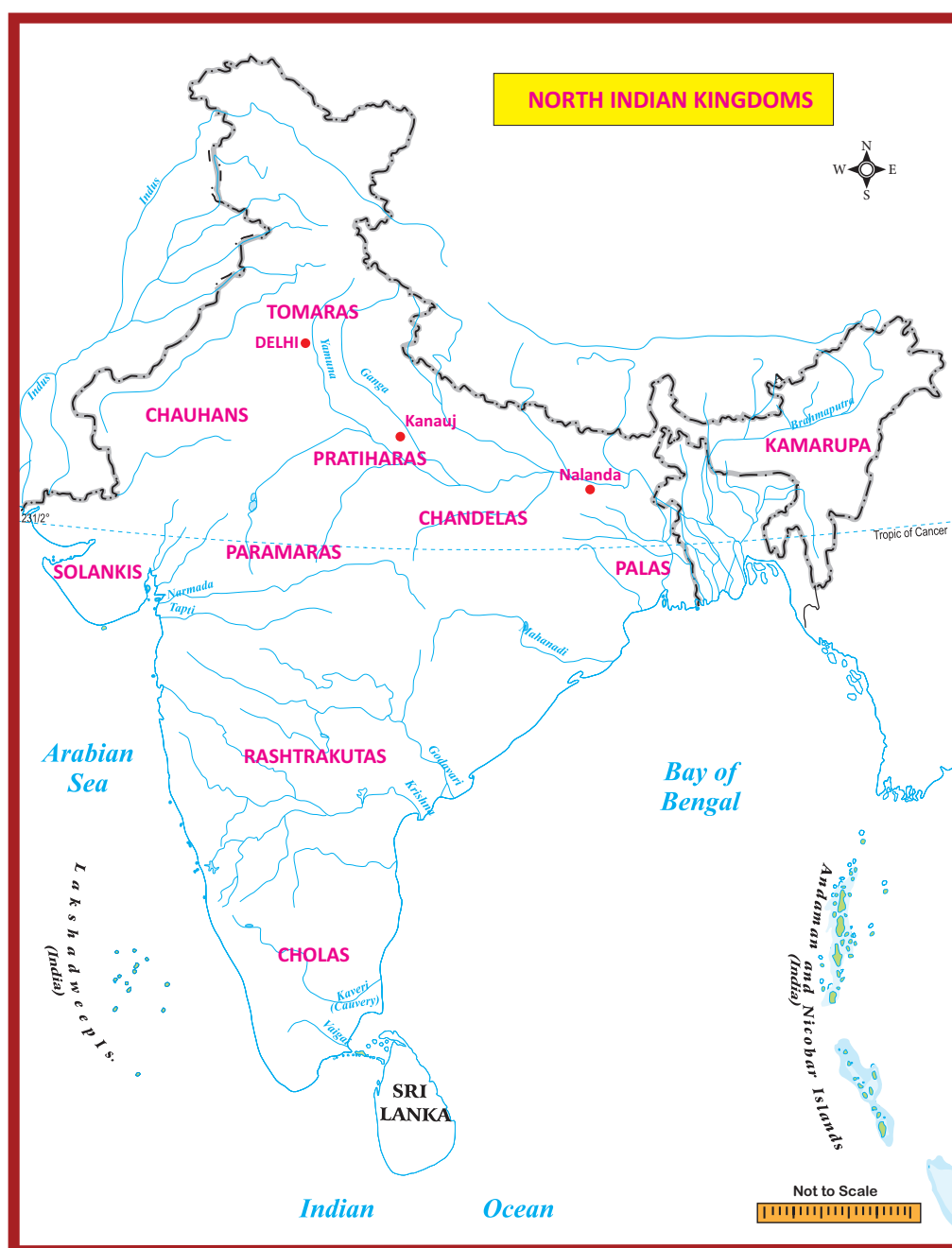
Jaya Stambha

## Origin of the Rajputs

The word 'Rajput' is derived from the Sanskrit word Rajputra, which means 'scion of the royal blood'. After the death of Harsha in A.D. (CE) 647, various Rajput clans established kingdoms in different parts of northern and central India. The Rajputs trace their pedigree far back into the past. Their three principal houses are the *Suryavanshi* or the Race of the Sun, the *Chandravanshi* or the Race of the Moon and the *Agnikula* or the Race of Fire God. Among those who claimed descent from solar and lunar lines,

Chandelas of Bundelkhand were prominent. Tomaras were ruling in the Haryana region. But they were overthrown by the Chauhans in the 12th century.

Thirty-six royal Rajput clans were listed by the Oriental scholar James Tod in A.D. (CE) 1829. Among them four claimed a special status: the Pratiharas, the Chauhans, the Chalukyas (different from the Deccan Chalukyas), known as Solankis, and the Paramaras of Pawars. All the four clans were of the Agnikula origin.



## Pratiharas

The Pratiharas or Gurjara Pratiharas, one of the four prominent clans of the Rajputs, ruled from Gurjaratra (in Jodhpur). In the 6th century A.D. (CE), Harichandra laid the foundation of the Gurjara dynasty. Nagabhatta I was the first and prominent ruler of Pratiharas. In the 8th century, he ruled over Broach and Jodhpur and extended his dominion upto Gwalior. He repulsed the invasion of the Arabs of Sind from the east and checked their expansion. He was succeeded by Vatsaraja, who desired to dominate the whole of North India. His attempt to control over Kanauj brought him into conflict with the Pala ruler Dharmapala.

There was a prolonged tripartite struggle between the Gurjara Pratiharas of Malwa, the Rashtrakutas of Deccan and the Palas of Bengal, as each one of them wanted to establish their supremacy over the fertile region of Kanauj. In the process, all the three powers were weakened.

Vatsaraja's successors Nagabhatta-II and Rambhadra did not do anything impressively. Mihirabhoja or Bhoja, son of Rambhadra, within a few years of his accession, succeeded in consolidating the power of the Pratiharas. As a strong ruler, Bhoja was able to maintain peace in his kingdom. The Arab menace was firmly tackled by him. After Bhoja, the Pratihara Empire continued its full glory for nearly a century.

Having successfully resisted the Arabs, the Pratiharas turned their attention towards the east and by the end of millennium, they ruled over a large part of Rajasthan and Malwa. They also held Kanauj for some time. The Rajputs fought each other endlessly in the 11th and 12th

centuries. Taking advantage of these internecine quarrels, many local kings succeeded in making themselves independent.

## Palas

### Dharmapala (A.D. (CE) 770 - 810)

Gopala, who founded the Pala dynasty, did not have royal antecedents. He was elected by the people for his superior capabilities. During his reign from 750 to 770, Gopala laid the foundations for the future greatness of this dynasty in Bengal. Dharmapala, his son, made the Pala kingdom a powerful force in northern Indian politics. He led a successful campaign against Kanauj. He was a great patron of Buddhism. He founded Vikramashila Monastery, which became a great centre of Buddhist learning.



Vikramashila Monastery

Dharmapala was succeeded by his son, Devapala, who extended Pala control eastwards into Kamarupa (Assam). Devapala was also a great patron of Buddhism. He gifted five villages to Buddhists. He also constructed many temples along with monasteries in Magadha. According to the historian R.C. Majumdar, 'The reigns of Dharmapala and Devapala constitute the most brilliant chapter in the history of Bengal.'

After Devapala, five rulers ruled the region insignificantly. The kingdom attained unprecedented glory when Mahipala ascended the throne in 988.

## Mahipala I (988 - 1038)

Mahipala I was the most powerful ruler of the Pala dynasty. He is called the founder of the second Pala dynasty. The decline of Pratiharas gave the Palas an opportunity to take a leading role in north Indian affairs. But he could not extend his domain beyond Banaras because of the impressive campaigns of the Chola king from the South, Rajendra Chola. Mahipala restored the old glory of the Palas. He constructed and repaired a large number of religious buildings at Banaras, Sarnath and Nalanda.

The Pala dynasty declined soon after the death of Mahipala and gave way to the Sena dynasty.

## The Chauhans

The Chauhans ruled between A.D. (CE) 956 and 1192 over the eastern parts of the present-day Rajasthan, establishing their capital at Sakambari. This Rajput dynasty was founded by Simharaji, who was popularly known as the founder of the city of Ajmer.

The Chauhans were the feudatories of the Pratiharas and staunchly stood by them to check the Arab invasions. The last of Chauhan kings, Prithviraj Chauhan, was considered the greatest of all Chauhan rulers. He defeated Muhammad Ghori in the first battle of Tarain

fought in 1191. However, he was defeated and killed in the second battle of Tarain in 1192.

## Contribution of Rajputs to Art and Architecture

### Art

Rajput courts were centres of culture where literature, music, dance, paintings, fine arts and sculpture flourished. A specific style of Rajput painting—often focusing on religious themes emerged at Rajput courts. Their style of painting is called 'Rajasthani'. The Rajasthani style of painting can be seen at Bikaner, Jodhpur, Mewar, Jaisalmer (all in Rajasthan).



Rajasthani Painting

### Architecture

The Rajputs were great builders. Some of the important examples of the Rajput buildings are the strong fortresses of Chittorgarh, Ranathambhor and Kumbhalgarh



There is a long epic poem *Prithvirajraso*, composed by the bard Chand Bardai, a few centuries later. The story goes like this: The daughter of the King of Kanauj was to marry. A *suyamwara* (the bride choosing the bridegroom of her choice) was held to enable her to choose her husband. But she was in love with Prithviraj and desired to marry him.

Prithviraj was the enemy of her father. In order to insult him, the King of Kanauj had not only denied him an invitation but had placed a statue of Prithviraj as door keeper at the entrance to his court. To the shock of everyone assembled, the princess rejected the princes present and garlanded the statue of Prithviraj, indicating her choice. Prithviraj, who had been hiding in the vicinity, jumped in and rode away with the princess in a horse. Later both of them were married.





Udaipur Lake Palace



Jaipur Amber Fort



Gwalior Palace

(all in Rajasthan), Mandu, Gwalior, Chanderi and Asirgarh (all in Madhya Pradesh).

The examples of domestic architecture of the Rajputs are the palaces of Mansingh at Gwalior, the buildings at Amber (Jaipur) and lake palaces at Udaipur. Many of the Rajput cities and palaces stand among the hills in forts or by the side of beautiful artificial lakes. The castle of Jodhpur in Rajasthan is perched upon a lofty rock overlooking the town.

The temples the Rajput rulers built have won the admiration of art critics. The temples in Khajuraho, the Sun temple in Konark, the Dhilwara Jain temple constructed in Mount Abu and Khandarya temple at Madhya Pradesh are illustrious examples of their architecture.

The Khajuraho in Bundelkhand has 30 temples. The *shikharas* of the Khajuraho temples are most elegant. The exterior and interior parts of the temples are adorned with very

fine sculptures. These temples are dedicated to Jain Tirthankaras and Hindu deities like Shiva and Vishnu.



Kajuraho

**The Raksha Bandan** (*Rakhi*) tradition is attributed to Rajputs. *Raksha* (protection) Bandhan (to tie) is a festival that celebrates brotherhood and love. It is believed that if a woman ties a *rakhi* around the wrists of male members, it means they are treating them like brothers. Such men are placed under an obligation to protect them.

Rabindranath Tagore started a mass *Raksha Bandhan* festival during the Partition of Bengal (1905), in which he encouraged Hindu and Muslim women to tie a *rakhi* on men from the other community and make them their brothers. The exercise was designed to counter British efforts to create a divide between Hindus and Muslims.

There are sixteen Hindu and Jain temples at Osian, which is 32 miles away from Jodhpur. The Jain temple at Mount Abu has a white marble hall and a central dome of 11 concentric rings and richly carved vaulted ceiling and pillars.



Temple at Osian

### Contribution of Palas to Culture

The Palas were adherents to the Mahayana school of Buddhism. They were generous patrons of Buddhist temples and the famous universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila. It was through their missionaries that Buddhism was established in Tibet. The celebrated Buddhist monk, Atisha (981-1054), who reformed Tibetan Buddhism, was the president of the Vikramashila monastery. The Palas also maintained cordial relations with the Hindu-Buddhist state of the Shailendras of Sumatra and Java.

Under Pala patronage, a distinctive school of art arose, called Pala art or **Eastern Indian art**. Pala artistic style flourished in present-day states of Bihar and West Bengal, and also in present-day Bangladesh. It was chiefly represented by bronze sculptures and palm-leaf paintings, celebrating the Buddha and other divinities. The Pala bronze sculptures from this area played an important part in the spread of Indian culture in Southeast Asia.



Palm Leaf Painting of Palas

### Advent of Islam

Islam as a religious faith originated at Mecca in Arabia. The founder of Islam was Prophet Muhammad. The followers of Islam are called Muslims. An Islamic state, especially the one ruled by a single religious and political leader, was known as 'Caliphate'. Caliph means a representative of the Prophet Muhammad. Two early Caliphates were 'Umayyads' and the 'Abbasids'. Both the Umayyads and the Abbasids expanded their rule separately by their conquests and by preaching the principles of Islam.

In the 8th century India, the Arab presence appeared in the form of a Muslim army that conquered the Sind. But their further expansion was made impossible by the kings of Gangetic plains and the Deccan. By the end of the 9th century, with the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate, the Arab garrisons in India and elsewhere threw off Caliph's control and began to rule independently.

The Turkish governor, Alp-Tegin, was one among them whose capital was Ghazni (Afghanistan). His successor and son-in-law Sabuktigin wanted to conquer India from the north-west. But only his son Mahmud succeeded in this endeavour.

### Mahmud of Ghazni (A.D. (CE) 997 -1030)

Mahmud is said to have conducted 17 raids into India. At that time, North India was divided into number of small kingdoms. One of them was



## Arab Conquest of Sind and its Impact

In A.D. (CE) 712, Muhammad bin Qasim who was the commander of the Umayyad kingdom invaded Sind. Qasim defeated Dahir, the ruler of Sind, and killed him in the battle. The capital of Sind, Aror, was captured. Qasim extended his conquest further into Multan. He organised the administration of Sind. The people of Sind were given the status of 'protected subjects'. There was no interference in the lives and religions of the people. But soon Qasim was recalled by the Caliph.

The Arab scholars visited Sind and studied many Indian literary works. They translated many Sanskrit books on astronomy, philosophy, mathematics and medicine into Arabic. They learnt the numerals 0 to 9 from India. Until then, the people in the West did not know the use of zero. Through the Arabs, Europe gained more knowledge in mathematics. The importance of zero was learnt by them from India. It is believed that the people in the West and the Arabs learnt the game of chess only from the Indians.



### Arrival of Turks in India

Shahi kingdom, which extended from Punjab to Kabul. The other important kingdoms were Kanauj, Gujarat, Kashmir, Nepal, Malwa and Bundelkhand. The initial raids were against the Shahi kingdom in which its king Jayapala was defeated in 1001. After his defeat, Jayapala

immolated himself because he thought that this defeat was a disgrace. His successor Anandapala fought against Mahmud but was defeated in the battle of Waihind, near Peshawar, in 1008. As a result of his victory at Waihind, Mahmud extended his rule over Punjab.



The subsequent raids of Mahmud into India were aimed at plundering the rich temples and cities of North India. In 1011 he raided Nagarkot in Punjab hills and Thaneshwar near Delhi.



Ruins of Somnath Temple

In 1018 Mahmud plundered the holy city of Mathura. He also attacked Kanauj. The ruler of Kanauj, Rajyapala, abandoned Kanauj and later died. Mahmud returned with enormous riches. His next important raid took place in Gujarat. In 1024 A.D. (CE) Mahmud marched from Multan across Rajaputana and defeated the Solanki king Bhimadeva I and plundered Anhilwad. Mahmud is said to have sacked the famous temple of Somanath, breaking the idol. Then he returned through the Sind desert. That was his last campaign in India. Mahmud died in 1030 A.D. (CE) The Ghaznavid Empire roughly included Persia, Trans-Oxyana, Afghanistan and Punjab.

### Muhammad of Ghor (1149 - 1206)

Muhammad of Ghor or Muhammad Ghori started as a vassal of Ghazni but became independent after the death of Mahmud. Taking advantage of the decline of the Ghaznavid Empire, Muhammad Ghori brought Ghazni under his control. Having made his position strong and secure at Ghazni, Muhammad

turned his attention to India. Unlike Mahmud of Ghazni, he wanted to extend his empire by conquering India. In 1175 Muhammad captured Multan and occupied whole of it in his subsequent expeditions. In 1186 he attacked Punjab and captured it.

### The Battle of Tarain (1191 - 1192)

Realising the grave situation in which they were caught, the Hindu princes of North India formed a confederacy under the command of Prithviraj Chauhan. Prithviraj rose to the occasion and defeated Muhammad in the battle of Tarain near Delhi in 1191. This was called the first battle of Tarain. To avenge this defeat, Muhammad made serious preparations and gathered a huge army. He arrived with his large force in Lahore via Peshawar and Multan. He sent a message to Prithviraj, asking him to acknowledge his supremacy and become a Muslim. But Prithviraj rejected the proposal and prepared his army to resist the invader. Many Hindu kings and chieftains also joined him. In the ensuing second battle of Tarain in 1192, Muhammad thoroughly routed the army of Prithviraj who was captured and killed.

The second battle of Tarain was a major disaster for the Rajputs. Their political prestige suffered a serious setback. The whole Chauhan kingdom now lay at the feet of the invader. The first Muslim kingdom was thus firmly established in India at Ajmer and a new era in the history of India began. After his victory over Prithviraj at Tarain, Muhammad returned to Ghazni to deal with the threat from the Turks and the Mongols. After the death of Muhammad in 1206, his most capable general Qutb-ud-din Aibak who had been left behind in India took control of Muhammad's territories in India and declared himself as the First Sultan of Delhi.



## Summary

- ❖ After Harsha, new regional powers emerged. Prominent ruling dynasties among them were Pratiharas, Palas, Chauhans and Paramaras.
- ❖ Pratiharas and Palas were battling to control the northern plains. Their focus was on capturing the city of Kanauj.
- ❖ The continued conflict over the possession of Kanauj prompted the local chieftains and kings to declare themselves independent.
- ❖ The Rajputs and Palas made impressive contribution to the evolving Indian culture.
- ❖ The attempts of Arabs to expand were resisted by various rulers.
- ❖ Military raids of Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century followed by expeditions of Muhammad of Ghor paved the way for the establishment of Islamic rule in India.

## Glossary

scion	a descendant of the notable family	வாரிசு, வழித்தோன்றல்
unprecedented	exceptional	முன்னெப்போதுமில்லாத
internecine	mutually destructive	இருசாராருக்கும் நாசத்தை விளைவிக்கின்ற
portraiture	the art of painting	சித்தரிக்கும் கலை
elegant	grand	நேர்த்தியான
monastery	a place where monks live	மடாலயம்
confederacy	a league or alliance of states	கூட்டமைப்பு




## Evaluation

### I. Choose the correct answer

- Who wrote *Prithivirajraso*?
 

- Kalhana
  - Vishakadatta
  - Rajasekara
  - Chand Bardai



NN5U7V
- Who was the first prominent ruler of Pratiharas?
  - Bhoja I
  - Naga Bhatta I
  - Jayapala
  - Chandradeva
- Ghazni was a small principality in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Mangolia
  - Turkey
  - Persia
  - Afghanistan

- What was the most important cause of the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni?
  - To destroy idolatry
  - To plunder the wealth of India
  - To spread Islam in India
  - To establish a Muslim state in India

### II Fill in the blanks

- \_\_\_\_\_ was the founder of Vikramashila University.
- Arabs conquered Sind in \_\_\_\_\_.
- The city of Ajmeer was founded by \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Khandarya temple is in \_\_\_\_\_.



### III Match the following

1. Khajuraho - Mount Abu
2. Sun temple - Bundelkhand
3. Dilwara Temple - Konark

### IV True or False

1. Rajputra is a Latin word.
2. King Gopala was elected by the people.
3. The temple at Mount Abu is dedicated to Lord Shiva.
4. Raksha Bandan is a festival of brotherhood.
5. Indians learnt the numerals 0 – 9 from Arabs.

### V Consider the following statements. Tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

1. **Assertion:-** The tripartite struggle was to have control over Kanauj.

**Reason:-** Kanauj was a big city.

- a) R is the correct explanation of A.
  - b) R is not the correct explanation of A.
  - c) A is wrong and R is correct.
  - d) A and R are wrong.
2. **Statement I.** Mahipala could not extend his domain beyond Benaras.

**Statement II.** Mahipala and Rajendra Chola were contemporaries.

- a) I is correct.
  - b) II is correct.
  - c) I and II are correct.
  - d) I and II are false.
3. **Assertion:-** India's Islamic period did not begin after Arab conquest of Sind in AD (CE)712.

**Reason:-** Gurjara Pratiharas gave a stiff resistance to Arabs.

- a) R is the correct explanation of A.
- b) R is not the correct explanation of A.
- c) A is correct and R is wrong.
- d) A is wrong and R is correct.

4. **Assertion:-** The second battle of Tarain was lost by Prithviraj.

**Reason:-** There was disunity among the Rajputs

- a) R is the correct explanation of A.
- b) R is not the correct explanation of A.
- c) A is correct and R is wrong.
- d) A is wrong and R is correct.

5. **Consider the following statements and find out which is/are correct.**

1. *Raksha Bandan* tradition is attributed to Rajputs.
2. Tagore started a mass *Raksha Bandan* festival during Partition of Bengal
3. *Raksha Bandan* was to counter the British attempt to create a divide between Hindus and Muslims.

- a) 1 is correct.
- b) 2 is correct.
- c) 3 is correct.
- d) All the above are correct.

### VI Answer in one or two sentences

1. Write about tripartite struggle over Kanauj.
2. Name any four Rajput clans.
3. Who was the founder of Pala dynasty?
4. Mention the first two early Caliphates.
5. Name the ruler of Sind who was defeated by Qasim.

### VII Answer the following in detail

1. What was the impact of Arab conquest of Sind? (point out any five)

## VIII HOTs

- Difference between Mahmud Ghazni's invasion and Muhammad Ghor's invasion.
- Find out

	First battle of Tarain	Second battle of Tarain
Fought in the year		
Causes for the battle		
Who defeated whom?		
What was the result?		

## IX Students activity

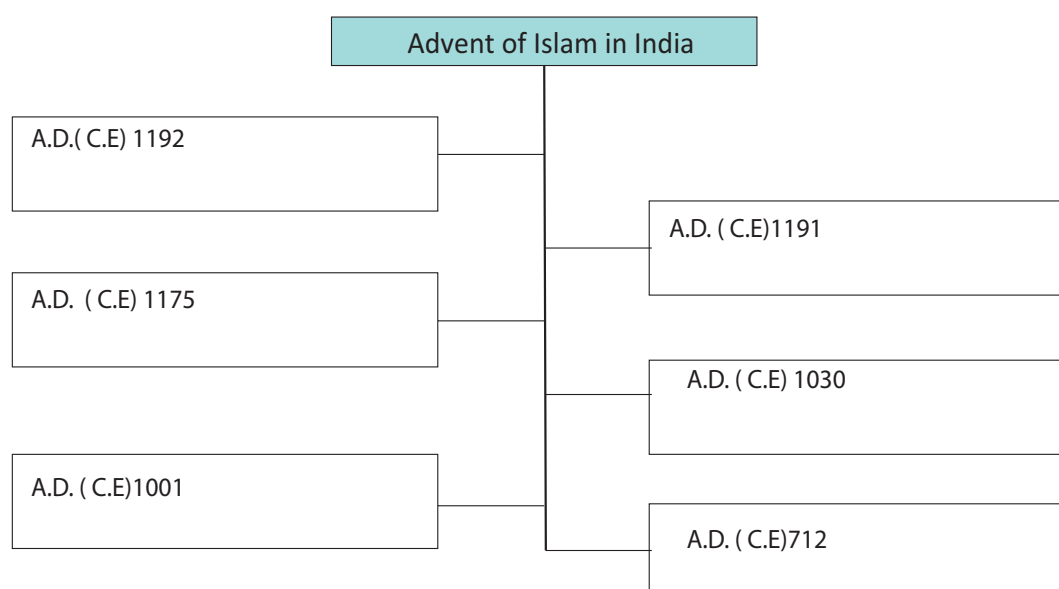
### a) Word Splash

(Students discuss what they know about the words given here. They use the words from what they have learnt in a narrative form)

Harsha	Rajputs
Kanauj	Vikramashila
Prithviraj	Caliph

### b) Time Line

Write the event for the given year in each column.



## X Map work

On the river map of India mark the territories ruled by Pratihars, Chauhans, Palas and Paramaras.



## XI Answer Grid

1. Who was the Shahi ruler of Punjab defeated by Mahmud of Ghazni? Ans:	2. Rajput style of Painting is called _____ Ans:
3. How many Rajput clans were there? Ans:	4. Who established the first Islamic empire in India? Ans:
5. Who was the first Sultan of Delhi? Ans:	6. Where is Mecca? Ans:

## XII Life skill

1. Make an album with the pictures of temples built by Rajput rulers.

## References

1. Romila Thapar, *Early India*, New Delhi: Penguin, 2002.
2. Burton Stein, *A History of India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004 (Reprint).
3. S.K. Singh, *History of Medieval India*, New Delhi: Axis Books, 2013.
4. K.V Rajendra, *Ancient and Medieval Indian History*, New Delhi: Pacific Publication, 2010.