



Kingdoms in North India: Gurjara-Pratiharas, Kalachuri-Chedis, Gahadavalas and Paramaras

These kingdoms played key roles in resisting Arab invasions, contributing to temple architecture, and shaping regional politics in the **post-Gupta period (8th to 13th centuries CE)**.

1. Gurjara-Pratiharas (c. 730 - 1027 CE)

Origin and Territory

- Emerged in western and northern India post-Gupta period.
- Initially centered in **Rajasthan and Gujarat**.
- Capital: **Kannauj** under later rulers.
- Possibly of **foreign origin (Gurjara)** or indigenous Rajput clans.

Key Rulers

- **Nagabhata I** (c. 730–760): Founder; resisted **Arab invasions** in Rajasthan.
- **Vatsaraja**: Engaged in the **Tripartite Struggle** for Kannauj with Palas and Rashtrakutas.
- **Nagabhata II**: Captured Kannauj and rebuilt it.
- **Mihira Bhoja (Bhoja I)** (c. 836–885): Greatest ruler; ruled from Gujarat to Bengal; adopted title **Adivaraha**.
- **Mahendrapala I**: Continued the empire's prosperity.

Administration

- Feudal monarchy with **samantas** (feudatories).
- Maintained a large army, cavalry particularly strong.



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- Trade flourished under their protection, particularly overland routes.

Culture and Religion

- Strong patrons of **Shaivism and Vaishnavism**.
- Promoted **Sanskrit learning** and arts.
- Developed the **early Nagara style of temple architecture** (e.g., temples at Osian and Gwalior).

Decline

- Repeated attacks by **Rashtrakutas, Mahmud of Ghazni (1027)**, and internal rebellions led to their fall.

2. Kalachuri-Chedis (c. 9th - 12th century CE)

Origin and Territory

- Ruled **Dahala region** (modern **Madhya Pradesh**, especially **Tripuri/Jabalpur**).
- Known as **Chedi Kalachuris** to distinguish from southern Kalachuris.

Key Rulers

- **Kokalla I** (9th century): Founder of the dynasty.
- **Lakshmikarna** (c. 1041–1073): Most powerful king, expanded territory into Bihar,



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Odisha, and Vidarbha.

Administration

- Ruled through feudal chieftains.
- Strong regional administration; issued many inscriptions.

Culture and Religion

- Promoted **Shaivism**, built many temples.
- Patronized **Sanskrit literature** and **inscriptions**.
- Supported scholars and religious institutions, including **mathas** and **temples**.

Decline

- Attacks from Chandelas, Paramaras, and Kalachuris of Kalyani.
- Eventually absorbed by neighboring powers by 12th century.

3. Gahadavalas of Kannauj (c. 11th - 12th century CE)

Origin and Territory

- Rose to prominence in **Uttar Pradesh**, especially in **Kannauj and Varanasi**.
- Filled the power vacuum after the decline of the Pratiharas.



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Key Rulers

- **Chandradeva** (c. 1089–1103): Founder; brought stability to the Ganga valley.
- **Govindachandra** (c. 1114–1155): Most notable ruler; expanded control across eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- Maintained diplomacy with **Pala remnants** and **Cholas**.

Administration

- Issued **land grants** extensively.
- Feudal system with **local zamindars and officials** under royal supervision.

Culture and Religion

- Patronized **Hinduism**, especially **Vaishnavism**.
- Encouraged **temple building** and **Sanskrit literature**.
- Varanasi emerged as a **center of learning** under their rule.

Decline

- The dynasty weakened by **Muhammad Ghori's invasions**.
- **Jayachandra**, the last major ruler, was defeated in the **Battle of Chandwar (1194 CE)**.

4. Paramaras of Malwa (c. 9th - 13th



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century CE)

Origin and Territory

- Ruled over **Malwa** (modern-day Madhya Pradesh), with capital at **Dhar**.
- Possibly originated as **feudatories of the Rashtrakutas**.

Key Rulers

- **Siyaka II**: Declared independence from Rashtrakutas.
- **Bhoja I (c. 1010-1055)**: Most celebrated king; **scholar, patron, warrior**.
 - Built the famous **Bhojeshwar Temple**.
 - Authored or patronized works in **astronomy, medicine, poetry, and architecture**.
 - Associated with **Sarasvati Kanthabharana**, a major grammar work.

Administration

- Centralized monarchy with feudatories.
- Focus on **temple-centered administration and urban development**.

Culture and Religion

- Great patrons of **Sanskrit learning, Shaivism, and Jainism**.
- Under Bhoja, Malwa became a **center of classical learning**—like a second Nalanda.
- Many **temples, inscriptions, and manuscripts** date from this era.



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Decline

- Repeated invasions by **Chalukyas of Kalyani**, **Kalachuris**, and later **Delhi Sultanate**.
- Territory gradually diminished by the early 14th century.

Conclusion

The kingdoms of North India—**Gurjara-Pratiharas**, **Kalachuri-Chedis**, **Gahadavalas**, and **Paramaras**—played crucial roles in:

- Resisting foreign invasions (e.g., Arab, Ghaznavid).
- Fostering temple architecture, literature, and regional identity.
- Developing political rivalries and cultural flourishing in a **feudal age**.

These dynasties, despite internal conflicts, **preserved the political continuity and cultural vibrancy** of North India between the **8th and 13th centuries**, before the **advent of the Delhi Sultanate**.