

# Encyclopedia of Indian History 18th Century, Vol 2

**Arthur Rodgers**



**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
INDIAN HISTORY  
18TH CENTURY, VOL 2**



**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
INDIAN HISTORY  
18TH CENTURY, VOL 2**

Arthur Rodgers



Encyclopedia of Indian History: 18th Century, Vol 2  
by Arthur Rodgers

Copyright© 2022 BIBLIOTEX

[www.bibliotex.com](http://www.bibliotex.com)

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without the prior written permission of the copyright owner, except for the use brief quotations in a book review.

To request permissions, contact the publisher at [info@bibliotex.com](mailto:info@bibliotex.com)

Ebook ISBN: 9781984668073



Published by:

Bibliotex

Canada

Website: [www.bibliotex.com](http://www.bibliotex.com)

# Contents

<b>Chapter 9</b>	Peshwas .....	212
<b>Chapter 10</b>	Hereditary Peshwas from Bhat Family .....	227
<b>Chapter 11</b>	Ningthouja Dynasty .....	320
<b>Chapter 12</b>	Nizam of Hyderabad.....	331
<b>Chapter 13</b>	Nizams of Hyderabad: 18th Century.....	341
<b>Chapter 14</b>	Chhatrasal, Ruler of Bundelkhand in the Battle of Malwa.....	382



## Chapter 9

# Peshwas

## Moropant Trimbak Pingle

**Moropant Trimbak Pingle** (1620–1683), also known as **Moropant Peshwa** was the *peshwa* of the Maratha Empire, serving on Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Ashta Pradhan (Council of Eight Ministers).

### Early life

He was born in Deshastha Brahmin family in 1620 Nimgaon. In 1647, Moropant joined Chatrapati Shivaji in establishing the Maratha Empire. He was one of the warriors who participated in the successful 1659 battle of Shivaji's forces against the forces of Bijapur's Adil Shah which immediately followed Adil Shah's general Afzalkhān's death at Jāwali. He also participated in the battles at Trimbakeshwar Fort and Wāni-Dindori against the Mughal Empire. He participated in Shivaji's invasion of Surat in 1664. Sambhaji Maharaj son of Shivaji stayed with Moropant's relatives in Mathura after their escape from Agra.

Moropant introduced sound revenue administration to Shivaji's regime, and played an important role in resource planning concerning defenses and maintenance of strategic forts. He was also responsible for the construction and administration of Pratapgad. At Shivaji's death, Moropant Pingle was working as a supervisor of fort development activities in Nashik District



for the Salher-Mulher forts. Under Shivaji's successor, Sambhaji, he also participated in the battle of Burhanpur in 1681.

## **Moreshvar Pingale**

**Nilakanth Moreshvar Pingale (Moreshvar Pingale)** was the Peshwa (1683–89) of Maratha Empire. He was the son of Moropant Trimbak Pingale and the elder brother of Bahiroji Pingale. In 1689, he was killed together with the Maratha King Sambhaji.

## **Ramchandra Pant Amatya**

**Ramchandra Neelkanth Bawadekar** (1650–1716), also known as **Ramchandra Pant Amatya**, served on the Council of 8 (*Ashta Pradhan*) as the Finance Minister (*Amatya*) to Emperor (*Chhatrapati*) Shivaji dating from 1674 to 1680.

He then served as the Imperial Regent to four later emperors, namely Sambhaji, Rajaram, Shivaji II and Sambhaji II. He authored the *Adnyapatra*, a famous code of civil and military administration, and is renowned as one of the greatest civil administrators, diplomats and military strategists of the Maratha Empire.

## **Early life**

Ramchandra Pant was born in a Deshastha Brahmin family in approximately 1650. He was the youngest son of Neelkanth

Sondeo Bahutkar (more popularly known as Nilo Sondeo), who had risen from a local revenue collection post (*Kulkarni*) to the post of Minister in the court of Shivaji.

His family came from the village of Kolwan; near Kalyan Bhiwandi. Ramchandra Pant's grandfather Sonopant and uncle Abaji Sondeo were in the close circle of Shivaji. The Bahutkar family was closely associated with Samarth Ramdas, the spiritual guru of Shivaji. Samarth Ramdas is believed to be the one who named the newly born child as Ramchandra.

## **Early career**

Before 1672, Ramchandra Pant was engaged in various clerical jobs in Shivaji's administration. In 1672, he and his elder brother Narayan were both promoted to the post of Revenue Minister (*Mujumdar*) by Shivaji.

In 1674, at the coronation ceremony, the post of *Mujumdar* was renamed as *Amatya* and the title was solely bestowed upon Ramchandra Pant. He worked in this capacity until 1678. On his death bed, Shivaji named him as one among six pillars of the Maratha Empire that would save the kingdom in difficult times.

After Shivaji's death in 1680, Sambhaji became ruler of the Maratha Empire, and Ramchandra Pant continued with his administration in various posts. Among other duties, Ramchandra Pant was sent to Prince Akbar, Aurangzeb's rebel son, for negotiations and, in 1685, Sambhaji also deployed him as an envoy to Vijapur for certain sensitive talks.

## **Amatya of 5 Chhatrapaties**

Ramchandra Pant Amatya was the only person (Amatya) who dedicatedly served The Maratha Swarajya under 5 Chhatrapati's in a row. When the Marathi empire was in trouble he used his wisdom, dedication to the throne and even force as needed to keep the empire and its Swarajya safe.

During the coronation of Shivaji, Ramchandra Pant Amatya was the youngest Pradhan of all the Asthapradhan's existing at that time. Thereafter, during the reign of Sambhaji, Rajaram, Maharani Tarabai and (Kolhapur's first ruler) Sambhaji Raje, Pant Amatya always held a prominent positions. As Riyasatkar(s) rightly said that 'ever since the time of Shivaji Maharaj, Ramchandra Pant Amatya was the only person in the history of the Marathas who seems to have dedicatedly served the throne.' Ramchandra Pant Amatya has laid down all the experiences encountered by him, while serving the throne in his book Rajniti (Adnyapatra). The said book is a testament to his dedication and service to the throne of Chatrapati's and Hindavi Swarajya.

The forefathers of Ramchandra Pant Amatya had close relations with the Bhosle Gharana even before the establishment of Swarajya. Before the coronation of Shivaji, Ramchandra Pant Amatya's father used to participate in various initiatives undertaken by Shivaji. Ramchandra Pant Amatya subsequently carried forward this (his father's) tradition with even more impact. Ramchandra Pant Amatya took the lead when it came to the protection of the Swarajya. Being impressed by his efforts, Shivaji included Ramchandra Pant as Amatya in his First Ashta Pradhan mandal i.e. Council

of Ministers. This, in itself portrays the qualities that Ramchandra Pant Amatya possessed. During the coronation ceremony of Shivaji, Pant was included as Amatya. He must've been 22-23 years old then. Before the coronation, a Pradhan Mandal was appointed by Maharaj in the year 1662 which included Ramchandra Pant's father Neelkanth Sondev as Maharaj's Amatya. This legacy was carried forward, as after the death of Neelkanth Sondev his son Ramchandra Pant was appointed as Maharaj's Amatya.

According to the information provided by the Bakharkar(s), Ramchandra Pant Amatya was one of the very few people present when Shivaji was on his death bed at Raigad. Shivaji had named a few people who had the ability protect the Swarajya after his demise. Ramchandra Pant Amatya was one of them. During the Reign of Sambhaji, Ramchandra Pant Amatya was given an important position. (Period of 1680 to 1685)

## **Fight for Freedom**

After the unfortunate demise of Sambhaji, the Maratha Empire was in great trouble. Aurangzeb had taken a vow to defeat the Maratha empire at any cost, and with that motive, he attacked many forts of the Marathas with a huge army. Sadness prevailed all over the Maratha Empire. In this situation, Ramchandra Pant Amatya stood up and acted with a lot of patience. This was the era of the freedom struggle of the Maratha empire. Ramchandra Pant Amatya did every thing he could to keep the royal family and the Maratha empire safe and endure the struggle of the troubled times. Ramchandra Pant Amatya, Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav, Parshurampant

Pant-Pratinidhi were the major contributors to the struggle for freedom. Rajaram Maharaj's stay in Gingi ended in 1697. He returned to Maharashtra. However, Rajaram Maharaj died in 1700 when he was at Fort Sinhagad. The Maratha empire was in trouble again. Ramchandra Pant Amatya did everything he could to save the Maratha Empire from the trouble and he succeeded. This was no mean achievement. Ramchandra Pant had paid a visit to Rajaram Maharaj when he was on his death bed at Sinhagad fort. Pant had sensed the inevitable. He wrote letters to many Sardars and informed them of the dire situation and brought to their notice, the need to protect the Empire.

After the death of Rajaram Maharaj, Aurangzeb started attacking with even more force. He thought that now, he could easily defeat the Maratha empire as there was no King. He planned to take over the entire empire. But he was wrong. Ramchandra Pant, Dhanaji Jadhav, Parshuram Pant Pratinidhi along with thousands of soldiers loyal and dedicated to the throne resolved to defend their Empire.

They fought with Aurangzeb for seven years continuously, that is from 1700 to 1707. Eventually, Aurangzeb admitted defeat and subsequently died in Ahmednagar. This struggle for 7 continuous years was a period with innumerable difficulties and troubles for the Marathas. The leadership of Maharani Tarabai and the wisdom of Ramchandra Pant had played a vital role in the protection of the *Swarajya* in these 7 years. Tarabai wanted her son Shivaji II on the Maratha throne but Ramchandra Pant wanted to wait for Prince Shahu to return. But he did not pursue it beyond a point. He decided to be loyal to the Kolhapur throne. Tararani knew about Ramchandra

Pant's capabilities and qualities. In every time of peril, he stood behind the Maratha throne like a mountain. Tarabai has in a letter to his son Bhagwantrao acknowledged his greatness. She says, "Ramchandra Pant served the Maratha kingdom with great loyalty. He restored an almost finished Swarajya and made a great name for himself".

It is said that Ramchandra Pant Amatya was behind the bloodless coup that led to Rajasbai's son Sambhaji being crowned as The Chatrapati in 1713-1714. He felt it necessary as the Kolhapur Kingdom was heading towards a different path.

There seems to be no ulterior motive behind this coup. He crowned Sambhaji as the Chatrapati and soon went in the background. As Sambhaji was only 16-17 years old he would naturally look up to Ramchandra Pant Amatya for guidance. Shortly after Ramchandra Pant Amatya died. There is some confusion about the date of his death but most historians assume it to be somewhere in February 1716.

## **A Warrior and a Statesman**

Ramchandra Pant Amatya was also a warrior as he was a statesman. He is known to lead many wars. Moghul historians mention that when Aurangzeb's grandson had invaded Panhala in 1693 Ramchandra Pant along with Pratinidhi launched a heavy attack on the Mughal forces. A Farsi historian notes that Ramchandra Pant was the head of Konkan army in 1699 and attacked them with all his might. His guns were blazing with all their might and a mighty war ensued.

A Portuguese Killedar has mentioned that on 22 February 1701 Ramchandra Pant along with 20,000 Maratha's attacked Dandya's Siddi Yakubkhan.

## **Adnyapatra**

Ramchandra Pant Amatya is the writer of the First book on Politics in Maratha history "AdnyaPatra". This main topics refer to

- The King and his duties ways of governance,
- How revenue is important for the State
- Importance of the Army and Importance of scholars and experts in all fields
- Education of the Princes.
- Importance of a Pradhan i.e. Prime Minister and his duties
- Policies regarding foreigners i.e. British, French etc.
- Policy regarding your judicatories
- Importance of forts.
- he who has the Navy rules the seas,
- Policy regarding natural resources etc.

It is said that it outlines the theories and way of ruling of Shivaji. The book is said to be of such high stature that it can be compared to Kautilya's Arthashastra.

It is said that the book still holds relevance in today's time and can be a guide for a person in the administration of a state, such is the richness of his thoughts more than 300 years back.

# Contribution to Maratha War of Independence

In 1689, at the time of Sambhaji's assassination by Aurangzeb, Ramchandra Pant was deployed at Fort Vishalgad. In consultation with Sambhaji's queen, Yesubai, who was located at Fort Raigad along with Rajaram and her son Shahu, he decided to send Rajaram to Fort Gingee (in current-day Tamil Nadu) to divide the battlefield. Subsequently, Rajaram was brought to Panhala fort and was secretly sent to Gingee. Before leaving for Gingee, Rajaram conferred on Ramchandra Pant the title of Imperial Regent (*Hukumat Panah*).

Thereafter, with the aid of generals Santaji Ghorpade, Dhanaji Jadhav, Parshuram Pant Pratinidhi, and Shankaraji Narayan Gandekar, Ramchandra Pant launched a great retaliatory war against the Mughal Empire.

## Wartime strategies

- To encourage the local Maratha warriors to fight independently against the Mughals, Ramchandra Pant adopted a new policy to officially reward pieces of land (*Vatans*) in exchange for military service. **Turn out the Mughals and own the land** was the pronouncement. This mercenary policy went against Shivaji's will, but Ramchandra Pant saw no alternative given the changed circumstances.
- Independent Maratha warlords were encouraged to cross the Maharashtra border and to invade Mughal



areas in response to Mughal invasion. Nemaji Shinde and Chimnaji Damodar were the first warlords to successfully respond to this strategy.

- Appealing to Mughal greed, Maratha forts were traded to the Mughals for large sums. Once the forts were well equipped by the Mughals, the forts were re-captured by Maratha forces.

These strategies proved to be extremely effective against the Mughal Empire.

## **Later career**

In 1698, after Rajaram's return from Gingee, Ramchandra Pant voluntarily stepped down from the post of Imperial Regent. In 1700, after Rajaram's death, Queen Tarabai once again delegated enormous wartime powers to Ramchandra Pant. Both of them continued to fight against the Mughal power in India. At the time of Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the Marathas had become extremely powerful and the Mughal Empire was on the verge of total devastation.

After Shahu's release from the Mughal camp, most of the Maratha generals defected from Tarabai and joined him. As a result, Tarabai was forced to leave the capital at Satara, fleeing to Panhala fort. Ramchandra Pant, however, strongly supported Tarabai at the time and worked as the Senior Minister for her son Shivaji II.

In 1714, Rajasbai instigated a coup against Tarabai and her son Shivaji II and installed her own son Sambhaji II on the Kolhapur throne. Modern-day scholars generally conclude that

Ramchandra Pant was behind this conspiracy as he was appointed by Sambhaji II to the Imperial Regency immediately thereafter. It is speculated that Ramchandra Pant and his supporters were not satisfied with Tarabai's treatment of her peerage.

## **Later life**

On the request of Sambhaji II, Ramchandra Pant wrote the *Adnyapatra* (also spelled *Ajnapatra*), a standard code of civil and military administration for the Maratha Empire. It can be compared to Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

In 1716, Ramchandra Pant died at the age of 66. A monument dedicated to his life and valiant effort in fighting against the Mughal invaders is located at Panhala fort. His heirs still live near Fort Gaganbawada to this day — a gift to Ramchandra Pant for his great contribution to Maratha power.

## **Founder of Gaganbavada Jahagir**

The descendants of Ramchandra Pant Amatya were awarded the Jahagir of Gagan Bavda, the hilly region on the hilltops of the Konkan and the Konkan area. This was the largest Jahagir in Kolhapur state with an area of 243 square miles. The Jahagir extended from Mutukeshwar near Kolhapur almost touching the Mumbai Goa highway of today. The area in Konkan was managed from here. More than a mere Jahagir, it was a Feudatory kingdom with its own revenue Department, Police Force, Judicial and Criminal Courts etc.

The Main Jahagir Offices were situated in Gagan Bavda where the police force, Revenue departments and Courts were situated in the Rajwada area.

The Jahagirdars of Bavda were given the title of Raja by Shahu along with 3 other Jaghirdars of Kolhapur namely Kagal (Ghatges), Vishalgad (Pratinidhis) and Kapashi (Ghorpades). The Bavda Jahagir though the biggest in area, was not the one with highest income due to people living in hilly area and scattered population. The Jahagirdar's of Bavda in spite of natural odds undertook many welfare schemes for the subjects in their area.

The Jahagir was abolished after independence and a privy purse was given to the Jahagirdar's until 1975. The present descendants live in Tararbai Park, area of Kolhapur in Maharashtra state.

Geography of Bavda Jahagir (Sanstha Bavda):

Boundaries on the east, North and south of Bavda is the Kolhapur state. On the west, the Jahagir had a border with Ratnagiri district. Some of the towns in the Jahagir were also located outside the boundaries. The east west length is approx 40 miles and width approx 25 miles. The total area being 243 square miles. It was divided between Konkan Area and area on top of the Sahyadri Ghats. Most of the area is dense forests. The height of the konkan area from the sea level is 450 feet and the upper area height from the sea level is 200 feet. The Sahyadri mountain ranges reach up to a height of 3400 feet.

The forts of Gagangad and Shivgad were situated in Gagan Bavda Jahagir. In 1846, the old buildings on the Gagangad fort

were demolished after which there was no habitation on the forts, until the time Gagangiri Maharaj built an Ashram on Gagangad fort. The crops mainly cultivated are Sugarcane, rice, sunflower Maize etc. The fruits which are natural to the region are Jackfruit, Jambhul, karvanda etc.

## **Gaganbavada Fort**

Gaganbavda fort was built by Raja Bhoj from around 1178 to 1209 A.D. The height of the fort from sea level is 2244 feet on The western Sahyadri Mountain ranges. The fort had buildings earlier which have demolished. Gagan Bavda fort came into the Maratha's control in the year 1660. It was given to Ramchandra Pant Amatya's father Nilo Sondev. For some time, it was captured by the Adilshahi forces but came back into the Maratha's fold in 1689. After the Maghals held Sambhaji, it went in to their hands. Ramchandra Pant Amatya captured it and brought it under Swaraj in 1700 and which remained in The Bavda Jahagir till independence.

At the time Bavda Jahagir extended up to Malvan and Vijaydurg and had a cavalry of 25000.

## **Bahiroji Pingale**

**Bahirojipant Pingale / Bhaironji Pant Pingale** was the younger son of Moropant Trimbak Pingle. His father, Moropant Pingle was the first Peshwa of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

When Kanhoji Angre attacked Satara in 1711, Bahiroji was taken a prisoner by him. Immediately Shahu I ordered Balaji

Vishwanath to ensure his release and also gave Balaji Vishwanath authority in the form of the post of Peshwa, so that he could negotiate with Kanhoji Angre on behalf of the king. His descendants, the Pingale family still lives in Kothrud Pune.

## **Parshuram Pant Pratinidhi**

**Parshuram Trimbak Kulkarni** (1660–1718 CE), popularly known as **Parshuram Pant Pratinidhi**, was a Minister (*Pradhan*) and Count (*Sardar*) of the Maratha Empire. He served as *Pratinidhi* (Chief Delegate) during Chhatrapati Rajaram and Tarabai's reign. His contribution to the War of 27 years is considered to be of vital importance. He was also the founder of the princely states of Vishalgad and Aundh in Maharashtra. The first hereditary recipient of the title 'Pratinidhi', meaning 'the representative of the king' or viceroy, was Parshuram Trimbak Pant, who was a recorder and interpreter at the court of Shivaji. The title Pratinidhi was conferred upon him in 1698 by Rajaram, the second son of Shivaji.

## **Life**

### **Early life**

Parshuram Trimbak was born in 1660 in Kanhai village in a Deshastha Brahmin family. His father Trimbak Krishna was a devotional and pious village officer of Kanhai.

## **Career**

Parashuram started his career as a clerk, but his abilities and valour enabled him, during the reign of Rajaram, to repel the attacks of Mughal emperor in Maharashtra. He succeeded in the recovery of Satara, Panhala and other fortresses and in re-establishing Maratha power. He had already been a nobleman but in view of his meritorious services, Rajaram conferred upon him the title of Pratinidhi, after the death of Pralhad Niraji, the first holder of the office. Rajaram was succeeded by his wife Tarabai who retained Parashuram Trimbak as Pratinidhi.

## **Death**

Parshuram Trimbak Pant Pratinidhi died in Mahuli, near Satara, in 1718 and was succeeded by his third son Shripatrao Pratinidhi as Pratinidhi of Aundh State and the Vishalgad estate was succeeded by his first son Krishnajirao Pant Pratinidhi.

## Chapter 10

# Hereditary Peshwas from Bhat Family

## Balaji Vishwanath

**Balaji Vishwanath Bhat** (1662–1720), better known as **Shrimant Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath**, the first of a series of hereditary Peshwas hailing from the Bhat family who gained effective control of the Maratha Empire during the 18th century. Balaji Vishwanath assisted a young Maratha Emperor Shahu to consolidate his grip on a kingdom that had been racked by civil war and persistently intruded on by the Mughals under Aurangzeb. He was called *the Second Founder of the Maratha State*. Later, his son Bajirao I became the Peshwa.

## Early life and career

Balaji Vishwanath Bhat was born into an Indian Konkanastha Hindu Chitpavan Brahmin family. The family hailed from the coastal Konkan region of present-day Maharashtra and were the hereditary Deshmukh for Shrivardhan under the Siddi of Janjira. He went out in search of employment to the upper regions of western ghats and worked as a mercenary trooper under various Maratha generals. According to Kincaid & Parasnis, Balaji Vishwanath entered the Maratha administration during the reign of Chhatrapati Sambhaji or the

regency of his brother, Rajaram. Later, he served as an accountant for the Maratha general, Dhanaji Jadhav, at Janjira. Between 1699 and 1702, he served as the *Sar-subhedaror* head-administrator at Pune and from 1704 to 1707 as Sarsubedar of Daulatabad. By the time Dhanaji died, Balaji had proven himself as an honest and able officer. Balaji fell out with Dhanaji's son and successor, Chandrarao Jadhav and went over to the newly released Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shahu who took note of his abilities and appointed Balaji as his assistant (c.1708).

### **Role during Maratha Civil War**

- Since the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, his two sons Sambhaji and Rajaram continued the Maratha war against the Mughal Empire. Emperor Aurangzeb entered the Deccan in 1686, hoping to put an end to the fledgling Maratha state. Aurangzeb spent the next 27 years in the Deccan in ceaseless warfare against the Marathas. Despite the cruel executions of Sambhaji and early death of Rajaram, Rajaram's widow Tarabai continued the resistance while Sambhaji's son Shahu was captured at a very young age and held captive of the Mughals. Aurangzeb died at Ahmednagar in 1707 at the age of eighty-eight, with the Mughal armies exhausted and the treasury empty. The ensuing war of succession in the Mughal Empire resulted in accession of the aged Prince Mu'azzam, who ascended the Mughal throne under the title of Bahadur Shah
- In the intrigues following the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal governor of the Deccan released Shahu



from captivity, hoping to keep the Marathas locked in an internecine struggle between the partisans of Shahu, and Tarabai, the widow of Rajaram who governed in the name of her son Shivaji and denounced Shahu as an impostor substituted by the Mughals for the son of Sambhaji.

- Tarabai sent the Maratha Senapati Dhanaji Jadhav to attack Shahu. Balaji Vishwanath was despatched by Dhanaji Jadhav to meet secretly with Shahu and verify his *bona fides*. Balaji is believed to have persuaded his master to support the cause of Shahu. Dhanaji's forces met Shahu's at Khed, in Pune District. Instead of attacking Shahu, Dhanaji Jadhav declared him to be the rightful successor to the Maratha throne. Dhanaji's confidence in Balaji Vishwanath, however, aroused the jealousy of his son and successor, Chandrasen Jadhav.
- After the death of Dhanaji Jadhav in June 1708, Shahu appointed Dhanaji's son Chandrasen Jadhav as Senapati, but the rivalry between Chandrasen and Balaji led the former to intrigue with Tarabai, while seeking an opportunity to eliminate Balaji. A dispute over the conduct of a junior officer in Balaji's employ led Chandrasen to attack Balaji, who fled to the fortress of Purandar. Chandrasen besieged Purandar whereupon Balaji fled again to Pandavgad whence he sent an emissary to plead for help from his sovereign. Shahu had Balaji Vishwanath brought under escort to his capital Satara and asked Chandrasen to make the case against Balaji Vishwanath before him. Instead of obeying Shahu Chandrasen defected to the cause of Tarabai in April

1711. Haibatrao Nimbalkar, who Shahu had dispatched against Chandrasen, also defected to Tarabai, and Shahu's fortunes were at their lowest. Bereft of his experienced generals, Shahu turned to Balaji Vishwanath, who undertook to raise a new army in the cause of Shahu. For his efforts, Shahu bestowed Balaji with the title of Senakarte or Organiser of Maratha armies (20 August 1711).

- Balaji "next turned against Tarabai her own armory of intrigue". The fall of Tarabai at Kolhapur in 1712 was the outcome of a conspiracy hatched by Balaji Vishwanath in connivance with the disgruntled elements of Tarabai's court. Balaji Vishwanath induced Rajaram's other widow, Rajasbai to conduct a coup against Shivaji II, the son of Tarabai and install her own son, Sambhaji II, on the throne of Kolhapur. This brought the ruling house of Kolhapur under protection and subordination of Shahu at that time.

## **Appointment as Peshwa**

Next Shahu turned to subdue the Angre's. Tukoji Angre had commanded Chattrapati Shivaji's navy and was succeeded in 1690 by his son Kanhoji Angre. Kanhoji received from Tarabai the title of "Sarkhel" or Koli Admiral of the Maratha fleet. Kanhoji seized the opportunity of war between Tarabai and Shahu to effectively free himself of the suzerainty of either. Instead, he captured the major trading center of Kalyan and the neighboring forts of Rajmachi and Lohgad. Shahu sent a large force under his *Peshwa* or Prime Minister, Bahiroji

Pingale. Kanhoji defeated Pingale and imprisoned him at Lohagad, and started to advance towards Shahu's capital Satara. Shahu commanded Balaji again to raise another army to subdue Kanhoji. Balaji preferred the path of negotiation and was appointed as Shahu's plenipotentiary to negotiate with the admiral. Balaji and Kanhoji met at Lonavala. The newly appointed Peshwa appealed to the old sailor's patriotism for the Maratha cause. Angre agreed to become the *Sarkhel* (admiral) of Shahu's navy with control of the Konkan. Balaji and Angre then jointly attacked the Muslim Siddis of Janjira. Their combined forces captured most of the Konkan coast, including Balaji's birthplace of Shrivardhan, which became part of the Angre fiefdom. Delighted with Balaji's success, Shahu dismissed Bahiroji Pingale and appointed Balaji Vishwanath as Peshwa on 16 November 1713.

## **Northward expansion of the Maratha power**

There existed a power vacuum in the Mughal empire, caused by the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, and that of his successor Bahadur Shah, leading to continual internecine conflict within the imperial family and the leading Mughal grandees. Farrukhsiyar came to the throne in 1713 with the help of the two powerful nobles, Sayyid Hussain Ali Khan and Sayyid Abdullah Khan. Claiming descent from the Islamic prophet, Muhammad, the Sayyid Brothers had turned king-makers in the Mughal court. Soon after, differences arose between them and the Emperor Farruksiyar. And while the Mughals were intriguing in the civil war between the factions of Shahu and

Tarabai, the Marathas themselves became a major factor in the quarrels between the Emperor and the Sayyids.

To rid himself of the tutelage of the Sayyids, in 1718 Farrukhsiyar dispatched Sayyid Hussain Ali Khan as Viceroy of the Deccan with orders to restore Mughal authority over the south. Farrukhsiyar sought the patronage of Marathas, which by then had conquered most of India and were planning to dispose of the Mughal throne in Delhi. Hussain Ali Khan found himself harried by the Marathas who resorted to their traditional guerilla tactics. Unable to defeat the Marathas in a pitched battle and weary of chasing after constantly marauding Maratha horsemen, Hussain Ali Khan sought to make peace with the Marathas.

In July 1718 Balaji negotiated a Maratha-Mughal treaty with Hussain Ali Khan, demanding the Maratha right of "*Chauth*" (literally: 1/4th of revenues) and "*Sardeshmukhi*" (an additional 10% of revenues) of the old Mughal provinces of the Deccan. To this Balaji Vishwanath added the demand of *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi* over the rich provinces of Gujarat and Khandesh, and the restoration of Chattrapati Shivaji's conquests in Karnataka, in return for which Balaji promised that Shahu would acknowledge the nominal overlordship of the Mughal Emperor, and the Marathas would provide a force of 15,000 armed horsemen to the Mughal Empire. To these egregious demands, Sayyid Hussain Ali Khan readily agreed, with a view to utilize the Maratha soldiers to their advantage in their struggle with the Emperor.

Farrukhsiyar refused to ratify this treaty and sought to depose and murder the Sayyids. The plot was betrayed to Sayyid

Abdulla Khan who was in Delhi, who succeeded in neutralizing other powerful Mughal nobles like Asaf Jah I (also known as Chin Qilich Khan and Nizam-ul-Mulk) and Sarbuland Khan (governor of Patna) with promises of rich governorships of Malwa and Kabul respectively. In September 1718, accompanied by Balaji Vishwanath and supported by (now) sixteen thousand Maratha horsemen commanded by the gallant Parsoji Bhosale Hussain Ali Khan arrived in Delhi. Most of Farrukhsiyar's supporters fled but the Emperor's partisans resisted but were overcome at the cost of two thousand Maratha soldiers.

Farrukhsiyar was dethroned, blinded and imprisoned by the Sayyid's, who substituted in his place a more pliable puppet, Rafi-ul-darjat in February 1719. (This hapless prince was dying of tuberculosis and was in turn replaced after a reign of only three months by his older brother Rafi Ud-Daulah.) Rafi-ul-Darjat duly ratified the Maratha treaty. Shahu and his successors were recognized by the Mughal Emperors as the rightful heirs to Chattrapati Shivaji. The Mughals became a puppet government of Marathas and gave a quarter of their total revenue as Chauth and additional 10% for their protection.

## **Conflict with Sambhaji of Kolhapur**

Shahu I wanted the south part of Kolhapur in his territory. After he defeated Shivaji II of Kolhapur in 1714, Sambhaji II son of Rajasbai became the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur. He ruled his territory with the advice of the Ramchandra Pant Amatya. In 1716 Ramchandra Pant died in Panhala. Now, Sambhaji began to create trouble in the territory of Shahu with the help

of Senapati Udaji Chavan and Senakhaskhel Yashwantrao Thorat. The Shirol was under Chavan and the Ashta, Yelvi, Walwa and the wantans in Warana valleys was under Yashwantrao Thorat. After Balaji Vishwanath returned from Delhi with imperial sanads, he decided to March against Sambhaji and Yashwantrao Thorat. He captured Ashta, Yelvi and other village in the Warana valley and went to attack on Panhala fort. At that time Yashwantrao Thorat was ruling his jagir in Vijapur (Bhoom Tahsil, Osmanabad District). He got the news that Balaji Vishwanath captured his jagir in Warana valley and went to attack on Panhala fort. He immediately take some troops with him and went towards Panhala fort. The troops of Peshwa Balaji and Yashwantrao came in front of each other at Aпти village near Panhala fort. This battle was fought in 1718. Yashwantrao Thorat was defeated and killed in the battle.

## **Death**

Balaji returned in triumph from Delhi to Satara, having also secured the release after decades of Mughal captivity, the mother (Yesubai), wife (Savitribai) and half-brother (Madan Singh) of Shahu. Weary from his labors and the tiresome journey back from the imperial capital, Balaji Vishwanath's health began to fail. In October 1719 he obtained leave from Shahu to retire to the village of Saswad near Pune that had been granted by Shahu to the Peshwa. Balaji Vishwanath died on 12 April 1720. He was succeeded by his elder son, the celebrated Baji Rao I, who was appointed *Peshwa* by Chattrapati Shahu.

## **Administrative Achievements**

Balaji Vishwanath also laid the foundation for the complex administrative system of the Marathas that held sway for a century after his death.

The Maratha tax collection system from a wide swathe of nominally Mughal provinces was based on a widespread network of agents and collectors. "To it as much as to their victories in the field the Marathas owed the spread of their empire".

The mechanism of revenue collected was supported by credit facilities from established banking families.

## **Personal life**

Balaji married Radhabai Barve and had two sons, Baji Rao I and Chimaji Appa. He also had two daughters. The older, Bhiubai married Abaji Joshi of Baramati, brother of the banker Balaji Naik famed as Bajirao I's most tormenting creditor. The younger,

Anubai married Venkatrao Ghorpade of Ichalkaranji. Their heirs ruled the state of Ichalkaranji till 1947.

## **Memorials**

A statue of Balaji Vishwanath stands at his ancestral village of Shrivardhan near Raigad in coastal Maharashtra.

## **Baji Rao I**

**Baji Rao I** (18 August 1700 – 28 April 1740), born as **Visaji**, also known as **Bajirao Ballal**, was the 7th Peshwa of the Maratha empire. In his 20-year military career, he never lost a battle and is widely considered as the greatest Indian cavalry general. His relationship with his Muslim wife, a subject of controversy, has been adapted in Indian novels and cinema.

Baji Rao is the most celebrated personality after Shivaji in the history of the Maratha Empire. His achievements are establishing Maratha supremacy in South and political hegemony in North. During his 20-year career as Peshwa, he defeated Nizam-ul-Mulk at the Battle of Palkhed and responsible for establishment of Maratha power in Malwa, Bundelkhand, Gujarat, as redeemer of Konkan from Siddis of Janjira and liberator of western coast from the rule of Portuguese.

### **Early life**

Baji Rao was born into the Bhat family in Sinnar. His father, Balaji Vishwanath, was a Peshwa of Shahu and his mother was Radhabai Barve. Baji Rao had a younger brother, Chimaji Appa, and two younger sisters, Anubai and Bhiubai. Anubai was married to Venkatrao Ghorpade of Ichalkaranji and Bhiubai was married to Abaji Naik Joshi of Baramati.

Baji Rao spent his childhood in his father's newly acquired fiefdom of Saswad. He and Chimaji were very close. Baji Rao was inspired by the lives of Shivaji, Ramchandra Pant Amatya



and Santaji Ghorpade. He was trained as a diplomat and a warrior under his father. Being born in a Brahmin family, his education included reading, writing and learning Sanskrit however, he did not remain confined to his books. Baji Rao displayed a passion for the military at an early age and often accompanied his father on military campaigns. He was with his father when his father was imprisoned by Damaji Thorat before being released for a ransom. Baji Rao had been on the expedition to Delhi in 1719 with his father and was convinced that the Mughal Empire was disintegrating and unable to resist northward Maratha expansion. When Balaji Vishwanath died in 1720, Shahu appointed the 20-year-old Baji Rao as Peshwa despite opposition from other chieftains. He is said to have preached the ideal of a *Hindu Pad Padshahi* (Hindu empire).

## **Appointment as Peshwa**

Baji Rao was appointed Peshwa, succeeding his father, by Shahu on 17 April 1720. By the time of his appointment, the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah had upheld Maratha claims to the territories held by Shivaji at his death. A treaty gave the Marathas the right to collect taxes (chauth) in the Deccan's six provinces.

Baji Rao convinced Shahu that the Maratha Empire had to go on the offensive against its enemies to defend itself. He believed that the Mughal Empire was in decline, and wanted to take advantage of the situation with aggressive expansion into North India. Baji Rao compared the Mughals' declining fortune to a tree which, if attacked at its roots, would collapse. He is reported to have said:

Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree and the branches will fall off themselves. Listen but to my counsel and I shall plant the Maratha flag on the walls of Attock.

As a new Peshwa, however, he faced several challenges. His appointment at a young age had evoked jealousy from senior officials such as Naro Ram Mantri, Anant Ram Sumant, Shripatrao Pant Pratinidhi, Khanderao Dabhade and Kanhoji Bhosle. Baji Rao promoted young men like himself, such as Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Shinde, the Pawar brothers and Fateh Singh Bhosle, as commanders; these men did not belong to families who were hereditary Deshmukhs in the Deccan sultanates.

The Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I, had created a *de facto* autonomous kingdom in the region. He challenged Shahu's right to collect taxes on the pretext that he did not know whether Shahu or his cousin, Sambhaji II of Kolhapur, was the rightful heir to the Maratha throne. The Marathas needed to assert their rights over the nobles of newly acquired territories in Malwa and Gujarat. Several nominally-Maratha areas were not actually under the Peshwa's control; for example, the Siddis controlled the Janjira fort.

## **Military conquests**

### **The Nizam**

On 4 January 1721, Baji Rao met Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I at Chikhalthana to resolve their disputes. However, the Nizam refused to recognize the Maratha right to collect taxes from the Deccan provinces. He was made vizier of the Mughal Empire in

1721 by emperor Muhammad Shah, alarmed at his increasing power, transferred him from the Deccan to Awadh in 1723. The Nizam rebelled against the order, resigned as vizier and marched towards the Deccan. The emperor sent an army against him, which the Nizam defeated at the Battle of Sakhar-kheda; this forced the emperor to recognise him as viceroy of the Deccan. The Marathas, led by Baji Rao, helped the Nizam win this battle. For his valor, Baji Rao was honored with a robe, a 7,000-man mansabdari, an elephant, and a jewel. After the battle, the Nizam tried to appease the Maratha Chhatrapati Shahu and the Mughal emperor; in reality, however, he wanted to carve out a sovereign kingdom and considered the Marathas his rivals in the Deccan.

In 1725, the Nizam sent an army to clear Maratha revenue collectors from the Carnatic region. The Marathas dispatched a force under Fateh Singh Bhosle to counter him; Baji Rao accompanied Bhosle, but did not command the army. The Marathas were forced to retreat; they launched a second campaign after the monsoon season, but again were unable to prevent the Nizam from ousting the Maratha collectors.

In the Deccan, Sambhaji II of Kolhapur State had become a rival claimant to the title of Maratha King. The Nizam took advantage of the internal dispute, refusing to pay the chauth because it was unclear who was the real Chhatrapati (Shahu or Sambhaji II) and offering to arbitrate. Shripatrao Pant Pratinidhi advised Shahu to begin negotiations and agree to arbitration. Sambhaji II was supported by Chandrasen Jadhav, who had fought Baji Rao's father a decade earlier. Baji Rao convinced Shahu to refuse the Nizam's offer and launch an assault.

The Nizam invaded Pune, where he installed Sambhaji II as the King. He then marched out of the city, leaving behind a contingent headed by Fazal Beg. The Nizam plundered Loni, Pargaon, Patas, Supa and Baramati, using his artillery. On 27 August 1727, Baji Rao began a retaliatory guerilla attack on the Nizam with his trusted lieutenants Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Shinde and the Pawar brothers. He began to destroy the towns held by the Nizam; leaving Pune, he crossed the Godavari River near Puntamba and plundered Jalna and Sindkhed. Baji Rao destroyed Berar, Mahur, Mangrulpir and Washim before turning north-west to Khandesh. He crossed the Tapi River at Kokarmunda and entered eastern Gujarat, reaching Chota Udaipur in January 1728. After hearing that the Nizam had returned to Pune, Baji Rao feinted toward Burhanpur; he thought that after hearing about the threat to the strategically-important Burhanpur, the Nizam would try to save it. Baji Rao did not enter Burhanpur, however, arriving at Betawad in Khandesh on 14 February 1728. When the Nizam heard that his northern territories had been devastated by Baji Rao, he left Pune and marched towards the Godavari to meet Baji Rao on an open plain where his artillery would be effective. The Nizam went on ahead of his artillery; on 25 February 1728, the armies of Baji Rao and the Nizam faced each other at Palkhed, a town about 30 miles (48 km) west of Aurangabad. The Nizam was quickly surrounded by Maratha forces and trapped, his lines of supply and communication were cut. He was forced to make peace; he signed the Treaty of Mungi Shevgaon on 6 March, recognising Shahu as the King and the Maratha right to collect taxes in the Deccan.

This battle is considered as an example of brilliant execution of military strategy. In his *Military History of India*, Jadunath

Sarkar wrote: "This campaign gives a classic example of what the predatory horse, when led by a genius, could achieve in the age of light artillery."

## **Malwa**

In 1723, Baji Rao organised an expedition to southern Malwa. Maratha chiefs, including Ranoji Shinde, Malhar Rao Holkar, Udaji Rao Pawar, Tukoji Rao Pawar and Jivaji Rao Pawar, had collected chauth from several parts of the province. (Later, these chiefs carved out their own kingdoms: Gwalior, Indore, Dhar and Dewas State - Junior and Senior, respectively). To counter Maratha influence, the Mughal emperor had appointed Girdhar Bahadur governor of Malwa.

After defeating the Nizam, Baji Rao again turned his attention to Malwa. He consigned a large army in October 1728 to his younger brother, Chimaji Appa, and aided by his trusted generals Udaji Pawar and Malhar Rao Holkar. The Maratha force reached the southern bank of the Narmada River on 24 November 1728. The following day, they crossed the river and encamped near Dharampuri. Marching rapidly northwards, they crossed the ghat near Mandu and halted at Nalchha on 27 November. The Mughal forces, led by Girdhar Bahadur and his cousin Daya Bahadur, hastily prepared to oppose them on hearing that the Maratha army had begun to climb the ghats. Girdhar Bahadur believed that the Marathas, thinking that the pass near the Mandu fort was well guarded, would climb the ghat near Amjhera; he and his army marched to Amjhera and took up a strong position there. Since the Marathas did not appear there, he suspected that they climbed near the Mandu fort and set out for Dhar on 29 November 1728. Girdhar

Bahadur found Maratha horsemen coming towards him. In the 29 November Battle of Amjhera, Chimaji's army defeated the Mughals; Girdhar Bahadur and Daya Bahadur were killed. The Mughal forces fled, and their camp was plundered; eighteen elephants, horses, drums and other loot were taken by the Marathas. News of the victory reached the ears of Peshwa, who was visiting Chhatrasal. Chimaji marched towards Ujjain, but had to retreat due to lack of supplies. By February 1729, Maratha forces had reached present-day Rajasthan.

## **Bundelkhand**

In Bundelkhand, Chhatrasal rebelled against the Mughal Empire and established an independent kingdom. In December 1728, a Mughal force led by Muhammad Khan Bangash attacked him and besieged his fort and family. Although Chhatrasal repeatedly sought Baji Rao's assistance, he was busy in Malwa at the time. He compared his dire situation to that of Gajendra Moksha. In his letter to Baji Rao, Chhatrasal wrote the following words:

Know you, that I am in the same sad plight in which the famous elephant was when caught by the crocodile. My valiant race is on point of extinction. Come and save my honour, O Baji Rao.

In March 1729, the Peshwa responded to Chhatrasal's request and marched towards Bundelkhand with 25,000 horsemen and his lieutenants Pilaji Jadhav, Tukoji Pawar, Naro Shankar, and Davalji Somwanshi. Chhatrasal escaped capture and joined the Maratha force, increasing it to 70,000 men. After marching to Jaitpur, Baji Rao's forces surrounded Bangash and cut his

supply and communication lines. Bangash launched a counterattack against Baji Rao, but could not pierce his defences. Qaim Khan, son of Muhammad Khan Bangash, learned of his father's predicament and approached with fresh troops. His army was attacked by Baji Rao's forces, and he was defeated. Bangash was later forced to leave, signing an agreement that "he would never attack Bundelkhand again". Chhatrasal's position as ruler of Bundelkhand was restored. He granted a large jagir to Baji Rao, and gave him his daughter Mastani. Before Chhatrasal's death in December 1731, he ceded one-third of his territories to the Marathas.

## **Gujarat**

After consolidating Maratha influence in central India, Baji Rao decided to assert the Maratha right to collect taxes from the wealthy province of Gujarat and sent a Maratha force under Chimaji Appa there in 1730. Sarbuland Khan, the province's Mughal governor, ceded the right to collect chauth to the Marathas. He was soon replaced by Abhay Singh, who also recognized the Maratha right to collect taxes. This irked Shahu's senapati (commander-in-chief), Trimbak Rao Dabhade, whose ancestors had raided Gujarat several times and asserted their right to collect taxes from the province. Annoyed at Baji Rao's control of what he considered his family's sphere of influence, he rebelled against the Peshwa. Two other Maratha nobles from Gujarat, Damaji Rao Gaekwad and Kadam Bande, also sided with Dabhade.

After Girdhar Bahadur's defeat in 1728, the Mughal emperor had appointed Jai Singh II to subdue the Marathas. Jai Singh recommended a peaceful agreement; the emperor disagreed,

replacing him with Muhammad Khan Bangash. Bangash formed an alliance with the Nizam, Trimbak Rao and Sambhaji II. Baji Rao learned that Dabhade and Gaikwad had made preparations for an open fight on the plain of Dabhoi with a force of 40 thousand, while Baji Rao's numbers hardly reached 25 thousand in all. Baji Rao repeatedly sent messages to Dabhade to solve the dispute amicably in the presence of Chatrapati Shahu. But Dabhade was stiff and stubborn, disagreeing Baji Rao's proposition, therefore on 1 April 1731, Baji Rao struck at the allied forces of Dabhade, Gaekwad and Kadam Bande. The Dabhade was seated on elephant and Baji Rao was on horseback. But during the battle, a bullet pierced Trimbakrao's head and he died on the spot. Later it was discovered that the shot that killed Dabhade was fired by Dabhade's maternal uncle Bhau Singh Thoke. Baji Rao resolved the dispute with Sambhaji II on 13 April by signing the Treaty of Warna, which demarcated the territories of Shahu and Sambhaji II. The Nizam met Baji Rao at Rohe-Rameshwar on 27 December 1732, and promised not to interfere with Maratha expeditions.

Shahu and Baji Rao avoided a rivalry with the powerful Dabhade clan after subduing Trimbak Rao; Trimbak's son, Yashwant Rao, was appointed as Shahu's senapati. The Dabhade clan were allowed to continue collecting chauth from Gujarat if they deposited half the revenue in Shahu's treasury.

## **Siddis**

The Siddis of Janjira controlled a small, strategically-important territory on India's west coast. Although they originally held only the Janjira fort, after Shivaji's death they expanded their rule to a large part of central and northern



Konkan. After the death of Siddi chief Yakut Khan in 1733, a war of succession broke out among his sons; one, Abdul Rehman, asked Baji Rao for help. Baji Rao sent a Maratha force led by Sekhoji Angre, son of Kanhoji Angre. The Marathas regained control of several portions of Konkan, and besieged Janjira. Their strength was diverted after Peshwa's rival, Pant Pratinidhi, occupied Raigad Fort (near Janjira) in June 1733. Sekhoji Angre died in August (further weakening the Maratha position), and Baji Rao signed a peace treaty with the Siddis. He allowed the Siddis to retain control of Janjira if they accepted Abdul Rehman as the ruler; they were also allowed to retain control of Anjanvel, Gowalkot and Underi. The Marathas retained Raigad, Rewas, Thal and Chaul.

The Siddis launched an offensive to regain their lost territories soon after the Peshwa returned to Satara, and Baji Rao dispatched a force to prevent them from taking over Raigad Fort in June 1734.

himnaji made a surprise attack on a Siddi camp near Rewas on 19 April 1736, killing about 1,500 (including their leader, Siddi Sat). On 25 September of that year, the Siddis signed a peace treaty which confined them to Janjira, Gowalkot and Anjanvel.

## **Rajputana**

With Shahu's consent, Baji Rao began a northward journey on 9 October 1735. Accompanied by his wife, Kashibai, he intended to visit Rajput courts and persuade them to pay chauth. Baji Rao arrived at Mewar's southern frontier in January 1736, where Rana Jagat Singh had made arrangements for his visit.

Diplomatic talks got underway. Baji Rao also visited Jagmandir Palace, in the centre of Pichola Lake (at Rana Jagat Singh's invitation), and Nath-Dwara. After resolving matters in Mewar, Baji Rao advanced towards Jaipur. Jai Singh hastened south with his forces, and they met in Bhambholao (near Kishangarh).

Their meeting lasted for several days, with talks about chauth and the cession of Malwa from the Mughal Emperor. Baji Rao then returned to the Deccan. The emperor did not agree to his demands, however, and he planned to march on Delhi to force him to agree.

### **March to Delhi**

After the death of Trimbak Rao, Bangash's alliance against the Marathas fell apart. The Mughal emperor recalled him from Malwa, and re-appointed Jai Singh II as governor of Malwa. However, the Maratha chief Holkar defeated Jai Singh in the 1733 Battle of Mandsaur. After two more battles, the Mughals decided to offer the Marathas the right to collect the equivalent of ₹22 lakh in chauth from Malwa. On 4 March 1736, Baji Rao and Jai Singh reached an agreement at Kishangad. Jai Singh convinced the emperor to agree to the plan, and Baji Rao was appointed deputy governor of the region. Jai Singh is believed to have secretly informed Baji Rao that it was a good time to subdue the weakening Mughal emperor.

The Peshwa began to march on the Mughal capital, Delhi, from Pune on 12 November 1736 with a force of 50,000 cavalry troops. Learning of the advancing Maratha army, the Mughal emperor asked Saadat Ali Khan I to march from Agra and

check the advance. The Maratha chiefs Malhar Rao Holkar, Vithoji Bule and Pilaji Jadhav crossed Yamuna and plundered the Mughal territories in the Doab. Saadat Khan led a force of 150,000, defeated them, and retired to Mathura. Malhar Rao Holkar rejoined Baji Rao's army near Gwalior. Samsam-ud-Daulah, Mir Bakshi and Muhammad Khan Bangash invited Saadat Ali Khan to a banquet in Samsam-ud-Daulah's tent in Mathura, thinking that the Marathas had retreated to the Deccan. During the feast, they learnt that Baji Rao had slipped along the Jat and Mewati hill route (avoiding the direct Agra-Delhi route) and was at Delhi. The Mughal commanders left the feast and began a hasty return to capital. The Mughal emperor dispatched a force, led by Mir Hasan Khan Koka, to check Baji Rao's advance. The Marathas defeated his force in the 28 March 1737 Battle of Delhi. Baji Rao then retreated from the capital, concerned about the approach of a larger Mughal force from Mathura.

Baji Rao's dash on Delhi was executed with such daring and audacity that neither the Mughal generals nor the Mughal intelligence could comprehend or predict his moves.

### **Battle of Bhopal**

Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah sought help from the Nizam after Baji Rao's march to Delhi; the Nizam set out from the Deccan, met Baji Rao's returning force at Sironj, and told the Peshwa that he was going to Delhi to repair his relationship with the Mughal emperor. The Nizam was joined by other Mughal chiefs, and a 30,000-man Mughal army (reinforced by artillery), was dispatched against Baji Rao. The Peshwa assembled an 80,000-man force. To counter aid to the Nizam

from the Deccan, Baji Rao stationed a force of 10,000 (under Chimaji Appa) on the Tapti River with instructions to prevent Nasir Jung from advancing beyond Burhanpur. He and his forces crossed the Narmada in early December 1737, communicating with agents and spies posted to observe enemy moves. The Nizam sheltered in Bhopal, a fortified town with a lake at his rear, to keep his army and artillery secure.

Baji Rao besieged the Nizam, cutting off outside provisions. Because of the Nizam's artillery, the Marathas kept their distance and harassed their lines; no food could come in from outside, and the men and their animals were starving. The Nizam, unable to hold out any longer, signed a peace agreement at Doraha on 7 January 1738. Malwa was ceded to the Marathas; the Mughals agreed to pay the equivalent of ₹5,000,000 in reparations, with the Nizam swearing on the Quran to abide by the treaty.

## **The Portuguese**

The Portuguese had colonised several regions of India's west coast. They violated an agreement to give the Marathas a site on Salsette Island for a factory, and were intolerant of Hindus in their territory. In March 1737, the Peshwa dispatched a Maratha force (led by Chimaji) against them.

Although the Marathas captured Ghodbunder Fort and nearly all of Vasai in the Battle of Vasai and gained control of Salsette on 16 May 1739 after a long siege, Nader Shah's invasion of India then diverted their attention from the Portuguese. The war trophies from Vasai included several Church bells which are found in many prominent Hindu temples in Maharashtra.

## Battle tactics and character

Baji Rao was known for rapid tactical movements in battle, using cavalry inherited from Maratha generals such as Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav. Two examples are the Battle of Palkhed in 1728, when he outmaneuvered the Mughal governor of the Deccan, and in the battle against Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah at Delhi in 1737. His skill was in moving large numbers of cavalry at a great speed. British field marshal Bernard Montgomery studied Baji Rao's tactics in the Palkhed campaign, particularly his rapid movements and his troops' ability to live off the land (with little concern about supply and communication lines) while conducting "maneuver warfare" against the enemy. In his book, *A Concise History of Warfare*, Montgomery wrote the following about Baji Rao's victory at Palkhed:

They (Marathas) were at their best in the eighteenth century, and the Palkhed campaign of 1727-28 in which Baji Rao I outgeneralled Nizam-ul-Mulk, is a *masterpiece of strategic mobility*. Baji Rao's army was a purely mounted force, armed only with sabre, lance, a bow in some units and a round shield. There was a spare horse for every two men. The Marathas moved unencumbered by artillery, baggage, or even handguns and defensive armour. They supplied themselves by looting.

Montgomery also wrote,

Baji Rao resented the Nizam's rule over the Deccan and it was he who struck the first blow. In October 1727, as soon as rainy season ended, Baji Rao burst into the territories of Nizam. The

lightly equipped Marathas moved with great rapidity, avoiding the main towns and fortresses, living off the country, burning and plundering.

They met one reverse at the hands of Nizam's able lieutenant, Iwaz Khan, at the beginning of November 1727, but within a month they had fully recovered and were off again, dashing east, north, west, with sudden changes in direction.

The Nizam had mobilised his forces, and for a time pursued them, but he was bewildered by the swift unpredictable movements of Marathas, and his men became exhausted.

Jadunath Sarkar called Baji Rao, "a heavenly-born cavalry leader". Baji Rao used local terrain to cut enemy supply lines. Leading from the front, he used the traditional Maratha tactics of encircling the enemy quickly, appearing from the rear, attacking from an unexpected direction, distracting the enemy's attention, keeping them off-balance, and defining the battlefield on his own terms. Baji Rao kept detailed information about enemy forces to himself, attacking where least expected and thus inspiring fear.

Baji Rao is considered as the most charismatic and dynamic leader in the Maratha history after Shivaji. He is also considered to be one of the greatest military generals of his time. In his introduction to *Baji Rao I: The Great Peshwa*, K. M. Panikkar wrote:

Baji Rao, the great Peshwa, was without doubt the most outstanding statesman and general India produced in [the] 18th century. If Shivaji was the founder of Maratha State, Baji Rao could claim that he was the one who saved it from

disruption and transformed what was national state in[to] an Empire. Chatrapati Shahu also had an implicit faith on Baji Rao. He had issued orders that, "all should obey Baji Rao faithfully and should do nothing to offend his temper". On the other occasion he has called Baji Rao as "the man with iron nerves".

## **Personal life**

Baji Rao's first wife was Kashibai, the daughter of Mahadji Krishna Joshi and Shiubai of Chas (a wealthy banking family). Baji Rao always treated his wife Kashibai with love and respect. Their relationship was a happy one. They had three sons Balaji Baji Rao (also called Nanasaheb), Raghunath Rao (also called Ragoba) and Janardhan Rao, who died at an early age. Nanasaheb was appointed Peshwa by Shahu in 1740, succeeding his father.

Baji Rao took Mastani as his mistress, the daughter of Rajput king Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand and his Muslim concubine. The relationship was political one, arranged to please Chhatrasal. Mastani had a son, Krishna Rao, in 1734. Since his mother was Muslim, the Hindu priests refused to conduct upanayana ceremony and he became known as Shamsheer Bahadur. After the deaths of Baji Rao and Mastani in 1740, Kashibai raised six-year-old Shamsheer Bahadur as her own. Shamsheer received a portion of his father's dominion of Banda and Kalpi. In 1761, he and his army fought alongside the Peshwa in the Third Battle of Panipat between the Marathas and the Afghans. Wounded in the battle, Shamsheer died several days later in Deeg.

Baji Rao moved his base of operations from Saswad to Pune in 1728, laying the foundation for the transformation of a kasba into a large city. He began the construction of Shaniwar Wada in 1730. It was completed in 1732, beginning the era of Peshwa control of the city.

## **Death**

Baji Rao's body was exhausted due to ceaseless wars and military campaigns. He caught a virulent fever when he was encamped in Raverkhedi and died on 28 April 1740. He was cremated that day on the Narmada River. Balaji Baji Rao ordered Ranoji Shinde to build a chhatri as a memorial. The memorial is enclosed by a dharmashala. The compound has two temples, dedicated to Nilkantheshwara Mahadeva (Shiva) and Rameshvara (Rama).

## **Balaji Baji Rao**

**Shrimant Peshwa Balajirao Bhat** (December 8, 1720 – June 23, 1761), also known as **Nana Saheb**, was the 8th Peshwa of the Maratha Empire in India. He was appointed as Peshwa in 1740 upon the death of his illustrious father, the Peshwa Bajirao I.

During his tenure, the Chhatrapati (Maratha Emperor) was reduced to a mere figurehead. At the same time, the Maratha empire started transforming into a confederacy, in which individual chiefs — such as the Holkars, the Scindias and the Bhonsles of Nagpur kingdom — became more powerful. During Balaji Rao's tenure, the Maratha territory reached its zenith. A



large part of this expansion, however, was led by the individual chiefs of the Maratha Empire. By the end of Balaji Baji Rao's tenure, the Peshwa was reduced to more of a financier than a general. Unlike his father, Balaji Baji Rao was not a great military leader and failed to gauge the seriousness of Durrani invasions in northern India. This ultimately resulted in a devastating Maratha defeat at the Third Battle of Panipat. Some judicial and revenue reforms were made during his tenure, but the credit for these goes to his cousin Sadashivrao Bhau and his associate Balshastri Gadgil.

## **Early years and family**

Balaji Rao was born in the Bhat family, to Peshwa Baji Rao I, on 8 December 1720. After Baji Rao's death in April 1740, Chhatrapati Shahu appointed 19-year old Balaji as the Peshwa in August 1740, despite opposition from other chiefs such as Raghoji I Bhonsle. He was married to Gopikabai. The couple had three sons, Vishwasrao who died in the battle of Panipat in 1761, Madhavrao who succeeded Nanasahab as Peshwa and Narayanrao who succeeded Madhavrao in his late teens. Nanasahab had an able brother called Raghunathrao whose ambitions to be the Peshwa became disastrous for the Maratha empire.

## **Rivalry with Raghoji Bhonsle**

In early years of Balaji Rao's tenure, Raghoji I Bhonsle helped extend Maratha influence in South and East India. However, he was not on good terms with the Peshwa. Shortly before Balaji's appointment as the Peshwa, Raghoji had led a Maratha force to

South India. His mission was to help Pratap Singh of Thanjavur, a royal of the Bhonsle clan, against Dost Ali Khan. Raghoji killed Dost Ali in May 1740, and installed Dost Ali's son Safdar Ali Khan as the Nawab of Arcot. He returned to Satara, and unsuccessfully lodged a protest against Balaji Rao's appointment as the Peshwa. He then returned to South India, where he defeated Chanda Sahib in March 1741, before being forced to retreat by Chanda Sahib's French allies from Pondicherry. After returning to Satara, Raghoji continued to oppose Balaji Rao.

In 1743, Raghoji Bhonsle attacked Alivardi Khan's forces in Orissa. Khan paid ₹ 2,000,000 to Balaji Rao, who helped him expel Raghoji from Orissa in 1744. Raghoji then complained to Chhatrapati Shahu, and got himself appointed the in-charge of Marathas in Orissa, Bengal and Bihar. By 1752, Raghoji had taken over administration of Orissa, and also frequently raided Bengal and Bihar to collect *chauth*. The instability brought by him to Bengal later paved way for the rise of the East India Company there.

## **Rebellion by Tarabai and Umabai**

Tarabai, the senior widow of Rajaram Chhatrapati after being released by her stepson Sambhaji II of Kolhapur was given asylum by Chhatrapati Shahu, her nephew. In the 1740s, during the last years of Shahu's life, Tarabai brought a child to him: Rajaram II. She presented the child as her grandson, and thus, a direct descendant of Shivaji. Shahu adopted the child, and after his death in 1749, Rajaram II succeeded him as the *Chhatrapati*. The next year, Peshwa Balaji Rao left to fight against the Nizam of Hyderabad. In his absence, Tarabai urged

Rajaram II to remove him from the post of Peshwa. When Rajaram refused, she imprisoned him in a dungeon at Satara, on 24 November 1750. She claimed that he was an impostor, and that she had falsely presented him as her grandson. Tarabai was unsuccessful in getting support from other ministers and the would-be Nizam Salabat Jung. However, she managed to enlist the help of another noblewoman, Umabai Dabhade.

Umabai Dabhade was the matriarch of the Dabhade family, whose members held the title of *Senapati* (commander-in-chief) and controlled several territories in Gujarat. Her husband had been killed by the Mughals, and her eldest son had been killed by Balaji Rao's father for a rebellion against Chhatrapati Shahu. However, Shahu had forgiven the Dabhades and allowed them to retain their jagirs and titles on the condition that they would remit half of the revenues collected from Gujarat to his treasury. Umabai's minor son Yashwant Rao was made the titular *Senapati*, while she held the actual executive power in Maratha territories of Gujarat. The Dabhades never actually shared any revenues, but Shahu did not want to take any action against a grieving mother. However, after Shahu's death Peshwa Balaji Rao faced an empty treasury and pressurized the Dabhades to share Gujarat revenues as per the agreement. Umabai personally met him in 1750 and argued that the agreement was void because the Dabhades had signed it under force. The Peshwa refused to entertain this argument.

Umabai dispatched 15,000 troops led by her lieutenant Damaji Rao Gaekwad in support of Tarabai's rebellion. Gaekwad initially advanced towards Pune, prompting the Peshwa's mother Kashibai and his grandmother Radhabai to flee from

Pune to Sinhagad. While encamped at Pargaon near Pune, he received a letter from the Peshwa loyalist Mahadji Purandare, who denounced him as a traitor. Subsequently, Gaekwad changed course and started advancing towards Satara. Mahadji's brother Trimbakrao Purandare led a 20,000-strong force against him. Gaekwad defeated him at Nimb, a small town north of Satara. He then marched to Satara, where he was received by Tarabai. However, Trimbakrao re-formed his army and on 15 March 1751, he attacked Gaekwad's army, which was encamped on the banks of the Venna River. Gaekwad was defeated in this battle, and forced to retreat with heavy losses. Trimbakrao kept pursuing him and cornered his force near a gorge in the Krishna river valley.

Meanwhile, on hearing about the rebellion, Balaji Rao left the Mughal frontier, and quickly advanced towards Satara, covering 400 miles in 13 days. He reached Satara on 24 April, and stormed the Yavateshwar garrison, defeating Tarabai's forces. He then joined Trimbakrao, who had been keeping a watch on Gaekwad's army. Gaekwad was compelled to declare ceasefire and meet Balaji Rao to discuss the terms of a peace treaty. Balaji Rao demanded from him half of Gujarat's territories in addition to a war indemnity of ₹ 2,500,000. Damaji refused to sign an agreement, stating that he was only a subordinate, and asked Balaji Rao to consult Umabai. On 30 April, Balaji Rao launched a surprise evening attack, and Damaji's camp surrendered without resistance. Balaji Rao then surrounded the Satara fort, and asked Tarabai to release Chhatrapati Rajaram II, whose physical and mental condition had deteriorated considerably. Tarabai refused, and Balaji Rao left for Pune, since a siege of the well-provisioned and strong Satara fort would not be easy.

Later, a section of Tarabai's troops in the Satara garrison rebelled against her. Although she crushed the mutiny, she realized that it would be difficult to continue the fight against Balaji Rao. She, therefore, agreed to a peace treaty. She met Balaji Rao in Pune, and accepted the superiority of the Peshwa's office. She agreed to dismiss her lieutenant Baburao Jadhav, whom the Peshwa disliked. In return, the Peshwa forgave her. On 14 September 1752, the two took oaths at Khandoba temple in Jejuri, promising mutual peace. At this oath ceremony, Tarabai swore that Rajaram II was not her grandson, but an impostor from the Gondhali caste. Nevertheless, the Peshwa retained Rajaram II as the titular Chhatrapati and a powerless figurehead.

In May 1751, Balaji Rao had arrested Damaji Gaekwad and his relatives, and sent them to Pune. Sometime later, the Dabhades were also arrested, and deprived of their jagirs and titles. In Pune, Balaji Rao repeatedly pressurized Damaji to cede half of Gujarat on behalf of Yashwant Rao Dabhade. Damaji kept refusing, and on 19 July 1751, Balaji Rao placed him and his dewan Ramchandra Baswant in strict confinement. On 14 November, he sent them to captivity in Lohagad. A few weeks later, Ramchandra Baswant escaped to Gujarat. As a result, Balaji Rao ordered Damaji to be put in iron chains at Lohagad. He then sent a military expedition to Gujarat, under his brother Raghunath Rao. Raghunath Rao managed to recover revenues from Surat, but could not advance north of the Tapti river. Meanwhile, Balaji Rao received a setback when his general Shankarji Keshav Phadke was defeated at the siege of Parner. As a result, he decided to seek reconciliation with the Gaekwads. In March 1752, Damaji finally agreed to abandon Dabhades and join Balaji Rao. In return, he was made

the Maratha chief of Gujarat, and Balaji Rao offered him assistance in expelling the Mughals from Gujarat. Gaekwad promised to pay an annual tribute of ₹ 525,000 to Peshwa in addition to a one-time payment of ₹ 1,500,000. He was also asked to maintain a cavalry of 20,000 horses in service of the Peshwa.

## **Campaign against the Nizam**

In 1751, Balaji Rao had invaded the territories of Nizam of Hyderabad Salabat Jung, who was supported by the French Governor-General of Pondicherry Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau. Due to Tarabai's rebellion and the French-trained enemy troops, the Marathas had to retreat. In 1752, Balaji Rao launched a fresh attack against the Nizam. He also sought support of the English to counter the French, but the English refused to get involved in the conflict. The Marathas wanted Salabat Jung's brother Ghazi ud-Din Khan to be appointed as the Nizam; as he had promised them a payment of ₹ 6,000,000 among other favours. However, Khan was poisoned to death by his step-mother. Ultimately, Balaji Rao and Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau concluded a peace treaty. Raghoji Bhonsle also agreed to peace on the condition that Nizam would grant him some jagirs in Berar.

## **Relations with Rajputs**

Balaji's father Baji Rao aimed to establish a *Hindu Padshahi* (Hindu kingship) in India, and maintained good relations with the Hindu Rajputs. However, during Balaji Rao's tenure, the Marathas alienated the Rajput rulers.

When Jai Singh II of Jaipur died in 1743, a war of succession broke out between his sons Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh. Madho was supported by Jagat Singh II of Mewar and Ummed Singh of Bundi. The Marathas, however, initially supported Ishwari, simply because he offered them more money. Later, Jagat Singh was able to enlist Malhar Rao Holkar on Madho's side, while Jayappa Rao Scindia continued to support Ishwari. This episode not only spoiled the Maratha relations with the Rajputs, but also resulted in internal strife among the Marathas. Madho Singh later sought arbitration from Balaji Rao, who personally came to Jaipur and convinced Ishwari Singh to cede 4 mahals to Madho Singh. Ishwari Singh initially agreed, but refused to abide by his promise after Balaji returned to Pune. Malhar Rao Holkar then not only forcefully captured the *mahals* for Madho, but also imposed a tribute on Ishwari Singh. In 1750, the Marathas declared a war on Ishwari Singh for his failure to pay the arrears. Ishwari Singh was desperate as he did not have sufficient money to pay off the Marathas, and he could not impose excessive taxes on his citizens. As a result, he committed suicide by consuming poison.

After Ishawari Singh's death, Madho Singh became the ruler of Jaipur. However, he no longer trusted the Marathas, having seen their treatment of his elder brother. He participated in battles against the Marathas, until Safdarjung intervened and convinced the Marathas to leave with an apology and some compensation. After Safdarjung's death, the Marathas again invaded the Rajput territories. This forced Madho Singh to seek help from Safdarjung's successor Shuja-ud-Daula as well as the Afghan king Ahmad Shah Durrani (Abdali).

In 1749, Abhai Singh of Jodhpur (Marwar) died, leading to a war of succession between his sons Bakht Singh and Ram Singh. Ram Singh sought help from Jayappa Scindia. By the time Scindia marched to Jodhpur in September 1752, Bakhat Singh had died. He was succeeded by his son Bijay Singh, who sought help against the Marathas from the Mughals, the Rohillas and Madho Singh. With Madho Singh's help, Bijay Singh resisted the Marathas for a year, before he agreed to peace talks. During one such peace negotiation, Jayappa Scindia was assassinated by emissaries of Vijay Singh of Marwar in July 1755. This led to further hostilities between the Marathas and the Rajputs until Dattaji Rao Scindia concluded a peace treaty in February 1756.

## **Relations with the Jats**

The Marathas-Jat relations also worsened during Balaji Rao's reign. Balaji's younger brother Raghunath Rao wanted a share of revenues from the prosperous Bharatpur State. Suraj Mal, the ruler of this state, had interfered in Jaipur politics in support of Ishwari Singh.

This had antagonized Maratha chiefs like Malhar Rao Holkar, who had supported Madho. In 1754, the Mughal wazir Safdarjung sought Suraj Mal's help against the Mughal emperor. To counter him, the imperial loyalist Imad-ul-Mulk, sought Maratha help. Raghunath Rao used this opportunity and sent a force led by Malhar Rao Holkar to Bharatpur. Suraj Mal tried to avoid a war by offering him ₹ 4,000,000; but, Raghunath Rao was not satisfied with the offer. The Marathas besieged Bharatpur's Kumher fort in early 1754 for around four months, before a peace treaty was concluded. The



Marathas accepted an offer by Suraj Mal to pay ₹ 3,000,000 in three yearly installments.

## **Relations with the Mughals**

During Baji Rao's tenure, the Mughals had nominally granted the Malwa to the Marathas, but the control was not actually passed to the Marathas. After becoming Peshwa, Balaji Rao approached the Mughal emperor through Jai Singh II, and managed to get appointed as the Deputy Governor of Malwa (with Ahmad Shah as the titular Governor). In return, he pledged faithfulness to the Mughal emperor. He also agreed to keep a force of 500 soldiers at the emperor's court, in addition to providing a force of 4,000 soldiers on a need basis.

In 1748, Javed Khan, a rival of the Mughal wazir Safdarjung invited the new Nizam of Hyderabad Nasir Jung, to join an alliance against the wazir. Safdarjung requested Maratha support against Nasir Jung. Balaji Rao dispatched Scindia and Holkar chiefs to prevent Nasir Jung from reaching Delhi, and thus, saved Safdarjung.

Starting in 1748, the Afghan king Ahmad Shah Durrani (Abdali) launched several invasions of India, forcing the Mughals to seek Maratha help. In 1752, the Rohillas of the Doab region rebelled against the Mughal emperor. They defeated Safdarjung in a battle, and invited Durrani to invade India. Once again, Safdarjung sought assistance from the Marathas, who helped him crush the rebellion. The Marathas and the Mughals signed an agreement in 1752. The Marathas agreed to help the Mughals defeat external aggressions as well as internal rebellions. The Mughals agreed to appoint Peshwa

Balaji Rao as the Governor of Ajmer and Agra. The Marathas were also granted the right to collect *chauth* from Lahore, Multan, Sindh, and some districts of Hissar and Moradabad. However, the Mughal emperor had also ceded Lahore and Multan to Ahmad Shah Durrani in order to pacify him. In addition, he did not ratify the transfer of Rajput-ruled territories like Ajmer to the Marathas. This brought the Marathas in conflict with Durrani as well as Rajputs.

## **Conflict with the Durrani Empire**

After his initial invasions of India, Ahmed Shah Durrani appointed his son Timur Shah Durrani as the governor of Punjab and Kashmir. Balaji Rao then dispatched Raghunath Rao to check the advance of the Durrani. In 1758, Raghunath Rao conquered Lahore and Peshawar, and drove out Timur Shah Durrani. The Marathas thus became Durrani's major rivals in the north-western part of the subcontinent. Meanwhile, the Marathas had reduced the Mughal emperor to a figurehead, and Balaji Rao talked of placing his son Vishwasrao on the Mughal throne. The Mughal loyalist Muslim intellectuals of Delhi were alarmed at these developments, and appealed Durrani to check the rising Maratha power.

Under these circumstances, Ahmad Shah Durrani launched a fresh invasion of India, reaching Lahore by the end of 1759. He gained allies in the Rohilla noble Najib-ud-Daula and the Nawab of Oudh Shuja-ud-Daula. Balaji Rao responded to the Durrani invasion by dispatching a large force commanded by Sadashiv Rao Bhau. This force was supplemented by the contingents of Holkar, Scindia, Gaikwad and Govind Pant Bunde. The Jat ruler Suraj Mal of Bharatpur also joined the

Marathas, but later left the alliance due to a misunderstanding with Bhau. Between 1759 and 1761, the Durranis and the Marathas fought each other in several skirmishes and small battles, with varying results. Due to the extended duration of the siege of the Maratha garrison at Panipat which Balaji's reinforcements were supposed to break but never reached beyond the Narmada, the Durranis decisively defeated the famished and under-equipped Maratha army in the Third Battle of Panipat on 14 January 1761. According to Shuresh Sharma, "It was Balaji Bajirao's love of pleasure which was responsible for Panipat. He delayed at Paithan celebrating his second marriage until December 27th, when it was too late."

## **Death**

The defeat at Panipat resulted in heavy losses for the Marathas, and was a huge setback for Peshwa Balaji Rao. He received the news of the defeat of Panipat on 24 January 1761 at Bhilsa, while leading a reinforcement force.

Besides several important generals, he had lost his own son Vishwasrao in the Battle of Panipat. Hearing the news of the death Sadashivrao Bhau, He fell in depression and died on 23 June 1761, and was succeeded by his younger son Madhav Rao I.

## **Madhavrao I**

**Shrimant Peshwa Madhavrao Bhat I** (February 15, 1745 – November 18, 1772) was the 9th Peshwa of the Maratha Empire. During his tenure, the Maratha empire recovered from

the losses they suffered during the Third Battle of Panipat, a phenomenon known as Maratha Resurrection. He is considered one of the greatest Peshwas in Maratha history.

## **Early life and ascendancy to Peshwa**

Madhavrao Bhat was second son of Peshwa Nanasaheb, son of Bajirao. He was born in Savnur in 1745. At the time of his birth, the Maratha Empire was stretched across a sizeable portion of Western, Central and Northern India. On December 9, 1758, Madhavrao married Ramabai in Pune.

Nanasaheb had greatly expanded the Maratha Empire and had tried to establish better governance. However, he was held partially responsible for the severe defeat of the Marathas by Ahmad Shah Abdali at the Third Battle of Panipat in early 1761. The Maratha forces suffered heavy losses including Nanasaheb's eldest son and heir Vishwasrao Bhat and cousin Sadashivrao Bhau. He died on June 23, 1761 at Parvati Hill in Pune.

After his father's death, the sixteen-year-old Madhav Rao was made the next Peshwa of Maratha Empire. His father's brother Raghunathrao was to act as regent.

## **Early reign**

At the ascendancy of Madhavrao, the Maratha empire was in complete shambles as their defeat at Panipat had accumulated big debts to their wealth. At Shaniwar Wada, the prime residence of the Peshwa, religious rituals and ceremonies were

frequently being conducted. The discipline required for the smooth running of administrative affairs was almost non-existent. The security at the treasury was poor. When these weaknesses were brought to Madhavrao's notice, he introduced changes by personally looking into the administration, accounts and the treasury. He also reduced the religious practices being followed at Shaniwar Wada.

In February 1762, Peshwas set out to conquer Karnataka. This was one of the earliest wars against the Nizam when conflict arose between Madhavrao and his uncle Raghunathrao. Due to difference of opinion between the two, Raghunathrao decided to abandon the troop midway and return to Pune, while Madhavrao continued. Eventually, a treaty was signed with the Nizam and Madhavrao returned. Both Madhavrao and Raghunathrao had their preferences even over the *Sardars* (Generals). Madhavrao usually preferred the company of Gopalrao Patwardhan, Tryambakrao Mama Pethe, Nana Fadnavis and Ramshastri Prabhune; while Raghunathrao was dearer to Sakharam Bapu Bokil, Gulabrao and Gangoba Tatya.

## **Disputes with Raghunathrao**

The discord between Madhavrao and Raghunathrao was increasing and on August 22, 1762, Raghunathrao fled to Vadgaon Maval where he started grooming his own army.

Raghunathrao's men started looting the nearby villages for warfare and this act angered Madhavrao. He decided to wage a war against his uncle Raghunathrao on November 7, 1762. However, Madhavrao didn't wish to battle against his own uncle and thus, proposed for a treaty. Raghunathrao agreed to

sign the treaty with Madhavrao and asked him to move back to a non-attacking position. Madhavrao did so. However, Raghunathrao deceived Madhavrao. When the Maratha camp under Madhavrao was relaxed and unsuspecting of a battle, they were caught unawared as Raghunathrao attacked treacherously. Thus, Madhavrao was defeated in the Battle of Alegaon and on November 12, 1762 surrendered himself to Raghunathrao near Alegaon. After the surrender, Raghunathrao decided to control all the major decisions under the assistance of Sakharam Bapu. He also decided to befriend Nizam, but this proved to be a wrong masterplan as the Nizam slowly started infiltrating the zones of Maratha Empire. As time slipped by, Madhavrao pointed out the gravity of the situation to his uncle. Eventually on March 7, 1763 the Peshwas, once again under Madhavrao's leadership, decided to attack Aurangabad to crush Nizam. After months of chasing, Peshwas faced Nizam's army on August 10, 1763 in the Battle of Rakshasbhuvan near Aurangabad. Nizam's army suffered huge losses in this war and Nizam retreated.

## **War against Hyder Ali and Mysore**

In January 1764, for the second time, Madhavrao decided to gather up his defences and conquer Hyder Ali. This time his massive army included efficient generals like Gopalrao Patwardhan, Murarrao Ghorpade, Vinchurkar and Naro Shankar. Raghunathrao declined his offer to join him and instead chose to visit Nashik. This was a particularly long conquest which went for almost a year in and around the districts of Karnataka. However, Hyder Ali somehow managed to escape the clutches of the Peshwas. Eventually, Madhavrao

decided to call Raghunathrao for his assistance, but Raghunathrao only signed a treaty with Hyder Ali, much to Madhavrao's disappointment. Raghunathrao intentionally made this move, since he was now fearfully aware of Madhavrao's burgeoning power. Additionally, his loyal assistant Sakharam bapu also warned him against the consequences of conquering Hyder Ali. Peshwa's failure to impose authority over Hyder Ali triggered a major setback on Madhavrao's health. In 1767, Madhavrao I organized a 3rd expedition against Hyder Ali and inflicted defeats on Hyder Ali in the battles of Sira and Madhugiri and made a surprise discovery of Queen Virammaji the last ruler of the Keladi Nayaka Kingdom and her son who were kept in confinement in the fort of Madhugiri by Hyder Ali. They were rescued by Madhavrao I and were sent to Pune for protection.

## **Alliance with Nizam**



Peshwas were expanding their territory in the northern regions of India. Raghunathrao, Holkars and Shindes together marched towards Delhi with the intention of expanding the Maratha Empire in these territories. In the meanwhile, Madhavrao made a bold decision of bonding with his old rival, Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II. The Nizam also genuinely expressed his desire to increase the relationship and thus the two met at Kurumkhed

on February 5, 1766. The next few days saw some cultural exchanges and open expressions of concern. The levels of mutual understanding alleviated and this relationship started growing stronger.

## **British meet Peshwas**

On December 3, 1767, British officer Mastin arrived in Pune. The colonial rulers wanted to set up their armies in the regions of Vasai and Sashti, but Madhavrao had anticipated their intentions. Mastin's repeated requests to acquire these regions in return for conquering Hyder Ali fell on deaf ears, and Peshwa never agreed to them.

## **Raghunathrao faces house arrest**

Though Raghunathrao had marched to the north for expanding the empire, he failed to do so. Instead, he came back to Anandvalli and was again tempted to form an alliance with his generals and fight against Madhavrao. This time, however; Madhavrao was extremely agitated with his uncle's repeated attempts to overthrow him. On June 10, 1768 he waged a war against Raghunathrao, captured him and put him under house arrest at Shaniwar Wada along with his assistant Sakharam Bapu Bokil.

## **Assassination attempt**

The incident occurred on the evening of September 7, 1769. Madhavrao was returning from the Parvati temple at Pune with



his comrades, when one of his generals Ramsingh suddenly attacked him with a sword. Madhavrao was warned just in the nick of time and he suffered a blow from the sword on his shoulder as he tried to dodge Ramsingh. Madhavrao believed that this was Raguhnathrao's attempt to murder him, but he imprisoned General Ramsingh.

## **Death**

In June 1770, Peshwas set out to conquer Hyder Ali for the third time. However, Madhavrao was infected with tuberculosis which started deteriorating his health. Tuberculosis was also termed as “Raj-Yakshma” or the prince of diseases. Madhavrao had to return from Miraj as the effects of the disease had started becoming prominent. He was even recommended an English doctor for treatment of the terrible disease and he would follow the advice given by the doctor. However, there were no signs of improvement and slowly it started developing further. The disease had affected his intestine. There was no cure for tuberculosis in those times. Madhavrao decided to spend his last days in his favourite Ganesha Chintamani Temple, Theur.

On 6 October 1772, Raghunathrao tried to escape from the house arrest at Shaniwar Wada, but he was caught again. Madhavrao had become excessively weak, and he could no longer bear such incidents. He had constructed a garden, a wooden hall and a fountain outside this favourite temple.

18 November 1772, early morning approximately at eight: Madhavrao died at the temple premises of Chintamani, Theur. Thousands of citizens visited the site and paid their last

respects. Madhavrao was cremated on the banks of the river which was about half a mile from the temple. A small memorial carved out of stone rests today at that place as a memorial.

His wife Ramabai chose to commit *sati* with his body at the time of cremation, even though Brahmin widows were not required to follow the ritual.

## **Character**

- During this time, an interesting incident occurred. Madhavrao was busy managing the treasury of the kingdom and supervising the calculation of the expenses encountered during the war. One day, he noticed a large crowd anxiously waiting at the entrance of Shaniwar Wada. Upon summoning the guards, he discovered that they were the aggrieved citizens of Pune who had lost their families, house, land and wealth in the war. They had been visiting his residence for the past few days with hopes of expressing their unbearable losses. However, the guards had not allowed them to meet the Peshwa by excusing that his health had deteriorated. When he heard this, Madhavrao became furious with the guards; he immediately left all his tasks aside and stepped out of Shaniwar Wada. He personally met with the poverished families and patiently listened to each one of them. He made a note of every family's loss and personally saw to it that these losses were compensated from the empire's revenue. This speaks volumes about why the citizens always looked up to him with tremendous faith and respect.

Though there were rifts between him and his uncle Raghunathrao, Madhavrao always displayed concern for him on personal grounds. Madhavrao fined his own uncle, his mother's brother,

Rastemama for allowing Nizam's men to plunder Pune while his own house was spared. Rastemama complained to his sister and Gopikabai urged Madhavrao to reconsider the fine, he simply refused and did not budge even when she threatened to move out of Shaniwarwada. Gopikabai decided to live separately in Gangapur near Nashik, the two always shared frequent written communication. He had great respect, love and regard for his mother, which is visible in the letters exchanged between the two.

Madhavrao was one of the most able administrators; he brought radical revolutions in the Maratha Empire in terms of efficiency and honesty. Corrupt and lethargic officials were flogged in the courtyard; this brought about the much required discipline in the administration.

The judicial system was impartial and faithfully managed by Ram Shastri, who was considered as the supreme pillar of justice. The usage of revenues was maximized for the welfare of the citizens. Artillery and weapons were constantly upgraded and the strength of the empire was maintained at high standards.

Madhavrao was feared by his own servants, but he was approachable to the common man. He was always aware and made others in his fold realize that he is not the king. Justice Kashinath Trimbak Telang citing James Grant Duff narrates an

amusing story that illustrates Madhavrao's ruthlessness, omniscience and disregard for religious restrictions.

"When he [Madhavrao] was arranging for his expedition against Hyder Ali, he sent a summons to the Bhonsle chief of Nagpur(Janoji Bhonsle) to come over to join the Maratha army. The Bhonsle's agent at Puna went to consult with the ex-minister Sakharam Bapu as to what should be done. The latter was afraid to give his counsel openly as the Peshwa's Karkun was present, but he managed to convey his advice to the Bhonsle's agent without the Karkun understanding the point. He suggested to one of two persons who were sitting near him playing chess that, as the pawns(pyaada in Marathi, meaning both pawn and soldier) of his opponent had advanced in force, he should take back his king a square or two. The Bhonsle's agent, taking the hint, at once wrote off to his master to advise that he should not come to Pune in pursuance of the Peshwa's summons, but should go back the one or two stages he had advanced from Nagpur.

This was done accordingly, and Madhavrao, who had a great reputation for obtaining news of everything that was going on in which he was interested, heard of the Bhonsle's return to his capital; and he also heard of Sakharam Bapu's advice, which had led to it, though the latter was perceived only by him hidden under the facts he learnt from the cross-examination of the Karkun. Madhavrao was a man of very strong will. He at once sent for the Bhonsle's agent, and told him of his master's return to Nagpur on the advice of Sakharam Bapu, and added, "If your master is in Poona within fifteen days, well and good; if not, I will pay no heed to my being a Brahman, but will break his head with a tent-peg!"

## Legacy

Assessing the impact of the loss of Madhavrao, the writer James Grant Duff eulogised:

*"And the plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha Empire than the early end of this excellent prince..."*

## Narayan Rao

**Shrimant Peshwa Narayanrao Bhat** (10 August 1755 – 30 August 1773) was the 10th Peshwa of the Maratha Empire from November 1772 until his assassination in August 1773. He married Gangabai Sathe who later gave birth to Sawai Madhavrao Peshwa.

## Early life and ascendancy to Peshwa throne

Narayan Rao was the third son of Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao (also known as Nana Saheb) and his wife Gopikabai. Narayan Rao's eldest brother Vishwasrao, heir to the title of Peshwa, was killed during the Third Battle of Panipat.

The second brother, Madhavrao, succeeded their father after the latter's death in 1761.

Their uncle Raghunathrao was appointed as regent to Madhavrao, but conspired against his nephew, and was eventually placed under house arrest.

Madhavrao I died in 1772 from tuberculosis and was succeeded by the seventeen-year-old Narayan Rao, with his uncle Raghunathrao again acting as regent after being released from house arrest.

Differences soon arose between the immature Narayan Rao and his ambitious uncle, who had wanted to become Peshwa since Balaji Baji Rao's death. Both men were surrounded by ill-intentioned advisors, who further poisoned their minds against each other. As a result, Narayan Rao had his uncle again confined to his house.

## **Assassination of Narayanrao and aftermath**

Rao writes that "the guiding its behind the conspiracy were Anandibai, the disgruntled wife of Raghunath and Tulaji Pawar, a servant. Tulaji was the main link between the smarting couple in the palace and the clamoring sepoys outside". During the Ganesh Festival of 1773 (the actual date was 30 August 1773, the last day of Ganesh Festival i.e. Anant Chaturdashi), several Gardi guards, led by their captain, Sumer Singh Gardi , entered the palace and started creating a commotion.

They intended to release Raghunathrao. Raghunathrao and his wife Anandibai, who were opposed to Narayanrao, had promised the Gardis that they would mediate in their dispute with Narayanrao. Narayanrao ran to Raghunathrao, assuming that his uncle would not let them harm him. The Gardis followed Narayanrao to his uncle's chamber and the menial

Tulaji Pawar pulled him while Sumer Singh Gardi cut him down. At the scene, a total of 11 persons were killed. Historian Sardesai writes that these 11 victims included seven brahmins (including Narayanrao), two Maratha servants and two maids.

The entire carnage happened within half an hour. This happened at around 1 p.m. Narayanrao's body was secretly taken away through the Narayan gate of Shanivar wada and cremated near Lakdi pool by the banks of Mutha river.

There were a total of 49 people implicated in the assassination: twenty-four Brahmins, two Saraswats, three Prabhus, six Marathas, one Maratha maid-servant, five Muslims and eight north-Indian Hindus.

According to popular legend, Raghunathrao had sent a message to Sumer Singh Gardi to fetch Narayanrao using the Marathi word *dharaa* (धरा) or 'hold' (actual phrase in Marathi - "नारायणरावांना धरा"/"Narayanrao-ana dhara"). This message was intercepted by his wife Anandibai who changed a single letter to make it read as *maaraa* (मारा) or 'kill'. The miscommunication led the Gardis to chase Narayanrao, who, upon hearing them coming, started running towards his uncles' residence screaming, "Kaka! Mala Vachva!!" ("Uncle! Save me!"). But nobody came to help him and he was killed in the presence of his uncle.

Rumour has it that Narayanrao's body was hacked into so many pieces that they had to carry the pieces in a pot, henceforth it was taken near the river and cremated at midnight. This act brought ill fame to the Peshwa administration, which was being looked after by the minister

Nana Phadnavis. The Chief Justice of the administration, Ram Shastri Prabhune was asked to conduct an investigation into the incident, and Raghunathrao,

Anandibai and Sumer Singh Gardi were all prosecuted in absentia. Although Raghunathrao was acquitted, Anandibai was declared an offender and Sumer Singh Gardi the culprit. Sumer Singh Gardi died mysteriously in Patna, Bihar in 1775, and Anandibai performed Hindu rituals to absolve her sins. Kharag Singh and Tulaji Pawar were handed over by Hyder Ali back to the government and they were tortured to death. Swift punishment was given to the others too.

As the result of the murder, senior ministers and generals of the Maratha confederacy formed a regency council , known as the "Baarbhai Council", to conduct of the affairs of the state. In the next political development, the posthumous son of Narayan Rao, who was named Sawai Madhav Rao II, was declared to be the "peshwa". Raghunath rao (Raghoba) fled away from the scene. The Baarbhai Council began to conduct the affairs of the state in the name of Sawai Madhav Rao II as he was a minor.

The new Peshwa lived only for 21 years and died in 1795. As he had no successor of his own blood, Bajji Rao II (1796-1818) the son of Raghunathrao became the next Peshwa.

## **Legacy**

- The Narayan Peth area in Pune is named after Peshwa Narayanrao.



- There is a belief in Pune that Narayanrao's ghost roams the ruins of Shaniwar Wada at every full moon night and calls out for help just like the way he did on the fateful day of his assassination . Bajirao II believed in the ghost superstition too and planted thousands of mango trees around Pune city and gave donations to Brahmins and religious institutions in the hope that this would propitiate the ghost.
- S. N. Patankar directed an early Indian silent film on the assassination of the peshwa, titled *Death of Narayanrao Peshwa*, in 1915.

## **Raghunathrao**

**Raghunathrao Bhat** (a.k.a. **Ragho Ballal** or **Ragho Bharari**) (18 August 1734 – 11 December 1783) was the 11th Peshwa of the Maratha Empire for a brief period from 1773 to 1774.

### **Early life**

Raghunathrao Bhat, also known as "Raghoba", "Raghoba Dada" and "Ragho Bharari," was the younger brother of Nanasahab Peshwa. His father was Peshwa Bajirao I & mother was Kashibai. Raghunathrao was born in Mahuli near Satara on 8 December 1734. Much of his childhood was spent in Satara.

### **Maratha conquests**

In his early years he fought with great success in the north. His expedition during 1753–1755 was concluded by an

advantageous treaty with Jat. Raghunathrao imprisoned Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah Bahadur and made Alamgir II his puppet monarch.

## **Second Northern Expedition (1757-1758)**

At the end of 1756, Ahmad Shah Abdali was preparing to invade India and Delhi once again. Nansahab Peshwa, Ragunathrao, Malharrao Holkar and Dattaji Shinde and it was decided that Marathas being the protectors of the Mughal Emperor would make another expedition to North India to stop another Afghan invasion. Nansahab Peshwa gave the command of this expedition to Ragunathrao and Malharrao Holkar was asked to assist Ragunathrao. Malharrao Holkar left for Indore at the end of 1756 and Ragunathrao followed him with his army after few weeks in October 1756.

### **Maratha affairs in Rajputana (February 1757 - July 1757)**

Ragunathrao reached Indore on 14 February 1757 with Santajirao Wable and was joined by Malharrao Holkar. The purpose of Ragunathrao's northern expedition was twofold: first was to defend the Mughal Emperor from Afghan invasion and second to collect funds and tributes to meet with Peshwa's growing debts. So in the middle of May 1757, Ragunathrao sent an advance force of 20,000 into the Ganga Doab to recover lost possessions of Marathas, and with Malharrao Holkar and the remaining force decided to invade Rajputana to collect funds. Due to the fortified lands and the martial nature of the people, Ragunathrao was unable to even gather funds for the

subsistence of his army and constantly sent letters to Poona asking Peshwa for funds. "I am feeding myself only by looting villages. In this country most places are fortified, and not a grain of food can be obtained without fighting. I have no money, and cannot even raise a loan. My soldiers have been fasting for one or two days at a time." - *Ragunathrao's letter to Peshwa*

The Maratha army moved through Mewar from Indore and on its way collected a ransom of one lakh from Jawad and plundered Ranikheda in March 1757. Reaching Jaipur in April 1757, Ragunathrao demanded payments from Madho Singh and laid siege to Barwada, then belonging to the Shekhawats. Lacking siege materials the Maratha army could not force the Shekhawats to surrender, and the long-standing siege started taking its toll on the Maratha army. Kaniram, who was the Jaipur minister offered Ragunathrao payment as agreed in the past between Marathas and Rajputs, but Ragunathrao was adamant. He demanded 40 to 50 lakhs and territory worth 14 lakhs or threatened to wait out the siege and take territory worth 40 to 50 lakhs from the Rajputs. Madho Singh, king of Jaipur refused all of Ragunathrao's terms and asked all his feudatories to fortify their posts and stay vigilant. The Maratha army in Rajputana at the time did not have the numbers necessary to storm forts of Barwada and Jaipur and so on 12 July 1757 Ragunathrao agreed to peace talks with Madho Singh. He accepted a payment of eleven lakhs from Jaipur, six of which were paid immediately. On 12 July 1757, Ragunathrao wrote to Peshwa:

"I have no money, nor is any loan available. My troops are in debt. Prices here are very high. I am daily getting my food only

by sacking the villages.” - *Ragunathrao's letter to Peshwa on 12th July 1757* But unfortunately no help provided by Peshwa from Pune. Having thus concluded the business in Rajputana, Ragunathrao and Malharrao Holkar with the remaining Maratha forces started making for Delhi to liberate it from the Afghan agents at the end of July 1757, by which point of time Ahmad Shah Abdali was well away in his country.

### **Marathas enter the Ganga Doab (May 1757 - July 1757)**

The Maratha troops sent by Ragunathrao to recover lost possessions in the Ganga Doab under the command of Sakharam Bapu,

Vithal Shivdev, Tatyga Gangadhar and Antaji Mankeshwar into the Ganga Doab reached Agra in May 1757. On reaching Agra, the Marathas made peace with Suraj Mal and advanced to Yamuna.

They crossed Yamuna at Agra, occupied Etawah and Sikandra, and encamped at Kasganj on the southern bank of the Ganga on 17 June 1757. Antaji Mankeshwar went to Anupshahar about 2 July 1757.

Meerut which was occupied by Najib Khan's agents resisted the Marathas but were swiftly defeated. Imad-ul-mulk sent his diwan Nagar Mal to Anupshahar to establish friendly relations with the Marathas once again. Shuja-ud-daulah had agreed to remain neutral in the conflict between Najib-ud-daulah and the Marathas.

Thus most of the Doab was freed of Najib's agents and came under the control of Marathas.

## **Battle of Delhi (July 1757 - September 1757)**

Ahmad Shah Abdali, before heading home in Afghanistan, kept Alamgir II on the throne with Imad-ul-Mulk as his wazir. But Abdali gave all the real power to Najib-ud-Daulah, his supreme agent in India and made him Mir Bakshi. Alamgir II, Imad-ul-Mulk all wanted to be free from Najib Khan's dominance and asked the Marathas for aid in liberating Delhi from Afghan influence. Rangunathrao agreed and marched on the imperial capital in July 1757. Sakharam Bapu who was present in the Doab region at the time, occupied Patparganj, and Shamsheer Bahadur with the artillery division reached Rewari on 27 July 1757. Grain was stopped from entering the city. Najib Khan in preparation of the coming battle, dug trenches at Khizirabad outside the city to halt the cavalry advance of the Marathas. Najib Khan on hearing of Rangunathrao's advance, sent his wakil Meghraj to Imad-ul-Mulk to seek terms of peace, but Imad proposed humiliating terms which were unacceptable to Najib. And so there was no other alternative to settle this conflict other than war.

## **Rangunathrao reaches Delhi and Attack Begins (August 1757 – September 1757)**

Rangunathrao reached Khizirabad on 11 August 1757 with his lieutenants where he was joined by Sakharam Bapu who had crossed over from Doab. Rangunathrao sent two Maratha divisions to attack Delhi. The first division fought their way to the Old City through Lal Darwaza and captured it swiftly after defeating Najib's troops under the leadership of Bakhtawar Khan. The second division attacked from the south-east side of the City, where Qutb Shah commanding 2,500 troops fired

bombardments on the Maratha soldiers from the Blue Bastion. Realizing that the Old City was lost, Najib Khan and Qutb Shah retreated to the inner City with all their Rohilla troops. In retaliation, Rohillas attacked and plundered Imad-ul-mulk's house in Delhi, and dishonored Imad-ul-mulk's women in his harem. Imad-ul-mulk met with Ragunathrao and cemented an alliance with the Marathas.

The Marathas were unable to storm the fort from the south, so Ragunathrao decided to attack the fort from all sides and lay siege to the place. Grain supply to the fort was stopped and Maratha troops encircled the fort. Najib countering these plans placed guards and canons on all sides of the fort, preventing the Marathas from getting in the range of these canons.

Malharrao Holkar with Vithal Shivdev led the Maratha soldiers to attack Delhi fort from the Northern side of Kashmir Gate. Imad-ul-mulk's troops under Bahadur Khan Baluch and Jamil-ud-din Khan supported them. Santajirao Wable and Manaji Paygude entrenched himself opposite Kabul Gate in the north-western section of the Fort. On 25 August 1757, Bahadur Khan and Nagar Mal led an attack on the outskirts of the fort, forcing the Rohilla defenders to fall back to the Fort. Najib Khan had the long range canons dragged to the northern section of the fort and commenced bombardment on enemy's troops which resulted in several hundreds of Bahadur Khan's troops being killed. After this, the fighting stopped once again. Najib being all alone in the fort with his soldiers being reduced to 2000 men, sought to make terms by sending his diplomat (wakil) Meghraj to Malharrao. Ragunathrao set forth terms that Najib Khan should resign his post of Mir Bakshi (Paymaster-General), vacate the fort with all his troops and withdraw to

his Rohilla jagirs and pay an indemnity of 50 to 60 lakhs. Najib Khan preferred to die instead of accepted such humiliating and exorbitant demands and prepared the defense of the fort with renewed vigor.

### **Peace talks crumble and Battle renewed (30 August 1757 – 1 September 1757)**

The battle was renewed on the night of 29 August 1757, when Ragunathrao attacked the Delhi Gate in the south and Imad-ul-mulk attacked the Lahor Gate in the North-west. The fort was bombarded by Maratha canons from all sides, resulting in two of the bastions of Delhi Gate being demolished. The canon fire from all sides of the fort continued till 31 August 1757. Najib's soldiers tried forming a counterattack and drove away Imad-ul-mulk and Ahmad Khan Bangash's men from Lahore Gate. Another sortie was successfully executed by Najib's soldiers at Turkoman Gate, where Dilel Singh (diwan of Wazir), lost some soldiers.

### **Najib-ud-daulah surrenders and agrees for Peace Talks (September 1757)**

With famine raging in the city, many soldiers started deserting Najib Khan and leaving the city, and only a few remaining loyal with him. Being hopelessly outnumbered Najib realized that surrender was the only option. Malharrao convinced Ragunathrao and Imad-ul-mulk for peace while Abdul Ahad Khan pressed Najib to agree to peace. On 3 September 1757 Qutb Shah and Najib Khan visited Malharrao's camp at Qudsiabad and accepted all terms of surrender. This created some animosity between Malharrao and Ragunathrao, as

Ragunathrao was in command of the Northern expedition and peace talks were conducted by Malharrao Holkar. The peace became operative on 6 September 1757 where Najib vacated his seat with all the Rohilla soldiers and their belongings and encamped at Wazirabad. Ragunathrao released all Rohilla prisoners. Grain was brought from ferries and supplied to the starving city and Maratha soldiers started guarding the city. Imad-ul-Mulk replaced Najib's agents in the city with his own men on high posts. Ahmad Khan Bangash was made imperial Paymaster-General. Thus, Delhi was freed from Rohilla and Afghan influence by the wazir and Marathas.

On 22 October 1757, Ragunathrao and Malharrao Holkar left Delhi after celebrating the Dasahara festival and entered Doab. Ragunathrao marched to Garh Mukteshwar to bathe in those holy waters and Malharrao Holkar started plundering Saharanpur district, which was Najib Khan's jagir. Najib with his Afghan forces retreated against the Maratha onslaught and moved to his interior domains. Then, Ragunathrao and Malharrao decided to withdraw from the Doab, and gave its lands to the Wazir, Imad-ul-Mulk and started focusing on Punjab expedition to liberate that province from the Durrani empire.

## **Maratha Invasion of Punjab (October 1757-May 1758)**

### **Siege of Sarhind (February 1758- March 1758)**

Ahmad Shah Abdali had annexed the province of Punjab from the Mughal Empire in his invasion of 1757. He had appointed



his son Timur Shah as the governor of Punjab province. Timur Shah began strengthening his position in Punjab by sending Sarafraz Khan to deal with Adina Beg, the Mughal governor of Punjab. Adina Beg successfully repelled Sarafraz Khan's invasion, but he knew his cause was doomed as he only had 10,000 troops with him. So he opened negotiations with Rangunathrao who was currently in Delhi. Adina Beg promised to pay 1 lakh rupees for each marching day and half a lakh for each day of halt.

Hearing of this, Abdus Samad Khan Mohmand of Sarhind, a close ally of Abdali, marched to Thaneshwar in October 1757, where he was joined by Najib-ud-daulah's son. Rangunathrao and Malharrao avoided the bait of attacking Abdus Samad Khan and circled around Delhi for a time. Then in December 1757, Malharrao laid siege to Kunjpura and raided most of the territories from Delhi to Thaneshwar. At this time, Abdus Samad Khan was on an expedition against Ala Singh and was greatly alarmed at the approach of the Marathas. He quickly settled the expedition and returned to Sarhind fort on 12 January 1758 and started making defensive preparations. But Malharrao again did not rise to the bait and retreated from Kunjpura after exacting a tribute of five lakhs.

Rangunathrao entered Punjab in February 1758 with all the Maratha troops Malharrao Holkar, Shinde, Santajirao Wable and laid siege of Sarhind fort. He was joined by Adina Beg's forces and hired Sikh mercenaries. Maratha raiding bands spread all over the district to plunder the villages around. The siege lasted few days, after which on 21 March 1758, Abdus Samad Khan along with Jangbaz Khan and other Afghan captains were captured by the Marathas while escaping,

though they were well treated by Ragunathrao. Thus, Sarhind was captured by the Marathas. The Marathas and Adina Beg's forces advanced to Lahore to liberate it from Afghan supremacy.

### **Siege of Lahore (April 1758)**

Timur Shah's position at Lahore was a delicate one, Ahmad Shah Abdali was busy in Khurasan with a rebellion, the Lahore fort was in a state of disrepair, he was surrounded with a hostile population of Sikhs and he himself had very little soldiers to make a defence. So Timur Shah decided it wise to retreat against the Maratha onslaught. Timur Shah fled Lahore on 19 April 1758 and crossed Ravi River with all his troops and supplies. When the Marathas and Mughals arrived at Lahore, they took Lahore fort with no resistance from the Afghans. The Marathas pursued Timur Shah and the Afghans, first crossing Ravi river, then defeating the rear guard of Mir Hazar Khan. Timur Shah alarmed by the possible scenario of being captured crossed Chenab river with his Durrani clansmen, leaving all his other soldiers and supplies behind. They were captured by the Marathas and Mughals. The Marathas stopped the pursuit as the country on the other side of Chenab was full of Afghan sympathizers and due to the depth of Chenab.

Ahmad Shah Durrani (of present-day Afghanistan) approached Punjab in 1760 and defeated Dattaji Scindia in Battle of Barari Ghat near modern-day Delhi, Dattaji was also killed in battle. To counter this Raghunathrao was supposed to go north to handle the situation. Raghunathrao asked for large amount and an army, which was denied by Sadashivrao Bhau, his cousin and Diwan of Peshwa, so he declined to go. Sadashivrao

Bhau was there upon made commander in chief of the Maratha Army, under whom the Battle of Panipat was fought.

## **Regency**

After Maratha defeat at Third Battle of Panipat, his brother Nanasaheb Peshwa's death and his half brother's (Shamsher Bahadur) death in 1761, the Peshwa title was passed on to Madhavrao I, second son of Nanasaheb. Madhavrao was a minor when appointed Peshwa. Therefore, Raghunathrao was appointed as the regent to the young Peshwa. He soon fell out of favor with Madhavrao and even tried to conspire against him by joining the Nizam of Hyderabad against the Peshwa. The alliance was defeated at Ghodegaon, and Raghunathrao was placed under house arrest. After Madhavrao I's death in 1772, Raghunathrao was released from house arrest. He then became the regent of Madhavrao's younger brother Narayanrao. Together with his wife Anandibai, he had his nephew Narayanrao murdered.

Legend has it that the original command was "Hyala Dharaava" (Have him seized) written on a parchment of paper, and while the message was handed over to Anandibai to pass it on to the minions, she changed the letters to mean "Hyala Maraava" (Have him killed). And therefore when the assassins attacked the young Peshwa, he ran over outside of the house of Raghoba crying "Kaakaa malaa waachwaa" (Uncle, save me). His cry fell on deaf ears as Raghoba stood by imagining Narayanrao to be overacting while his nephew was eventually killed. After Narayanrao's murder, Raghoba became Peshwa, but he was shortly overthrown by Nana Phadnavis and 11 other administrators in what is called "The Baarbhaai Conspiracy"

(Conspiracy by the Twelve). Raghunathrao was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by the justice Ram Shastri Prabhune but the sentence was never carried out.

At Kasegaon near Pandharpur the first battle between the Baarbhai and Raghobadada took place in 1774. He then went to Khambhat with hope of getting help from the British, who did not help but transported him to Surat from their ship.

At Surat a treaty was signed between Raghunathrao and the British East India Company on 6 March 1775. According to the treaty it was decided that Thane, Vasai and Sashti were to be handed over to the British, and in return the Company would assist Raghunathrao to become the Peshwa.

However, the company was not yet ready for war, so that the treaty between the Baarbhai and the company was signed at Purandar.

After the Treaty of Purandar (1776), the Company openly distanced itself from Raghunathrao and asked him to live as their pensioner. But due to the fear of the Baarbhai, Raghunathrao was unhappy to leave Surat and in fact the Company did not insist on it, so he kept on living there.

In 1776, Raghunathrao unsuccessfully tried to get help from the Portuguese.

After that he came to Bombay. During that period Company gave him Rs 15000. At the Battle of Talegaon, the East India Company was defeated. A treaty was signed at Vadgaon according to which Raghunathrao's claim on the position of Peshwa was rescinded.

## Death and aftermath

Raghunathrao Bajirao moved to kopergaon at his trusted Sardar Santajirao Wable's place and died on 11 December 1783 of unknown causes at Kopergaon. He had two sons Baji Rao II and Chimaji Rao II; in addition, he had adopted Amrit Rao. After his death, his wife Anandi Bai and his three sons were kept in confinement by the Peshwa's minister Nana Fadnavis. After the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao II, Nana Phadnavis and the powerful chief Daulat Rao Scindia installed Chimaji Rao and Baji Rao II as puppet Peshwas in quick succession.

## Madhavrao II

**Shrimant Peshwa Madhav Rao Bhat II** (18 April 1774 – 27 October 1795) was the 12th Peshwa of the Maratha Empire in India, from his infancy. He was known as Sawai Madhav Rao or Madhav Rao Narayan. He was the posthumous son of Narayanrao Peshwa, murdered in 1773 on the orders of Raghunathrao. Madhavrao II was considered the legal heir, and was installed as *Peshwa* by the Treaty of Salbai in 1782 after First Anglo-Maratha War.

## Early life

Madhavrao II was the posthumous son of Peshwa Narayanrao by his wife, Gangabai. After Narayanrao's murder by Raghunathrao's supporters he became the Peshwa but was soon deposed by the courtiers and knights of the Maratha Empire. They instead installed Gangabai's new born son,

Madhavrao II, as the Peshwa with the courtiers, led by Nana Fadnavis, as the Regents. Madhavrao II was made Peshwa when he was barely 40 days old. His time in power was dominated by the political intrigues of Nana Fadnavis.

His father Narayan Rao became Peshwa in 1772 and later he was murdered by the supporters of Raghunath Rao (Raghoba). During this time Peshwa Narayan Rao's wife was pregnant. In such situation Raghunath Rao became the Peshwa in 1773, for the time being. She gave birth to a male child. The subjects of the state became happy as they heard that the widow queen had given birth to the male child who would be the next Peshwa.

Acting Peshwa Raghunath Rao (Raghoba) couldn't do anything before the wit and wisdom of Nana Phadnavis. The male child was named as Sawai Madhav Rao II and declared as the Peshwa of Pune.

There was a lot of resentment among the people of the state against the cruel murder of the Peshwa Narayan Rao and held a judicial enquiry under the leadership of the renowned justice Ramshastri Prabhune.

He pointed out that the acting Peshwa Raghunath Rao (Raghoba) was the prime author of the murder.

As the result of it, the responsible ministers of the royal court and leaders of Maratha empire formed a council of state known as *Bara Bhai* for the conduct of the affairs of the state. *Bara Bhai* began to conduct the affairs of the state on the name of Sawai Madhav Rao II as he was a minor.

# **Reign**

## **First Anglo-Maratha War**

After the British loss in 1782 in the First Anglo-Maratha War, Mahadji Shinde got Madhvrao recognized as Peshwa by the British. However, all powers of the Peshwa were in the hands of ministers like Nana Fadnavis, Mahadaji Shinde and others.

## **Involvement in Anglo-Mysore Wars**

Mysore had been attacking the Maratha Confederacy since 1761. To counter the menace presented by Mysore's Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan the Peshwa supported the English.

During the Third Anglo-Mysore War the British East India Company was alarmed by the strength and the gains made by the Maratha Confederacy not just against Mysore but also in India.

## **Chaos in Delhi, Mughal Darbar**

In 1788, Ghulam Qadir attacked Delhi, Mahadaji Shinde led the army of Marathas to Delhi and saved the Mughal Emperor and his family.

## **Subjugation of Rajput**

In 1790, the Marathas won over Rajput States in the Battle of Patan. After the death of Mahadaji Shinde In 1794, the Maratha power got concentrated in the hands of Nana Fadnavis.

## **Zoo**

Madhavrao was fond of the out-doors and had a private collection of exotic animals such as lions and rhinoceros.

The area where he hunted became later the Peshwe park zoo in Pune. He was particularly fond of his herd of trained dancing deer.

## **Death**

Madhavrao committed suicide at the age of 21 by jumping off from the high walls of the Shaniwar Wada in Pune. The cause of the suicide probably was that he could not endure the highhandedness of Nana Fadnavis. Just before his suicide, it is said that in ordering the execution of the despised police commissioner, Ghashiram Kotwal, Madhavrao was able to defy the wishes of Nana for the first time.

## **Succession**

Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao II died in 1795 with no heir. Therefore, he was succeeded by Raghunathrao's son, Baji Rao II.

## **Baji Rao II**

**Shrimant Peshwa Baji Rao II** (10 January 1775 – 28 January 1851) was the 13th and the last Peshwa of the Maratha Empire. He governed from 1795 to 1818. He was installed as a



puppet ruler by the Maratha nobles, whose growing power prompted him to flee his capital Poona and sign the Treaty of Bassein (1802) with the British. This resulted in the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–1805), in which the British emerged victorious and re-installed him as the titular Peshwa. In 1817, Baji Rao II joined the Third Anglo-Maratha War against the British, after they favoured the Gaekwad nobles in a revenue-sharing dispute. After suffering several battle defeats, the Peshwa surrendered to the British, and agreed to retire in return for an estate at Bithoor and an annual pension.

## **Personal life**

Baji Rao was the son of the former *Peshwa* Raghunathrao and his wife Anandibai. Raghunathrao had defected to the English, causing the First Anglo-Maratha War, which ended with the Treaty of Salbai. Baji Rao was born in 1775, when both his parents were kept in imprisonment by the then Peshwa's cabinet. Until the age of 19, he along with his brothers were kept in confinement and denied even basic rights of education.

Raghunathrao's successor as Peshwa, Madhavrao II, committed suicide in 1795, and died without an heir. A power struggle ensued among the Maratha nobles for control of the Confederacy. The powerful general Daulat Rao Scindia and minister Nana Fadnavis installed Baji Rao II as a puppet Peshwa. Baji Rao II had to carry the unfortunate legacy of his parents who, despite being from the same Brahmin family, were suspected of being involved in the murder of the young fifth Peshwa Narayanrao in 1774. As such, being the son of suspected murderers, he was looked down upon by his ministers, nobility, and even by his subjects. His every action

was viewed with prejudice and it is said that though regarded as a good administrator and builder of modern-day Pune, he was often labeled as incapable and a coward Peshwa.

Pandita Ramabai has criticized him in her writings for marrying, at the age of 60, a girl who was only 9 or 10 years old.

## **Holkar's conquest of Poona**

After the death of Fadnavis in 1800, Daulat Rao Scindia took complete control over the Peshwa's government. As Scindia started eliminating his rivals within the government, Peshwa Baji Rao II became concerned about his own safety. He turned to British resident Colonel William Palmer for help. General Arthur Wellesley was already in the southern parts of Maratha territory at that time, having concluded a campaign against Dhondia Wagh. However, Baji Rao was reluctant to sign a treaty with the British. In 1802, Scindia's rival chief Yashwant Rao Holkar marched towards Poona. He proclaimed allegiance to the Peshwa, and sent assurances that he only wanted to free Poona of Scindia's control. But Baji Rao was apprehensive since he had earlier ordered the killing of Yashwant Rao's brother Vithoji Rao Holkar. He sought help from Scindia, who was away from Poona at that time. Scindia dispatched an army that arrived in Poona on 22 October 1802. Holkar defeated the joint forces of Peshwa and Scindia in the Battle of Hadapsar on 25 October.

On the morning of 25 October, before the battle, Baji Rao had already sent preliminary terms for a treaty to the British. After the Holkar victory in the battle, he fled to Vasai, where he

sought assistance from the British in Bombay. Holkar set up an ad hoc council headed by Baji Rao's adoptive brother Amrut Rao, and ran the Peshwa's government in Amrut Rao's name.

## **Treaty with the British**

Baji Rao II concluded the Treaty of Bassein in December 1802, in which the British agreed to reinstate Baji Rao II as Peshwa, in return for allowing into Maratha territory a force of 6,000 infantry troops complete with guns, and officered by the British, paying for its maintenance and accepting the stationing of a permanent British political agent (Resident) at Poona. Holkar and Sindhia resisted the British intrusion in Maratha affairs, which resulted in the Second Anglo-Maratha War of 1803–1805.

The British triumphed, and the Marathas were forced to accept losses of territories due to internal rivalries between Holkars and Scindias, and treachery committed in all the battles by Scindia's French and other European officers, who mostly handled the imported guns within the Maratha army—the Marathas failing to train their own men in sufficient numbers to handle imported guns.

## **Third Anglo-Maratha War**

The raids of the Pindaris, irregular horsemen who resided in the Maratha territories, into British territory ultimately led to the Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817–1818, which ended in the defeat of the Bhosles, Holkars, and other Maratha feudatories. In the mid-1810s, the British had intervened in a

financial dispute over revenue-sharing between the Peshwa and Gaekwads of Baroda. On 13 June 1817, the Company forced Baji Rao II to sign an agreement renouncing claims on Gaekwad's revenues and ceding large swaths of territory to the British. This treaty of Poona formally ended the Peshwa's titular overlordship over other Maratha chiefs, thus officially ending the Maratha confederacy.

On 5 November 1817, the British Resident at Poona was attacked by Baji Rao II's army led by his Attorney Mor Dixit. Bajirao II could have won this battle had he not halted the progress of his forces by succumbing to the request of British Resident Elphinstone for a ceasefire. Baji Rao watched the battle that ensued between his troops and the British from a hill now called Parvati. This battle on 5 November 1817, referred to as the Battle of Khadki, resulted in Peshwa's defeat.

Afterward, his troops moved to Garpir on the outskirts towards present-day Solapur Road to block the British troops coming from Jalna, but the treason of one of Baji Rao's chiefs, Sardar Ghorpade Sondurkar, led to his force withdrawing. Subsequently, Baji Rao captured Chakan Fort from the British troops. Meanwhile, the British placed Poona under Colonel Burr, while a British force led by General Joseph Smith pursued the Peshwa. Towards the end of December, Colonel Burr received news that the Peshwa intended to attack Pune, and asked the Company troops stationed at Shirur for help. The troops dispatched from Shirur came across the Peshwa's forces, resulting in the Battle of Koregaon. The Peshwa was unsuccessful in defeating the Shirur contingent, and was forced to retreat fearing the arrival of a bigger Company force led by General Smith.

## **Surrender and retirement**

Five British columns set out after Baji Rao II in full cry, slaving at the thought of the 'prize money' that lay at the end of the chase. After running for five months from one fort to another, awaiting the promised help from Scindias, Holkars, and Bhosles that did not come, Baji Rao II surrendered to Sir John Malcolm. Much to the chagrin of the Company's Governor-General Francis Rawdon-Hastings, 1st Marquess of Hastings (no relation to Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India), Malcolm was prepared to keep Baji Rao a lifelong prince, allow him to retain his personal fortune, and pay him an annual pension of £80,000 (£100,000 according to some sources) every year. In return, Baji Rao II would have to live in a place assigned by the British along with his retainers on the condition that he would never return to his homeland at Poona. He would also have to forsake all his claims to his heritage and could not style himself as Peshwa, but there was no objection to calling himself 'Maharaja'. The only reason why Francis Rawdon-Hastings ratified the treaty made by Malcolm was his conviction that Baji Rao II would not live long as he was already above 40 and many of his ancestors did not live much beyond that age.

To keep Baji Rao II under watchful eyes, the British selected a small village on the right bank of the Ganges at a place called Bithur near Kanpur, where they had a large military establishment then. The place selected was exactly six square miles in area and in it, together with his relatives and others who moved from Poona along with him in 1818, there were about 15,000 inhabitants. He had once ruled 50 million.

Contrary to the Company's wishes, Baji Rao lived for another 33 years and died in 1851 at Bithur.

There were many stories making the rounds in the Court of Gwalior about Baji Rao II, where Manohar Malgonkar's grandfather P. Baburao was a minister. One such story was about the ghost of a slain Peshwa, Narayan Rao, haunting Baji Rao throughout his life, that was widely known to many people due to Baji Rao II's unceasing efforts to exorcise the ghost. Narayan Rao was the ninth Peshwa who was allegedly murdered with the connivance of Baji Rao's parents, as was mentioned earlier.

In order to get rid of the ghost, Baji Rao employed the priests of Pandharpur, a temple town of Maharashtra on the banks of a local river. Initially, the priests succeeded in driving away the ghost and in gratitude, Baji Rao II ordered the building of a riverside embankment in Pandharpur, which still bears his name. However, when Baji Rao II was exiled to Bithur, the ghost re-appeared and started haunting again. Since he was forbidden to visit his homeland, he performed religious penances prescribed by the priests of Benares (Varanasi) and was extravagant in distributing alms to Brahmins. He built temples, bathing ghats, performed endless poojas (religious prayers), underwent countless stringent fasts, fell at the feet of sadhus and soothsayers, etc., but the ghost wouldn't leave him. It stayed with him until the end, warning him that his line would end with his successor, his house would burn to ashes, and his clan would perish. Incidentally, after the flare-up of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, Company troops, in July that year, after their successful re-capture of Kanpur under Major-General Henry Havelock initially and later under the

then Brigadier James Hope Grant, sacked and burnt down Bithur, including the residence (wada) of Baji Rao II, where many members of his extended family except his adopted son, Nana Sahib, resided.

## **In popular culture**

- The Marathi historical novelist N. S. Inamdar has written two books on the career of Peshwa Baji Rao II. The last Peshwa has been much-maligned by historians. In these novels, Inamdar tries to show the Peshwa in a different light. A person who was imprisoned in his childhood for a crime which was supposedly committed by his mother Anandibai, a person who came to the Peshwai not knowing the ABCs of politics, and a person who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.
- The first of the books, "**Jhep**" (1963), is actually based on the life of Trimbakji Denge, who was a guard of the Peshwa and rose to become his chief minister (Karbhari). He helped the Peshwa resurrect the Peshwai from the ruins after the Second Anglo-Maratha War. He also tried to form a sort of coalition with some kings to try to overthrow British rule. In this he failed and the British framed him in the murder of the eminent Gangadhar Shastri (chief minister of the Gaekwad), and he was arrested. The Peshwa wasn't willing to give up his much-valued prime minister and was prepared to start a war against the British, but Trimbakji asked him to lie low and wait until the right time has come.

- The second book, "**Mantravegala**" (1969), is a sort of continuation of "Jhep". The difference is that "Jhep" deals more with the personal life of Trimbakji whereas "Mantravegala" deals with the personal life of Baji Rao between the years 1817 and 1818, and the Third and last Anglo-Maratha war. In the initial part of the book, Baji Rao is very angry that the English are constantly interfering in the affairs of the Maratha kingdom to a great extent. He is secretly making plans to destroy the British once and for all. He knows it will not be possible but wants to attempt it nonetheless. He frees Trimbakji from the prison in which the British have imprisoned him but refuses to acknowledge to Mounstuart Elphinstone that he was behind the release. Also, some Maratha chieftains are aiding marauders called the Pindaris who have harassed the British. They ask the Peshwa to stop the chieftains from aiding the Pindaris, which he says he cannot do. Finally, the Pindari War takes the form of the Anglo-Maratha war. In the initial part of the war, Baji Rao wins some battles as the British are caught unawares. But the British manage to defeat the Maratha chieftains and finally Baji Rao himself. He is made to give up the Peshwai (which is abolished) and is exiled to Bithur (near Kanpur). The book very beautifully captures the Peshwa's feelings and thoughts. His hatred of the British, his acknowledgement of his past mistakes (like refusing to accept Yashwantrao Holkar), his sadness at not being able to raise any children (all his children died very early or were stillborn), and also his last tearful farewell to Trimbakji at the end of the book.



## **Amrut Rao**

**Amrut Rao** (c. 1770 – 1824) was a Maratha noble, and the adopted son of Peshwa Raghunath Rao. In 1803, Yashwant Rao Holkar invaded Pune and deposed his adoptive brother Peshwa Baji Rao II. Subsequently, Holkar set up an ad hoc council nominally headed by Amrut Rao, and ran the Peshwa's government in his name. Holkar also installed Amrut Rao's son Vinayak Rao as the Peshwa to strengthen the legal status of his government, because Vinayak had been adopted by the widow of the deceased Peshwa Madhav Rao II. However, Baji Rao sought assistance from the British East India Company, whose advance forced Amrut Rao and his son to flee Pune. Subsequently, Amrut Rao signed a treaty with the British, agreeing to give up all claims over the Peshwa's office in return for a pension and an estate in Bundelkhand.

### **Early life**

Amrut Rao was born around 1770. He was adopted by Raghunath Rao, the Maratha Peshwa who allied with the British East India Company in 1775. However, the British later signed the Treaty of Salbai (1782) with Raghunath's rivals among the Marathas, and acknowledged Madhav Rao II as the Peshwa. Raghunath Rao died a year later in 1783, and his family was kept in confinement by the Peshwa's minister Nana Fadnavis. His wife Anandi Bai, his sons Baji Rao II and Chimaji Rao II, and his adopted son Amrut Rao were all kept imprisoned at Kopergaon until 1793. Subsequently, they were moved to Anandwali (in Nashik), and in April 1794, they were confined to the Shivneri fort. After the death of Peshwa Madhav

Rao II, Nana Fadnavis and the powerful nobleman Daulat Rao Scindia installed Amrut Rao's adoptive brothers — first Chimaji Rao and then Baji Rao II — as titular Peshwas in quick succession. After Fadnavis' death, Daulat Rao Scindia held the actual power, while Baji Rao II was a puppet Peshwa.

## **Conflict with Daulat Rao Scindia**

The widows of Daulat Rao Scindia's predecessor Mahadji Scindia fought with him for control of the Scindia court. In 1798, Scindia decided to transfer the widows to Ahmednagar, and keep them in confinement there. However, Muzaffar Khan, an officer loyal to the ladies, rescued them near Koregaon Bhima, when Scindia's men were moving them to Ahmednagar. Khan took the widows to Amrut Rao, who happened to be near Koregaon Bhima. Amrut Rao granted them protection.

On the night of 7 June 1798, Scindia sent five infantry battalions under the command of a French officer — Captain Du Prat, to retrieve the widows. However, Amrut Rao's army forced Scindia's men to retreat. Scindia then started negotiations, offering the ladies a chance to select their residence. Amrut Rao arrived near Pune to meet Scindia on behalf of the ladies. He set up his camp on the banks of the Mula river, near the Khadki bridge. Scindia's father-in-law and general Sarji Rao Ghatge (also known as Sarjerao) led two battalions to the riverside, on the pretext of maintaining order at the local Muharram procession. But his men opened fire at Amrut Rao's camp, with 25 cannons. As Amrut Rao's troops dispersed, Ghatge's force attacked them and pillaged their camp. The widows then fled to Kolhapur.

## **Holkar's occupation of Pune**

On 25 October 1802, Daulat Rao Scindia's rival noble Yashwant Rao Holkar invaded Pune, defeating the joint forces of Scindia and Peshwa Baji Rao II, in the Battle of Hadapsar. After taking control of Pune, Holkar decided to install a titular Peshwa at Pune. While the office of the Peshwa no longer held the actual power, an act of dislodging the Peshwa would be met with opposition by other Maratha nobles. Therefore, Holkar sent for Baji Rao's brother Amrut Rao, who was in Junnar. Amrut Rao arrived in Pune with his son Vinayak Rao, who had been adopted by Yasoda Bai, the widow of Baji Rao II's predecessor Peshwa Madhav Rao II. Holkar set up an ad hoc council headed by Amrut Rao, and ran the Peshwa's government in his name. He also attempted to give a legal status to his new government at Pune by appointing Vinayak Rao as the new Peshwa.

On 13 March 1803, Holkar left Pune, leaving Amrut Rao with 1,000 soldiers. Meanwhile, Baji Rao II had fled to Vasai, and had sought assistance from the British. Yashwant Rao Holkar and Amrut Rao unsuccessfully tried to obtain British support for their government. But the British signed the Treaty of Bassein with Baji Rao on 31 December 1802. In 1803, the British dispatched an army led by Arthur Wellesley to capture Pune and restore Baji Rao II as the titular Peshwa under British authority. Amrut Rao was forced to flee Pune with Holkar's men. As Wellesley advanced towards Pune, he received news that Amrut Rao had plundered the city, and that Holkar had ordered his general to burn down the city before leaving it. However, by the time he reached the city on 20 April 1803, he

found the city to be safe. The British restored Baji Rao II as a titular Peshwa on 13 May 1803, this time under British control.

## **After fleeing Pune**

Holkar had left his European officer William Linnæus Gardner as a liaison officer (actually a spy) in Amrut Rao's camp. After being forced to flee from Pune, Amrut Rao felt betrayed by Holkar, who had left him with a small force against the mighty British. As a result, Amrut Rao imprisoned Gardner. Subsequently, he summoned Gardner and suggested that they both join Holkar's rival Scindia, with Gardner serving as a trainer for Amrut Rao's soldiers. Gardner laughed at the proposal, which enraged Amrut Rao. At one point, Amrut Rao's soldiers bound him to the muzzle of a cannon. However, they did not actually execute him, since he was a valuable prisoner: as one of Holkar's best officers, he could be offered to Scindia. While Amrut Rao was on his way to meet Scindia, Gardner managed to escape from his custody.

Meanwhile, the British general Arthur Wellesley opened correspondence with Amrut Rao. Wellesley saw him as a valuable ally, who could turn into a dangerous opponent if antagonized. Amrut Rao had joined Holkar reluctantly, and saw little sense in fighting against the British. Consequently, the two parties decided to negotiate, although Peshwa Baji Rao II considered Amrut Rao his enemy and was not happy with the rapprochement. On 14 August 1803, Amrut Rao signed an agreement with the British. He agreed to abandon all claims over the Peshwa's office and to remain friendly with the British. In return, he would receive an annual pension of ₹ 7

lakhs annually from the Company with a jagir in Banda district. He took up his residence at Karwi. He and his descendants governed the Tiroha (Kirur) estate of the Bundelkhand Agency. There, he became well known for his religiousness and charity. He once freed all the persons imprisoned in Benares for debt, by paying off their debts.

Amrut Rao died on 6 September 1824, at Secrole near Benares. His son and successor Vinayak Rao died childless in 1853. Vinayak's adopted sons Narayan and Madho joined the 1857 uprising after the Company ceased their pension. The revolt was crushed: Narayan Rao died a prisoner, while Madho Rao was allowed to remain a landlord in consideration of his young age at the time of the uprising.

## **Nana Saheb**

**Nana Saheb Peshwa II** (19 May 1824 – 24 September 1859), born as **Dhondu Pant**, was an Indian Peshwa of the Maratha empire, aristocrat and fighter, who led the rebellion in Kanpur (Kanpur) during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. As the adopted son of the exiled Maratha Peshwa Baji Rao II, Nana Saheb believed that he was entitled to a pension from the East India Company, but the underlying contractual issues are rather murky.

The Company's refusal to continue the pension after his father's death, as well as what he perceived as high-handed policies, compelled him to revolt and seek independence from company rule in India. He forced the British garrison in Kanpur to surrender, then executed the survivors, gaining control of Kanpur for a few days. He later disappeared, after

his forces were defeated by a British force that recaptured Kanpur. He went to the Nepal Hills in 1859, where he is thought to have died.

## **Early life**

Nana was born on 19 May 1824 as **Nana Govind Dhondu Pant**, to Narayan Bhat and Ganga Bai.

After the Maratha defeat in the Third Maratha War, the East India Company had exiled Peshwa Baji Rao II to Bithoor near Kanpur), where he maintained a large establishment paid for in part out of a British pension. Nana's father, a well-educated Deccani Brahmin, had travelled with his family from the Western Ghats to become a court official of the former Peshwa at Bithoor. Lacking sons, Baji Rao adopted Nana Saheb and his younger brother in 1827. The mother of both children was a sister of one of the Peshwa's wives. Nana Saheb's childhood associates included Tatya Tope, Azimullah Khan and Manikarnika Tambe. Tatya Tope was the son of Pandurang Rao Tope, an important noble at the court of the Peshwa Baji Rao II. After Baji Rao II was exiled to Bithoor, Pandurang Rao and his family also shifted there. Tatya Tope was the fencing master to Nana Saheb. Azimullah Khan joined the court of Nana Saheb as Secretary, after the death of Baji Rao II in 1851. He later became the dewan in Nana Saheb's court.

## **Inheritance**

The Doctrine of lapse was an annexation policy devised by Lord Dalhousie, who was the British Governor-General of India

between 1848 and 1856. According to the Doctrine, any princely state or territory under the direct influence (paramountcy) of the British East India Company (the dominant imperial power in the subcontinent), as a vassal state under the British Subsidiary System, would automatically be annexed if the ruler was either "manifestly incompetent or died without a direct heir". The latter supplanted the long-established legal right of an Indian sovereign without an heir to choose a successor. In addition, the British were to decide whether potential rulers were competent enough.

The doctrine and its application were widely regarded by Indians as illegitimate. At that time, the Company had absolute, imperial administrative jurisdiction over many regions spread over the subcontinent. The company took over the princely states of Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Sambalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Nagpur (1853), and Jhansi (1854) using this doctrine. The British took over Awadh (Oudh) (1856) claiming that the local ruler was not ruling properly. The Company added about four million pounds sterling to its annual revenue by the use of this doctrine. With the increasing power of the East India Company, discontent simmered amongst sections of Indian society and the largely indigenous armed Jhansi forces; these joined with members of the deposed dynasties during the Indian rebellion of 1857.

Under the Peshwa's will Nana Saheb was, through his adoption, heir-presumptive to the Maratha's throne, and eligible for his adoptive father's continuing annual pension of £80,000 from the East India Company. However, after the death of Baji Rao II, the Company stopped the pension on the

grounds that the Nana was not a natural born heir and that the kingdom no longer existed. The Nana, while still wealthy, was greatly offended by both the termination of the pension and by the suspension of various titles and grants that had been retained by Baji Rao in exile. Accordingly, Nana Saheb sent an envoy (Azimullah Khan) to England in 1853 to plead his case with the British Government. However, Azimullah Khan was unable to convince the British to resume the pension, and he returned to India in 1855.

## **Role in the 1857 uprising**

Nana Saheb won the confidence of Charles Hillersdon, the Collector of Kanpur. It was planned that Nana Saheb would assemble a force of 1,500 soldiers to support the British, in case the rebellion spread to Kanpur.

On 6 June 1857, at the time of the rebellion by forces of the East India Company at Kanpur, the British contingent had taken refuge at an entrenchment in the northern part of the town. Amid the prevailing chaos in Kanpur, Nana and his forces entered the British magazine situated in the northern part of the town. The soldiers of the 53rd Native Infantry, who were guarding the magazine, thought that Nana had come to guard the magazine on behalf of the Company. However, once he entered the magazine, Nana Saheb announced that he was a participant in the rebellion against the Company, and intended to be a vassal of Bahadur Shah II.

After taking possession of the Company treasury, Nana advanced up the Grand Trunk Road stating that he wanted to restore the Maratha confederacy under the Peshwa tradition,



and decided to capture Kanpur. On his way, Nana met the rebel Company soldiers at Kalyanpur. The soldiers were on their way to Delhi, to meet Bahadur Shah II. Nana wanted them to go back to Kanpur, and help him defeat the British. The soldiers were reluctant at first, but decided to join Nana when he promised to double their pay and reward them with gold, if they were to destroy the British entrenchment.

### **Attack on Wheeler's entrenchment**

On 5 June 1857, Nana Saheb sent a letter to General Wheeler informing him to expect an attack next morning at 10 am. On 6 June, his forces (including the rebel soldiers) attacked the Company entrenchment at 10:30 am. The Company forces were not adequately prepared for the attack but managed to defend themselves as the attacking forces were reluctant to enter the entrenchment. The Indian forces had been led to believe that the entrenchment had gunpowder-filled trenches that would explode if they got closer. The Company side held out in their makeshift fort for three weeks with little water and food supplies, and lost many lives due to sunstroke and lack of water.

As the news of advances over the British garrison spread, more rebel sepoys joined Nana Saheb. By 10 June, he was believed to be leading around twelve thousand to fifteen thousand Indian soldiers. During the first week of the siege, Nana Saheb's forces encircled the attachment, created loopholes and established firing positions from the surrounding buildings. The defending Captain John Moore retaliated and launched night-time sorties. Nana Saheb then withdrew his headquarters to Savada House (or Savada *Kothi*), which was situated around

two miles away. In response to Moore's sorties, Nana Saheb decided to attempt a direct assault on the British entrenchment, but the rebel soldiers displayed a lack of enthusiasm.

The sniper fire and the bombardment continued until 23 June 1857, the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Plassey. The Battle of Plassey, which took place on 23 June 1757, was one of the pivotal battles leading to the expansion of the East India Company rule in India. One of the driving forces of the rebellion by sepoys, was a prophecy that predicted the downfall of East India Company rule exactly one hundred years after this battle.

This prompted the rebel soldiers under Nana Saheb to launch a major attack on the entrenchment on 23 June 1857. However, they were unable to gain an entry into the entrenchment by the end of the day.

The entrenchment had been steadily losing its soldiers and civilians to successive bombardments, sniper fire, and assaults from the attackers. It was also suffering from disease and low supplies of food, water and medicine. General Wheeler's personal morale had been low, after his son Lieutenant Gordon Wheeler was decapitated in an assault on the barracks.

Nana Saheb and his advisers came up with a plan to end the deadlock. On 24 June, he sent a female European prisoner, Rose Greenway, to the entrenchment to convey their message. In return for a surrender, he promised the safe passage of the Europeans to the Satichaura Ghat, a dock on the Ganges from which they could depart for Allahabad. General Wheeler rejected the offer, because it had not been signed, and there

was no guarantee that the offer was made by Nana Saheb himself. Next day, on 25 June, Nana Saheb sent a second note, signed by himself, through another female prisoner, Mrs. Jacobi. The entrenchment divided into two groups with different opinions—one group was in favour of continuing the defence, while the second group was willing to accept the offer. During the next day, there was no bombardment from Nana Saheb's forces. Finally, Wheeler decided to surrender, in return for a safe passage to Allahabad. After a day of preparation and burying their dead, the Europeans decided to leave for Allahabad on the morning of 27 June 1857.

### **Satichaura Ghat massacre**

On the morning of the 27 June, a large column led by Wheeler emerged from the entrenchment. Nana sent a number of carts, dolis and elephants to enable the women, the children and the sick to proceed to the river banks. The Company officers and military men were allowed to take their arms and ammunition with them, and were escorted by nearly the whole of the rebel army. They reached the Satichaura Ghat by 8 am. At this ghat, Nana Saheb had arranged around 40 boats, belonging to a boatman called Hardev Mallah, for their departure to Allahabad.

The Ganges river was unusually dry at the Satichaura Ghat, and the Europeans found it difficult to drift the boats away. Along the flight of steps going down to the river and also on the high banks on either side of the ghat was filled with people who had assembled in large numbers to see their erstwhile masters leaving. Standing with the throng of people along the banks were also sepoy of 6th Native Infantry from Allahabad

and 37th from Benares. Both these battalions had been driven away from their stations by James George Smith Neill column. They were assembled on parade and ordered to lay down their arms and after doing so, were fired upon mercilessly by British troops. Those who were lucky to escape returned to their villages only to hear the brutality of Neills column in sacking entire villages that lay in the path of his march. These soldiers, who had come to Cawnpore to vent their anger with high hopes of participating in the assault on Entrenchment were also watching the proceedings at the Satichaura ghat. Wheeler and his party were the first aboard and the first to manage to set their boat adrift.

At this point a shot was fired possibly from the high banks and the Indian boatmen jumped overboard and started swimming toward the banks. During their jump, some of the cooking fires were knocked off, setting some of the boats ablaze. Though controversy surrounds what exactly happened next at the Satichaura Ghat, and it is unknown who fired the first shot, the departing European were attacked by the rebel sepoys, and most either killed or captured.

Some of the Company officers later claimed that Nana had placed the boats as high in the mud as possible, on purpose to cause delay. They also claimed that Nana had previously arranged for the rebels to fire upon and kill all the Europeans. Although the East India Company later accused Nana of betrayal and murder of innocent people, no definitive evidence has ever been found to prove that Nana had pre-planned or ordered the massacre. Some historians believe that the Satichaura Ghat massacre was the result of confusion, and not of any plan implemented by Nana and his associates.

Nevertheless, the fact that sniper fire from cannons pre-positioned along the riverbank was reported on the scene might suggest pre-planning.

Whatever the case, amid the prevailing confusion at the Satichaura Ghat, Nana's general Tatyā Tope allegedly ordered the 2nd Bengal Cavalry unit and some artillery units to open fire on the Europeans. The rebel cavalry sowars moved into the water to kill the remaining Company soldiers with swords and pistols. The surviving men were killed, while women and children were captured, as Nana did not approve of their killing. Around 120 women and children were taken prisoner and escorted to Savada House, Nana Saheb's headquarters during the siege.

The rebel soldiers also pursued Wheeler's boat, which was slowly drifting to safer waters. After some firing, the European men on the boat decided to fly the white flag. They were escorted off the boat and taken back to Savada house. The surviving men were seated on the ground, as Nana's soldiers got ready to kill them. The women insisted that they would die with their husbands, but were pulled away. Nana granted the British chaplain Moncrieff's request to read prayers before they were killed. The British were initially wounded with the guns, and then killed with the swords. The women and children were taken to Savada House to be reunited with their remaining colleagues.

### **Bibighar massacre**

The surviving women and children, around 120 in number, were moved from the Savada House to Bibighar ("the House of

the Ladies"), a villa-type house in Kanpur. They were later joined by some other women and children, the survivors from Wheeler's boat. Another group of women and children from Fatehgarh, and some other captive women were also confined in Bibighar. In total, there were around 200 women and children there.

Nana Saheb deputed a tawaif (nautch girl) called Hussaini Khanum (also known as Hussaini Begum) to care for these survivors. He decided to use these prisoners in bargaining with the East India Company. The Company forces consisting of around 1,000 British, 150 Sikh soldiers and 30 irregular cavalry had set out from Allahabad, under the command of General Henry Havelock, to retake Cawnpore and Lucknow. Havelock's forces were later joined by the forces under the command of Major Renaud and James Neil. Nana demanded that the East India Company forces under Havelock and Neil retreat to Allahabad. However, the Company forces advanced relentlessly towards Cawnpore. Nana sent an army to check their advance, and the two armies met at Fattehpoore on 12 July, where General Havelock's forces emerged victorious and captured the town.

Nana then sent another force under the command of his brother, Bala Rao. On 15 July, the British forces under General Havelock defeated Bala Rao's army in the Battle of Aong. On 16 July, Havelock's forces started advancing to Kanpur. During the Battle of Aong, Havelock was able to capture some of the rebel soldiers, who informed him that there was an army of 5,000 rebel soldiers with 8 artillery pieces further up the road. Havelock decided to launch a flank attack on this army, but the rebel soldiers spotted the flanking

manoeuvre and opened fire. The battle resulted in heavy casualties on both sides, but cleared the road to Kanpur for the Company forces.

By this time, it became clear that the Company forces were approaching Kanpur, and Nana's bargaining attempts had failed. Nana was informed that the British troops led by Havelock and Neil were committing violence against the Indian villagers. Nana, and his associates, including Tatya Tope and Azimullah Khan, debated about what to do with the captives at Bibighar. Some of Nana's advisers had already decided to kill the captives at Bibighar, as revenge for the murders of Indians by the advancing British forces. This was not only the reason. The captives of Bibighar helped the British Forces to get closer towards Kanpur. These captives also sent the maps and other important documents to British forces.

Finally, on 15 July, Nanasaheb gave an order to kill the women and children imprisoned at Bibighar. Before the death, some women asked some time for their prayers and the demand was granted. After the prayers, the captives were killed and the dead bodies were put into a well near the Bibighar.

### **Recapture of Kanpur by the British**

- The Company forces reached Kanpur on 16 July 1857. General Havelock was informed that Saheb had taken up a position at the Ahirwa village. His forces launched an attack on Nana's forces, and emerged victorious. Nana then blew up the Kanpur magazine, abandoned the place, and retreated to Bithoor. When the British soldiers came to know

about the Bibighar massacre, they indulged in retaliatory violence, including looting and burning of houses.

On 19 July, General Havelock resumed operations at Bithoor, but Nana Saheb had already escaped. British forces murdered all the villagers of the Bithoor mercilessly. They murdered men and women, they murdered young children and old adults. Nana's palace at Bithoor was occupied without resistance. The British troops seized guns, elephants and camels, and set fire to Nana's palace.

Very few relics of Nana Saheb are known but a silver mounted sword seems to be one of the more interesting. Many British search parties tried to capture Nana Saheb but all failed to prevent his escape. A detachment of the 7th Bengal Infantry came very near to capturing him but he managed to escape just in time. In his hurry he left this sword on the table where he had been dining. Major Templer (later Major General) of the 7th Bengal Infantry brought home the sword. In the 1920s the family loaned it to the Exeter Museum, until 1992 when it was sold at auction. The present whereabouts of this sword are unknown.

## **Disappearance**

Nana disappeared after the Company's recapture of Kanpur. His general, Tatyasaheb Tope, tried to recapture Kanpur in November 1857, after gathering a large army, mainly consisting of the rebel soldiers from the Gwalior contingent. He managed to take control of all the routes west and north-west of Kanpur, but was later defeated in the Second Battle of Kanpur.



In September 1857, Nana was reported to have fallen to malarious fever; however, this is doubtful. Rani Laxmibai, Taty Tope and Rao Saheb (Nana Saheb's close confidante) proclaimed Nana Saheb as their Peshwa in June 1858 at Gwalior.

### **Nepal connection**

By 1859, Nana was reported to have fled to Nepal. Perceval Landon recorded that Nana Sahib lived out his days in western Nepal, in Thapa Teli, near Ririthang, under the protection of Sir Jang Bahadur Rana, the Prime Minister of Nepal.

His family also received protection, in Dhangara, eastern Nepal, in exchange for precious jewels. In February 1860, the British were informed that Nana's wives had taken refuge in Nepal, where they resided in a house close to Thapathali. Nana himself was reported to be living in the interior of Nepal. Some early government records maintained that he died in Nepal after a tiger attacked him during a hunt on 24 September 1859 but other record differs on the matter. Nana's ultimate fate was never known.

Venkateshwar, a Brahmin interrogated by the British, disclosed that he met Nana Saheb in Nepal in 1861. Up until 1888 there were rumours and reports that he had been captured and a number of individuals turned themselves in to the British claiming to be the aged Nana.

As these reports turned out to be untrue further attempts at apprehending him were abandoned. There were also reports of him being spotted in Constantinople (Present days Istanbul).

## **Sihor connection**

Two letters and a diary retrieved in the 1970s accounted that he lived as an ascetic, Yogindra Dayanand Maharaj, in Sihor in coastal Gujarat until his death in 1903. Harshram Mehta, the Sanskrit teacher of Nana Saheb, was addressed in the two letters probably written by him in Old Marathi and in black ink dated 1856 and signed *Baloo Nana*. The third document is the diary of Kalyanji Mehta, brother of Harshram. In Old Gujarati, the diary records arrival of Nana Saheb to Sihor with his colleagues after failure of rebellion. Kalyanji had raised Shridhar, son of Nana Saheb changing his name to Giridhar, as his own son and got him married in Sihori Brahmin family. His diary also records death of Nana Saheb in 1903 in Dave Sheri, Kalyanji's house in Sihor. The place still displays some articles of him. Keshavlal Mehta, son of Giridhar, recovered these documents in the 1970s and his descendants still live in town.

The authenticity of documents was accepted by G.N. Pant, former director of the National Museum, in 1992 but the official recognition was never given.

## **Belsare's account**

K. V. Belsare's book on the Maharashtrian saint Brahmachaitanya Gondavlekar maharaj claims that after the lost battle, Nana Saheb went to Naimisharanya, the Naimisha Forest in the vicinity of Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh, where he met Brahmachaitanya maharaj, who assured him safety. He lived there from 1860 until his death in 1906. According to the book, he died between 30 October to 1 November 1906 and

Shri Brahmachaitanya maharaj performed his last rites. The authenticity of the claims in the book is not established. After the independence of India in 1947, Nana was hailed as a freedom fighter, and the Nana Rao Park in Kanpur was constructed in honour of Nana and his brother, Bala Rao.

## Chapter 11

# Ningthouja Dynasty

The **Ningthouja** dynasty also known as **Mangang** dynasty comprises the descendants of the kings of Manipur. Ningthouja literally means progeny of King (*Ningthou* means king and *cha* or *macha* means progeny in which *ja* is a corrupted word of *cha*) . It has 125 extended families. It was apparently founded by King Nongda Lairen Pakhangba in 33 CE.

## History

By the beginning of the 1st millennium CE, the Ningthouja Dynasty began to emerge in Imphal River valley, overrunning the territory of the Khaba clan. They established Kangla as their seat of power. From Kangla they absorbed the surrounding clan principalities of Luwang, Moirang, Khaba-Nganba, Angom, Sarang-Leishangthem and Khuman.

Since 33 CE till the rule of the last King Bodhchandra, Manipur was ruled by seventy-four kings, of whom the hallowed reign of Pakhangba, Naothingkhong, Loiyumba, Kiyamba, Khagemba, Charairongba, Pamheiba, Maharaja Jai Singh, Maharaja Gambhir Singh, Maharaja Nara Singh, Chandrakirti and Churchand are outstanding.

## List of Kings of Ningthouja dynasty

- Nongta Lailen Pakhangpa (33–154 CE)
- Khuiyoi Tompok (154-264 CE)

- Taothingmang (264-364 CE)
- Khui Ningonba (364-379 CE)
- Pengsipa (379-394 CE)
- Kaokhangpa (394-411 CE)
- Naokhampa (411-428 CE)
- Naophangpa (428-518 CE)
- Sameilang (518-568 CE)
- Urakonhoupa (568-658 CE)
- Naothingkhon (663-763 CE)
- Khongtekcha (763-773 CE)
- Keilencha (784-799 CE)
- Yalaba (799-821 CE)
- Ayangpa (821-910 CE)
- Ningthoucheng (910-949 CE)
- Chenglei-Ipan-Lanthapa (949-969 CE)
- Keiphaba Yanglon (969-984 CE)
- Irengba (984-1074 CE)

## **Royal Houses**

Since 19th century the ruling family was divided into several royal houses. They are:

- The House of Nara Singh (descendants of Maharaja Nara Singh (r. 1844-1850 CE) and Maharaja Devendra Singh (r.1850)) .
- The House of Karta (descendants of Maharaja Bhagyachandra (r.1762-1799 CE)
- Mantrimayum (descendants of Prince Ananta Sai)
- Lourungpurenmayum (descendants of Ibungshi/Prince Haricharan Sai)

- Urungpurenmayum
- Senapatimayum

## **Members of the Royal Family of Manipur since 1709 CE**

The members of the Royal Family of Manipur since 1709 CE include:

- Emperor Pamheiba (r. 1709-1748 CE), popularly known as Garibniwaz, Mayangamba, Gopal Singh
- King Ajit Sai (r. 1748-1752), son of Garibniwaz
- King Bharat Sai (r. 1752-1753), son of Garibniwaz
- Prince Shyam Sai, the Khurai Lakpa, son of Garibniwaz
- Prince Ngaobram Bir Sai, the Senapati, also known as Theer Sai, son of Garibniwaz
- Prince Ananta Sai, son of Garibniwaz
- Prince Haricharan Sai, son of Ningthem Pamheiba
- Jay Jagadananda, the Lourungpuren, Son of Haricharan Sai
- Prince Kokilananda, son of Ananta Sai
- Joy Singh (r. 1822-1823), son of Kokilananda
- King Maramba, also known as Gourshyam (r. 1753-1759, 1762-1763 CE), son of Shyam Sai
- Princess Sheitamala, niece of Garibniwaz, later the Queen of Burma
- Princess Haripriya, daughter of Garibniwaz, later the Queen of Cachar

## **Members of the House of Nara Singh**

- King Badra Singh (r. 1824-1825), also known as Meetingu Nongpok Wairang Pamheiba, Maharaja Khaba, son of Ngaobram Bir Sai
- King Yadu Singh (r. 1823), son of King Badra Singh
- King Ragav Singh (r. 1823-1824), Son of King Yadu Singh
- King Nara Singh (r. 1844-1850) also known as Chingthanglen Pamheiba, Meetingu Lairen Nongdren Sendreng Manik Khomba, son of King Badra Singh.
- Crown Prince Bubonsana, also known as Bogendra, son of King Nara Singh
- Prince Barachaoba, the Yaiskullakpa (He rose in rebellion against Maharaja Surchandra. He was captured and exiled to Hazaribad.), son of King Nara Singh
- Prince Angou, the Senapati (He rose in rebellion against Maharaja Chandrakirti in 1851. He was defeated and fled to Cachar.), son of King Nara Singh
- Prince Haojao, the Khurailakpa, son of Nara Singh
- Prince Puskar Sana, the Mantri (after the Anglo-British War he was recommended as the new king of Manipur under the British rule. He declined it and recommended his elder brother's youngest grandon son Churchand as the king of Manipur.), son of King Nara Singh
- Prince Udendra also known as Sana Uriba, son of King Nara Singh
- Prince Megazing, son of King Nara Singh
- Prince Theba, son of King Nara Singh
- Prince Bekendra, the Sangol Senba Hanjaba

- Prince Keipha Sana or Keifa Singh, son of King Nara Singh (Keifa Singh introduced the modern polo game to the British in his exile to Hazaribad in 1862).
- Princess Konusana, daughter of King Nara Singh
- Princess Chaobiton, daughter of King Nara Singh
- Princess Sana Pukhrambi
- Princess Yumsangbi, daughter of King Nara Singh
- Princess Thokchom Ongbi, daughter of King Nara Singh
- Princess Nongthonbi Sana, daughter of King Nara Singh
- Princess Chaonu Sana, daughter of King Nara Singh
- King Devendra Sing (r. 1850), also known as Maharaj Dhaka Taba, son of King Badra Singh
- Princess Dhaka Rani, daughter of King Devendra Singh, later the Queen of Tripura
- Prince Thangkok Sana, son of King Devendra Singh (he was exiled for taking part in the uprising of 1904. He later became a Member of Darbar)
- Prince Dumbra Singh, also known as Chaobiyaima, son of Bogendra
- Dumbra Singh, son of Chaobiyaima and elder brother of King Churhand ( He was given the title of "Raja" by the British Govt. for his service to the state)
- Maharaja Sir Chura Chand Singh (r. 1891-1941) (He died at Nabadwip, West Bengal), son of Chaobiyaima
- Prince Priya Brata Singh, the first and last Chief Minister of independent Manipur, son of Maharaja Chura Chand Singh.
- Princess Tamphasana, daughter of Maharaja Chura Chand Singh



- Princess Tombisana, daughter of Maharaja Chura Chand Singh
- Prince Jai Singh
- Prince Khedasana, son of Maharaja Chura Chand Singh
- Prince Maipaksana, son of Prince Sanahal, also known as Aminsana
- Princess Sanatombi, daughter of Maharaja Chura Chand Singh
- Princess Binodini, popularly known as M. K. Binodini Devi, daughter of Maharaja Chura Chand Singh. She was a novelist, short stories writer, film maker and social activist.
- Maharaja Bodh Chandra (r. 1941-1955), son of Maharaja Chura Chand Singh
- Princess Tamphasana
- Maharaja Okendra Singh, son of Maharaja Bodh Chandra

### **Members of the House of Karta**

- Maharaja Bhayachandra, popularly known as Chingthang Khomba (r. 1759-1762, 1763-1798), son of Shyam Sai
- King Labyanachandra (r. 1798-1801), son of Bhayachandra
- King Madhuchandra (r. 1801-1803), son of Bhayachandra
- King Chourjit (r. 1803-1813) (He died at Nabadwip, West Bengal), son of Bhayachandra
- Prince Sana Chahi Ahum (popularly known as Rajkumar Norendra Singh, son of Maharaja Chourjit.

He raised banner of rebellion against the British in North East India in 1857).

- King Marjit (r. 1813-1819), son of Bhayachandra
- Prince Herachandra, popularly known as Daku Ningthou, son of King Labyanachandra (He was the first leader who mobilized the Meiteis against the Burmese occupation forces in 1819-1821)
- King Yumjaotaba, also known as Pitamber (r. 1821-1822), son of King Madhuchandra
- King Gambhir Singh (He, accompanied by his second cousin Nara Singh drove out the Burmese occupation forces beyond Chinwin River in 1825. By the Treaty of Yandaboo he was declared as the independent ruler of Manipur, 1826-1834), son of Bhayachandra
- Princess Kuranganayani, daughter of Bhayachandra, later the Queen of Assam.
- Princess Tamphasana (Chingakham Ongbi) (today's Moirangkhom market was the dowry of the princess)
- King Chandra Kirti (r. 1834-1844, 1850-1886), son of Gambhir Singh
- Princess Phandengsana (she was a daughter of King Chandra Kirti. She lived at Thangmeiband and later at Nabadwip, Nadia, West Bengal)
- King Surchandra (r. 1886-1890) (He died in Calcutta), son of Chandra Kirti
- Prince Lukhoisana, the son of King Surchandra (He died young after the Anglo Manipur War).
- Rajkumari Sanatombi, daughter of King Surchandra (She became the second wife of Major Maxwell, British political Agent in Manipur and the Regent to the young Raja Churhand. she was popularly known as Bor Sahib ongbi Sanatombi)

- King Kulachadra (r. 1890-1891) (He was exiled to Andaman Island and later settled down until his death at Radhakunda, U.P, India), son of King Chandra Kirti
- Crown-Prince Tikendrajit, also known as Koireng the Senapati (He was hanged by the British in 1891 for waging war against the Queen of the United Kingdom), son of King Chandra Kirti
- Prince Paka Sana, the Sagol Hanjaba, also known as Bheirajit Singh, son of King Chandra Kirti
- Prince Thambou Sana, the Samu Hanjaba, also known as Kishorjit Singh, son of King Chandra Kirti
- Prince Gopal Sana, the Phunganai Hanjaba, son of King Chandra Kirti
- Prince Zilla Ngamba, son of King Chandra Kirti
- Prince Angou Sana, son of King Chandra Kirti
- Rajkumar Bikramjit Singh (Indian flautist)

## **Royal Titles**

The royal titles of Meitei princes are:

- *Wangam* for male members of the Ningthouja Dynasty.
- *Meidingu* for king.
- *Ningthem* for king.
- *Wangol Ningthou* for crown prince.
- *Ningthemcha, Ibungshija, Ibungo, Ningthoumacha* for princes.
- *Sanawapihal* or *Sanahal* for the eldest son of the reigning king.

The royal titles for Meitei princesses are:

- *Wangamlon* for the daughters of the Ningthouja Dynasty.
- *Meetei Leima* for head queen.
- *Apambi Ahal* for second queen.
- *Leimakhubi Ahal* for third queen.
- *Apambi Naha* for fourth queen.
- *Shija* and *Eberra* for the princesses and wives of the princes.
- *Tampha Wangamlon* or *Tamphasana* for the eldest daughter of the reigning king.

Since the adoption of Hinduism in the 18th century the royal family of Manipur styled Hindu titles:

- Maharaja, Shrijut, Manipureswar, Mekleswar for king.
- Yuvaraj for crown prince.
- Rajkumar for princes.
- Rajkumari for princesses.

During the reigns of Maharaja Churhand Singh (1891–1941) and Maharaja Bodhchandra Singh (1941–1955) their sons and daughters were given the high-sounding titles such as Maharaj Kumar and Maharaj Kumari. On the inherent title and privilege of the princes Major Maxwell, the then British Political Agent in Manipur and the regent of the young Raja Churhand Singh writes: "Rajkumars, or as they are called in Manipur Ninthou Machas, a Rajas, are very numerous; if, for instance, a Raja had eight sons and these sons were equally well blessed with male issue, the whole 64 grandsons would be Ninthou Machas, and their sons again, and so on." Rajkumars were a

troublesome people, Major Maxwell observed and he gave them little encouragement.

## **Notable Works on Manipur Royalty**

### **Films on Manipur Royalty**

- Coronation of the Maharaja of Manipur

*(dated 1944, 7 min, 35 mm)*

- The Maharajah dancer

*(dated 1945)*

- Raj Nartaki

*(dated 1941)*

### **Books on the Kings of Manipur**

- L. Ibungohal Singh and N. Khelchandra, *Cheitharol Kumbaba*

*(Imphal: Manipur sahitya Parisad)*

- Saroj Nalini Arambam Parratt, *The Court Chronicle of the kings of Manipur*

*(London, 2005).*

- Raj Kumar Somorjit Sana, *The Chronology of Meetei Monarchs (From 1666 CE to 1850 CE)*

(Imphal: W. Ananda Meetei, 2010)

- L. Joychandra, *The Lost Kingdom*

(Imphal, 2005)

- Gangmumei Kamei, *A History of Modern Manipur 1826-2000*

(New Delhi: Akansha Publishing).

## Chapter 12

# Nizam of Hyderabad

The **Nizams** were the 18th-through-20th-century rulers of Hyderabad. **Nizam of Hyderabad** (**Niẓām ul-Mulk**, also known as **Asaf Jah**) was the title of the monarch of the Hyderabad State (as of 2019 divided between the state of Telangana, Hyderabad-Karnataka region of Karnataka and the Marathwada region of Maharashtra). *Nizam*, shortened from *Nizam-ul-Mulk*, meaning *Administrator of the Realm*, was the title inherited by Asaf Jah I. He was the viceroy of the Great Mughal in the Deccan, the premier courtier in Mughal India in 1724, and the founding "Nizam of Hyderabad".

The Asaf Jahi dynasty was founded by Mir Qamar-ud-Din Siddiqi (Asaf Jah I), who served as a viceroy of the Deccan under the Mughal Empire from 1713 to 1721. He intermittently governed the region after Emperor Aurangzeb's death in 1707. In 1724 Mughal control weakened, and Asaf Jah became virtually independent of the Mughal Empire; Hyderabad would then become a tributary of the Maratha Empire, losing a series of battles through the 18th century.

When the East India Company achieved paramountcy over the Indian subcontinent, they allowed the Nizams to continue to rule their princely states as client kings. The Nizams retained internal power over Hyderabad State until 17 September 1948, when Hyderabad was integrated into the new Indian Union. The Asaf Jah dynasty had only seven rulers; however there was a period of 13 unstable years after the rule of the first Nizam when three of his sons (Nasir Jung, Muzafar Jung and

Salabath Jung) ruled. They were never officially recognised as rulers. The seventh and last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, fell from power when India annexed Hyderabad in 1948 which is known as operation polo or police action

## **Hyderabad**

By the time of its annexation, Hyderabad was the largest and most prosperous among all the princely states. It covered 82,698 square miles (214,190 km) of fairly homogeneous territory and had a population of roughly 16.34 million people (as per the 1941 census). Hyderabad State had its own army, airline, telecommunication system, railway network, postal system, currency and radio broadcasting service. Hindus were also given highest of the government posts; like 2-time Prime Minister of Hyderabad - Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad, Maharaja Chandu Lal and Raja Sham Raj I. Raja Sham Raj II, a member of H. E. H Nizam's Executive Council. The position of Kotwal was also given to a Hindu, Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy.

## **History**

### **Etymology**

The name *Nizam* comes from Urdu نظام /nizām/ , which itself is derived from Arabic language *nizām* which means "order" or "arrangement". *Nizām-ul-mulk* was a title first used in Urdu around 1600 to mean *Administrator of the Realm*. The word is derived from the Arabic language, as in Abu Ali Hasan ibn Ali Tusi (11 April 1018 – 14 October 1092), better known



by his honorific title of Nizam al-Mulk (Arabic: الملكنظام, "Order of the Realm").

## **Descent**

According to Sir Roper Lethbridge in *The Golden Book of India* (1893), the Nizams are lineally descended from the First Caliph Abu Bakr, the successor of the Islamic prophet Muhammed. The family of Nizams in India is descended from Abid Khan, a Turkoman from Samarkand, whose lineage is traced to Sufi Shihab-ud-Din Suhrawardi (1154–91) of Central Asia. In the early 1650s, on his way to hajj, Abid Khan stopped in Deccan, where the young prince Aurangzeb, then Governor of Deccan, cultivated him. Abid Khan returned to the service of Aurangzeb to fight in the succession wars of 1657–58. After Aurangzeb's enthronement, Abid Khan was richly rewarded and became Aurangzeb's favourite nobleman. His son Ghazi Uddin Khan received in marriage, Safiya Khanum, the daughter of the former imperial prime minister Sa'dullah Khan. Mir Qamaruddin Khan, the founder of the line of Nizams, was born of the couple, thus descending from two prominent families of the Mughal court.

Ghazi Uddin Khan rose to become a General of the Emperor Aurangzeb and played a vital role in conquering Bijapur and Golconda Sultanates of Southern India in 1686. He also played a key role in thwarting the rebellion by Prince Akbar and alleged rebellion by Prince Mu`azzam.

After Aurangzeb's death and during the war of succession, Qamaruddin and his father remained neutral thus escaping the risk of being on the losing side; they remained marginal

players in the Mughal court during the reigns of Bahadur Shah I (1707–12) and Jahandar Shah (1712–13). Their successor Farrukhsiyar (1713–19) was appointed Qamaruddin the governor of Deccan in 1713, awarding him the title *Nizam-ul-Mulk*. However, the governorship was taken away two years later and Qamaruddin withdrew to his estate in Moradabad. Under the next emperor, Muhammad Shah (1719–48), Qamaruddin accepted the governorship of Deccan for the second time in 1721. The next year, following the death of his uncle Muhammad Amin Khan who had been a power-broker in the Mughal Court, Qamaruddin returned to the Delhi and was made the *wazir* (prime minister). According to historian Faruqi, his tenure as prime minister was undermined by his opponents and a rebellion in Deccan was engineered against him. In 1724, the Nizam returned to Deccan to reclaim his base, in the process making a transition to a semi-independent ruler.

## **Reign**

- In 1724, Asaf Jah I defeated Mubariz Khan to establish autonomy over the *Deccan Suba*, named the region *Hyderabad Deccan*, and started what came to be known as the Asaf Jahi dynasty. Subsequent rulers retained the title *Nizam ul-Mulk* and were referred to as Asaf Jahi Nizams, or Nizams of Hyderabad. Nizam I never formally declared independence from the Mughals; he still flew the Mughal flag, and was never crowned. In Friday prayers, the sermon would be conducted in the name of Aurangzeb, and this tradition would continue until the end of Hyderabad State in 1948. The death

of Asaf Jah I in 1748 resulted in a period of political unrest as his sons, backed by opportunistic neighbouring states and colonial foreign forces, contended for the throne. The accession of Asif Jah II, who reigned from 1762 to 1803, ended the instability. In 1768 he signed the treaty of Machilipatnam, surrendering the coastal region to the East India Company in return for a fixed annual rent. Following the decline of the Mughal power, the region of Deccan saw the rise of the Maratha Empire. The titular Nizams themselves fought during the Mughal-Maratha Wars since the 1720s, which resulted in the Nizam paying a regular tax (*Chauth*) to the Marathas. The major battles fought between the Marathas and the Nizam include Palkhed, Bhopal, Rakshasbhuvan, and Kharda, in all of which the Nizam lost. Following the conquest of Deccan by Bajirao I and the imposition of *chauth* by him, the Nizam remained a tributary of the Marathas for all intent and purposes.

In 1805, after the East India Company victory in the Second Anglo-Maratha War, the Nizam of Hyderabad came under their protection.

In 1903 the Berar region of the state was separated and merged into the Central Provinces of British India, to form the Central Provinces and Berar.

The last Nizam of Hyderabad state, Mir Osman Ali Khan crowned in 1911, had been the richest man in the world in his time. The Nizams developed the railway, introduced electricity,

and developed roads, airways, irrigation and reservoirs; in fact, all major public buildings in Hyderabad City were built during his reign during the period of British rule in India. He pushed education, science, and establishment of Osmania University.

In 1947, at the time of the partition of India, the British government offered the 565 princely states in the sub-continent the options of acceding to either India or Pakistan, or remaining independent.

### **End of the dynasty**

After the Independence of India in 1947, the Nizam of Hyderabad chose to join neither India nor Pakistan. He later declared Hyderabad an independent state as the third dominion, but the Government of India refused to accept this. After attempts by India to persuade the Nizam to accede to India failed, and due to large scale atrocities committed by Razakars (who wanted the Nizam to accede Hyderabad to Pakistan) on the Hindu populace, the Indian government finally launched a military operation named Operation Polo. The Indian Army invaded Hyderabad on 13 September 1948 and defeated his untrained forces. The Nizam capitulated on 17 September 1948; that same afternoon he broadcast the news over the State radio network. The Nizam was forced to accept accession to the new Union of India. His abdication on 17 September 1948 was the end of the dynasty's ambitions. Still he became the Rajpramukh, post independence based on public vote.

Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last Nizam, died on Friday 24 February 1967. All the Nizams are buried in royal graves at the

Makkah Masjid near Charminar in Hyderabad excepting the last, Mir Osman Ali Khan, who wished to be buried beside his mother, in the graveyard of Judi Mosque facing King Kothi Palace.

## **State wealth**

During the period of the Nizams' rule, Hyderabad became wealthy - thanks to the Golconda mines which were the 'only sources of diamonds in the world market at that time (apart from South African mines) making the 7th Nizam the richest person in the world. Osman Ali Khan, Asaf Jah VII and his family including Salar Jung I were taught by Nawab Sarwar Ul Mulk and Agha Mirza Baig Bahadur, who was his political advisor, and the senior-most salute state among the Indian princely states. It was spread over 223,000 km (86,000 sq mi) in the Deccan, ruled by the Asaf Jahi dynasty. The Nizams were conferred with the title of His Exalted Highness, and "Faithful Ally of the British Government" for their roles in the Second and Third Anglo-Mysore Wars and the Indian Rebellion of 1857, becoming the only Indian prince to be given both these titles.

One example of the wealth of the Nizams are the Jewels of the Nizams, an international tourist attraction once displayed in Salar Jung Museum, but now locked in an Reserve Bank of India vault in Delhi. In 1948 Hyderabad state had an estimated population of 17 million (1.7 crore), and it generated an estimated annual revenue of £90,029,000.

The state had its own currency known as the Hyderabadi rupee, until 1951. The pace at which the last Nizam Mir Osman

Ali Khan amassed wealth made him one of the world's richest men in 1937, also known for his miserliness. He was estimated to be worth ₹ 660 crores (roughly US\$2 billion by the then exchange rates). According to the *Forbes All-Time Wealthiest List* of 2008, Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan is the fifth richest man in recorded history per the figures, with an estimated worth of US\$210.8 billion adjusted by Forbes as per the growth of the US GDP since that period and the present exchange rate of the US dollar against the Indian rupee.

### **Institutions**

The Nizams set up numerous institutions in the name of the dynasty including hospitals, schools, colleges, and universities that imparted education in Urdu. Inspired by the Indian Civil Service, the Nizams established their own local Hyderabad Civil Service.

### **Infrastructure**

The Nizams commissioned engineering projects such as large reservoirs like Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar. Survey work on the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam was also initiated during this time, although the actual work was actually completed under the aegis of the Government of India in 1969.

They also gave Hyderabad its own Railway Network -the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway which helped in setting up various industries.

Other landmarks include the Telangana High Court, City College, Public Gardens, (formerly *Bagh-e-Aaam*) Jubilee Hall,

Asafia Library, The Assembly building, Niloufer Hospital, the Osmania Arts College and the Osmania Medical College.

### **Donation for compilation of Mahabharata**

In 1932, there was a need for money for the publication of Mahabharata in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute located in Pune. A formal request was made to the 7th Nizam - (Mir Osman Ali Khan) who granted Rs. 1000 per year for a period of 11 years.

He also gave Rs 50,000 for construction of the guest house which stands today as "*Nizams guest house*"

### **Donation to Hindu Temples**

The Nizams donated Rs. 82,825 to the Yadagirigutta temple at Bhongir, Rs. 29,999 to Sita Ramachandraswamy temple, Bhadrachalam

The 7th Nizam also donated Rs. 8,000 to Tirupati Balaji Temple as yearly grants. A donation of Rs. 50,000 towards the reconstruction of Sitarambagh temple located in the old city of Hyderabad was also made.

### **Palaces**

The Asaf Jahis were prolific builders. Their palaces are listed below:

- Chowmahalla Palace - Official residence of early Nizams
- Purani Haveli

- King Kothi Palace
- Mahboob Mansion
- Falaknuma Palace
- Bella Vista
- Hill Fort Palace
- Chiran Palace
- Saifabad Palace
- Hyderabad House, New Delhi
- Nizam Palace, Kolkata



## Chapter 13

# Nizams of Hyderabad: 18th Century

## Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah I

**Mir Qamar-ud-din Khan Siddiqi Bayafandi** (20 August 1671 – 1 June 1748) also known as **Chin Qilich Kamaruddin Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah** and **Nizam I**, was the 1st Nizam of Hyderabad. A trusted nobleman and General of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1677–1707 AD), he served as the Mughal governor of Deccan (1713–1715 AD) and (1720–1722 AD), Mughal Grand vizier (1721–1724 AD) and the founder of the Asaf Jahi dynasty (1724 AD) of which he was the Nizam I (1724–1748 AD).

## Background

Mir Qamar-ud-din Khan (also known as Nizam) was the son of Safia Khanum and Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung I, who were married in 1670. Nizams's mother Safia Khanum was the daughter of Sa'dullah Khan who was Grand vizier (1645-1656) of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, during his tenure construction of Taj Mahal was completed. While through his father he is a descendant of Abu Bakr the first caliph of Islam, his ancestry is traced from Shihab al-Din 'Umar al-Suhrawardi (1145–1234). His great-grandfather Alam Sheikh was a Sufi saint of Bukhara (in present-day Uzbekistan) he was titled as

*Azam ul Ulama* by Imam Quli Khan (1611–1642) of Khanate of Bukhara. His grandfather Kilich Khan hailed from Samarkand in present-day Uzbekistan. In 1654, Kilich Khan came to India for the first time while on his way to the *Hajj* (Islamic pilgrimage) during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. After completing the pilgrimage, he migrated to India and joined erstwhile Mughal prince Aurangzeb's army in Deccan in 1657. Khan fought in the Battle of Samugarh which ended with the defeat of Aurangzeb's brother Dara Shikoh. Besides being a commander in Aurangzeb's army, he also served as governor of Zafarabad (present-day Bidar). Khan's eldest son and Nizam-ul-Mulk's father was Feroze Jung. Jung migrated to India in 1669, and got employed in Aurangzeb's army, raised a General and later as governor of Gujarat.

## **Early life**

Nizam-ul-Mulk was born on 11 August 1671. He was named Qamaruddin Khan by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. There exists no record of his birthplace. However, Yousuf Hussain Khan opines that Nizam-ul-Mulk was born in Agra.

At the age of six, Nizam-ul-Mulk was awarded with a *mansab*. During his youth, he Nizam-ul-Mulk used to accompany his father to military expeditions. After distinguishing himself during an expedition with his father to Pune, Nizam-ul-Mulk received a rank of 400 *zat* and 100 horses in 1684. In 1688, he took part in the siege of Adoni fort under the leadership of his father. Aurangzeb increased his rank to 2,000 *zat* and 500 horses for his performance in the siege. Two years later, he was awarded with the title Chin Qilich Khan. The emperor also presented him a she-elephant. In 1693, the Marathas sieged

the Panhala Fort. In response, Nizam-ul-Mulk fought and defeated the Marathas at Karad. 30 Marathas were taken as prisoners.

In 1698, Aurangzeb sent Nizam-ul-Mulk to put down a revolt at Nagori, near Bijapur. The emperor was satisfied with his expedition and subsequently sent him to Kotha to restore order. Following his success, he was raised to a rank of 3,000 *zat* and 500 horses. In 1699 Aurangzeb promoted him to 3,500 *zat* and 3,000 horses.

Nizam-ul-Mulk successfully sieged the Panhala Fort which was occupied by the Marathas. He closed all the roads as a result of which no supply could reach the inhabitants. The fort fell to his forces on 9 June 1700.

Satisfied with his services, Aurangzeb made him the *faujdar* (garrison commander) of Bijapur and increased his rank by 400 horses. Nizam-ul-Mulk became the *subahdar* (governor) of Bijapur in 1702 and was awarded with a *stead*. In the same year, he was also given the *faujdari* of Azamnagar and Belgaum. In 1704, he became the *faujdar* of Nusratabad and Mudgal.

In 1705, Nizam-ul-Mulk accompanied Aurangzeb in the siege of Wakinkhera. Nizam-ul-Mulk led an assault in the hillock of Lal Tikri. He attacked the Marathas who were attempting to provide supplies to the besieged inhabitants. The Marathas were ultimately defeated.

Nizam-ul-Mulk was raised to a rank of 5,000 *zat* and 5,000 horses for his performance in the siege. He was also awarded with a jewelled *sabre* and an elephant.

## **Life after Aurangzeb**

After Aurangzeb's death he was appointed Governor of Oudh. After Bahadur Shah's (Muazzam Shah i Alam Bahadur Shah the 1st) death he opted for a private life in Delhi. His sabbatical was cut short when in 1712 the sixth of Aurangzeb's successors, Farrukhsiyar son of Azim-ush-Shan convinced him to take up the post of Viceroy of the Deccan with the title of Nizam ul-Mulk (Regulator of the Realm) Fateh Jung.

His enemies accuse Nizam ul-Mulk of building his own power-base independently of the Mughals in Delhi, while continuing to give obeisance to the throne and even remitting money to the centre. He was then called upon by Farrukhsiyar to help fight off the Sayyid Brothers. Farrukhsiyar lost his strife against the Saadaat i Baarha Sayyid Brothers and was killed.

## **Grand Vizier of the Great Mogul**

Later Nizam ul-Mulk was rewarded for defeating the Sayyid Brothers with the post of Vizier in the court of Muhammad Shah, the 18-year-old successor.

But all did not work as planned. Nizam ul-Mulk's attempts to reform the corrupt Mughal administration with its cliques of concubines and eunuchs created many enemies. According to his biographer, Yusuf Husain, he grew to hate the "harlots and jesters" who were the Emperor's constant companions and greeted all great nobles of the realm with lewd gestures and offensive epithets. Nizam ul-Mulk's desire to restore the etiquette of the Court and the discipline of the State to the

standard of Shah Jahan's time earned him few friends. The courtiers poisoned the mind of the Emperor against him.

Nizam was made Grand vizier of the Mughal Empire in 1721, but alarmed at his growing power, emperor Muhammad Shah transferred him from the court of Delhi to Awadh in 1723. Nizam rebelled against the order, resigned as the Grand vizier and marched towards the Deccan. The emperor sent an army against him in the command of Mubariz Khan-(the then governor of Hyderabad subah), which the Nizam defeated at the Battle of Sakhar-kheda. In response, the Mughal emperor was forced to recognize him as the viceroy of the Deccan.

### **Viceroy of the Deccan**

In 1724, Nizam ul-Mulk resigned his post in disgust and set off for the Deccan to resume the Vice-royalty, only to find Mubariz Khan, who had been appointed governor by Emperor Farrukhsiyar nine years earlier, refusing to vacate the post.

Mubariz Khan had successfully restored law and order in the Deccan but he was also disloyal to the Mughal throne making only token payments and dividing plum administrative posts among his sons, his uncle and his favourite slave eunuchs. Unimpressed by the up-start occupying what he considered to be his rightful place,

Nizam ul-Mulk gathered his forces at Shakarkheda in Berar for a showdown with Mubariz Khan's army known as Battle of Shakar Kheda. The encounter was short but decisive. Wrapped in his bloodsoaked shawl, Mubariz Khan drove his war elephant out of the battle until he died from his wounds. His severed head was then sent to Delhi as proof of Nizam ul-

Mulk's determination to annihilate anyone who stood in his way. Now came from the Emperor an elephant, jewels and the title of Asaf Jah, with directions to settle the country, repress the turbulent, punish the rebels and cherish the people. Asaf Jah, or the one equal to Asaf, the Grand Vizier in the court of King Solomon, was the highest title that could be awarded to a subject of the Mughal Empire. There were no lavish ceremonies to mark the establishment of the Asaf Jahi dynasty in 1724. The inauguration of the first Nizam took place behind closed doors in a private ceremony attended by the new ruler's closest advisors. Nizam ul-Mulk never formally declared his independence and insisted that his rule was entirely based on the trust reposed in him by the Mughal Emperor.

As the Viceroy of the Deccan, the Nizam was the head of the executive and judicial departments and the source of all civil and military authority of the Mughal empire in the Deccan. All officials were appointed by him directly or in his name. Later, assisted by a Diwan the Nizam drafted his own laws, raised his own armies, flew his own flag and formed his own government.

Acknowledging Muhammad Shah's farman, Nizam ul-mulk had good reason to be grateful. Alongside his own personal wealth came the spoils of war and status, he was also entitled to the lion's share of gold unearthed in his dominions, the finest diamonds and gems from Golconda mines and the income from his vast personal estates.

He then divided his newly acquired kingdom into three parts. One third became his own private estate known as the Sarf-i-Khas, one third was allotted for the expenses of the government and was known as the Diwans territory, and the

remainder was distributed to Muslim nobles (Jagirdar, Zamindars, Deshmukh), who in return paid nazars (gifts) to the Nizam for the privilege of collecting revenue from the villages under their suzerainty. The most important of these were the Paigah estates. The Paigah's doubled up as generals, making it easy to raise an army should the Nizams Dominions come under attack. They were the equivalent to the Barmakids for the Abbasid Caliphate. Only second to the Nizams family, they were very important in the running of the government and even today their legacy lingers on with ruined palaces and tombs dotted around the once very feudal city of Hyderabad. On the sanads (scrolls) granting them their lands, inscribed in Persian were the words "as long as the Sun and the Moon are in rotation". The owners of the estates were mostly absentee landlords who cared little for the condition of the lands under their control. Jagirs were usually split into numerous pieces in order to prevent the most powerful of the nobles from entertaining any thought of carving out an empire for themselves. The system, which continued relatively unchanged until 1950, ensured a steady source of income for the state treasury and the Nizam himself.

### **Usage of War elephants**

During a campaign against the Maratha in the year 1730, Nizam-ul-Mulk had no less than 1026 War elephants, 225 of which were armoured.

### **War against the Marathas**

In 1725, the Marathas clashed with the Nizam, who refused to pay Chauth and Sardeshmukhi to the Marathas. The war began

in August 1727 and ended in March 1728. Nizam was defeated at Battle of Palkhed near Nashik by Bajirao I, the son of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath Bhatt.

## **Nader Shah**

In 1738, from beyond the Hindu kush, Nader Shah started advancing towards Delhi through Afghanistan and the Punjab.

Nizam ul-Mulk sent his troops to Karnal, where Mughal Emperor Muhammed Shah's forces had gathered to turn back the Persian army. But the combined forces were cannon fodder for the Persian cavalry and its superior weaponry and tactics. Nader Shah defeated the combined armies of Muhammed Shah and Nizam. Nader Shah entered Delhi and stationed his troops there. Some locals of Delhi had a quarrel and attacked his soldiers. At this, Nader Shah flew into a rage, drew out his sword from the scabbard and ordered the city to be looted and ransacked. Muhammad Shah was unable to prevent Delhi from being destroyed.

When Nader Shah ordered the massacre in Delhi, neither the helpless Mughal Emperor Muhammed Shah nor any of his Ministers had the courage to speak to Nader Shah and negotiate for a truce.

Only Asaf Jah came forward and risked his life for by going to Nader Shah and asking him to end the bloodbath of the city. Legend has it that Asaf Jah said to Nader Shah

"You have taken the lives of thousands of people of the city, if you still wish to continue the bloodshed, then bring those dead



back to life and then kill them again, for there are none left to be killed." These words had a tremendous impact on Nader Shah – he immediately put his sword inside its scabbard, ended the massacre and returned to Persia.

## **Later life**

The Nizam was well suited to rule his own territory. The administration was under control.

In March 1742, the British who were based in Fort St George in Madras sent a modest hamper to Nizam ul-mulk in recognition of his leadership of the most important of the Mughal successor states. Its contents included a gold throne, gold and silver threaded silk from Europe, two pairs of large painted looking glasses, and equipage for coffee cups, 163.75 yards of green and 73.5 yards of crimson velvet, brocades, Persian carpets, a gold ceremonial cloth, two Arab horses, half a dozen ornate rose-water bottles and 39.75 chests of rose water – enough to keep the Nizam and his entire darbar fragrant for the rest of his reign.

In return, the Nizam sent one horse, a piece of jewelry and a note warning the British that they had no right to mint their own currency, to which they complied.

It was after Nizam ul-mulk's death that his son and grandson sought help from the British and French in order to win the throne. Just days before he died in 1748, Asaf Jah dictated his last will and testament. The 17 clause document was a blueprint for governance and personal conduct that ranged from advice on how to keep the troops happy and well fed to an

apology for neglecting his wife. He then reminded his successors to remain subservient to the Mughal Emperor who had granted them their office and rank. He warned against declaring war unnecessarily, but if forced to do so to seek the help of elders and saints and follow the sayings and practices of the Prophet. Finally, he insisted to his sons that "you must not lend your ears to tittle-tattle of the backbiters and slanderers, nor suffer the riff-raff to approach your presence."

## **Legacy**

Nizam-ul-Mulk is remembered as laying the foundation for what would become one of the most important Muslim states outside the Middle East by the first half of the twentieth century.

Hyderabad state survived right through the period of British rule up to the time of Indian independence 1947, and was indeed the largest – the state covered an extensive 95,337 sq. miles, an area larger than Mysore or Gwalior and the size of Nepal and Kashmir put together (although it was the size of France when the first Nizam held reign) – and one of the most prosperous, among the princely states of the British Raj. The titles of "Nizam Ul Mulk" and "Asaf Jah" that were bestowed on him by the Mughal Emperors, carried his legacy as his descendants ruled under the title of "Nizam of Hyderabad" and the dynasty itself came to be known as the Asaf Jahi Dynasty.

In early 1710, while being as Subedar of Awadh, he was very much disturbed with the Mughal Emperors court politics and crafty cliques present inside the court, that he resigned from Subedari of Awadh and left to live a life of Fakir.

## Personal life

Asaf Jah was married to Sayed-UnNissa Begum, who belonged to a Sayed family from Gulbargah-with this marriage he had four children, two daughters and two sons; Ghazi-Uddin and Nasir Jung. From other wives he had four more sons; Salabat Jung, Nizam Ali Khan-(later Nizam II), Basalat Jung, and Mogal Ali Khan.

## Death

Due to continuous engagement in restoring internal conflicts and resolving increasing treats of neighboring Marathas, he was engaged in extensive tour of his domain and in this process as soon as in May 1748 he arrived in Burhanpur, he caught cold and flu that deteriorated his health. Realizing death upon him, the Nizam dictated his last testament (wasiyyatnama), spanning 17 clauses in the presence of his available family members and close confidants. He died on 1 June 1748 aged 77 at Burhanpur, and was buried at *mazaar* of Shaikh Burhan ud-din Gharib Chisti, Khuldabad, near Aurangabad, the place where Nizams mentor Aurangazeb is also buried.

## Titles

- 1685 : Khan
- 1691 : Khan Bahadur
- 1697 : Chin Qilich Khan (by Emperor Aurangazeb)
- 9 December 1707 : Khan-i-Dauran Bahadur

- 1712 : Ghazi ud-din Khan Bahadur and Firuz Jang
- 12 January 1713 : Khan-i-Khanan, Nizam ul-Mulk and Fateh Jang (by Emperor Farrukhsiyar)
- 12 July 1737 : Asaf Jah (by Emperor Muhammad Shah)
- 26 February 1739 : Amir ul-Umara and Bakshi ul-Mamalik (Paymaster-General)
- Final : Chin Fateh Khan, Chin Qilich Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah, Khan-i-Dauran Bahadur, Khan-i-Khana, Fateh Jung, Firuz Jang, Ghazi-ud-din Bahadur, Amir-ul-Umara, Bakhshi-ul-Mumalik

## **Nasir Jung**

**Mir Ahmed Ali Khan Siddiqi Bayafandi, Nasir Jung**, was the son of Nizam-ul-Mulk by his wife Saeed-un-nisa Begum. He was born 26 February 1712. He succeeded his father as the Nizam of Hyderabad State in 1748. He had taken up a very pompous title of *Humayun Jah, Nizam ud-Daula, Nawab Mir Ahmad Ali Khan Siddiqi Bahadur, Nasir Jung, Nawab Subadar of the Deccan*. However, he is most famously known as Nasir Jung. The Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah bestowed him with the title Nasir Jung and later the next Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah Bahadur appointed him as the Subedar of the Deccan and bestowed him with the title **Nasir-ud-Daula**.

## **Official name**

His official name was *Humayun, Nizam ud-Daula, Nawab Mir Ahmad Ali Khan Siddiqi Bayafandi Bahadur, Nasir Jang, Nawab Subadar of the Deccan*.

## **Rise to power**

In his early career, he defied the Marathas by refusing to pay tribute and Chauth to Chhatrapati (Emperor) Shahu. The Peshwa Bajirao marched against Nasir Jung who was stationed at Jalna governing the state of Hyderabad in the absence of Nijam. Bajirao with 30,000 cavalry attacked Nasir Jung and his army near Jalna and defeated him in open field battle. Nasir Jung surrendered to Bajirao and paid a tribute of one crore (10,000,000) of Rupees and restitution of 75 lakhs (7,500,000) of Rupees. He also handed over the territories of Srirangapatnam, Vellore and Gingee to the Marathas under the governorship of Murari Rao.

He ruled Hyderabad State in India from 1 June 1748 to 1750. He was appointed as his father's Deputy during his absence in Delhi from 1737 to 1741. In 1741 he attempted to seize power, but was defeated by his father at the *Eid Gah Maidan* in Aurangabad, on 23 July 1741. After his father's death, he ascended the throne on 2 June 1748 at Burhanpur.

## **Second Carnatic War**

After the death of the Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Nizam of Hyderabad, a civil war for succession broke out in south between Nasir Jung (son of the Nizam-ul-Mulk) and Muzaffar Jung (grandson of the Nizam-ul-Mulk from his daughter). This opened a window of opportunity for Hussain Dost Khan better known as Chanda Sahib who wanted to become Nawab of Carnatic and

joined the cause of Muzaffar Jung and began to conspire against Nawab Anwar-ud-din Muhammad Khan in Arcot.

The Europeans got directly involved in the affairs of the Deccan and Carnatic. This resulted in the Second Carnatic War which was an unofficial war fought between the British East India Company and the French Compagnie de Indes at a time when there was peace between the two powers in Europe. Its roots lay in Dupleix's (French Governor) skillful exploitation of the confused politics of the region to enhance French power through a series of Indian alliances.

The French sided with Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jung to bring them into power in their respective states. But soon the British intervened. To offset the French influence, they began supporting Nasir Jung and Muhammad Ali Khan Walajah the son of late Nawab Anwar-ud-din Muhammad Khan who had recently been killed by the French in Battle of Ambur in 1749.

There were initial successes for the French in both Deccan and Carnatic in defeating and murdering their opponents and placing their supporters on thrones by 1750. It was during one such success that Nasir Jung was killed at Dupleix-Fathabad (Sarasangupettai), near Gingee, by the Pathan Himmat Khan who was Nawab of Kadapa, on 16 December 1750. He was buried at the Mausoleum of Burhan ud-Din Gharib, Khuldabad. As a result, Muzaffar Jung succeeded to the throne of Hyderabad.

Later, the famous capture of Arcot by the English under Robert Clive in 1751 led to successive British victories and of their South Indian Allies. The war ended with the Treaty of Pondicherry, signed in 1754–55. Muhammad Ali Khan Walajah

was recognized as the Nawab of Carnatic. Joseph François Dupleix the French leader was asked to return to France. The directors of the French Compagnie de Indes were dissatisfied with the political ambitions of Dupleix, which had led to immense financial loss. In 1754, Godeheu replaced Dupleix.

## **Death**

He was killed at Sarasangupettai, near Gingee, by the "Himmat Khan the Nawab of Kadapa", on 16 December 1750 and was buried at the Mausoleum of Burhan ud-Din Gharib, Khuldabad.

## **Muhyi ad-Din Muzaffar Jang Hidayat**

**Muhyi ad-Din Muzaffar Jang Hidayat** (died 13 February 1751) was the ruler of Hyderabad from 1750 until his death in 1751. His official name was *Nawab Hidayat Muhi ud-din Sa'adu'llah Khan Bahadur, Muzaffar Jang, Nawab Subadar of the Deccan*. He was also given a very pompous title like his predecessor and rival Nasir Jung; it was *Nawab Khan Bahadur, Muzaffar Jung, Nawab Subadar of the Deccan*. He became famously known as *Muzaffar Jung*.

## **Birth**

He was born to Nawab Talib Muhi ud-din Mutawassil Khan *Bahadur* who was the *Naib Subahdar* (Deputy Governor) of Bijapur and his wife *Sahibzadi* Khair-un-nisa Begum who was the daughter of Nizam-ul-Mulk.

## **Reign**

Initially, he was appointed to an Imperial mansab of 3,000 *zat* and 2,000 *sowar* and later promoted to 4,000 **zat** on his appointment to Bijapur. He was Subadar of Bijapur after the death of his father. When his grandfather Nizam-ul-Mulk died in 1748, he decided to stake his claim to the throne in opposition to his uncle, Nasir Jung.

This resulted in the first major direct involvement of the Europeans in Indian domestic politics. He joined hands with his Carnatic ally Chanda Sahib and the French while Nasir Jung joined hands with his Carnatic ally Muhammad Ali Khan Walajah and the British. Eventually, the serious situation in Deccan and Carnatic would result in the Second Carnatic War. During the war Muzaffar Jung was briefly captured in March, 1750 after the Battle of Villianur. But after the assassination of Nasir Jung, he was released and took the throne of Hyderabad, 16 December 1750. He granted territories and titles to Dupleix and the French on 31 December 1750. He failed however, to honor his Afghan allies in a similar way. The resulting disagreement led to the Battle of Lakkireddipalli Pass in the Rayachoti taluka, Kadapa district, where the Nawab of Kurnool struck him in the head with a spear, 13 February 1751 killing him instantly.

Muzaffar Jung's death is somehow linked to the deaths of the Nawab of Kurnool and Nawab of Savanur, Abdul Majid Khan I.

At this critical juncture in history the French commander De Bussy made the decision to install Salabat Jung as the new Nizam.



## **Family**

Muzaffar Jang had only one son named, Nawab Muhammad Sa'ad ud-din Khan Bahadur who was a minor at the death of his father in February 1751. He became Subedar of Bijapur in 1751. But died later from smallpox.

## **Salabat Jung**

**Salabat Jung** was born as **Mir Sa'id Muhammad Khan Siddiqi Bayafandi** on 24 November 1718. He was the 3rd son of Nizam-ul-Mulk. He was appointed as *Naib Subahdar* (Deputy Viceroy) to his elder brother, Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II, the Prime Minister of Mughal Empire, with the title *Salabat Jung*. He was invested by Imperial firman, at Aurangabad, Maharashtra, 12 September 1749. He was granted the titles of *Khan Bahadur* and *Salabat Jung* during his father's lifetime.

During the Second Carnatic War he was a prisoner, first in Nasir Jung's camp and later in Muzaffar Jung's camp. After Muzaffar Jung (his nephew) was killed by the Afghans on 13 February 1751, Mir Sa'id Muhammad Khan was proclaimed as the new Nizam near Lakkireddipalli Pass, by the French under De Bussy with the title *Asaf-ad-Daulah*, *Nawab Said Muhammad Khan Bahadur*, *Salabat Jung*, *Zafar Jung*, *Nawab Subahdar of the Deccan*. He was promoted to the title of *Amir-ul-Mamalik* by the Emperor Alamgir II. He was the ruler of the Hyderabad State in India from 1751 until 1762.

The Khilwath Palace of Hyderabad was built under his direction.

## **Alliance with the French**

Salabat Jung agreed to retain the French in the Deccan restoring previous rights and privileges. He gave the title of *Saif-ud-daula Umdat-ul-Mulk* to De Bussy and wrote to the Mughal Emperor Alamgir II for ratification, the Mughal Emperor agreed to their decision and granted De Bussy a title "Mansabdar of 7000" and appointed Hyder Jung as the "Vakil" (attorney) representing the French within the Mughal Empire.

This new alliance with the French had greatly contributed to the advancement of Salabat Jung's forces, in the year 1756 Salabat Jung utilised heavy muskets known as *Catyocks*, which were attached to the ground, it was known to have fired more rapidly than a cannon. These new weapons would completely reverse fortunes of the Maratha rebels.

## **Conflict with Marathas**

In March 1751, Salabat Jung gave the French the villages of Nizampatnam and Alamanava in the Krishna district, Kondavid, Narsapur in the Godavary district, together with Yanaon and Mahfuzbandar. The extirpation of the conspirators against Muzaffar Jung was only the prelude to a more serious contest that threatened his successor to the Nizamat of Hyderabad Deccan, Salabat Jung. He had scarcely crossed the River Krishna when he was met by 25,000 Marathas under the personal command of their *Peshwa*, Balaji Baji Rao. This prince had entered into a league with Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II the elder brother of Salabat Jung; had levied a contribution of Rs. 150,000 from Aurangabad, the chief

authority of which place was secretly disposed to Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II and now appeared as the ally of the "lawful" Nizam and as the precursor of his appearance in the territories of his father. The Maratha army however disappeared as suddenly as it had presented itself. The invasion of the Deccan by Damaji Rao Gaekwad from Gujarat had forced the *Peshwa* to retreat.

Salabat Jung made his entry in great pomp and took formal possession of Hyderabad. His first attention was directed to rewarding his allies. Gratuities were bestowed on the officers according to their rank from 100,000 to the commander in chief to 5,000 to each ensign. The future pay of the troops was settled with equal liberality. A communication was opened with Machilipatnam (Masulipatam) and from that port only 220 miles distant the French were supplied with recruits of men, stores and ammunition. De Bussy was thus enabled afterwards to increase his Europeans to 500 and to arm new *Sipahis* (Native Soldiers) whom he recruited in the country making a total of 5,000 *Sipahis*. Salabat Jung did not remain long at his capital. The threatened appearance of Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II, the disaffection of Aurangabad and the prospect of renewed invasion by the Marathas required his presence on his northern frontier and he set off for Aurangabad within a month (May 1751) after his arrival.

Salabat Jung reached Aurangabad on 18 June and in the month of August, Balaji Baji Rao having settled his internal disorders again invaded and ravaged the Mughal territory at the head of 40,000 men. The character of the French auxiliaries acquired fresh lustre on this occasion. While at Aurangabad their discipline and orderly conduct had

commanded the respect of the Indians and they now established the superiority of the Salabat Jung over the Marathas. The Peshwa, meanwhile, had ordered Holkar and Scindia to join Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II and to affect a junction with himself near Aurangabad, occupied by Salabat Jung and his French allies. The news of this fresh campaign filled the Nizam and his advisers with consternation and dismay. But it was in the hour of danger that the courage of Charles Joseph Patissier better known as Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau rose to its greatest height.

De Bussy said;

- "Care nothing for the invading army; you will best preserve the Deccan by marching on Poona."

With cool audacity the French general unfolded his plan and such was his influence that he overcame the fears of Salabat Jung. Leaving Aurangabad to its fate, the Mughal prince moved on to Golkonda, and, after some days spent there in preparation, he marched through Pabal, Khedal and Ahmednagar to Bedar on the road to Poona. As he marched, he contrived to send messages to Tara Bai at Satara and received from the old queen favourable and encouraging replies.

Near Parner, De Bussy learnt of the approach of a Maratha army. Balaji, angered at the boldness of the Nizam's plan, had been sufficiently affected by it to detach 40,000 horsemen from the main army and lead them in pursuit. The Mughal forces consisted of large irregular levies, quite unfit to meet Balaji's cavalry. But with them were 500 French infantry and 5000 highly disciplined Sipahis led by French officers. On the news of the enemy's vicinity the Muslims formed up to await the

Maratha attack. De Bussy seized some heights on one of the flanks and put his field-pieces on them, so as to command the ground across which the Peshwa must charge. In support of the guns he drew up his disciplined infantry. Balaji attacked the Mughals in the usual Maratha fashion, testing the whole line before charging home. But these proved bad tactics in face of the rapid shooting of the French cannon and the continuous fire of their drilled riflemen. The Maratha army after suffering some loss disappeared.

De Bussy led the Mughals on Poona, destroying all the villages through which they passed. The Peshwa retaliated by getting his agents to spread among the Mughals rumours of intended French treachery. De Bussy's answer was a brilliant coup de main. On 22 November, the Marathas were engaged at Kukadi in devotions inspired by an eclipse of the moon. Balaji, like most members of his family, was strict in his religious beliefs and encouraged his soldiers to pray to their gods, to secure an early release of the moon from the clutches of the demon Ketu. While so engaged, they were surprised by De Bussy's attack. The Maratha army did not suffer heavily, but they abandoned their camp, from which the plundering Mughals secured a considerable booty. Among their trophies were the golden utensils used by Balaji Baji Rao for himself and for his gods.

On 27 November 1751, the French general took and sacked Ranjangaon and utterly destroyed Talegaon Damdhere. De Bussy's plan of campaign had succeeded. So far from invading the Nizam's dominions, Balaji Baji Rao was perplexed how to save Poona. He reinforced his army by summoning to it the Scindia contingent, led by Datta and Madhav Rao Scindia, two sons of Ranu Scindia ; and on 27 November 1751, he attacked

the Mughal army on the banks of the Ghodnadi river with the utmost determination. The Maratha attack was led by Mahadji Purandare, Datta and Madhav Rao Scindia and Kanher Rao Trimbak Ekbote better known as *Kanher Rao Phakde*, a native of Purandar. So vigorous was the Maratha charge that Salabat Jung's levies were completely overwhelmed. The day was saved by De Bussy again. Changing his front, he brought his guns to bear on the flank of the charging cavalry with such effect that he enabled the Mughals to rally; and, although the Maratha losses were far less than those of their enemies, they eventually withdrew from the field, taking with them Salabat Jung's howdah, four elephants and seven hundred horses. The next day De Bussy pressed on to Koregaon on the river Bhima, a little town only 16 miles from Poona.

Balaji Baji Rao now decided to follow his foe's example and save his capital by carrying the war into Nizam's country. He directed Sadashiv Rao Bhau to enter into negotiations with the Nizam's Hindu diwan, Ram Das, to whom Dupleix had given the title of Raja Raghunath Das. The plenipotentiaries met, but the negotiations, no doubt at Balaji's orders, were deliberately drawn out. Before any settlement was arrived at, the Nizam was dismayed to hear that the fort of Trimbak had been escaladed by a Maratha officer.

While the Nizam vainly protested against the outrage and demanded the return of his property, news reached him that Raghuji Bhonsle was over-running, on his eastern frontier, the whole country between the Penganga and the Godavari.

At the same time the Peshwa's agents fomented the discontent of the Mughal soldiery, by charging De Bussy with embezzling

their pay, which they had not received for several months. Salabat Jung's confidence in his French general was shaken and he ordered a retreat to Ahmednagar. Having reached that town in safety, the Nizam's courage returned. He replenished his ammunition and collected siege guns for the recapture of Trimbak. He set out northwards, but he was so harassed on his march that he abandoned his enterprise and once again sought De Bussy's counsel.

That sagacious soldier saw that it was useless to continue the march on Trimbak. It was useless also to march on Poona, for the Mughals had turned their backs on it and were now 60 miles away. He advised Salabat Jung to ask for an armistice and thus secure his retreat to his own dominions. The Nizam took his advice. On 7 January 1752, Balaji at Shingwa accepted an armistice in return for a promised cession of land. Salabat Jung sent some cakes, and his *diwan*, Raja Raghunath Das, sent some *tulsi* leaves as a proof of their good faith; and the lately victorious Nizam and French army retreated across their own frontier.

During this period the Salabat Jung's government was entirely in the hands of the French. Bussy personally commanded the army and controlled the civil administration through his agent Raja Raghunath Das. Salabat Jung did not hesitate to address Dupleix as his protector and to acknowledge that himself and his states were entirely at his disposal. Salabat Jung ceded a territory round Machilipatnam to the French in September 1751 and conferred the government of the Carnatic on Dupleix and his successors in February 1752. It was probably not intended by Dupleix to displace Chanda Sahib who was yet alive.

## **Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II's Deccan Expedition and Unrest in Aurangabad**

Despite his initial victories against the Marathas, Salabat Jung had to retreat to protect his dominions from the North. His army was mutinous for want of pay, and during the homeward march Raja Raghunath Das was assassinated by some Afghan soldiers in April 1752, with whose commander he had quarrelled. The French received a serious shock from the death of Raghunath Das.

Salabat Jung was provided with another councillor in whom De Bussy had even more confidence than in the deceased. This was Haider Jung of Machilipatnam who had early entered into the service of the French and learned their language. His abilities attracted the notice of Dupleix and his judgment and fidelity while with Bussy had raised him to great power and high honours. But to fill the part of minister it was necessary to find a man of rank who should be able to regulate the mutinous army and embarrassed finances and willing at the same time to be entirely subservient to the French.

The predominance of a body of foreigners and the elevation of their upstart dependents had unavoidably proved disgusting to the nobility of Salabat Jung's court and was felt most by those who but for them would have been at the head of the state. The two most distinguished men of this class were Shah Nawaz Khan Dakhani and *Rukan ud-Daulah* Syed Lashkar Khan. Shah Nawaz had been minister of Nasir Jung while governing the



Deccan as his father's deputy. He joined the prince in his rebellion in 1741 and although his life was spared after the victory of Nizam-ul-Mulk *Asaf Jah I*, he remained for some years in disgrace. He employed that period in writing a biography of the principal nobles of the preceding age which has contributed more than his political transactions to preserve his reputation in India. On the accession of Nasir Jung he became prime minister and on his death he fled to a hill fort in the Carnatic. He was pardoned and reconciled to Muzaffar Jung through the intervention of Dupleix and probably expected to be restored to his former power. Finding the whole administration committed to Raghunath Das he became discontented and obtained permission to retire to Aurangabad where he became the head of a party opposed to the French and was the principal mover of the intrigues in that city in favour of Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II. De Bussy was too well aware of his hostility to trust him with the office of prime minister but thought it expedient to disarm his opposition by appointing him governor of the province of Hyderabad. Rukan ud-Daulah had also held a high office under Nasir Jung and was no less inimical than Shah Nawaz to the French ascendancy but he had concealed his sentiments with more care; had always been employed under Salabat Jung's government and now appeared to Bussy to be a suitable person to place at the head of the administration. He was accordingly made minister and the French influence seemed as great as ever.

But events in Delhi were going in a different direction. Safdar Jung was the new Vizier of the Mughal Empire and the *Amir ul-Umara* Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II felt slighted on being left out as the heir to Nizamat of Hyderabad. The motives

which led to his acquiescence in the accession of Nasir Jung ceased with that prince's life. The weakness of Salabat Jung's title invited him to assert his own. He therefore solicited the Emperor's nomination to the governorship of the Deccan and at the same time entered on negotiations with Balaji Baji Rao for the purpose of obtaining his support. He left his son, Shihab ud-Din Muhammad Khan, as his deputy in the office of *Mir Bakhshi*, and proceeded towards the Deccan, taking with him Malhar Rao Holkar, on the promise of paying him money upon his arrival at home. He was acknowledged at Burhanpur by the troops on that frontier. He was joined by the Maratha Peshwa, Balaji Baji Rao in person and when he arrived at Aurangabad on 29 September 1752 his force computed to amount to 150,000 men.

When intelligence of his arrival reached Hyderabad, Salabat Jung, marched out with a great force to oppose his elder brother. Malhar Rao Holkar, being informed of these designs, and seeing that war between the two brothers was imminent, took the opportunity of asking for Khandesh and Khanpur, which were old dependencies of Aurangabad. He foresaw that the struggle with Salabat Jung would be severe, and he deemed it prudent to refrain from taking any part in it.

Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II had appeared with one of the largest armies ever assembled in the Deccan and it was thought that his succession was inevitable. But no fighting had taken place between the rivals, when Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II died on 16 October 1752. Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, carried his coffin to Delhi. They also carried with them his money and valuables, exceeding a Rs. 10,000,000 in amount, and delivered them over to his son Shihab ud-Din

Muhammad Khan. This young man, whenever his late father was absent, had deemed it best for his interests to be constant in his attentions to Safdar Jung, and by this conduct he had gained the favour of that minister, who showed him great kindness. When the intelligence of his father's death arrived, he communicated the fact to Safdar Jung before it was generally known, and from that day the minister called him his "son". By the minister's influence, he was appointed Mir Bakhshi, and received the title of *Amir-ul-Umara Imad-ul-Mulk Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung III*.

But the Maratha leaders insisted on his carrying out Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II's engagements. In this they were supported by the Mughals of Burhanpur, who, after the help given by them to Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II, were afraid to remain Salabat Jung's subjects. The Nizam left the decision to De Bussy. The French general preferred a solid peace to a doubtful war and advised the surrender of a considerable tract of land, provided Raghuji Bhonsle first withdrew from the eastern provinces. Balaji ordered Raghu Bhonsle to do so. He complied.

Thus, in spite of de Bussy's genius and of French valor, the Peshwa acquired in this war the sacred town and fort of Trimbak and the whole country west of Berar from the Tapti to the Godavari. This treaty is known in history as the **Treaty of Bhalki** (November 1752).

With the death of Ghazi ud-Din Khan Feroze Jung II, Salabat Jung remained the uncontested Nizam of Hyderabad Deccan. De Bussy advised Salabat Jung to move back to Hyderabad with him, to which he agreed.

## **Conquest of Northern Circars by the French**

The acquisition of the Northern Circars is an important landmark in the history of the French in India. It placed at their disposal a contiguous territory of 470 miles of sea coast stretching from Orissa to the Coromandel Coast. These territories were also noted for their economic wealth; Machilipatnam was noted at this period for its dyeing and printing industry, while Rajahmundry abounded in rich teak forests. Srikakulam (Chicacole) was a rice-producing area. The presence of the Eastern Ghats made this region invulnerable to outside attack. The Eastern Ghats abounded in thick bamboo forests, and in those days of infantry and cavalry warfare, it was difficult for the enemy to penetrate through them.

The acquisition was made possible by the uprising of Syed Lashkar Khan who was bitterly opposed to the French predominance and other noblemen in the region. The treasury of the Nizam, was almost empty and the Nizam's troops had not been paid for six months. Salabat Jung found it still more difficult to pay the French detachment, and their pay was in arrears for two months. The French Sipahis, threatened to rebel, if their arrears were not paid, and Salabat Jung was forced to pay their salaries by raising a loan of 150,000 Rupees from the local Circars and from the revenue of Hyderabad. But the troops of the Nizam had to go without their pay. So, these soldiers started clamouring for the payment of their arrears and refused to go on the proposed Carnatic expedition unless

their arrears were cleared. The general discontent was so great in the Nizam's army that even the nagar-beaters and camel drivers took a solemn oath not to proceed to the Carnatic until their salaries were paid. The Mughal soldiers openly went about saying, that the French were robbing the Nizam of his riches, which the family had accumulated for the past 60 years, while the subjects of the Nizam, were starving. Their discontent was so great, that they went to the extent of threatening the life of Rumi Khan Fransisi, the agent of the French. De Bussy was ordered to ask Salabat Jung for the grant of the four Northern Circars, namely Ellore, Mustafanagar, Rajahmundry and Srikakulam (Chicaole), towards the maintenance of the French detachment. De Bussy, moved the matter with Salabat Jung, but Syed Lashkar Khan, saw, that the consideration of the matter was postponed for the time being and before Bussy could further move in the matter, he had to go to Machilipatnam on account of his illness.

Taking advantage of the financial distress of the Nizam and the general indiscipline that had crept into the French forces, Syed Lashkar Khan used all his ingenuity to make the French unpopular and their stay, untenable in the Deccan. He started exploring his moorings in a very cautious manner. Early in April 1753 he appealed to the British, to leave no stone unturned and to assist him to expel the French.

The letter of Syed Lashkar Khan was intercepted by the spies of Dupleix but Syed Lashkar Khan, even after knowing it, did not desist from intriguing against the French. Though the plans of Syed Lashkar Khan against the French were welcome to the English, they could not send him any material help

owing to their preoccupations in the Carnatic affairs. Syed Laskhar Khan tried to harass the French by with-holding their salaries. To the original detachment of 300 Europeans and 2000 Sipahis, Bussy added further a battalion of 5000 Sipahis, and all these were entirely under the personal command of Bussy. All together, their salaries amounted to, Rs. 250,000, per month.

Bussy, accordingly started from Machilipatnam on 25 June 1753, and reached Hyderabad on 15 July 1753. He arrived in Hyderabad with the firm resolve not to leave the Deccan unless the financial condition of the Nizam warranted such a step. On his arrival he found that the French commandant Goupil was busy elsewhere, collecting the revenues, and that great confusion and disorder prevailed in the French ranks. He soon restored order and discipline among the 500 Europeans and 4000 Sipahis who were in Hyderabad and opened negotiations with the Qiladar, Mahmud Hussain. The latter, realising that Bussy was not the man to mince matters, arranged the necessary money for the payment of the French troops. Bussy, cleared the arrears of pay of the troops partly by raising money from the Bankers and partly by advancing from his own private funds.

De Bussy, then called upon Goupil and Mainville to submit accounts of the money, so far, collected by the French troops. He found on a careful scrutiny of the accounts submitted that the French had over-reached themselves in collecting taxes, and that they extorted gratuities from the Nawabs and Palaiyakkarars (polygars) and oppressed the people in general. When Dupleix was informed of this he sent the following letter of admonition to the French officers;

I have been informed that several of you have worried and tried the Nawab and other lords by the irksome demands for gratuities, almost always ill-founded. As such a procedure can be nothing else than extremely harmful to the transactions of the Company as also to the glory of the King and the nation, as it tends to bring disgust even to the very ones who much need out protection. It is absolutely essential to prohibit in the future all endeavours which have the slightest appearance of a solicitation and to forbid visits to the lords except after receiving the sanction of the commander. Moreover, you are warned, that you are all bound to consider yourself as being directly in the service of the king and the Company that you must deem yourself very fortunate to draw the higher salaries which you receive and that on no account you should think of gratuities except in so far as circumstances may allow and that they shall be freely granted by those who have the power to do so. The King, the Company and I will it so and whosoever does not submit shall be a rebel.

De Bussy realised that the irresponsible and arrogant manner of the French soldiers had alienated the people from them and that intrigues were afoot in the court against the French. Syed Lashkar Khan, the Marathas, especially Janu Nimbalkar and Raja Ram Chander, and the English at Fort St. George were interested in ousting, the French power from the Deccan. Syed Lashkar Khan, even after the arrival of Bussy, did not desist from plotting against the French. He induced Salabat Jung to write to Dupleix that the arrears, due to the French troops must be deducted from the Rs. 5,000,000 that Dupleix owed to the Nizam, as his deputy in the Carnatic. He also proposed that during the rainy season the French troops should be stationed at Machilipatnam so that they could collect the

revenues with greater ease. Syed Lashkar Khan, though he advised the French in the above manner, at the same time sent secret instructions to the *zamindars* on the East Coast not to pay taxes to the French and to attack the French *jagirs* in the various districts. Encouraged by such messages, Raja Ram Chander of Ongole, seized Bandurti, with the help of the English.

Syed Lashkar Khan also put two younger brothers of Salabat Jung, Nizam Ali Khan and Basalat Jung into prison in the Fort of Daulatabad on the plea that the latter were intriguing with Mainville and ordered the French Commandant to return forthwith to Hyderabad.

He also made Salabat Jung to write to Bussy, suggesting that the French should stay, during the monsoons in Machilipatnam and that the Nizam would call them whenever he required their assistance. Apart from this, no sooner did he hear that Mahmud Hussain, the *Qiladar* of Hyderabad, had assisted Bussy in arranging the loans for the payment of the French troops, than he got him replaced by a new Governor. Seeing these manoeuvres, De Bussy decided to deal with Syed Lashkar Khan, in a very drastic manner. He decided to adopt one of the following three courses; namely; to demand from the Nizam fresh territories to maintain, the French forces and if the Subah refused to grant them, to seize certain territories and attach them to Machilipatnam which was under Moracin and inform Salabat Jung that those territories would be safeguarded by the French for the Nizam. But if either of these plans failed, Bussy, even decided to get the help of the Peshwa, against the Nizam in exchange for Surat being ceded to the Marathas. On being informed of these plans, Dupleix fully



concurrred with them and he sent to Bussy an additional force of 350 men. Of these, Bussy, dispatched 150 men to Machilipatnam, under the command of the Marquis of Conflans.

Feeling himself sufficiently strong, Bussy now decided to march against Aurangabad. Prior to this, he sent a letter to Salabat Jung, in which he reminded him that if he became the Deccan Subahdar it was mainly due to the efforts of the French. Saunders, the English Governor, remarked;

The weakness of the Moors is now known and it is certain any European nation resolved to wage war on them with a tolerable force may overrun the whole country.

De Bussy in Aurangabad in November 1753. His journey to Aurangabad was full of obstacles and he had to meet the silent opposition of the people, inspired by the manoeuvres of Syed Lashkar Khan. Seeing this, Bussy decided to enter Aurangabad in full battle array; Syed Lashkar Khan seeing the preparations made by Bussy decided to yield and opened negotiations with the latter. On Bussy's arrival, Syed Lashkar Khan at the head of 21 nobles mounted on elephants went to receive him. Bussy, when he met them, contrived to arrange their order of arrival in such a manner that they had to dismount first as though doing obeisance to the French General.

On approaching Bussy, the Diwan, Syed Lashkar Khan dismounted from his elephant and bowed to the French General, seeing which, the other Deccan nobles followed suit. Bussy, getting down from his elephant embraced the Diwan. The latter then offered to surrender his official seals as a token of his resignation. Bussy, was shrewd enough to perceive that

Syed Lashkar Khan was popular with the people, and whatever intrigues he had carried on against the French he had done for the noble purpose of ridding his country and his ruler of foreign domination. So Bussy, realised, that however much he desired to get rid of the minister, making him to resign openly was not the proper method. Hence he refused to accept the seals, and mildly hinted to the Diwan, that he would be satisfied with the cession of the Northern Circars to the French.

The Northern Circars, constituted the most fertile coastal strip of the Nizam's Dominions. They were watered by the three important rivers of the Deccan, the Krishna River, the Godavari and the Gundlakamma. Syed Lashkar Khan was loath to part with those fertile regions and he asked De Bussy, whether he would not be satisfied with territorial grants in the interior; but on finding that Bussy had set his heart on the acquisition of the Northern Circars alone, he gave way. On 23 November, a grand court was held at Aurangabad, and the treaty of Aurangabad, was signed between Salabat Jung and the French. By this treaty the four Northern Circars, Ellore, Mustafanagar (Kondapalli) Rajahmundry and Srikakulam (Chicacole) were granted to the French. The Sarkars were personally conferred on Bussy towards the maintenance of the French troops. It was also decided that the revenues of the Circars should be spent exclusively for disbursing the pay of the French troops.

At this period a Mughal Governor Jafar Ali, was in charge of the revenue administration of the Circars. So it was settled that if Jafar Ali, failed to remit the revenues to Bussy within the stipulated time, the sum should be made good from the treasury of the Nizam. Secondly, the safety of the person of

Salabat Jung was entrusted to the care of the French, and further, it was agreed that the Nizam should not interfere in the administration of the Subah of Carnatic. It was also mutually agreed, that in matters of general administration also, the Nizam should govern the country in accordance with the wishes of De Bussy. Bussy in his turn agreed to support and befriend Syed Lashkar Khan. Soon after receiving the patent for the Sarkars, Bussy, instructed the French agent at Machilipatnam to take charge of those territories, and he dispatched 150 Europeans and 2500 Sipahis to French commander Moracin at Machilipatnam, to bring those territories under the French control.

## **Death**

He was deposed by his brother, Asaf Jah II Mir Nizam Ali Khan Siddiqi, on 8 July 1762 and ordered held in Bidar Fort prison where he was killed on 16 September 1763. He was buried at Bidar outside the dargah of Multani pasha (bustan e Asifia by manik rao vital rao)

## **Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II**

**Mir Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II** (7 March 1734 – 6 August 1803) was the 2nd Nizam of Hyderabad State in South India between 1762 and 1803. He was born on 7 March 1734 as fourth son to Asaf Jah I and Umda Begum. His official name is *Asaf Jah II, Nizam ul-Mulk, Nizam ud-Daula, Nawab Mir Nizam 'Ali Khan, Fateh Jang, Sipah Salar, Nawab Subedar of the Deccan.*

# **Nizam of Hyderabad**

## **Faujdar of the Deccan**

Nizam Ali was appointed as the leading commander and administrator of the Deccan in the year 1759, his successful methods of fighting against the Marathas had earned him much repute as a capable commander.

## **Shah Alam II' – Subedar of the Deccan**

After the Marathas were routed during the Third Battle of Panipat in the year 1761,

Nizam Ali and his army of 60,000 immediately advanced and repulsed them as far as Puna and forced them to sue for lasting peace.

Nizam Ali then seized the Bidar Fort and later arrested Salabat Jung, this action of Nizam Ali Khan was ratified by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, who issued a Firman terminating Salabat Jung (supported by the French East India Company), from his position as the Subedar of Deccan and appointing Nizam Ali Khan Asaf Jah II as his successor.

## **Supporting Shah Alam II**

Immediately after recapturing the throne Shah Alam II in 1772, came under the influence of Nizam Ali Khan the Nizam of Hyderabad.

## **Nizam's intervention against the Peshwa**

In 1762, Raghunathrao allied with the Nizam due to mutual distrust and differences with Madhavrao Peshwa. The Nizam marched towards Poona, but little did he know that Rughunathrao was going to betray him. In 1763, Madhavrao I along with Rughunathrao defeated Nizam at Battle of Rakshasbhuvan and signed a treaty with the Marathas.

In 1795, he was defeated by Madhavrao II's Marathas at the Battle of Kharda and was forced to cede Daulatabad, Aurangabad and Sholapur and pay an indemnity of Rs. 30 million. A French general, Monsieur Raymond, served as his military leader, strategist and advisor.

## **Fall of Mysore**

The following year, he realized that the fall of Tipu Sultan was imminent and thus, he entered into a Subsidiary alliance with the British East India Company. Thus Hyderabad, which is in both area and population comparable to the United Kingdom, became a princely state within the British Raj.

## **Death**

Asaf Jah II died at Chowmahalla Palace, Hyderabad at the age of 69 on 6 August 1803.

## **Battle of Palkhed**

The **Battle of Palkhed** was fought on February 28, 1728 at the village of Palkhed, near the city of Nashik, Maharashtra, India between the Maratha Empire *Peshwa*, Baji Rao I and the Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah I of Hyderabad wherein, the Marathas defeated the Nizam.

## **Background**

The seeds of this battle go to the year 1713, when Maratha King Shahu, appointed Balaji Vishwanath as his *Peshwa* or Prime Minister. Within a decade, Balaji had managed to extract a significant amount of territory and wealth from the fragmenting Mughal Empire. In 1724, Mughal control lapsed, and Asaf Jah I, the 1st Nizam of Hyderabad declared himself independent of Mughal rule, thereby establishing his own kingdom known as Hyderabad Deccan.

The Nizam set about strengthening the province by attempting to control the growing influence of the Marathas.

He utilized a growing polarization in the Maratha Empire due to the claim of the title of King by both Shahu and Sambhaji II of Kolhapur.

The Nizam began supporting the Sambhaji II faction, which enraged Shahu who had been proclaimed as King. The Nizam further decided to halt Chauth given by many landowners of the Deccan province to the Marathas, as had been agreed by the Syed Brothers in 1719.

## **Battle**

The battle plan was set by the withdrawal of Baji Rao's army from the southern reaches of the Maratha empire during May 1727. This was followed by Shahu breaking off negotiations with the Nizam-ul-Mulk about restoration of the chauth.

The Nizam pursued Baji Rao's army around the vicinity of Pune for about six months, where Baji Rao executed a series of thrust and parry moves to finally corner the Nizam at Palkhed.

### **The Event**

Baji Rao and the Maratha armies were called back from the south, from the Karnataka campaign. In May 1727, Baji Rao then asked Shahu to break off negotiations with Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah I (Nizam-ul-Mulk had called for arbitration over the payment of the Chauth and sardeshmukhi) and started mobilizing an army. With the monsoons over and the land ready for this exciting campaign, Baji Rao moved towards Aurangabad.

After a skirmish near Jalna (the Marathas by now had become famous for their strategy of not engaging with the enemy) with Iwaz Khan (the General of Nizam-ul-Mulk), as could have been predicted, Baji Rao moved away from the battlefield, towards Burhanpur.

Nizam-ul-Mulk's army pursued Baji Rao. Baji Rao then moved westwards to Gujarat from North Khandesh. However, the Nizam-ul-Mulk gave up the pursuit and moved southward towards Pune. This is an interesting reason and comparison

between how the two armies functioned. The Nizam is known to have carried huge armies with him, including supplies to last for the duration of the campaign. In fact, the Nizam used to carry his *jenana* or womenfolk with him during his campaigns. The Maratha armies, however, were very light and found supplies on the way by plundering and looting out-posts on the way. As Nizam-ul-Mulk left the pursuit of Baji Rao and moved towards the headquarters of the Shahu stronghold, posts like Udaipur, Avasari, Pabal, Khed, and Narayangarh surrendered to Nizam-ul-Mulk, who then occupied Pune and advanced towards Supa, Patas, and Baramati.

### **Sambhaji II's Withdrawal**

In Baramati, Nizam-ul-Mulk got news of Baji Rao moving towards Aurangabad. Nizam-ul-Mulk began moving northwards to intercept the Maratha Army. By this time he was confident of crushing Baji Rao and his army. It was not to happen so. The Raja of Kolhapur, Sambhaji II refused to join him in this campaign against Baji Rao, *backing out at the last moment*. The Nizam was cornered in a waterless tract near Palkhed of 25 February 1728. Through Iwaz Khan, the Nizam-ul-Mulk sent out a word of his plight, and his army was allowed to move to the vicinity of the river. The Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar appointed Nizam-ul-Mulk as Subedar of Deccan.

### **Outcome**

The Nizam of Hyderabad was defeated by the Marathas, and Peshwa Baji Rao I made him sign a peace treaty on March 6, 1728 at the village of Mungi-Paithan.



By the treaty of Munji Shivagaon, the Nizam was forced to make certain concessions by the Peshwa.

- Chhatrapati Shahu was recognised as the sole Maratha ruler.
- Marathas were given the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of Deccan.
- Those revenue collectors driven out would be reappointed.
- The balance revenue was to be paid to Chhatrapati Shahu.

## Chapter 14

# **Chhatrasal, Ruler of Bundelkhand in the Battle of Malwa**

**Maharaja Chhatrasal** (4 May 1649 – 20 December 1731) was an early modern Indian king from the Bundela clan who fought against the Mughal Empire, and established his own kingdom in Bundelkhand.

## **Early life**

Chhatrasal was born at Kachar Kachnai in Tikamgarh, on 4 May 1649, to Champat Rai and Sarandha into the Bundela Rajput clan. He was a descendant of Rudra Pratap Singh of Orchha.

## **Power Struggle against the Mughals**

Chhatrasal was 12 when his father Champat Rai of Mahoba was killed by the Mughals during the reign of Aurangzeb. Inspired by Chhatrapati Shivaji's ideals he travelled to Maharashtra and sought guidance from him. Chhatrasal raised the banner of revolt against the Mughals in Bundelkhand at the age of 22, with an army of 5 horsemen and 25 swordsmen, in 1671. During the first ten years of his revolt he conquered a large tract of land between Chitrakoot, Chhatarpur and Panna on the east and Gwalior on the west. His domains stretched from Kalpi in the north to Sagar, Garhakota, Shahgarh and Damoh in the south. Some of the Mughal generals who were

defeated by him were Rohilla Khan, Kaliq, Munawwar Khan, Sadruddin, Sheikh Anwar, Sayyid Latif, Bahlol Khan and Abdus Ahmed. He maintained an army of 25,000 soldiers in Bundelkhand.

Chhatrasal was able to defeat the Mughals until he was attacked by Muhammad Khan Bangash on December 1728. Chhatrasal was 79 years old when he led his army against Bangash, after a severe battle Chhatrasal was defeated and was forced to retreat to his fort at Jaitpur.

The Mughals besieged him and conquered most of his territories. Chhatrasal made several attempts to ask the Baji Rao I, the Peshwa of Maratha Empire, for help. However, the Peshwa was busy and could not help Chhatrasal until March 1729. In a letter sent to Baji rao, Chhatrasal wrote: *"Know you Bajirao! That I am in the same plight in which the famous elephant was when caught by the crocodile. My valiant race is on the point of extinction. Come and save my honour"*.

Peshwa Baji rao I personally led his army towards Bundelkhand and attacked several Mughal outposts, the Mughal supplies were completely cut off by the swift Cavalry of the Peshwa. Bangash who was surprised by the sudden involvement of the Marathas, sent several letters to the Mughal emperor for aid, however upon being denied any help he started negotiations with Chhatrasal and Bajirao. Bangash was allowed to retreat on the condition that he never returns or shows aggression towards Bundelkhand. Chhatrasal rewarded the peshwa with large tracts of lands and diamond mines in Bundelkhand which helped the Marathas to gain access in Central and North India.

## **Relations with Bajirao I**

The Maratha Peshwa Baji Rao I's second wife Mastani was Chhatrasal's daughter born from his Muslim concubine. In his book *Mastani*, the historian D. G. Godse states that the relationship between Chhatrasal and Baji Rao I was like that of father and son.

Before his death on 20 December 1731, Chhatrasal bequeathed Mahoba and the surrounding area to Baji Rao I in return for Baji Rao's assistance against the Mughals. Also, Chhatrasal put an army of 5,000 men under service of Peshwa in Pune. Chhatrasal also payed 12 lakh rupees as a tribute to Maratha Emperor ( Chhatrapati ) so as to establish long time relationship with Satara royal family.

## **Patron of literature**

Chhatrasal was a patron of literature, and his court housed several noted poets. His eulogies written by Kavi Bhushan, Lal Kavi, Bakhshi Hansaraj and other court poets helped him gain lasting fame.

## **Religious views**

Chhatrasal was a disciple of Mahamati Prannathji and accepted him as his guru. Their meeting took place in Mau Sahaniya in 1683, a place near Panna. His nephew Dev Karanji who had met Swami Prannathji, earlier in Ramnagar, was instrumental for this meeting. Chhatrasal was highly

impressed of Prannathji and became his disciple. When Maharaja Chhatrasal came to meet him, he was going for a battle against Mughals. Swami Prannathji gave him his own sword and covered his head with a scarf, saying, "You will always be victorious. Diamond mines will be discovered in your land and you will become a great emperor." His prophecy came true and even today Panna region is famous for their diamond mines. Swami Prannathji was not only the religious Guru of Chhatrasal; but he guided him too in political, social, and economic matters. It was by being granted the boon of finding diamonds in Panna by Swami Prannathji that Maharaja Chhatrasal became prosperous.

## **Successors and descendants**

- Chhatrasal gave a third of his kingdom to Marathas under Peshwa Baji Rao I for his assistance, the other parts of his kingdom was divided amongst his sons. The eldest son, Harde Sah was given the kingdom of Panna State; second son, Jagat Rai was given Jaitpur State and the youngest son Bharti Chand was given Jaso State. The Jaitpur State was

further divided into Ajaigarh State, Bijawar State, Charkhari State and Chhatarpur State by his descendants.

## **Legacy**

The Chhatarpur town and its eponymous district in Madhya Pradesh are named after Chhatrasal. Several places in Chhatarpur, including the Maharaja Chhatrasal Museum,

Maharaja Chhatrasal Station Chhatarpur railway station (a railway station in Chhatarpur), are named after him. The Chhatrasal Stadium in Delhi is also named after the Maharaja Chhatrasal.

*Veer Chhatrasal* is a 1971 Indian historical film about the king by Harsukh Jagneshwar Bhatt, starring Ajit in the titular role. A series on him named *Chhatrasal*.

## **Bundelkhand**

**Bundelkhand** is a geographical and cultural region and also a mountain range in central & North India. The hilly region is now divided between the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, with the larger portion lying in the latter state.

Jhansi is the largest city in Bundelkhand and is a major cultural, educational, transport and economic hub.

Another major city of Bundelkhand is Sagar being second largest city of Bundelkhand and headquarter of Sagar Division.

Other towns are Konch, Kalpi, Chirgaon, Datia, Dabra, Mauranipur, Panna, Banda, Chitrakoot, Tikamgarh, Rath, Lalitpur, Damoh, Jalaun, Orai, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, Maudaha, Ashoknagar, Kalinjar, Chhatarpur and Gwalior

Among the well-known places of Bundelkhand is Khajuraho, which has numerous 10th-century sculptures devoted to fine living and eroticism. The mines of Panna have been the source of magnificent diamonds; a very large one dug from the last active mine was kept for a time in the fort of Kalinjar.

## **Etymology**

Bundelkhand means "Bundela domain". The region was earlier known as Jejabhukti or Jejakabhukti ("Jeja's province"). According to the inscriptions of the Chandela dynasty, this name derived from Jeja, the nickname of their ruler Jayashakti. However, it is possible that this name derives from an even earlier name of the region: "Jajhauti" or "Jijhoti" (khangar's capital). After the Bundelas replaced the Chandelas around 14th century, the region came to be known as Bundelkhand after them.

## **Geography**

- Bundelkhand lies between the Indo-Gangetic Plain to the north and the Vindhya Range to the south. It is a gently sloping upland, distinguished by barren hilly terrain with sparse vegetation, although it was historically forested. The plains of Bundelkhand are intersected by three mountain ranges, the Vindhya, Fauna and Bander chains, the highest elevation not exceeding 600 meters above sea-level. Beyond these ranges the country is further diversified by isolated hills rising abruptly from a common level, and presenting from their steep and nearly inaccessible scarps eligible sites for forts and strongholds of local kings. The general slope of the region is towards the northeast, as indicated by the course of the rivers which traverse or bound the territory, and finally discharge themselves into the Yamuna River.

The principal rivers are the Sindh, Betwa, Shahzad River, Ken, Bagahin, Tons Pahuj, Dhasan and Chambal. The Kali Sindh, rising in Malwa, marks the western frontier of Bundelkhand. Parallel to this river, but further east, is the course of the Betwa. Still farther to the east flows the Ken, followed in succession by the Bagahin and Tons (also known as Tamsa). The Yamuna and the Ken are the only two navigable rivers. Notwithstanding the large number of streams, the depression of their channels and height of their banks render them for the most part unsuitable for the purposes of irrigation, which is conducted by means of ponds and tanks. These artificial lakes are usually formed by throwing embankments across the lower extremities of valleys, and thus arresting and impounding the waters flowing through them.

## **Ecology**

Since 2007, Bundelkhand region has been facing severe drought problems. Normal rainy days in Bundelkhand is 52 days (metrological department of India) but last six years its restricted 24 days. Timing of Monsoon usually in this area is second week of June but, Year 2008 this season saw rains, but in the second week of June alone the region received around 32 percent of its total rainfall. Farmers were not prepared for sowing. Then till July 2008, most of the Bundelkhand region received around 55 percent of its total average rainfall. This change caused floods and widespread losses in livestock and top soil. In Bundelkhand region, average level of rainfall is 800–900 mm. (Ramesh et al. 2002), But, during the last six years Bundelkhand received only 400–450 mm annual rainfall. Agriculture production also decreased in this areas. In 2000, this region used to contribute 15 percent of the state's total



food grain production, which has now come down to 7 percent. A once food secure zone has now become a symbol of insecurity and migration due to climate change. In this area various livelihoods such as fishing, vegetable production and traditional betel leaf farming are facing one of the worst crises ever.

## **History**

### **Medieval Period & Maratha Rule**

After Khengar dynasty the Chandela clan ruled Bundelkhand from the 9th to the 16th centuries. In the early 14th century they were feudatories of the Pratiharas of Kannauj, and ruled from the fortress-city of Kalinjar. A dynastic struggle among the Pratiharas allowed the Chandelas and other feudatories to assert their independence. The Chandelas captured the strategic fortress of Gwalior. 10th century ruler Dhanga left many inscriptions, and endowed a large number of Jain and Hindu temples. Dhanga's grandson Vidyadhara expanded the Chandela kingdom to its greatest extent, extending the Chandela dominions to the Chambal River in the northwest and south to the Narmada River. The Afghan king Mahmud of Ghazni attacked the Chandela dominions during Vidyadhara's reign, but were repelled by the Chandela Rajputs. The Chandelas built the famous temple-city of Khajuraho between the mid-10th and mid-11th centuries. During the Chandela period, Bundelkhand was home to a flourishing Jain community and numerous Jain temples were built in that period.

In the 12th century, the Rajput Chauhan rulers of Ajmer challenged the Chandelas. The Muslim conquests of the early 13th century reduced the Chandela domains, although they survived until the 16th century as minor chieftains. Bundela Rajputs grew to prominence starting in the 16th century. Orchha was founded in the 16th century by the Bundela chief Rudra Pratap Singh, who became the first raja of Orchha. In 1545, Sher Shah Suri was killed while attempting to capture Kalinjar Fort from the local Bharshiva king.

The region came under Mughal rule from the 15th to 17th centuries, although the hilly, forested terrain of the sparsely populated region made it difficult to control. Akbar's governors at Kalpi, Jhansi, Allahabad maintained authority over the surrounding districts, and the Bundela chiefs were in a state of chronic revolt, which culminated in the war of independence under Chhatrasal. On the outbreak of his rebellion in 1671 he occupied a large province to the south of the Yamuna and eventually Mughals were forced to settle his claim over this newly won territory. Soon infighting spread in between Bundela Chiefs and Mughals seized this as an opportunity to ascertain their claim over this area again. The famous Mughal Governor Bangash Khan set out from Allahabad to capture Maharaj Chatrasal. One by one forts fell down and Maharaja Chatrasal was cornered in Jaitpura. After 6 months of fighting, he sends out a message to Peshwa Bajirao for help, which he equally responded. The Marathas contested severely and defeated Bangesh Khan in the pitched battle of Jaitpur and Mahoba. On his death in 1732, he bequeathed one-third of his dominions, including Jalaun, Jhansi and Banda domains to Peshwa allies, who in due time succeeded in controlling the whole of Bundelkhand, with the local rulers as tributaries to the

Marathas. Under Peshwa Rule, the Bundelkhand was divided into 11 personal subas of him and his families and relatives were posted in Kalpi, Shivpuri, Charkhari, Jalon, Mahoba, Jahnsi, Banda, Karwi, Kalinjar, Mathondh & Sagar. Peace and tranquility prevailed and the masses were at large saved from the tyranny of Mughals. However, the Peshwa - Bundela tussle continued by the fact that Bundelas always considered Peshwas entry into Bundelkhand as illegal. From 1732 to 1785, Maratha forces were the masters of India and people of Bundelkhand formed the much revrealined Peshwa Huzurat battalions of Maratahs. They fought in Punjab, Attock, Peshawar, Kashmir & Bengal. In 1761 Battle Of Panipath, Bundelkhand lost around 6 thousand soldiers in direct hand-to-hand combat battle with Durrannies, yet they were able to push Rohillas out of India. 1785 - 1787 was a period of resurgence in Bundela power, but was resisted by Ali Bahadur of Banda. He warred with the Bundelas and was successful in saving his dominions from them. The power center of Bundelkhand shifted from Jhansi to Banda and Ali bahadur declared himself Nawab of Banda. He is also called the " Conqueror of Bundelkhand " and was associated with both Peshwa & Bundela royalty by blood lines. After the fall of Pune in 1802, the East India Company signed the Treaty Of Bassein and Peshwas were granted a sanad in Bithoor. Bundelkhand was placed under newly created BUNDELKHAND AGENCY which signed separate treaties with 11 Peshwa Subas & Bundela states.

### **British rule, 1802–1947**

The Marathas ceded parts of Bundelkhand, which were later called **British Bundelkhand**, to the British in the 1802 Treaty

of Bassein. After 1802, many of the local rulers were granted *sanads* (leases) by the British, which entitled them to the lands they controlled at the death of Ali Bahadur, in return for the rulers signing a written bond of allegiance (*ikrarnama*) to the British. A political officer attached to the British forces in Bundelkhand supervised British relations with the '*sanad* states. In 1806 British protection was promised to the Maratha ruler of Jhansi, and in 1817 the British recognised his hereditary rights to Jhansi state. In 1818 the Peshwa in Pune ceded all his rights over Bundelkhand to the British at the conclusion of the Third Anglo-Maratha War.

In February 1832, a terrible state of famine here was reported in the *Samachar Darpan*, and this is reflected on in Letitia Elizabeth Landon's harrowing poem, *Scene in Bundelkhund*, published towards the end on that year.

📖 *Scene in Bundelkhund*, a poem by L. E. L..

The *sanad* states were organised into the **Bundelkhand Agency** in 1811, when a political agent to the Governor-General of India was appointed and headquartered at Banda . In 1818 the headquarters were moved to Kalpi, in 1824 to Hamirpur, and in 1832 back to Banda. The political agent was placed under the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, headquartered in Agra, in 1835. In 1849 authority over the Bundelkhand Agency was placed briefly under the Commissioner for the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories, who appointed a political assistant based at Jhansi. Shortly thereafter, authority over Bundelkhand was placed under the Resident at Gwalior, and the headquarters of the political assistant was moved to Nowgong, which remained until 1947. In 1853 the Raja of Jhansi died childless, and his

territory was annexed to British Bundelkhand. The Jhansi State and the Jalaun and Chanderi districts were then formed into a superintendency. In 1854 Bundelkhand Agency was placed under the authority of the newly created Central India Agency, headquartered at Indore.

The widow of the Raja of Jhansi, Rani Lakshmi Bai, protested against the annexation because her adopted son was not recognised as the heir to his adoptive father, and because the slaughter of cattle was permitted in the Jhansi territory. The Revolt of 1857 found Jhansi ripe for rebellion. In June a few brave men of the 12th native infantry seized the fort containing the treasure and magazine, and massacred the European officers of the garrison. The Rani put herself at the head of the rebels, and they captured several of the neighbouring British districts and princely states allied to the British. She died bravely in battle in Gwalior in 1858. It was not till November 1858 that Jhansi was brought under British control.

After the revolt, Jhansi was given to the Maharaja of Gwalior, but came under British rule in 1886 when it was swapped for Gwalior fort. In 1865 the political assistant was replaced with a political agent. The eastern portion of the Agency was detached to form Bagelkhand Agency in 1871. The state of Khaniadhana was transferred to the authority of the Gwalior Resident in 1888, and in 1896 Baraundha, Jaso, and the Chaube Jagirs were transferred to Bagelkhand. In 1901 there were 9 states, 13 estates, and the pargana of Alampur belonging to Indore State, with a total area of 9,851 sq mi (25,510 km) and a total population of 1,308,326 in 1901. The most important of the states were Orchha, Panna, Samthar, Charkhari, Chhatarpur, Datia, Bijawar and Ajaigarh State.

Deforestation accelerated during British rule. The population of the agency decreased 13% between 1891 and 1901 due to the effects of famine. In 1931 Bagelkhand Agency, with the exception of the state of Rewa State, was merged into Bundelkhand Agency.

## **Independent India, 1947–present**

After Indian independence in 1947, the princely states of Bundelkhand Agency were combined with those of the former Bagelkhand Agency to form the province of Vindhya Pradesh, which became an Indian state in 1950. On 1 November 1956, Vindhya Pradesh was merged into Madhya Pradesh.

Notorious dacoits like Phulan Devi, Nirbhay Gujar, Devi Singh and Moorath Singh besides other robber gangs once ruled the area.

## **Proposed Bundelkhand state**

Bundelkhand comprises parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. While Bahujan Samaj Party government under Mayawati had proposed in 2011 creation of Bundelkhand from seven districts of Uttar Pradesh, organizations such as Bundelkhand Akikrit Party (BAP) and Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha (BMM) want it to include six districts from Madhya Pradesh as well. Uma Bharati of Bharatiya Janata Party has promised separate state of Bundelkhand within three years if her party voted to power, during campaign for Loksabha Election, 2014 at Jhansi. Similar promise was made by Congress leader Pradeep Jain Aditya during Loksabha Election, 2014.

Since the early 1960s there has been a movement for establishing a Bundelkhand state or promoting development of the region. Bundelkhand is geographically the central part of India covering some part of Madhya Pradesh and some part of Uttar Pradesh. (At Sagar is the exact centre of the original undivided India: the granite bench mark by British surveyors indicating this is placed in the compound of a church in Sagar Cantonment.) In spite of being rich in minerals, the people of Bundelkhand are very poor and the region is underdeveloped and underrepresented in state and central politics. There are several local parties and organisations, some promoting further development of the region and some seeking statehood. The agrarian crisis and farmers' suicides are also cited as reasons for separate statehood.

- Uttar Pradesh
- In November 2011 Uttar Pradesh Council of Ministers proposed to split the state into four parts, with one part being Bundelkhand. The proposed state includes the following districts:
  - From Uttar Pradesh (three districts from Jhansi Division and four districts from Chitrakoot Division)
  - Jhansi (currently part of Jhansi Division)
  - Jalaun (currently part of Jhansi Division)
  - Lalitpur (currently part of Jhansi Division)
  - Chitrakoot (currently part of Chitrakoot Division)
  - Banda (currently part of Chitrakoot Division)
  - Hamirpur (currently part of Chitrakoot Division)
  - Mahoba (currently part of Chitrakoot Division)

However, a larger part of Bundelkhand as a linguistic region is in Madhya Pradesh.

- Madhya Pradesh
- From Madhya Pradesh (one district from Gwalior Division and six districts from Sagar Division)
- Datia (currently part of Gwalior Division)
- Chhatarpur (currently part of Sagar Division)
- Damoh (currently part of Sagar Division)
- Panna (currently part of Sagar Division)
- Sagar (currently part of Sagar Division)
- Tikamgarh (currently part of Sagar Division)
- Vidisha District (Bhopal division)
- Guna District (Gwalior division)
- Ashoknagar District (Gwalior division)

The last three are linguistically and culturally considered to be Bundelkhand although they were ruled by the Scindia rulers. In addition to the above districts, sometimes the following districts of Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan are considered as being part of Bundelkhand:

- Madhya Bharat/Gird region
- Bhind
- Gwalior
- Morena
- Sheopur
- Shivpuri
- Dhaulpur

## **Culture**

The Bundeli language is the most common of the Hindi dialects spoken in the area. It in turn consists of several sub-dialects. The accent varies in various regions even though unmistakably



of a single origin. The region is predominantly Hindu. However, Jainism is historically significant in Bundelkhand, and several Tirthas are located in this region. Many prominent Jain scholars of the 20th century have been from this region and also in historically significant tradition of Buddhism. Nag people's ancestor were preached buddha-dhamma.

## **Folk dances**

Bundelkhand has following folk dances. Badhai, Rai, Saira, Alha, Jawara, Akhada, Shaitan, Dhimrai.

## **Radio**

- A community radio station, Radio Bundelkhand, was launched in Orchha on 23 October 2008. It is an initiative of the Development Alternatives Group. The radio station broadcasts daily programs in the Bundeli dialect and devotes significant amount of its broadcast time to local issues, culture, education and the rich tradition of Bundeli folk music. The station is available on 90.4 MHz.

## **Prominent Bundelkhandis**

- Goswami Tulsidas, the author of Ramcharitmanas, born in Rajapur [on the bank of river Yamuna, Chitrakoot district].
- Keshavdas (1555 – 1617), usually known by the mononym Keshavdas or Keshavadasa, was a Sanskrit scholar & Hindi poet
- Taty Tope, Freedom Fighter 1857 War

- Major Dhyanchand
- Jhalkari Bai (22 November 1830 – 1858) was an Indian Koli woman soldier who played an important role in the Indian Rebellion of 1857 during the battle of Jhansi.
- Chhatrasal
- Rani Avantibai, (died 20 March 1858) Lodhi Queen of estate of Ramgarh, one of the key figures in the Indian Rebellion of 1857
- Rani Lakshmibai, (1828–1858) Maratha Queen of princely state of Jhansi, one of the key figures in the Indian Rebellion of 1857.
- Raghunath Vinayak Dhulekar MCA & Member of Parliament 1952, MLC & Speaker Vidhan Parishad 1958, notable pleader, Social leader
- Mastani Second wife of Peshwa Bajirao I, the prime minister. Daughter of Maharaja Chhatrasal
- Saumitra Rawat, Surgeon, Chairman and Head, Surgical Gastroenterology and Liver Transplant, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi; Bundelkhand Gaurav Samman, 2015 Padma Shri
- Maithili Sharan Gupt, National Hindi Poet
- Pandit Nathuram Premi (1881–1960), Prominent publisher of Hindi, Sanskrit and Urdu literature as well as Jain literature. Independent scholar, Jain historian and editor of several Jain works. Founder of Hindi Granth Ratnakar Karyalay (24 September 1912), Manikacandra Digambara Jain Granthamala and Jain Hitaishi.
- Phoolan Devi, (1963–2001) popularly known as "Bandit Queen", was an Indian dacoit and later a politician.

- Uma Bharti, Prominent BJP politician and the former MLA from Charkhari in UP's Bundelkhand region.
- Dr. Hari Singh Gaur, Member of Constitution draft committee and founder of University of Sagar. The University of Sagar was later named the Dr. Hari Singh Gour University by the state government in 1983.
- Vrindavan Lal Verma, Hindi novelist (Mrig Nayani, Jhansi Ki Rani)
- Indeevar, one of the leading Hindi film lyricists in 1960s and 70s
- Rani Durgavati, Queen of Gondwana (born to Chandelas of Mahoba / Kalinjar) immortalised owing to her bravery in defending her kingdom against invasion by Mughal emperor Akbar
- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, of Transcendental Meditation
- Harishankar Parsai - He was a noted satirist and humorist of modern Hindi literature and is known for his simple and direct style.
- Rajneesh - He was mystic, philosopher, acknowledged to be enlightened being by many
- Raja Bundela - Raja Bundela (Raja Rajeshwar Pratap Singh Judev) is an Indian actor, producer, politician and civil activist.
- Pankaj Mishra, Indian essayist and novelist
- Joy Mukherjee, Indian actor and director
- Ram Mukherjee, Indian director
- Sashadhar Mukherjee, producer of Hindi films
- Subodh Mukherjee, director, producer, writer of Hindi cinema.
- Subodh Khandekar, Olympian hockey player

- Tushar Khandekar, player on Indian national hockey team

## **Battle of Malwa**

The **Battle of Jaitpur** was fought between Maratha empire and Mughal empire in 1729. Muhammad Khan Bangash attacked the state of Chhatrasal in 1729. Chhatrasal appealed Bajirao I for help, who defeated Mughals in 1729 at Jaitpur.

## **Battle**

In Bundelkhand, Chhatrasal had rebelled against the Mughal Empire and established an independent kingdom. In December 1728, a Mughal force led by the distinguished commander Muhammad Khan Bangash attacked him, and besieged his fort with his family. Chhatrasal had repeatedly sought Peshwa Baji Rao's assistance, but the latter was busy in Malwa at that time.

In March 1729, the Peshwa Baji Rao I finally responded to Chhatrasal's request and marched towards Bundelkhand. Chhatrasal also escaped his captivity and joined the Maratha forces. After they marched to Jaitpur, as a result Bangash was forced to retreat from Bundelkhand. Chhatrasal's position as the ruler of Bundelkhand was restored.