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The Establishment of the Mughal Empire BaBUR

The foundation of the empire was laid in 1526 by ahir al-Din Mu? ammad Babur, a Chagatai Turk (so called because his ancestral homeland, the country north of the Amu Darya [Oxus River] in Central Asia, was the heritage of Chagatai, the second son of Genghis Khan). Babur was a fifth-generation descendant of Timur on the side of his father and a 14th-generation descendant of Genghis Khan. His idea of conquering India was inspired, to begin with, by the story of the exploits of Timur, who had invaded the subcontinent in 1398.

Babur inherited his father's principality in Fergana at a young age, in 1494. Soon he was literally a fugitive, in the midst of both an internecine fight among the Timurids and a struggle between them and the rising Uzbeks over the erstwhile Timurid empire in the region. In 1504 he conquered Kabul and Ghazni. In 1511 he recaptured Samarkand, only to realize that, with the formidable ? afavid dynasty in Iran and the Uzbeks in Central Asia, he should rather turn to the southeast toward India to have an empire of his own. As a Timurid, Babur had an eye on the Punjab, part of which had been Timur's possession.

He made several excursions in the tribal habitats there. Between 1519 and 1524—when he invaded Bhera, Sialkot, and Lahore—he showed his definite intention to conquer Hindustan, where the political scene favoured his adventure. Conquest Of Hindustan Having secured the Punjab, Babur advanced toward Delhi, garnering support from many Delhi nobles. He routed two advance parties of Ibrahim Lodi's troops and met the sultan's

main army at Panipat. The Afghans fought bravely, but they had never faced new artillery, and their frontal attack was no answer to Babur's superior arrangement of the battle line.

Babur's knowledge of western and Central Asian war tactics and his brilliant leadership proved decisive in his victory. By April 1526 he was in control of Delhi and Agra and held the keys to conquer Hindustan. Babur, however, had yet to encounter any of the several Afghans who held important towns in what is now eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and who were backed by the sultan of Bengal in the east and the Rajputs on the southern borders. The Rajputs under Rana Sanga of Mewar threatened to revive their power in northern India. Babur assigned the unconquered territories to his nobles and led an expedition himself against the rana in person.

He crushed the rana's forces at Khanua, near Fatehpur Sikri (March 1527), once again by means of the skillful positioning of troops. Babur then continued his campaigns to subjugate the Rajputs of Chanderi. When Afghan risings turned him to the east, he had to fight, among others, the joint forces of the Afghans and the sultan of Bengal in 1529 at Ghagra, near Varanasi. Babur won the battles, but the expedition there too, like the one on the southern borders, was left unfinished. Developments in Central Asia and Babur's failing health forced him to withdraw. He died near Lahore in December 1530. Babur's Achievements

Babur's brief tenure in Hindustan, spent in wars and in his preoccupation with northwest and Central Asia, did not give him enough time to consolidate fully his conquests in India. Still, discernible in his efforts are the beginnings

of the Mughal imperial organization and political culture. He introduced some Central Asian administrative institutions and, significantly, tried to woo the prominent local chiefs. He also established new mints in Lahore and Jaunpur and tried to ensure a safe and secure route from Agra to Kabul. He advised his son and successor, Humayun, to adopt a tolerant religious policy.