

Topic: Unit-I (c) Establishment of Mughal Empire.

Humayun was twenty-three when he succeeded his father, and while he had experience as a military Commander, he lacked his father's vigor and toughness. These qualities were needed, for he was faced with a hostile combination of his own jealous relatives, including his three younger brothers and the Afghan nobles who were not reconciled to their loss of power.

He soon found himself fighting his enemies on two widely separated fronts. In the west, Bahadur Shah, the ruler of Gujarat, which had been independent of Delhi for over a century, provided shelter for his enemies; in the east, his authority was challenged by the Afghan chieftains, under Sher Khan Sur. He was able to carry out a successful attack on Bahadur Shah's territories, but he had to abandon his gains to move against the threat to his power from Sher Khan Sur in Bihar.

Sher Khan Sur was one of the most colourful of the numerous Afghans who had created places for themselves in the outlying provinces. The son of a petty Afghan jagirdar in Bihar, he had gone at an early age to Jaunpur, where he acquired an excellent knowledge of the Arabic and Persian classics. He entered the service of the governor of Bihar, but apparently seeing the likelihood of a Mughal triumph in North India, he joined the army of Babur when he invaded India. After Babur's death he took advantage of the disturbed conditions to assert his own supremacy over Bihar. This, however, did not satisfy him, and at the end of February 1536, he appeared at the gates of Gaur, the capital of Bengal, and retired only after receiving a large payment. Next year he marched eastward again and entered Gaur in triumph, but on the return of Humayun from Gujarat, he withdrew

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toward Bihar to fight the Mughals in the area he knew best. In 1539 Humayun, who had occupied Gaur, was caught in unfamiliar territory during the monsoon and as he tried to withdraw his forces toward Agra, Sher Khan blocked his communications and defeated him at Chausa on the Ganges. The two armies met again at Kanauj, in 1540, but the Mughal army was so demoralized that on Sher Khan's advance they fled in panic.

Humayun's last chance of making a stand against the Afghans was gone. He fled toward Rajputana and Sind, & at one time turned toward Qandahar where his brother Kamran was in power, but he received no help and had to seek refuge with the Shah of Persia. For the next 15 years he wandered through the Indian borderlands, quarreling with his brother and seeking support for a return to India, but it was not until 1555, a year before his death, that he was able to enter Delhi again.

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— D. M. Paswan, History.