

MCQ Question · mcqquestion.com

Muhammad bin Tughlaq

Free · Share

Muhammad bin Tughlaq

Muhammad bin Tughlaq was among the most learned Sultans of Delhi. He tried bold ideas in money, farming and the capital. Most of them failed. This lesson shows why, and what exams ask.

At a glance

Four key facts on this topic

01 **Reign**1325–1351.

02 **Capital**Daulatabad from 1327.

03 **Coins**Copper tokens, about 1330.

04 **Visitor**Ibn Battuta, 1334.

What kind of Sultan was he?

1 A Brilliant Sultan

1.1 Who was Muhammad bin Tughlaq?

He took the throne of Delhi in 1325. He was the son of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. He ruled for 26 years.

He knew Persian and Arabic. He also studied astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, medicine and logic. So he was among the best-educated Sultans of Delhi.

1.2 What made him unusual?

He held rationalist views. He talked with Hindu yogis and with Jain saints such as Rajasekhar and Jinaprabhasuri.

He curbed the political power of the orthodox ulema. He also believed that offices should go to talented people. Contemporaries called him one of the wonders of the age.

> 8. **Think it through:** If he was so gifted, why is his reign called a failure? See answer ↓

> **Quick check 1.** True or false: Muhammad bin Tughlaq took the throne of Delhi in 1325. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in; vajiramandravi.com; drishtiias.com

Why did he move the capital to Daulatabad?

2 The Capital Shift to Daulatabad

2.1 Why did he move the capital?

In 1327 he made Daulatabad, the old Devagiri, a capital in the south. It stood in a central place. It was also close to the newly conquered lands.

The aim was sensible: to rule both north and south from a central point.

2.2 Who had to move, and how did the journey go?

Officers, nobles, scholars and Sufi saints were ordered to go. The rest of Delhi's people were not forced to move.

The Sultan built a road with rest houses. He bought the houses of those who left and gave grants. He also provided free food and lodging at Daulatabad. Even so, many people died on the road in the summer heat.

2.3 Why did it end?

After about two years he moved the court back to Delhi. Daulatabad lacked water. It was also hard to rule the north from so far away.

Some benefit remained. North–south contact improved. Turkish culture and ideas spread into the Deccan.

2.4 Was Delhi really emptied?

Ibn Battuta visited Delhi in 1334. He found it fairly prosperous.

That makes stories of a wholly empty Delhi hard to believe. Only the elite were moved. Treat the picture of a deserted city as a later exaggeration.

> 9. **Think it through:** What lesson does the Daulatabad move teach? See answer ↓

> **Quick check 2.** True or false: The Sultan ordered every person in Delhi to move to Daulatabad. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: lotusarise.com

How did the token currency work, and why did it fail?

3 The Token Currency Experiment

3.1 Why did he issue token coins?

Around 1330 he replaced silver tankas with copper and brass coins of the same stated value. The world was then short of silver.

His wars and large gifts had also drained the treasury. Barani gave this second reason. Kublai Khan of China had already tried token money.



A copper token coin of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Photo: Drnsreedhar1959, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

3.2 Why did the scheme collapse?

The state did not keep a monopoly on minting. Coppersmiths' and goldsmiths' houses became mints, and forged coins spread fast.

Khuts and muqaddams even paid land revenue in the cheap coins. Barani wrote that heaps of copper coins lay on the road at Tughlaqabad.

3.3 What did it cost?

The coins were withdrawn after two to three years. The Sultan offered silver and gold in exchange. The treasury was emptied.

The Sultan lost twice. The state paid for the swap, and trust in his coinage fell. Edward Thomas still called him the "Prince of Moneyers" for the bold idea.

Token currency at a glance

Part	Detail
When	About 1329–1330; ended by about 1333

Part	Detail
Coins	Copper and brass, valued as silver tankas
Motive	Silver shortage and a drained treasury
Flaw	No state monopoly on minting, so forgery
Result	Coins withdrawn; silver and gold paid out

10. **Think it through:** Would a state monopoly on minting have saved it? See answer ↓

Quick check 3. True or false: The token currency failed mainly because the state tightly controlled who could mint coins. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What went wrong with the Doab tax and farm reform?

4 The Doab Tax Experiment

4.1 What happened in the Doab?

The Sultan raised land revenue in the Ganga–Yamuna Doab. The rise came in a time of famine. Books differ on the year: some say 1328–29, others say 1334.

One exam source gives a rise of up to 50 percent. Barani claims a rise of ten to twenty times, but this is seen as an exaggeration.

4.2 How did the peasants react?

Farmers burned their grain stores and left their fields. Towns such as Bulandshahr rose in revolt.

The Sultan put the revolts down harshly. Famine lasted for years, from about 1334–35 to 1342 in one account. So the tax fell on people who had nothing to give.

4.3 What help did he offer?

He gave takkavi loans for seed, cattle and wells.

He also set up the Diwan-i-Amir-i-Kohi, a department for farming. Its aim was to bring more land under cultivation.

4.4 What was the model farm?

The state picked about 60 square miles for reclaiming. It spent 70 lakh tankas over two years. Crops were changed: wheat for barley, then sugarcane for wheat.

The scheme was dropped after about three years. Officials were inexperienced and dishonest. The land was poor, and the farmers were not keen. Later, Firoz Shah wrote off the loans.

Doab measures compared

Measure	Aim	Result
Higher land tax	Raise money for army and state	Revolts, fled fields, burned grain

Measure	Aim	Result
Takkavi loans	Help farmers sow and dig wells	Little reached peasants
Diwan-i-Kohi farm	Extend farming, better crops	Dropped after about three years

11. **Think it through:** Was the Doab tax or the relief the bigger mistake? See answer ↓

Quick check 4. True or false: The Diwan-i-Amir-i-Kohi was a department meant to extend farming. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What were the Khurasan and Qarachil plans?

5 The Khurasan and Qarachil Plans

5.1 What was the Khurasan plan?

In 1332–33 he planned a campaign against the Persian ruler Abu Said. He formed a triple alliance with Tarmashirin of Transoxiana and the ruler of Egypt.

Barani says about 370,000 men were enrolled. Each was paid a year in advance.

5.2 Why did it fail?

The plan was dropped. Money ran short. The snowy mountains were hard to cross. Conditions in Khurasan had also improved.

The army was disbanded. Out-of-work soldiers turned to plunder. A year of pay had already been handed out.

5.3 What was the Qarachil expedition?

In about 1333 he sent his nephew Khusrau Malik into the hills. Books place them in Kumaon–Garhwal or in Kullu–Kangra. The hills sheltered rebels.

The army won at first. Then it pushed on toward Tibet, against orders. Rain, disease and hill fighters broke it. Barani says only ten horsemen came back from 10,000. Other books give higher numbers, so learn the story, not the count.

> 12. **Think it through:** Why do hill campaigns punish armies from the plains? See answer ↓

> **Quick check 5.** True or false: The Khurasan army marched out and conquered the Persian lands. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Whom did he promote, and what did Ibn Battuta say?

6 Officials, Rebels and Ibn Battuta

6.1 Whom did he promote?

He promoted people by skill, not by birth. Aziz-ud-din Khammar, a distiller, became governor of Malwa. Peera Mali, a gardener, became Diwan-i-Wizarat.

Najba, a singer, held Badaun, then Gujarat and Multan. Foreign nobles were called *aziz* and got rich gifts. Barani mocked the low-born officials. Ibn Battuta also criticised them.

6.2 What did Ibn Battuta say?

Ibn Battuta reached Delhi in 1334. He called the Delhi ruler one of the four most powerful rulers of the world.

He also blamed the Sultan for over-rich rewards and harsh punishments. His book is the main travel account of the reign.

6.3 Which rebellions broke out?

The reign saw 34 rebellions. Twenty-seven were in the south. The last decade, 1340–1351, was eaten up by revolts.

- Hasan Shah's revolt led to the Madurai Sultanate
- Harihara and Bukka founded Vijayanagara in 1336
- Alauddin Bahman Shah founded the Bahmani kingdom in 1347, with Gulbarga as capital
- Governors of Oudh, Multan and Sindh revolted

Rebellions and new states

Year	New state	Founder
1336	Vijayanagara (Hampi)	Harihara and Bukka
1347	Bahmani Sultanate (Gulbarga)	Alauddin Bahman Shah
Under the reign	Madurai Sultanate	Hasan Shah

> 13. **Think it through:** How did his best idea hurt him? See answer ↓

Quick check 6. True or false: Vijayanagara was founded during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

How did the reign end, and what do exams ask?

7 Death, Verdict and Exams

7.1 How did the reign end?

In Gujarat, Taghi rebelled. The Sultan spent nearly three years chasing him.

He restored order there. Then he marched on toward Thatta in Sindh. He died on the way, in March 1351. His cousin Feroz Shah Tughlaq took over.

7.2 What do historians conclude?

Badauni wrote that the king was freed from his people and the people from their king.

Modern writers say his aims were sound. He lacked balance and sense of proportion. His reign marked the height of the Delhi Sultanate and the start of its fall.

7.3 What do exams ask?

NDA (NA II) 2017 asked which travelogue gave insight into his reign. The answer is Ibn Battuta's Rihla. See NDA NA II 2017, Q122.

- Know the five experiments and their order

- Know why token currency failed
- Link Ibn Battuta's visit to 1334
- Know the 1336 and 1347 new states

7.4 What is the reign in one view?

Reign timeline

Year	Event
1325	Becomes Sultan
1327	Capital moved to Daulatabad
About 1330	Token currency introduced
1332–33	Khurasan plan raised and dropped
About 1333	Qarachil expedition fails
1334	Ibn Battuta reaches Delhi
1336	Vijayanagara founded
1347	Bahmani kingdom founded
1351	Dies near Thatta

> **Quick check 7.** True or false: The Sultan died in 1351 while on the way to Thatta in Sindh. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Remember this

- **Reign:** 1325 to 1351; a scholar-Sultan.
- **Capital:** Daulatabad from 1327; back to Delhi after about two years.
- **Token coins:** copper and brass valued as silver; forged widely; withdrawn.
- **Farming:** Doab tax in famine; takkavi loans; Diwan-i-Kohi.
- **Plans:** Khurasan dropped; Qarachil army destroyed.
- **Collapse:** Vijayanagara 1336; Bahmani 1347; death near Thatta 1351.

Explain it back: Pick two of his schemes. Say what he aimed for and why each failed.

Practice MCQs

1. Muhammad bin Tughlaq's token coins were declared equal in value to which silver coin?

A. Dam

B. Tanka

C. Dinar

D. Dirham

See answer ↓

2. Why did Muhammad bin Tughlaq's token currency collapse?

A. The Mongols seized the mint

B. Silver became too cheap

C. Merchants refused all coins from the north

D. The state did not control minting, so forgery spread

See answer ↓

3. Barani says about how many men were enrolled for the Khurasan plan?

A. 3,700,000

B. 370,000

C. 3,700

D. 37,000

See answer ↓

4. Which department did Muhammad bin Tughlaq set up to extend cultivation?

A. Diwan-i-Amir-i-Kohi

B. Diwan-i-Arz

C. Diwan-i-Risalat

D. Diwan-i-Mustakhraj

See answer ↓

5. Muhammad bin Tughlaq died in 1351 while chasing which rebel?

A. Harihara

B. Khusrau Malik

C. Taghi

D. Hasan Shah

See answer ↓

6. Who led the Qarachil expedition for Muhammad bin Tughlaq?

A. His nephew Khusrau Malik

B. His father Ghiyasuddin

C. His cousin Feroz

D. The rebel Taghi

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.**
   The copper and brass coins were valued as silver tankas. The state could not stop forgery. The coins were withdrawn after a few years.
   ↑ Q1
2. **D.**
   The state kept no monopoly on minting. Many houses made forged coins. Trust in the coins fell, and the treasury paid silver in exchange.
   ↑ Q2
3. **B.**
   Barani gives about 370,000 men, each paid a year in advance. The plan was dropped. The army was then disbanded.
   ↑ Q3
4. **A.**
   The Diwan-i-Amir-i-Kohi was a farming department. It aimed to bring more land under cultivation. The model farm was dropped after about three years.
   ↑ Q4
5. **C.**
   Taghi rebelled in Gujarat. The Sultan chased him for nearly three years. He then marched toward Thatta in Sindh and died on the way.
   ↑ Q5
6. **A.**
   His nephew Khusrau Malik led it. The army won at first. Then rain, disease and hill fighters broke it.
   ↑ Q6

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** He succeeded his father Ghiyasuddin that year. ↑ 1
2. **False.** Only officers, nobles, scholars and saints were ordered to go. ↑ 2
3. **False.** The failure came from a lack of control. Forged coins were made in many houses. ↑ 3
4. **True.** It aimed to bring more land under cultivation. ↑ 4
5. **False.** The plan was dropped, and the army was disbanded. ↑ 5

6. **True.** Harihara and Bukka founded it at Hampi in 1336. ↑ 6
7. **True.** He was chasing the rebel Taghi. ↑ 7
8. **Think it through.** Gifted minds can still plan badly. Each of his big schemes had a sound aim. But he ignored cost, timing and the people who had to carry the plan out. The next six lessons show this pattern. ↑ 8
9. **Think it through.** A good map is not enough. Moving a court means moving food, water, homes and trust. He planned the destination but not the people on the road. ↑ 9
10. **Think it through.** It would have removed the forgery. Yet the coins still carried a face value far above their metal. People might still have distrusted them. So a monopoly was necessary but may not have been enough. ↑ 10
11. **Think it through.** The tax was a mistake of timing. The relief came late and leaked through corrupt hands. Together they show a state that could plan but not carry out. ↑ 11
12. **Think it through.** Plains armies depend on large formations and supply lines. In the hills the paths are narrow and the weather turns fast. A small local force can cut the army off. ↑ 12
13. **Think it through.** He chose officials for talent. But Barani mocked such officials, and Ibn Battuta criticised them too. Fair in principle, the policy won him few friends among his critics. ↑ 13

Curated by Arsalan Zuberi · mcqquestion.com

Scan to read online

https://mcqquestion.com/articles/muhammad-bin-tughlaq/