



KHALJI IMPERIALISM (PART-3) खलजी साम्राज्यवाद (भाग-3)

(UG , SEM-4, PAPER MJC-7)

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Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316)

(अलाउद्दीन खलजी)

Mongol Raids

Alauddin had to deal with the recurring Mongol inroads which threatened not only the Punjab, Multan and Sind but also the very capital of the Empire. The earlier Mongol invaders were interested only in the wealth of India. They had no intention of founding their state in India. Now their aim was to establish their rule in India. The Mongols, therefore, became a serious menace to the Khalji imperialism. The Delhi Sultanate was fortunate to have a right man at the top at the right moment.

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Alauddin is credited with having repelled more than a dozen Mongol invasions. The first Mongol invasion occurred in 1296. Zafar Khan, an able commander, was sent against them. He defeated them near Jalandhar and killed nearly 20,000 Mongols. The second invasion took place in 1297. The Mongols had captured Siyistan. Once again, Zafar Khan, displaying great valor, defeated the Mongols and recovered Siyistan. The next invasion took place in 1299. Dava Khan sent an army of 2, 00,000 men under the command of his son Qutlugh Khwaja.

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As the aim of the Mongols this time was to conquer Delhi, not to plunder India, they marched to the neighborhood of Delhi without molesting the people on their way. Alauddin fixed his camp at Kili. The fate of the Delhi Sultanate depended on the outcome of the battle to be fought with the Mongols. The advance guard of the army led by Zafar Khan defeated the enemy and pursued him relentlessly. The Khalji imperialism was given a new lease of life.

The next important invasion took place in 1303. The Mongol army consisting of 1, 20,000 cavalrymen was led by Targhi.

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Marching towards Delhi, it encamped near the capital city. Alauddin was forced to take shelter in the fortress of Siri where he was besieged for two months. The Mongols plundered the neighborhood of Delhi and carried their raids into the streets of Delhi.

As the Mongols were not experienced in the art of capturing town by a regular siege, they could not press home the advantages they had gained by the conduct of Alauddin. After three months of campaigning, they withdrew.

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The ease with which the Mongols had reached Delhi without much difficulty made Alauddin realize the need for taking effective measures to protect the frontier. He repaired the old forts in Punjab, Multan and Sind and built new ones. The forts were garrisoned with powerful troops. An additional army was posted to guard the frontier. A special governor of the frontier region called the Warden of the Marches was appointed. In spite of these measures, the Mongols continued to invade India. A Mongol army led by Ali Beg was defeated. It was during this operation that Ghazi Malik, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty came to the forefront.

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Ghazi Malik defeated another Mongol army led by Kabak. The last Mongol raid occurred in 1307-1308. Iqbalmand was the leader of the Mongol army at that time. After this, Alauddin was free, from the Mongol menace.

The significance of the Mongol invasions lies in the fact that they prevented the Delhi Sultan from focusing all his attention to the conquest of all parts of North India and to the consolidation of the conquests he had made. Further, the need to guard the North-West frontier effectively compelled the Sultan to give more powers to the governors of frontier provinces.

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As a result, these governors became powerful enough to seize the throne of Delhi.

The founders of the Khalji and Tughluq dynasties were the governors of the frontier provinces before they became the Sultans. The recurring Mongol raids made the Sultan to depend on the nobles for support against the Mongols. As a result, the strength of the central government was very much reduced. Further, the Mongol raids necessitated certain steps to raise the strength of the army most important of these was the price-control system.

(To be continued)