



# **ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY**

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(A State University Established by the Government of Tamil Nadu)

**KARAIKUDI – 630 003**



## **Directorate of Distance Education**

### **B.A. (History)**

**II - Semester**

**108 23**

## **HISTORY OF INDIA (FROM 1707 TO 1947 A.D.)**

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**Vikas® Publishing House**

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E-28, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 7361, Ravindra Mansion, Ram Nagar, New Delhi 110 055

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**Work Order No. AU/DDE/DE1-291/Preparation and Printing of Course Materials/2018 Dated 19.11.2018 Copies - 500**

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## INTRODUCTION

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### NOTES

The period between 1707 and 1947 is extremely crucial in the history of India.

The advent of the Europeans for the purpose of trading later led to the invasion of the British in India who ruled over India for a long time. During the reign of the British,

India was exploited for its economic resources to a great extent. However, their rule also led to various reforms in the social, educational, commercial and judicial spheres in India. The World War I and World War II played an important role in arousing the spirit of nationalism among people.

Various freedom fighters fought for the Independence of the country in their own way. Finally, India became independent on 15th August 1947 and became a Republic on 26th January 1950 when the Constitution of India was enforced.

This book, *History of India (From 1707 to 1947 AD)*, is written keeping the distance learning student in mind. It is presented in a user-friendly format using a clear, lucid language. Each unit contains an Introduction and a list of Objectives to prepare the student for what to expect in the text. At the end of each unit are a Summary and a list of Key Words, to aid in recollection of concepts learnt. All units contain Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises, and strategically placed Check Your Progress questions so the student can keep track of what has been discussed.

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**BLOCK - I**  
**LATER MUGHALS AND ADVENT OF**  
**THE EUROPEANS**

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*Later Mughals and the  
Rise of the Marathas*

**NOTES**

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**UNIT 1 LATER MUGHALS**  
**AND THE RISE OF THE**  
**MARATHAS**

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**Structure**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The establishment of the Mughal Dynasty brought about many social and cultural changes in India. One of the last great Mughals was Aurangzeb, who had the largest area of India under his reign. Soon the religious policy adopted by him gradually distanced the loyal Hindus and Rajputs from his Empire. Around the same time, another great empire rose to power, led by Shivaji. Taking advantage of the numerous rebellions in the Mughal Dynasty, Shivaji soon overpowered them and annexed large parts of the Mughal Empire. The Mughal rulers after Aurangzeb are called the later Mughals.

With the fall of the Mughal Empire, the territories under its reign witnessed chaos and were fragmented into small princely states. Regional rulers who had till now nourished dreams of throwing out the Mughals started waging bitter wars. States like Awadh, Hyderabad, Punjab, and Mysore came to the fore. The Nawabs of Awadh and Hyderabad became mere puppets in the hands of the British. This unit deals with the rise of regional powers in

Bengal, Awadh, Punjab, Sindh, Hyderabad and Mysore. It will also discuss the rise of the Maratha Empire.

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### 1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the rise of regional kingdoms during the 18th century
- Examine the rise and fall of the Maratha Empire
- Describe the causes and consequences of the Third Battle of Panipat

### 1.2 LATER MUGHALS

After the death of Aurangzeb, no new emperor arrived at the scene who could compare with the legacy of the great Mughal emperors of the past. Muhammad Shah, Ahmad Shah Bahadur, Alamgir II, Shah Alam-II, and so on, were all weak leaders who were not able to sort the rot in the empire. Over time, the power of the Mughal emperor began to weaken. With the centre weakening, regional players began to take centre stage in India. Let us discuss these various regional kingdoms that began to emerge.

#### 1.2.1 Bengal

In 1717, the Mughal emperor issued a *firman* by which it granted special benefits to the English East India Company, namely, exemption of taxes on goods imported and exported from Bengal. However, this concession did not ensure that they could trade in Bengal without paying any taxes. The Company servants like other Indian traders had to pay taxes. This misinterpretation of the *firman* became a constant cause of dispute between the Nawabs of Bengal and the Company. All the Nawabs of Bengal, beginning from Murshid Quli Khan to Alivardi Khan, refused to sympathize with the Company's misconstrued explanation of the *firman* and even forced them to pay a huge amount as indemnity if they used the *dastaks* wrongly.

In 1741, when Muhammad Shah Rangila was the Mughal sovereign, Alivardi Khan, the governor of Bengal, announced himself independent and established his capital at Murshidabad. In 1756, with Alivardi's demise and in the absence of any rightful successor, several factions vied with each other to make their chosen candidate the Nawab of Bengal. Though Alivardi wanted his grandson, Siraj-ud-Daula, son of his youngest daughter, to acquire the nawabship, the latter's succession to the throne was not accepted by other contenders, such as Shaukat Jang (*faujdar* of Purnea) and Ghasiti Begam, eldest daughter of Alivardi. In the wake of increasing court intrigues, the English East India Company took the opportunity to win factions in

their favour and work against the Nawab and thereby lead to a headlong confrontation with the Nawab.

As Bengal, in the eighteenth century, was the most prosperous province, the English East India Company considered it economically and politically extremely lucrative. Hence, it is natural that they wanted to consolidate their position further in Bengal. They wanted to base their operations in Calcutta. There were other European contenders too in Bengal, namely, the Dutch, having their factory at Chinsura and the French with their factory at Chandernagor. Siraj-ud-Daula became the Nawab of Bengal in 1756. Apart from having several foes in the family who were not happy with the succession, he was immature and lacked adequate skills to tackle the situation. In the South, the English East India Company and the French were vying against each other. Without seeking Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah's consent, the English began to build fortifications in Calcutta. They even chose to disregard the Nawab's order to curtail augmentation of their military resources and abuse the use of *dastaks* granted to them by the *firman* of 1717. Also, Company servants began misusing the concessions granted by the *firman* of 1717 by extending the privileges over their private trade too. Causing further economic loss to Bengal, the officials began to profit by selling off the *dastaks* to the Indian merchants. Another cause of discontentment towards the English for Siraj was their conscious move to give protection to Siraj's foe Krishna Das, son of Raja Rajballava. The intrigue between the Nawabs of Bengal and the British was to play a vital role in the emergence of the British as the paramount power later on in the century.

### 1.2.2 Awadh

After the waning of the Mughal Empire, the second half of the 18th century witnessed gradual expansion of the British East India Company's role in North India and this had a strong bearing on the economy and politics of Awadh. Until 1801, Awadh was treated as a buffer state protecting Bengal against the powers of the Marathas and the question of encroachment and annexation did not arise. It was only around the turn of the 19th century that Awadh became a block to further British expansion. This eventually led to the takeover of the province in 1856.

The enmity between Awadh and the English started in 1764 with the Battle of Buxar. In this battle, the English defeated the combined forces of the Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh, Mughal emperor Shah Alam and Nawab of Bengal, Mir Qasim. After the battle, the Treaty of Allahabad was signed between the Nawab of Awadh and the British. According to this treaty, Shuja-ud-Daula was allowed to retain Awadh. However, Kora and Allahabad were ceded to the Mughal emperor. A war indemnity of ₹ 50,00,000 to be paid in instalments was imposed on Shuja who entered into a reciprocal arrangement with the company for defence of each other's territory. The Nawabs were

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aware of the company's burgeoning strength and aspirations and, like the Bengal Nawabs, they were not prepared to let go without at least a semblance of a struggle. This assumed, in the initial stages, the form of a concerted drive against British commercial penetration of Awadh. Alongside, a major reorganization and reform of the Awadh army was initiated.

The military reforms initiated by Shuja-ud-Daula after the humiliation at Buxar were not intended to either intimidate the English or promote a war against them. Rather, it would seem that the overall military effort reflected the Nawab's anxiety to defend his political authority at a time when it was being steadily undermined by the alien company. For the Company, Awadh was too important and lucrative a province to be left alone. Its vast amount of revenue could be used to subsidize the company's armies. In carefully planned stages, the company stepped up its fiscal demands. In 1773, the first definitive treaty was concluded between Awadh and the English East India Company. By this treaty, the Nawab agreed to pay ₹ 2,10,000 monthly for each brigade of company troops that would remain present in Awadh or Allahabad. This provision established the beginning of Awadh's chronic indebtedness to the Company and represented the initial British thrust into the region's political system.

It was in and after 1775 that the vulnerability of the nawabi came into sharp focus. It was also in these years, ironically enough, that the emergence of a provincial cultural identity centered on the new court and capital at Lucknow (the capital had been shifted from Fyzabad) was more clearly identifiable than before. Asaf-ud-Daula's succession to the throne in 1775 went without a hitch notwithstanding the hostility of some of Shuja's courtiers and of the opposition faction of his brother Saadat Ali, the Governor of Rohilkhand. Soon, however, under the stewardship of Murtaza Khan (Asaf's favourite who received the exalted title of Mukhtar-ud-Daula), the stability of the existing political set up was strengthened as older nobles and generals were displaced. Furthermore, Mukhtar allowed the Company to negotiate a treaty with the Nawab ceding to English control the territories surrounding Benaras, north to Jaunpur and west to Allahabad, then held by Chait Singh. The treaty also fixed a larger subsidy than before for the Company brigade and excluded the Mughal emperor from all future Anglo-Nawabi transactions. Finally all diplomatic transactions and foreign intelligence were to be controlled by the English through the resident at the Nawab's court. The disintegration of the political system, the blatant intervention of the English in Awadh's affairs and Asaf-ud-Daula's excessively indulgent disposition and disregard of political affairs alarmed a sizeable section of the Awadh nobility. The situation worsened as troops were in arrears and at places mutinied. These acts of disturbance and lawlessness smoothened the way for British intervention. In the 1770s, the English East India Company persistently eroded the basis of Awadh's sovereignty. The rapid inroads of the English made by virtue of

their military presence seriously undermined the Nawabi regime which in 1780 came up with the first declaration of protest. The supreme government in Calcutta was forced to realize that unremitting pressure on Awadh's resources could not be sustained indefinitely and that the excessive intervention of the English Resident would have to be curtailed if Awadh's usefulness as a subsidiary was to be guaranteed.

Thus, in 1784, Warren Hastings entered into a new series of arrangements with Asaf-ud-Daula which reduced the debt by ₹ 50 lakh and thereby, the pressure on the Awadh regime. In the following decade and a half, the Awadh regime continued to function as a semi-autonomous regional power whose relations with the company were cordial. This state of affairs lasted until 1797, the year of Asaf's demise, when the British once more intervened in the succession issue. Wazir Ali, Asaf's chosen successor, was deposed in favour of Saadat Ali. With Saadat Ali a formal treaty was signed on 21 February 1798 which increased the subsidy to ₹ 76 lakh yearly.

A more forward policy was initiated by Lord Wellesley who arrived in 1798 only to reject the Awadh system. The Nawab's declaration of inability to pay the increased financial demand of the company gave Wellesley a suitable pretext to contemplate annexation. In September 1801, Henry Wellesley arrived in Lucknow to force Saadat's surrender of his whole territory. After protracted negotiations, the company accepted the perpetual sovereignty of Rohilkhand, Gorakhpur and the Doab which yielded a gross amount of ₹ 1 crore 35 lakh. The annexations inaugurated anew era in Anglo-Awadh relations. The shrunken subah could no longer pose a threat to the stability of the Company dominions nor did the rulers of Awadh entertain any notion of resistance to the relentless forward march of the English. Deprived of their army and half of their territory, they concentrated their energies in cultural pursuits.

In this, they were following the footsteps of Asaf-ud-Daula, who had built up around the Lucknow court a vibrant and living cultural arena. The patronage extended to luminaries and poets like Mirza Rafi Sauda (1713-86) and Mir Ghulam Hasan (1734-86). Lucknow had been a second home for these sensitive men of letters who had left Delhi and lamented for the world they had loved and lost. The assumption of imperial status by Ghazi-ud-din-Hyder (1819) and the formal revocation of Mughal sovereignty was an integral part of the blooming court culture of Awadh. But this coincided with the decline in the ruler's control over the administration and province. The heavy price that had to be continually paid to the Company for 'protection', the devolution of administrative responsibility to ministers, and the dominant position of the British Resident, were facts which no regal pomp and ceremony could conceal.

The Nawab of Awadh had many heirs and could not, therefore, be covered by the Doctrine of Lapse. Some other pretext had to be found for

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depriving him of his dominions. Finally, Lord Dalhousie hit upon the idea of alleviating the plight of the people of Awadh. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was accused of having misgoverned his state and of refusing to introduce reforms. His state was, therefore, annexed in 1856. Undoubtedly, the degeneration of the administration of Awadh was a painful reality for its people.

### 1.2.3 Hyderabad

Six Deccan subahs of the Mughal Empire made up the area of Hyderabad. Since the Mughals were constantly involved in a struggle with the warring Marathas, they had neglected to consolidate the newly-conquered Deccan region. After Aurangzeb had died, an ambitious Zulfiqar Khan, who had hitherto been the strongest and most influential general of Aurangzeb, vowed to seize control of the Deccan subahs. To do so, he decided to befriend the Mughal enemies—the Marathas—and entered into a secret pact with them. Since Khan was a Shia Muslim, his ambition was to establish a Shia kingdom where Bijapur and Golconda had been. But he was not the only one with his eye on the coveted prize of these two states. Chin Qilich Khan (later known as Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah) was a powerful mansabdar who also wanted to set up an independent state in the Deccan.

Zulfiqar Khan and Chin Qilich Khan had been enemies for a long time, since they belonged to two warring camps in the Mughal court—Irani and Turani. However, after Aurangzeb died, Zulfiqar Khan had a slight edge because his father Asad Khan, had been the wazir in Aurangzeb's time and managed to maintain his influence for much longer after the Emperor died. Zulfiqar came even closer to realizing his ambition when in 1708, he was granted the vice-royalty of the Deccan by Bahadur Shah I. He held that post until his death in 1713 at the hands of his killer, Farrukh-Siyar.

Immediately after Aurangzeb died, as was the norm, his sons started fighting among themselves to take over the throne. However, Chin Qilich Khan remained neutral at his post in Bijapur. He was made the Governor of Awadh and *Faujdar* of Gorakhpur by Bahadur Shah on 9 December 1707. He was thus removed from Bijapur where his ambitions had lain. When Bahadur Shah eventually came close to the end of his reign, Chin Qilich Khan rejoined public service because he saw another opportunity for gaining power. However, the reigns of the Deccan were handed over to Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1713 by Farrukh-Siyar, who gave Nizam-ul-Mulk prestigious titles like Khan Khana and Bahadur Fatehjang in return for his services. The new Governor, Nizam-ul-Mulk, was an ambitious man and aspired to rule the Deccan region independently of the Mughal interference.

Nizam-ul-Mulk was a shrewd and tactful administrator. He wanted to suppress the Marathas and to do so, he put a stop to the payment of 'chauth' and incited the already proud and selfish Maratha chiefs against the Sahu. In the meantime, at the Delhi court a number of political intrigues were



brewing and as a result, Nizam-ul-Mulk was summoned from the Deccan close to the end of 1715 and replaced by Husain Ali. Nizam-ul-Mulk was sent to control Muradabad and later to Bihar. While he was still preparing to assume charge of his new duties Farrukh-Siyar fell and Nizam-ul-Mulk was transferred again, this time to Malwa. This time, he received the pledge that he would not be transferred again.

It was finally in Malwa that Nizam-ul-Mulk came into his own as a great leader. He became so popular that the Sayyid brother became jealous of him and he was summoned back to the court. However, Nizam-ul-Mulk was not happy with this decision and rebelled against it—he led the army to take control of Asirgarh in May 1720 and three days later, Burhanpur. The Sayyid brothers sent Sayyid Dilawar Ali Khan and Alam Ali Khan to overcome Nizam-ul-Mulk. However, Dilawar Ali Khan tasted defeat in June 1720 and Alam Ali Khan was killed in the battle. Husain Ali was also murdered when he was on his way to the Deccan, on 8 October 1720. Sayyid Abdullah was also killed soon after.

Once the Sayyid brothers were out of his way, Nizam-ul-Mulk appointed himself the ruler of the six subahs of the Deccan and shifted his attention to overpowering the Marathas. In February 1722, his feats were recognized by the Mughal ruler and he was granted the office of the Wazir of the Mughal Empire, which he remained until 1724. He was a strict disciplinarian and tried to rule the court with an iron hand. However, the hangers-on at the court did not like this. They spread stories about him to the king. As a wazir, his tenure was highly dissatisfying for him, even though he managed to add Malwa and Gujarat to the Deccan area.

Once he found out that he was not appreciated at the court, he left for the Deccan without taking leave of the emperor. Obviously, the emperor felt insulted and appointed Mubariz Khan as the Viceroy of the Deccan and ordered the new Viceroy to bring the Nizam to the court, dead or alive. But the Nizam was not so easily defeated and he killed Mubariz Khan and sent his head to the emperor instead. Nizam-ul-Mulk also defeated Mubariz Khan's son and overtook the reigns of Hyderabad in early 1725.

The historian, Irvine, writes, 'From this period may be dated Nizam-ul-Mulk's virtual independence and the foundation of the present Hyderabad state.' The Nizam started his rule in earnest and appointed officers for various posts, besides promoting his favourites and conferring titles upon the deserving officers. He also issued assignments on land revenue according to his own idea of administration. While in all other ways, he was like a king, he refrained from overt royal manifestations like the use of scarlet or imperial umbrella, the recitation of the Friday prayer in his own name and the issue of coins stamped with his own superscription.

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Nizam-ul-Malik was an intelligent ruler and gauged the intentions of the Marathas, specifically Peshwa Baji Rao I, to oppose his independent rule in the Deccan. He decided thus to take preventive measures. At the same time, there were many Maratha chieftains who were dissatisfied with the Peshwa and the Nizam got them to his side. The battle between the Nizam and supporters and Peshwa Baji Rao I continued for five years—from 1727 to 1732. In 1728, the Nizam was defeated at Palkhed. His main supporter, Senapati Trimbak Rao Dabhade, was killed later in 1731.

Nizam-ul-Mulk realized that he needed to negotiate a mutually beneficial treaty with the Peshwa, who also wanted peace after such a long period of strife and wanted Nizam's support for his expeditions to the north. The two leaders managed to reach a compromise in December 1732 which gave the Nizam freedom to expand his empire in the south and the Peshwa to expand his empire in the north.

When Peshwa Baji Rao I suddenly died soon after, the Nizam was summoned by the emperor and he reached Delhi in July 1737. Here, the Nizam was given the title of Asaf Jah. The Nizam then proceeded to Malwa but was overpowered by Peshwa Baji Rao near Bhopal and forced to sign a humiliating peace treaty in January 1738. The Nizam had to sign away the subedari of Malwa to Baji Rao as well as the area between rivers Narmada and Chambal.

After the attack of Nadir Shah on the Mughal India, the Nizam was summoned to Delhi by the emperor who wanted the Nizam to finalize a peace treaty with Nadir Shah. The Nizam succeeded in this task but it didn't amount to much due to the intervention of Saadat Ali Khan.

Nizam-ul-Mulk controlled the Deccan region until he died in 1748. He maintained his loyalty to the Mughal ruler and rejected Nadir Shah's offer of gaining control of the throne in Delhi. Not only was Nizam-ul-Mulk an able general and a thoughtful, progressive administrator but he was a shrewd statesman and diplomat as well. He helped to uplift the regions under his reigns financially by successfully suppressing the refractory chiefs, over-ambitious officers and robbers. He promoted trade through his measured revenue assessment and taxation policies. Religion-wise also, he was tolerant and progressive. His right hand man was Puran Chand, designated as Diwan.

After Nizam-ul-Mulk died, a war of succession followed which ultimately became interlinked with the Anglo-French dispute in the Deccan. It was finally in 1762 that India reached a level of political stability when Nizam Ali came to the throne and ruled for over 40 years. After the English East India company started to establish itself and Lord Wellesley was the administrator, the Nizam entered into a subsidiary alliance with them and became their ally.

### 1.2.4 Punjab

Ranjit Singh made himself the master of Punjab. The first regular contact between Ranjit Singh and the British seems to have been made in 1800, when India was threatened by an invasion of Zaman Shah, the Afghan ruler who had been invited by Tipu Sultan, a bitter enemy of the British. As a precautionary measure, the British sent Munshi Yusuf Ali to the court of Ranjit Singh with rich presents to win the Maharaja over to the British side. Soon, however, he learnt that the danger of Zaman Shah's invasion receded and Yusuf Ali was recalled.

The second contact was made in 1805, when the Maratha chief Holkar entered Punjab with help from Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh had gone to conquer Multan and Jhang but came to Amritsar on learning about Holkar's arrival. He called a meeting of a Sarbat Khalsa to decide about the policy to be followed towards Holkar. Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Bhag Singh of Jind advised Ranjit Singh not to come in conflict with the British by helping Holkar. Ranjit Singh told Holkar politely that he would not help him against the British. General Lake and Maharaja Ranjit Singh concluded an agreement in January, 1806.

As the danger of French invasion on India became remote, the English adopted a stern policy towards Ranjit Singh. He was given a note by the Governor General Metcalfe which contained some soft-worded warnings against his aggressive policy. Ranjit Singh was asked to restore all the places he had taken possession of since 1806 to the former possessors which will confine his army right to the bank of the Sutlej. Ranjit Singh was not prepared to accept the demand. However, he withdrew his troops from Ambala and Saniwal but continued to retain Faridkot. Ranjit Singh fortified the fort of Govindgarh. But in the last stage, Ranjit Singh changed his mind and agreed to sign the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809.

One of the effects of the treaty of Amritsar was that the British government was able to take the Sutlej states under its protection. Ranjit Singh's advance in the east was checked but he was given a carte blanche so far as the region to the west of the Sutlej was concerned.

The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in June 1839 was followed by political instability and rapid changes of government in the Punjab. Selfish and corrupt leaders came to the front. Ultimately, power fell into the hands of the brave and patriotic but utterly indisciplined army. This led the British to look greedily across the Sutlej upon the land of the five rivers even though they had signed a treaty in 1809. Figure 1.1 shows a map displaying the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

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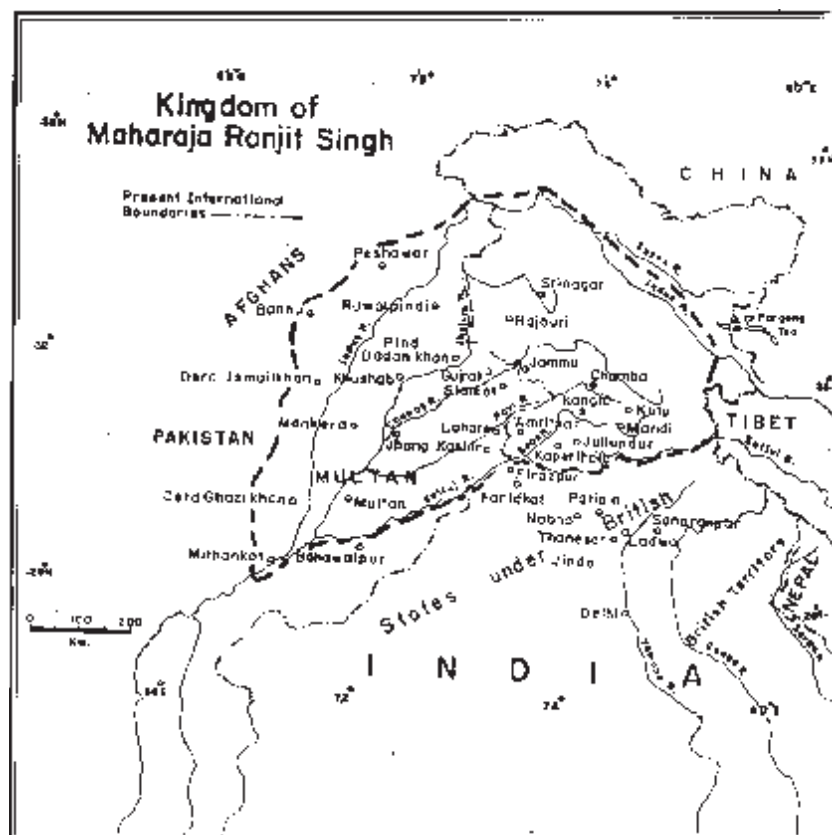


Fig. 1.1 Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

### First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–1846)

The First Anglo-Sikh War was fought at Mudki on 18 December 1845 and the Sikhs were defeated. The English again won the battle at Ferozepur on December 21. The Sikhs, under Ranjit Singh Majithia, however, defeated the English at Buddwal on 21 January 1846. But, the Sikhs were again defeated at Aliwal on January 28. The decisive battle was fought at Sobraon on 10 February 1846 and the Sikhs were routed. The English then crossed the Sutlej on February 13 and captured the capital of Lahore on February 20. As the Sikhs were absolutely beaten, many people advised Lord Hardinge to annex the Empire, but he did not accept this.

The war came to an end by the Treaty of Lahore which was signed on 9 March 1846. This treaty left the Sikhs with no capacity for resisting the English. Another treaty was made with the Sikhs on 16 December 1846. This treaty is known as the 'Second Treaty of Lahore' or the 'Treaty of Bhairowal'.

### Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–1849)

The Sikhs considered their defeat in the first Sikh War as a great humiliation. They had been accustomed to victories during the time of Ranjit Singh and

this defeat gave a rude shock to their mentality. The Sikhs wanted to restore the fallen fortunes of their kingdom and the Second Anglo-Sikh War was fought between them in 1848–1849.

Lord Gough, the British Commander-in-Chief, reached Lahore with the grand army of the Punjab on 13 November. On 22 November, the rebels were defeated in a battle at Ramnagar. Another indecisive action was fought at Sadullapur on 3 December.

### Third Anglo-Sikh War (1849)

The third battle was fought on 13 January 1849 at Chelianwala. On 21 February, Lord Gough met the Sikhs in another battle at Derajat. The Sikhs were utterly defeated. They surrendered themselves at Rawalpindi.

The complete defeat of the Sikhs sealed the fate of their kingdom. Lord Dalhousie, on his own responsibility, annexed Punjab on 29 March 1849.

The annexation of Punjab extended the British territories in India up to the natural frontiers of India towards the northwest. Besides, after the destruction of the power of the Sikhs, there remained no active power which could pose a threat to the security of the English in India.

#### Check Your Progress

1. What was the firman that was issued by the Mughal emperor in 1717?
2. When did the enmity between Awadh and the English begin?

## 1.3 RISE OF MARATHA POWER

Nearly three months after the Aurangzeb's death, Sambhaji's son Sahu (born on 18 May 1682) who had been in Mughal captivity since November 3, 1689 was liberated on 8 May 1707 by Aurangzeb's second son, who ascended the throne as Bahadur Shah I. Sahu was recognized as the king of the Marathas and his right to the Maratha swaraj and to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccani *subahs* of the Mughals was also probably recognized. The Mughal suzerainty was protected through the arrangement that he would rule as a vassal of the Empire. The intention of the Mughals was to end long-drawn wars in the Deccan or to create dissensions in the Maratha camp. Both situations were advantageous to the Mughals and they were not disappointed. Sahu's release was followed by a civil war between the forces of Tarabai and Sahu, which lasted up to 1714.

### Balaji Viswanath (1713-1720)

Balaji Viswanath began his career as a small revenue official and was given the title of '*Sena Karte*' (maker of the army) by Shahu in 1708. He became

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Peshwa in 1713 and made the post the most important and powerful as well as hereditary. He played a crucial role in the final victory of Shahu by winning over almost all the Maratha sardars to the side of Shahu.

He concluded an agreement with the Sayyid brothers (1719) by which the Mughal Emperor (Farukh Siyar) recognized Shahu as the king of the Swarajya. Balaji's character and capacity and the peculiar circumstances of the country favoured the rise of the Peshwas to power and renown. One of the first things Balaji was called upon to do was to secure the restoration of Sahu's mother to him from the custody of the Mughals who had detained her at Delhi as hostage for the good behaviour of her son Sahu, Balaji opened direct negotiations with the Saiyid brothers and in February 1719 all his demands were accepted.

Accordingly Sahu's mother and family was released, he was recognized as the ruler of Shivaji's home dominions and was allowed to collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from the six *subahs* of the Deccan, as also in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In return for all this, the Marathas were expected to keep a contingent on 15,000 horses in the service of the Mughals and to maintain order in the Deccan. Balaji's success in Delhi greatly increased his power and prestige. Balaji Vishwanath has been rightly called the 'second founder of the Maratha state'.

He perceived that the revival of Maratha power in its old monarchical form was no longer possible and it would be difficult to harness the nation's military resources to the common cause unless concessions were made to the great warlords who had won an important place for themselves. He made them subordinate allies or confederates of the sovereign, granting them a free hand in administering their conquests and called from them no greater sacrifice than uniting on matters of common policy. This arrangement, however, left too much authority in the hands of these chiefs, without providing for checks to call them to account, which was responsible for the speedy expansion of the Maratha power and its rapid dissolution. The term of Balaji's peshwaship marks the transition from the royal period to the age of the Peshwas.

Balaji has been credited with 'a mastery of finance'. Though constantly engaged in war and diplomacy, he took firm measures to put a stop to anarchy in the kingdom. He suppressed freebooters and restored civil government. Solid foundations were laid for a well-organized revenue system in the Swaraj territory, which was under direct royal administration.

### **Baji Rao I (1720-1740)**

Baji Rao, the eldest son of Balaji Viswanath, succeeded him as peshwa at the young age of twenty. He was considered the greatest exponent of guerrilla tactics after Shivaji and Maratha power reached its zenith under him.



Under him, several Maratha families became prominent and got themselves entrenched in different parts of India. Some of these places were as follows:

- Gaekwad at Baroda
- Bhonsles at Nagpur
- Holkars at Indore
- Scindias at Gwalior
- Peshwas at Pune

After defeating and expelling the Siddhis of Janjira from the mainland (1722), he conquered Bassein and Salsette from the Portuguese (1733). He also defeated the Nizam-ul-Mulk near Bhopal and concluded the Treaty of Durai Sarai by which he got Malwa and Bundelkhand from the latter (1737). He led innumerable successful expeditions into north India to weaken the Mughal Empire and to make the Marathas the supreme power in India.

### **Balaji Baji Rao (1740-1761)**

Balaji Baji Rao was popularly known as 'Nana Saheb'. He succeeded his father at the age of twenty. After the death of his father, the management of all state affairs was left in his hands. In an agreement with the Mughal emperor (Ahmad Shah), the peshwa (1752) was to protect the Mughal Empire from the internal and the external (Ahmad Shah Abdali) enemies in return for the *chauth*. He remained dependent on the advice and guidance of his cousin Sadashiva Rao Bhau.

With regard to the future policy of his government, he asked Sadashiva Rao Bhau to continue the policies of his father and said 'The elder Bajirao achieved great deeds in the devoted service of the king. But his life was cut short. You are his son, and you ought to consummate his policy of conquering the whole of Hindustan and establish an Empire and lead your horses beyond Attock.'

One of the earliest achievements of Nana Saheb was better financial management of the Empire by exercising careful supervision over all financial transactions. He later discussed the affairs of northern India with Holkar and Scindia and in April 1742 marched northwards to consolidate the Maratha authority in Bundelkhand. In 1743 he undertook the second expedition to the north to help Ali Vardi Khan (in Bengal) whose territories had been ravaged by Raghuji Bhonsle. The Peshwa reached Murshidabad and met Ali Vardi Khan who agreed to pay him the *chauth* for Bengal and ₹22 lakh to the Peshwa for the expenses of his expedition. By this arrangement the Peshwa freed Ali Vardi Khan's territories from the ravages of Raghuji's troops. During the first half of his Peshwaship he established Maratha supremacy in Karnataka and sent expeditions to Rajputana.

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Sahu died childless on 15 December 1749. He had nominated Ramaraja, a grandson of Tarabai, as his successor before his death. Ramaraja was crowned as Chhatrapati in January 1750. Since he was weak and incompetent, Tarabai tried to make him a puppet in her own hands, which caused utter confusion and crisis in the Maratha kingdom; it deepened further when the Peshwa learnt that Ramaraja was not the grandson of Tarabai but an impostor. When this fact came to knowledge, the Chhatrapati was virtually confined in the fort at Satara and lost all contacts with political developments. Hence forth, Pune became the real capital of the Maratha confederacy and the peshwa its virtual ruler.

During the second period of Balaji's regime (1751–1761), four campaigns were organized in the north. The Punjab politics was at the time in a confused state and as a result the first two invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the subahs of Lahore, Multan and Kashmir were annexed by Abdali to his dominions. After the third invasion, the Mughal wazir, Safdarjung, persuaded the Emperor to enter into an agreement with the Marathas in May 1752 for undertaking defence of the Empire against its internal and external foes. In return the Marathas were to get the *chauth* of the north-western provinces usurped and occupied by the Afghans. However, that *chauth* could only be secured by the actual conquest. The Marathas were also given the *subahs* of Agra and Ajmer. As a result of this agreement the Maratha military force was posted at Delhi and they repeatedly interfered in the politics of North India and established their supremacy at Delhi.

This arrangement would have marked the fulfillment of Balaji Baji Rao's dream of 'a Mughal–Maratha alliance for the governance of India as a whole'. But Safdarjung lost his wazirship and retired to Awadh in 1753, and power in the imperial court passed to Imad-ul-Mulk, grandson of Nizam ul-Mulk. He terrorized the helpless Emperor with Maratha help and secured the office of wazir, dethroned Ahmad Shah and placed Alamgir II, grandson of Bahadur Shah, on the imperial throne in 1754.

There was a wazir of Delhi whose rule was so barren of good result and so full of misery to himself and to the empire, to his friends and foes alike, as Imad-ul-Mulk's. At first he 'clung like a helpless infant to the breast of the Marathas'; but being unable to continue 'the cash nexus on which alone Maratha friendship depended', he agreed to Ahmad Shah Abdali's project of ousting the Marathas from the Doab and Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh, son and successor of Safdarjung, from provincial governorship (1757). This drew Shuja-ud-Daula, Surajmal Jat and the Marathas together and left Imad-ul-Mulk utterly friendless during the absence of Abdali from India. As per the above arrangements early in 1758, Raghunath Rao, accompanied by Malhar Rao Holkar, entered the Punjab. He was joined by Adina Beg Khan and the Sikhs. Sirhind fell, Lahore was occupied and the Afghans were expelled (April 1758). Timur Shah fled, pursued by the Marathas up to the Chenab. They



did not cross the river because it was too deep for fording and the districts beyond it were inhabited mostly by the Afghans.

Raghunath Rao returned from Punjab after leaving the province in the charge of Adina Beg Khan. Confusion followed the latter's death a few months later (October 1758). The Peshwa sent a large army under Dattaji Scindia who reached the eastern bank of the Sutlej (April 1759), and sent Sabaji Scindia to Lahore to take over the governorship of the province. Within a few months, a strong army sent by Abdali crossed the Indus. Sabaji fell back precipitately, abandoning the entire province of the Punjab to the Afghans. Abdali established his government at Lahore, resumed his march and entered Sirhind (November 1759).

The Maratha adventure in the Punjab has been acclaimed by some historians as 'carrying the Hindu paramount up to Attock'. It is doubtful if the Maratha army actually advanced as far as Attock and the collection of revenue in the trans-Chenab district was a purely temporary affair. The peshwa did not realize that the Punjab could not be retained without keeping a large well-equipped force constantly on the spot. This was not possible because the necessary funds were not available and no Maratha soldier could stand the winter of Lahore. No first-rate Maratha general was posted in the Punjab as warden of the North-west frontier. The peshwa sanctioned 'a provocatively advanced frontier', which made war with Abdali inevitable, but he made no adequate arrangement for its defence.

#### **North India: Bhau's expedition (1760)**

On return towards Delhi (May 1759) after the conquest of Punjab, Dattaji Scindia was involved in hostilities with Najib-ud-Daula in Rohilkhand. He suffered defeat and retreated towards Panipat (December 1759), and heard that Abdali's forces were advancing from Sind and had occupied Ambala. His resistance failed and he was killed in a battle with Abdali at Barari, some 16 km north of Delhi (January 1760). Malhar Rao Holkar was routed by the Afghans at Sikanderabad. Thereafter the Maratha army in Hindustan ceased to exist.

When the news of these disasters reached the Peshwa at Poona, he realized that 'all his gains in North India had been wiped out, and he must again fight for the Maratha control over the Delhi Empire and build up his supremacy in Hindustan from the very foundations.' This crisis could be met only by sending a strong army to the North. Soon the Peshwa dispatched the Maratha troops under his cousin Sadashiv Rao Bhau and his eldest son Vishwas Rao. The Maratha artillery was to be commanded by Ibrahim Khan Gardi. In July 1760, the Marathas occupied Delhi. This small success added to the prestige of the Marathas, but they were friendless in the whole of North India. Even the Jat king Surajmal deserted them at the last moment. On the other hand, Ahmad Shah Abdali had been able to secure the support

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of the Ruhela Chiefs Najib-ud-daula and Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh. During this period some futile attempts were made for peace between Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Peshwa, but they could not succeed due to the exorbitant demands of the Marathas and self-interest of the Muslim rulers. This culminated in the unfortunate and disastrous battle of Panipat. The Battle of Panipat (January 14, 1761) resulted in the death of Viswas Rao (son of Nana Saheb).

Madhav Rao (1761–1772), Narayana Rao (1772–1773), Sawai Madhav Rao (1773–1795), and Bajji Rao II (1795–1818) succeeded him thereafter.

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### 1.4 MARATHA CONFEDERACY

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The word ‘confederacy’ is derived from Anglo-French word ‘*Confederate cie*’, which means a league or union, whether of states or the individuals. After the death of Shivaji in 1680, there was no great leader among the Marathas who could unite them. Sahu, the grandson of Shivaji, was under Mughal custody (between 1689 and 1707), which made him weak, passive and dependent on others. The emergence of Peshwa as the ‘de facto’ ruler is directly linked with the weak character of Sahu. When Balaji Vishwanath served as Peshwa (1713–1720), he made the king a puppet in his hands and his own post hereditary.

However, the Maratha Confederacy really began in the Peshwaship of Bajji Rao I (1720–1740), son of Balaji Vishwanath, when Maratha Empire expanded in the North and South India. The Peshwa put large areas under the control of his following subordinates:

- Gwalior under Ramoji Scindia
- Baroda under Damaji Gaekwad
- Indore under Malhar Rao Holkar
- Nagpur under Raghuji Bhonsle

The Peshwa’s seat was at Pune and Sahu was relegated to being only a nominal king. The confederacy was strictly controlled by the two Peshwas:

- Bajji Rao I (1720–1740)
- Balaji Bajji Rao (1740–1761)

The defeat of the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat by the Afghan army of Ahmad Shah Abdali made the post of Peshwa very weak. He was now dependent on Phadnavis and the other Maratha chiefs.

The origin of the Maratha confederacy may be traced to the revival of the *jagir* or *saranjam* system by Rajaram. But, it was only in the time of Bajji Rao I that the system made a base for itself. In this process, Sahu issued letters of authority to his various Maratha sardars for collecting *Chauth* and

*Sardeshmukhi* from various parts of India. These letters of authority were called '*saranjam*'. The holders of these *saranjams* were called *saranjamdars*. They merely recognized the Maratha Peshwas as their nominal head after the death of Sahu. In this way, arose the confederacy, consisting of very important Maratha jagirdars. Some of them were as follows:

- Raghuji Bhonsle of Berar
- Gaekwad of Baroda
- Holkar of Indore
- Scindia of Gwalior
- The Peshwa of Poona

### 1. First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-1782)

The first Anglo-Maratha War started when Raghunath Rao, after killing Peshwa Narayan Rao, claimed the post of Peshwa. But the widow of Narayan Rao gave birth to Madhav Rao Narayan. The Maratha Sardars, led by Nana Phadnavis, accepted the minor Madhav Rao Narayan as Peshwa and rejected Raghunath Rao, who in search of a friend concluded a treaty with the English at Surat on March 7, 1775. This treaty led to the first war between the British and the Marathas.

#### Causes of the first Anglo-Maratha war

The causes of the first Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Friendship with Ragunath Rao
- Defeat of British by the Marathas at Talegoan (1776)
- March of British army under Goddard from Calcutta to Ahmedabad through central India (which itself was a great military feat in those days) and the brilliant victories on the way (1779–1780)
- Stalemate and deadlock for two years (1781–1782)

#### Results

The results of the first Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- **Treaty of Surat (1775):** Signed by Raghunath Rao, wherein he promised to hand over Bassein and Salsette and a few islands near Bombay to the British.

The provisions of the Treaty of Surat were as follows:

- o The English agreed to assist Raghunath Rao with a force of 2,500 men.
- o Raghunath Rao agreed to give Salsette and Bassein to the English and as security deposited six lakh.

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- o The Marathas would not raid in Bengal and Karnataka.
- o Some areas of Surat and Bharuch would be given to the English.
- o If Raghunath Rao decided to enter into a pact with Pune, the English would be involved.

The Calcutta Council became more powerful by the Regulating Act, 1773, than by the Government of Bombay and Madras. The Council condemned the activities of Bombay Government as 'dangerous', 'unauthorized' and 'unjust' and rejected the Treaty of Surat. It sent Lieutenant on to Pune who concluded the Treaty of Purandhar on March 1, 1776.

- **Treaty of Purandhar (1776):** Signed by Madhav Rao II; the Company got a huge war indemnity and retained Salsette.

The provisions of the Treaty of Purandhar were as follows:

- o The English and the Marathas would maintain peace.
- o The English East India Company would retain Salsette.
- o Raghunath Rao would go to Gujarat, and Pune would give him ₹2,500 per month as pension.

This time, the treaty was not acceptable to the Bombay Government, and Pune was also not showing any interest in its implementation. In the mean-time American War of Independence started (1776–1781). In this war the French supported the Americans against the English. French, who were old rivals of English East India Company, came closer to the Pune Durbar. The Court of Director of English East India Company was worried with the new political development, so it rejected the Treaty of Purandhar. The Government of Bombay was more than happy and the Calcutta Council, obviously, felt insulted. The Government of Bombay renewed its ties with Raghunath Rao (the Treaty of Surat) and a British troop was sent to Surat (November 1778) but the British troop was defeated and the Bombay government was forced to sign Treaty of Wadgaon (1779) with Pune Durbar.

### **Treaty of Wadgaon: Provisions**

The provisions of the Treaty of Wadgaon were as follows:

- The Bombay Government would return all the territories, which it occupied after 1773, to the Marathas.
- The Bombay Government would stop the English army coming from Bengal.
- Scindia would get some income from Bharuch.

Once again the treaty created a rift between the Calcutta Government and the Bombay Government. Warren Hastings, the Governor General (1773–1785), rejected the Convention of Wadgaon. An army, led by Godard,

came from Bengal and captured Ahmedabad (February, 1780) and Bassein (December, 1780). But the English army was defeated at Pune (April, 1781). Another British army led by Captain Popham came from Calcutta and won Gwalior (3 August 1780), Scindia was also defeated at Sipri (16 February 1781) and agreed to work as a mediator between the English and the Pune Durbar resulting into the Treaty of Salbai (17 May 1782).

- **Treaty of Salbai (1782):** Signed by Mahadji Scindia, whereby the British influence in Indian politics and mutual conflicts increased among the Marathas. It, however, gave the British twenty years peace with the Marathas.

The provisions of the Treaty of Salbai were as follows:

- o The British would support Rahghunath Rao, but he would get pension from Pune, the headquarters of Peshwa.
- o Salsette and Elephanta were given to the English.
- o Scindia got the land to the west of Yamuna.
- o The Marathas and the English agreed to return the rest of the areas to each other.

The Treaty of Salbai established the status quo. It benefited the company because they got peace from Marathas for the next twenty years. They could focus their energy and resources against their bitterest enemy in India, which was Mysore.

## **2. Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-1806)**

The internal conflict of Maratha Confederacy brought them once again on the verge of war. The Peshwa, Baji Rao II, after killing Bithuji Holkar, the brother of Jaswant Rao Holkar, fled from Pune. Holkar installed Vinayak Rao as Peshwa at Pune. Baji Rao came to Bassein and signed a treaty with the English on 31 December 1802. The Company, which was always in search of such situation, made Peshwa virtually a puppet.

- **Treaty of Bassein (1802):** Signed between Baji Rao II; The treaty gave effective control of not only Maratha but also Deccan regions to the Company.

The provisions of the Treaty of Bassein were as follows:

- o The English would help Peshwa with 600 troops and artillery.
- o Peshwa agreed to cede, to the Company, territories yielding an income of 26 lakh rupees. Territories included Gujarat, South of Tapti, territories between Tapti and Narbada and some territories near Tungabhadra.
- o Peshwa promised that he would not keep any European in his army other than the English.

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- o Peshwa would give up his claim over Surat.
- o Peshwa would not have any foreign relationship with other states without the English approval.
- o Peshwa would settle all its disputes, if any, with Nizam of Hyderabad and Gaekwad of Baroda with Company's mediation.

The Peshwa, with the help of Arthur Wellesley, entered Pune on 13 May 1803 and captured it. But the Treaty of Bassein was perceived as a great insult by the other Maratha chiefs. Daulat Rao Scindia and Raghuji Bhonsle joined hands together against the British. Instead of bringing peace, this was the treaty which brought war. The war started in August 1803 from both North and South of the Maratha Kingdom. The Northern Command was led by General Lake and Southern Command by Arthur Wellesley. The British started fighting in Gujarat, in Bundelkhand and in Orissa. The strategy was to engage all the Maratha chiefs at different places, and not allow them to unite. On September 23, 1803, Arthur Wellesley defeated a joint army of Scindia and Bhonsle at Assaye, near Aurangabad. Gwalior fell on December 15, 1803. In the North, General Lake captured Aligarh in August, Delhi in September and Agra in October 1803. Scindia was defeated again at Laswari (November 1803) and lost the territory south of Chambal river. The English also captured Cuttack and succeeded in Gujarat and Bundelkhand.

This humiliating defeat forced Bhonsle and Scindia to conclude similar kind of treaty as signed by the Peshwa. On 17 December 1803, Bhonsle at Dergaon, and on 30 December 1803, Daulat Rao Scindia at Surajgarh Gaon signed the peace treaty; Treaty of Surji-Arjangaon. Bhonsle gave Cuttack, Balasore, and Western part of Wardha River to the British. Scindia gave Jaipur, Jodhpur, North of Gohad, Ahmednagar, Bhadach, Ajanta and all their territory between Ganga and Yamuna. Both agreed that in resolving their outstanding issues with Nizam and Peshwa, they would seek English 'help'. They agreed that they would not allow any enemy of English to stay in their territory, that they would keep a British Resident in their capital and they would accept the Treaty of Bassein. Holkar, so far aloof from the war, started fighting in April 1804. After defeating Colonel Monson in the passes of Mukund Dara near Kota, he advanced towards Delhi and made an unsuccessful attempt to seize Delhi. He was defeated at Deeg on November 13, 1804 and at Farrukhabad on November 17, 1804. Finally, he too concluded a treaty with the British on January 7, 1806 at Rajpurghat. He agreed to give up his claims to places north of the river Chambal, Bundhelkhand and Peshwa's territory. He promised not to entertain any European, other than English, in his kingdom. In return, the British promised not to interfere in the southern territory of river Chambal.

### **3. Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818)**

The third Anglo-Maratha War was partly related with the British imperialistic design in India and partly with the nature of the Maratha state. In 1813, the



Charter Act was passed, which ended the monopoly of English East India Company. All the English Companies, now, were allowed to sell their products in India and purchase raw material from India. The British capitalists were in search of a greater market. Annexation of Indian territories meant a big market for British goods in India and cheap raw materials for British industries. English cotton mills were heavily dependent on Indian cotton and Deccan region was famous for cotton produce. The policy of 'non-interference', with Indian States, was no longer relevant.

The Company was in search of an excuse to wage war against the Marathas. The issue of Pindaris provided an opportunity. The Pindaris, who consisted of many castes and classes, were attached to the Maratha armies. They worked like mercenaries, mostly under the Maratha chiefs. But once the Maratha chief became weak and failed to employ them regularly, they started plundering different territories, including those territories which were under the control of the Company or its allies. The Company accused the Maratha for giving them shelter and encouragement.

Lord Hastings, the Governor-General (1813–1823), made a plan to surround the Pindaris in Malwa by a large army and to prevent the Marathas from assisting them. By the end of 1817 and early 1818, the Pindaris were hunted across the Chambal. Thousands of them were killed. Their leaders, Amir Khan and Karim Khan, surrendered while the most dangerous, Chitu, fled into the jungles of Asirgarh. The direct conflict between the English and the Marathas, however, started when Gangadhar Shastri, the ambassador of Gaekwad, was killed by Tryanbakji, the Prime Minister of Peshwa. The English Resident, Elphinston told Peshwa to hand over Tryanbakji, but he escaped. Colonel Smith besieged Pune and forced the Peshwa to sign the Pune Pact (June 13, 1817). The Maratha confederacy was dissolved and Peshwa's leadership was brought to an end. The fort of Ahmednagar, Bundelkhand and a vast territory of Malwa was ceded to the Company. The Peshwa agreed to keep English troops at Pune and his family under British custody till Triyanbankji was arrested or surrendered.

The Pune Pact was, once again, humiliating for the Marathas. The Peshwa too was unhappy. He started thinking of revenge so he burnt the British Residency and started war against the English. He was defeated at Kirki in November 1817. In the same month Appaji, the Bhonsle chief, was also defeated at Sitabaldi. In the Battle of Mahidpur (December, 1817), Holkar was defeated and was compelled to sign a treaty at Mandsor (January, 1818). He had to cede Khandesh and the vast territory across the river Narmada.

The Peshwa continued the war but he was defeated again at Koregaon (January, 1818) and finally at Ashti (February, 1818), he surrendered. A small part of his territory was given to the descendent of Shivaji, based at Satara, whereas a large part of his territory including Pune was annexed. The post of Peshwa was abandoned and Baji Rao was sent to Bithur (near Kanpur).

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An annual pension was fixed for him. With this defeat the British supremacy in Maratha kingdom was already established and the hopeful successor of Mughals lost all hopes.

### Causes of the Third Anglo-Maratha war

The causes of the third Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Resentment of the Marathas against the loss of their freedom to the British
- Rigid control exercised by the British residents on the Marathas chiefs

### Results of the Third Anglo-Maratha war

The results of the third Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Dethronement of the Peshwa (he was pensioned off and sent to Bithur near Kanpur) and the annexation of all his territories by the British (the creation of the Bombay Presidency)
- Creation of the kingdom of Satara out of Peshwa's lands to satisfy Maratha pride

After this war the Maratha chiefs existed at the mercy of the British.

### Causes of the failure of Marathas

The causes of the failure of Marathas were as follows:

- **Weak rulers:** Most of the Maratha chiefs, with few exceptions, were not capable to lead the Marathas. Rulers like Daulat Rao Scindia were lovers of luxury. Besides, Maratha rulers were jealous of each other and always conspired against each other. It helped the Company's cause.
- **Nature of the Maratha state:** The Maratha state was never stable. An English historian called their state as 'robber's state'. After the death of Shivaji (1680), various Maratha chiefs carved their own independent kingdoms. During the Peshwaship of Baji Rao I (1720–1740) they were loosely attached with the Peshwa, but after the debacle of Panipat (January 14, 1761) they became enemy of each other and plundered each other's territory.
- **Low morale:** During the period of Shivaji and the Maratha war of independence, the morale of the Maratha state was very high which enabled them to resist the imperial armies of the Mughals. In the absence of strong leadership, the moral of the army was low and the soldiers often fled from the battlefield.
- **Unstable economy:** The economy of the Maratha state was not on a sound basis. Agriculture was the main source of income, but it depended on rainfall. No proper attention was paid to industry and commerce. The success of any kingdom depended heavily on its resources. The



regular civil war had ruined Maratha's agriculture, trade and industry. Plunder was their main source of income. The Maratha chiefs were always found in debt. They failed to evolve a stable economic policy. War and plunder became most sought after job for Maratha youths, but most of the time their chiefs struggled to pay them. The soldiers always shifted their loyalty. Many of them joined Company's army, where they could get a regular salary.

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- **Superior English diplomacy:** Before any war the British always made some allies and isolated the enemy. This was the policy which most of the European nations in the eighteenth and nineteenth century adopted but the English succeeded the most. In the second Anglo-Maratha war, they were allies of Peshwa and Gackwad and in the third Anglo Maratha war they made Scindia their ally.
- **Superior British espionage system:** The Company's espionage system had no match in Asia. They carefully recorded each and every movement of their enemies, their strengths, weaknesses, military methods etc. The entire diplomacy of the East India Company was based on the 'inputs' provided by their spies. The Marathas, on the other hand, were completely ignorant about the activities of the Company. The English learned Marathi and other India languages, but the Marathas failed to learn English. They had no knowledge about England, English people, their factories, their arms and their strategy. Wars were fought in the battlefield but strategies were made on the table which required 'inputs'.
- **The Marathas lacked national spirit:** Individually, the Marathas were clever and brave but the internal jealousies and selfish treacheries triumphed over public interest.
- **The Marathas lacked a scientific spirit:** The Marathas tried to preserve religion at the sacrifice of science. They avoided handling modern equipment for fear that they would lose their religion. They failed to develop artillery as the main support of defence.
- **Defence policy:** The Marathas recruited foreigners as soldiers to defend their country. Thus, the Maratha army lacked homogeneity. Also, they failed to develop a strong navy.
- **Superior British military organization:** The Marathas failed to adopt modern technique of warfare. Except Mahadji Scindia, no Maratha chief gave importance to artillery. He too, was dependent on French. The Pune Government set up an artillery department, but it hardly functioned effectively. The Marathas also gave up their traditional method of guerilla warfare which had baffled the Mughals. Besides, there was no motivation for the mercenary soldiers of the Marathas.

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### 1.5 THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

The conquest and occupation of the Punjab by the Marathas brought them into conflict with Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Third Battle of Panipat took place on 14 January 1761, at Panipat (Haryana). The battle pitted the French-supplied artillery and cavalry of the Marathas against the heavy cavalry and mounted artillery of the Afghans led by Ahmad Shah Durrani, also known as Ahmad Shah Abdali. The battle is considered as one of the largest battles fought in the 18th century. The battle lasted for several days and involved over 1,25,000 men. Protracted skirmishes occurred, with losses and gains on both sides. The forces led by Ahmad Shah Durrani came out victorious after destroying several Maratha flanks. The extent of the losses on both sides was heavily disputed by historians, but it is believed that between 60,000–70,000 were killed in fighting, while number of the injured and prisoners taken vary considerably. The result of the battle was the halting of the Maratha advances in the north.

#### Causes of Third Battle of Panipat

The causes of the Third Battle of Panipat were many. Some of them were as follows:

- **Invasions of Nadir Shah:** Nadir Shah defeated the Mughal troops near Karnal. Then he marched to Delhi, where he stayed for 57 days. He took away the accumulated wealth of 348 years and the famous Peacock Throne from Delhi. The invasion of Nadir Shah exposed the weakness of Mughal Empire. It encouraged the Afghans to invade India.
- **Ambitions of Ahmad Shah Abdali:** He was an ambitious ruler and a gallant soldier. He dreamt to be the ruler of India and was not satisfied by merely plundering raids.
- **Attack of Maratha army on Punjab:** Maratha army attacked those regions which belonged to the heirs of Nadir Shah. Ahmad Shah Abdali wanted to teach lesson to the Marathas and break their power.
- **Internal disputes:** The internal disputes were also responsible for foreign invasion. Ahmad Shah Abdali took full advantage of the internal disputes. The Mughals, Rajputs, Rohillas and the Marathas have not combined together to face their common enemy. Had they combined together it would have been not so easy for Abdali to crush Marathas. The Marathas had interfered in the internal affairs of the Rajputana states (present day Rajasthan) and levied heavy taxes and huge fines on them. They had also made huge territorial and monetary claims upon Awadh. Their raids in the Jat territory had resulted in the loss of trust of Jat chiefs like Suraj Mal. They had, therefore, to fight their enemies

alone. The main reason for the failure of Marathas was that they went to war without good allies.

- **Distance of Punjab from south:** Though Marathas had conquered portions of Punjab but it was difficult to rule on Punjab from south because Marathas did not want to be away from their homes in the south. It made the task of recapturing of lost territories by Ahmad Shah easier. The Marathas did not care to defend northern frontier properly. Had the Marathas settled in Punjab, Abdali's success would have been doubtful.
- **Maratha relation with Ruhelas:** Marathas did not have good relations with Ruhelas because the Mughals had gained support from Scindia and Holker against Ruhelas. Under these circumstances, the Ruhelas invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India.
- **Strong position of Afghans:** After the murder of Nadir Shah, Abdali ascended the throne and improved his power. In a short period of one year, he was strong enough to invade India again and again.
- **Dream of the Marathas to establish a Hindu State:** Knowing the weaknesses of the Mughals, they thought it is practicable to establish a Hindu State on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. But Abdali never wanted that their dreams should be materialized.

### **Third Battle of Panipat (1761)**

At Panipat, the two rival armies stood entrenched, face to face, for more than two months. There were skirmishes and minor battles. The Afghan cavalry patrols dominated the environs of the Maratha camp and cut off its communications and also food supply. Gradually, despair and terror seized the straying Marathas. They decided to launch a direct attack on the Afghans when there was no food for men and no grass for horses, and when filth and stench 'made the confines of the entrenchment a living hell'.

The Bhau's army marched out to battle on January 15, 1761. The battle actually began about four hours after daybreak. Vishwas Rao was shot dead at quarter past two. Soon after, the Bhau was also killed. Among the leading chiefs who met death were Jankoji Scindia, Tukoji Scindia and Ibrahim Khan Gardi. Mahadji Scindia received wounds, which claimed his life. 'It was a nation-wide disaster like a flooded field. An entire generation of leaders was cut off at one stroke. Apart from those who fell on the field, many fugitives lost their lives during their long flight without food or rest. About 50,000 men and women were saved by the kindness and hospitality of Suraj Mal.

The crushing defeat of the Marathas is easily explained. Numerically, the Afghans had considerable superiority. Against 60,000 Afghans and their Indian allies actually present in the field, supported by 80,000 behind the fighting line, the Bhau had 45,000 troops in the field and 15,000 Pindaris in

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the rear. The Afghan army had better training and discipline, and it was better organized. Moreover, a famished army on less than half-dead country mares met the finest Afghan cavalry. Abdali had superiority in artillery; he employed 'the most efficient mobile artillery known in that age'. Although the field guns of the Marathas were of larger caliber than those of the Afghans, they could not be dragged forward with the advancing troops and became useless as the battle developed. The Bhau had no worthy and dependable lieutenants as comparable to Abdali's front-rank officers. Malhar Rao Holkar did not exchange fire till after the contest at the centre had been decided in Abdali's favour; and at the last stage he fled away. Abdali was a far greater military leader and strategist than the Bhau. The defeat became virtually inevitable after the Bhau's postponement of battle for two and a half months. He kept his army on the defensive in a besieged camp until starvation compelled him to make the last desperate effort for escape.

From the political point of view the defeat was largely due to the alienation of the Rajputs and the Jats and the failure to neutralize Shuja-ud-Daula and Najib-ud-Daula. While half of Abdali's army was composed of troops furnished by his Indian allies, the valiant Rajputs and the Jats did not fight on the Maratha side. The clue to this situation lies in 'the total diplomatic failure on the part of the Peshwa who dictated, and the Bhau who carried out, his North Indian policy'.

### **Consequences of Third Battle of Panipat**

Some modern Maratha writers argue that although the Marathas suffered terrible losses in manpower at Panipat, the battle did not destroy the Maratha power in North India nor did it essentially shake the Maratha Empire as a whole. Abdali made several unsuccessful efforts to conclude peace with the Peshwa and Surajmal, and in the following years he failed to crush the Sikhs in the Punjab. There was a revival of the Maratha power in North India under Peshwa Madhav Rao I (1761–1772). After the death of Najib-ud-daula (1770) who 'administered Delhi as Abdali's agent after Panipat, the Marathas restored the exiled Mughal emperor Shah Alam II to the capital of his ancestors (1772). Mahadji Scindia occupied Delhi in 1788 and it was from his successor Daulat Rao Scindia that the English wrested the imperial capital in 1803. In South India the Marathas secured victories against Haider Ali and the Nizam, S.G. Sardesai maintains that 'the disaster at Panipat was indeed like a natural visitation destroying life, but leading to no decisive political consequences'. But the views of Sardesai and the others were too simplistic. Undoubtedly the disaster at Panipat was the greatest loss to the Marathas in manpower and personal prestige both. The Maratha dream of being a successor to the great Mughals was lost forever. Certainly Panipat paved the way for the rise of the British power, which became a paramount power in India by the close of the eighteenth century.

Peshwa Balaji Bajirao could not bear the shock of the awful catastrophe at Panipat and died six months after the battle (June 1761). During the post-Panipat era, the links of the Peshwa with the Maratha Confederacy also grew very loose. In the words of Kashiraj Pandit, who was an eyewitness to the Third Battle of Panipat, 'It was verily doomsday for the Maratha people'.

### **Peshwa Madhav Rao I (1761-1772)**

After the death of Balaji Bajirao, his younger son Madhav Rao was placed on the Peshwa's *gaddi*. Since the new Peshwa was only seventeen years old, his uncle Raghunath Rao, the eldest surviving member of the Peshwa's family, became his regent and the *de facto* ruler of the state. During this period, serious differences broke out between the Peshwa and his uncle, leading to war between the two in 1762, in which the Peshwa's army was defeated. For some time a reconciliation was arrived at between the Peshwa and his uncle, but soon serious differences again erupted. In 1765, Raghunath Rao demanded the partition of the Maratha state between himself and the Peshwa. In the meantime, when the Maratha state was paralysed by the internal strife, Haider Ali of Mysore ravaged the Maratha territories in Karnataka; but the first Anglo-Mysore war involved Haider Ali in a greater crisis. During this period, the Marathas tried to restore their lost position in North India. In January 1771, Mahadji Scindia occupied Delhi and succeeded in exacting money from the leading Rajput princes; but the premature death of Madhav Rao in November 1772 placed the Maratha dominion in a deep crisis. Madhav Rao was the last great Peshwa, had he survived longer, the Maratha Empire could have been saved from disaster.

After Madhav Rao's death the fortunes of the Maratha Kingdom and the prestige of the Peshwas under Narayan Rao (1772–1774), Madhav Rao Narayan (1774–95) and Bajirao rapidly declined, owing to their internal feuds and prolonged wars with the English. The last Peshwa surrendered to the English and the Peshwaship was abolished.

### **Effects and Importance of the Third Battle of Panipat**

The effects and the importance of the Third Battle of Panipat were as follows:

- **Loss of the wealth and human power:** The Third Battle of Panipat decided the fate of India. In this battle the loss of money and life was enormous. It was a nationwide disaster. It was stated that—two pearls had been dissolved, twenty seven gold mohars had been lost and the loss of silver and copper could not be reckoned.
- **End of Maratha confederacy:** The decisive battle of Panipat completely destroyed the Maratha Confederacy. It destroyed the central organization of the Marathas. After this battle Maratha's central power became weak.

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- **Decentralization of Maratha power:** The Third Battle of Panipat also brought about the decentralization of the Maratha power. The power of Marathas was scattered and divided. Maratha leaders established their independent kingdoms. Scindias were wounded in the battle field. They established their independent kingdom and made Gwalior centre of their kingdom.
- **Downfall of Mughal Empire:** The Third Battle of Panipat was the last and final blow to the staggering Mughal power. It hastened its decline and paved the way for British supremacy.
- **Freedom of Rajputs:** After the Battle of Panipat the Marathas lost their hold over the Rajputana. The Rajputs regained their freedom. They did not support Marathas either against Ahamad Shah Abdali or Britishers.

### Causes of the Failure of Marathas in Panipat

The causes that led to the failure of Marathas in Panipat were as follows:

- The main reason of the failure of the Marathas was Abdali's superior strategy and novel tactics and superiority of arms and ammunitions. Though Sada Shiva Rao was a brave and capable leader but he lacked the maturity and experience of Abdali.
- The Marathas had made Jats and Rajputs their enemy while Abdali was supported by Ruhelas and others. It was total diplomatic failure on the part of the Peshwa who dictated, and the Bhau who carried out, his North Indian policy.
- Marathas had neither adequate force nor a good supply of quality horses or seasonal troops.
- The Marathas had terrible want of food and adequate clothing. Starved and barebacked on the bitter cold of January many of them fell sick or even died.
- The absence of Duttaji from this fateful fight was a serious handicap to the Marathas.
- Marathas had used guerrilla warfare in North India. Though their infantry was based on the European style contingent and had some of the best French made guns of the times, their artillery was static and lacked mobility against the fast moving Afghan forces.

### Marathas under Mahadji Scindia and Nana Phadnavis

Mahadji Scindia and Nana Phadnavis were contemporaries and both of them played an important role during the first Anglo-Maratha war and came into prominence in Maratha politics. Nana Phadnavis controlled the Maratha



affairs at Poona and Mahadji Scindia busied himself in the north. Both of them served the Maratha state faithfully. It is pointed out by Sardesai that if Mahadji Scindia and Nana Phadnavis had not acted in concert and brought all the resources to bear on the First Maratha war, there would have been an end of Maratha power.

Mahadji Scindia and Nana Phadnavis worked in close co-operation during the First Anglo-Maratha war, faced the British challenge united and succeeded in thwarting the British design to curb the Marathas. But Mahadji Scindia entered into the treaty of Salbai without the concurrence of Nana Phadnavis. By this treaty Mahadji Scindia became virtually independent and was recognized by the East India Company as mediator between it and Peshwas and guarantor of the honourable peace with the Marathas.

Mahadji and Nana Phadnavis had different physical features and mental cast. The life of Mahadji was a long period of strenuous activity. His life can be divided into four parts. During the first part up to 1761, he was an obscure figure over-shadowed by his brilliant brothers. From 1761 to 1772 his life was one of the apprenticeship in which he acquired the supreme fitness, which later on helped him to co-operate with Nana Phadnavis to defeat the English during the first Anglo-Maratha war. During the third part, he gained valuable experience of war and diplomacy on his own initiative which he put in actual test later on. During the fourth part he created the kingdom which he left for his children.

The private life of Mahadji was pure and free from blemish. He was free from caste and religious bias. He was equally respected by the Muslims and the Hindus. He employed Brahmans, Marathas and Mahars. The Saraswat Brahmans attained special distinction in his service as soldiers and diplomats.

Mahadji was always careful and faithful to the Peshwa family. He never tried to assert his independence. It was unfortunate that Nana Phadnavis was jealous of Mahadji and always tried to keep him away from Poona. Mahadji did not manage his financial affairs properly. He borrowed a large amount of money from all sources. A lot of money was pocketed by unscrupulous middlemen. There was confusion and misappropriation. Money was poured into useless channels. Lands were deserted and cultivation was stopped at many places. Robberies became frequent. Life became insecure. Mahadji agreed to pay the expenses of the Mughal armies but he had no money to do so.

Nana Phadnavis was born in 1742. He worked very hard at his desk. He attended to all the details of the administration. He did not like the open methods of Mahadji and always worked in secret. He was usually reasonable and fair in his dealings. He was afraid to commit treachery or wrong. He was strict in punctually carrying on work. However he did not possess self-confidence of Mahadji. He took counsel with all separately, but acted

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according to his own considered judgment. He was not at all loved as he was a stern task master. He was often in danger of assassination. On about 20 occasions, he had miraculous escape from attempts on his life.

Nana Phadnavis lacked military leadership and that was a great disadvantage in the rough times in which he lived. Nana Phadnavis did not possess a conciliatory spirit. He gradually removed all the members, one by one, of the Bara-Bhai council and concentrated all the power in his own hands. If, instead of that, Nana Phadnavis had shared powers with others, there would have been better prospects for the future of the Marathas. It has been suggested that if Nana Phadnavis had taken into confidence all the Maratha chiefs and pooled together all the resources of the Marathas, the Marathas would not have fallen as they did under Bajirao II.

According to Sardesai, Nana would have acquired a much higher place in history if he had subordinated his love of power and money to the service of the nation.

Nana had too much love for power. It is suggested that if he had retired from politics in 1795, he would have rendered a great service to the Maratha cause. Another criticism against Nana is that he loved money too much.

### Check Your Progress

3. Who is considered the greatest exponent of guerrilla tactics after Shivaji under the Marathas?
4. What were the causes of the third Anglo-Maratha war?
5. When did the Third Battle of Panipat take place?

## 1.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. In 1717, the Mughal emperor issued a *firman* by which it granted special benefits to the English East India Company, namely, exemption of taxes on goods imported and exported from Bengal.
2. The enmity between Awadh and the English started in 1764 with the Battle of Buxar. In this battle, the English defeated the combined forces of the Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh, Mughal emperor Shah Alam and Nawab of Bengal, Mir Qasim.
3. Baji Rao was considered the greatest exponent of guerrilla tactics after Shivaji and Maratha power reached its zenith under him.



4. The causes of the third Anglo-Maratha war were as follows:

- Resentment of the Marathas against the loss of their freedom to the British
- Rigid control exercised by the British residents on the Marathas chiefs

5. The Third Battle of Panipat took place on 14 January 1761, at Panipat (Haryana).

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### 1.7 SUMMARY

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- After the death of Aurangzeb, no new emperor arrived at the scene who could compare with the legacy of the great Mughal emperors of the past.
- In 1741, when Muhammad Shah Rangila was the Mughal sovereign, Alivardi Khan, the governor of Bengal, announced himself independent and established his capital at Murshidabad.
- As Bengal, in the eighteenth century, was the most prosperous province, the English East India Company considered it economically and politically extremely lucrative. Hence, it is natural that they wanted to consolidate their position further in Bengal.
- The enmity between Awadh and the English started in 1764 with the Battle of Buxar. In this battle, the English defeated the combined forces of the Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh, Mughal emperor Shah Alam and Nawab of Bengal, Mir Qasim.
- The First Anglo-Sikh War was fought at Mudki on 18 December 1845 and the Sikhs were defeated.
- Baji Rao, the eldest son of Balaji Viswanath, succeeded him as peshwa at the young age of twenty. He was considered the greatest exponent of guerrilla tactics after Shivaji and Maratha power reached its zenith under him.
- The first Anglo-Maratha War started when Raghunath Rao, after killing Peshwa Narayan Rao, claimed the post of Peshwa.
- The third Anglo-Maratha War was partly related with the British imperialistic design in India and partly with the nature of the Maratha state.
- The Third Battle of Panipat took place on 14 January 1761, at Panipat (Haryana). The battle pitted the French-supplied artillery and cavalry of the Marathas against the heavy cavalry and mounted artillery of the Afghans led by Ahmad Shah Durrani, also known as Ahmad Shah Abdali.

- The forces led by Ahmad Shah Durrani came out victorious after destroying several Maratha flanks.

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### 1.8 KEY WORDS

- **Nawab:** It refers to a native governor during the time of the Mogul empire.
- **Confederacy:** It is derived from Anglo-French word '*Confederate cie*', which means a league or union, whether of states or the individuals.
- **Firman:** It refers to a royal order bearing the seal of the emperor.
- **Espionage:** It means the practice of spying or of using spies, typically by governments to obtain political and military information.

### 1.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

#### Short Answer Questions

1. Discuss the causes of the First Anglo-Maratha War.
2. Describe the various Anglo-Sikh Wars.
3. What were the consequences of the Third Battle of Panipat?

#### Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the rise of the regional kingdoms of Bengal and Awadh.
2. Explain the rise of the Maratha Empire.
3. Examine the causes for the failure of the Marathas in the Third Anglo-Maratha War.

### 1.10 FURTHER READINGS

- Chandra, Bipin. 2009. *History of Modern India*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.
- Dube-Bannerjee, Ishita. 2015. *A History of Modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarique, Mohammad. 2007. *Modern Indian History*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Education.
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- Sen, S.N. 2006. *History Modern India*. New Delhi: New Age International.

## UNIT 2 ADVENT OF THE EUROPEANS

### NOTES

#### Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Coming of the Europeans
- 2.3 The Portuguese
  - 2.3.1 Factories, Fortresses and Commercial Arrangements
  - 2.3.2 Commodities of Export and Import
  - 2.3.3 Causes of Decline of the Portuguese
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- 2.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the rise of the regional kingdoms in India in the 18th century. With the decline of the Roman Empire, around the 7th century, the commercial contact between the East and the West suffered. The geographical discoveries in the last quarter of the 15th century deeply affected the commercial relations of different countries of the world and produced far-reaching consequences in their history. The European nations now embarked on finding a new sea route towards the East. The first efforts were made by the Portuguese. Prince Henry of Portugal, nicknamed the 'Navigator', devoted his whole life to encouraging voyages for the discovery of a sea route to India.

In 1487, Bartholomew Diaz reached the Cape of Good Hope, and following his route Vasco da Gama, another Portuguese navigator, reached the shores of Calicut in 1498. Thus, the long-sought direct trade link with India was discovered. There was perhaps no event during the middle age, which had such far-reaching repercussions on the civilized world as the opening of the sea route to India.

After the discovery of India by Vasco Da Gama, the Portuguese tried to establish a trade link and their rule in India. Later, the Dutch, English and

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the French companies came to India. The Dutch diverted their attention to Indonesia and Portugal. Since they were unable to compete with the English and the French companies, their rule became confined to Dadar, Goa, Daman and Diu.

In this unit, you will study about the advent of the Europeans—the Portuguese and the Dutch, and the British East India Company and the French. You will also study the reasons that led to the Anglo-French rivalry.

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### 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the arrival of the Europeans in India
- Discuss how trade played an important role in the expansion of Portuguese power in the east coast of India
- Interpret the process of Dutch settlements in India
- Explain the reasons for the Anglo–French rivalry
- Summarize the causes of conflict between the French and the British

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### 2.2 COMING OF THE EUROPEANS

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The sea route from Europe to India was discovered by Vasco Da Gama, a Portuguese explorer. He reached the Port of Calicut on 17 May 1498 and was received by the Hindu ruler of Calicut, the Samudiri, who was known by the title of Zamorin. This led to the establishment of the Portuguese trading stations at Calicut, Cochin and Cannanore. Cochin was the early capital of the Portuguese in India. Later, Goa became its capital and the Portuguese became a significant naval power on the Indian waters.

After the discovery by Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese made a lot of efforts to use the commercial potentialities of Asia, especially India. Local rulers who were ruling at that time allowed them to set up factories for the development of trade and commerce. They initiated propagation of the Christian faith, inter-marriages, conversions and settlements of the Europeans. New social groups emerged due to these activities. Many rulers made political and commercial alliances with them. When other European nations saw the successful commercial activities of the Portuguese, they also felt encouraged to indulge in trading activities with Asia. Many European powers came to India, but you will study about two prominent powers—the Portuguese and the Dutch.

**Check Your Progress**

1. Who discovered the sea route to India?
2. Name the early capital of Portuguese India?
3. When did Vasco Da Gama reach the port of Calicut?

**NOTES****2.3 THE PORTUGUESE**

The discovery of the sea route to India by Vasco Da Gama, one of the most successful explorers in the Age of Discovery and the commander of the first ships to sail directly from Europe to India, ushered the era of the Portuguese trade in India. He returned to Portugal from India in 1499, with cargo worth sixty times his expenses. Zamorin treated the Portuguese mariner in a friendly manner, which encouraged them to open up commercial relations with Calicut within two years. In 1502, he established a factory at Cochin. The king of Cochin let Vasco Da Gama build the first fort. He was followed by Alfonso de Albuquerque, who arrived in India in 1503.

In 1505, the Portuguese appointed a governor named Francisco de Almeidato who used to look after their affairs in India. He built forts at Anjadiva, Cannanore and Cochin. Alfonso de Albuquerque was the real founder of the Portuguese Empire in the East. In 1510, Albuquerque occupied the port of Goa from the Bijapur Sultan by a sudden attack and arranged for its defence by strengthening its forts. He was a capable ruler and played an important role in the abolition of the 'sati' system.

Albuquerque encouraged the Portuguese men to marry Indian women so that he could establish the authority of the Portuguese in India. He, however, ill-treated the Muslims. When Albuquerque died in 1515, the Portuguese had established themselves as the strongest naval power in India.

Nino da Cunha (1529–1538) transferred his capital from Cochin to Goa (1530) and acquired Diu and Bassein (1534) from Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. The famous Jesuit Saint Francisco Xavier arrived in India with Martin Alfonso de Souza during this time (1542–1545). Under Albuquerque's successors, the Portuguese occupied Diu, Daman, Salsette, Bassein, Chaul and Bombay, San Thome (near Madras) and Hugli (in Bengal).

Portuguese occupation of Diu compelled the Arabs to withdraw from the Indian trade. The Arab merchants of Calicut were apprehensive of the Portuguese designs from the very beginning. The Zamorins, the hereditary royal title used by the Hindu rulers of the medieval Kingdom of Calicut, supported them against the Europeans. On the other hand, Calicut's rivalry with Cannanore and Cochin forced them to cultivate friendship with the

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Portuguese. Besides, they forced Cochin to sell all its products through Calicut. To retaliate, this was an apt opportunity for Cochin. Its ruler allowed the Europeans to establish a factory in Cochin. The Portuguese exploited the situation to their advantage. They realized that Calicut was a major hindrance in controlling the Malabar trade. Hence, throughout the 16th century, the Portuguese carried on armed clashes against Calicut. With a view to driving out the Portuguese, the Zamorins allied with Bijapur, Gujarat, Ahmednagar and Egypt. However, they did not succeed. At any rate, the Zamorins continued to harass the Portuguese on land. Even on the seas the Portuguese found it difficult to destroy Calicut's naval power, which was organized under the celebrated Marakkar family of admirals. From 1528 to 1598, the Portuguese–Zamorin clashes were mainly confined to the seas. It was only in 1599 that the Portuguese succeeded in making a breakthrough against the Marakkars.

The Portuguese control was effective at only those places where they had built their fortresses. But their highhandedness and cruelty compelled even these allies to part with them in spite of their traditional rivalries with Calicut. For example, the Cannanore rulers, who supported the Portuguese against Calicut in the early years, later supported the Zamorin in 1558 against the Portuguese. Similarly the King of Tanur, who had become a Christian and supported the Portuguese against Calicut, turned his back to the Europeans. In fact, it was only Cochin and Quilon with whom Portuguese succeeded in maintaining a lasting friendship.

Portuguese settlements on the west coast consisted of the following places:

- Calicut (1500)
- Cochin (1501)
- Cannanore (1503)
- Quilon (1503)
- Cheliyam (1531)
- Rahole (1535)
- Krengannore (1536)
- Mangalore (1568)
- Hanawer (1568)
- Diu (1509)
- Goa (1510)
- Surat (1599)
- Daman (1599)

Portuguese settlements on the east coast consisted of the following places:

- Meliyapur
- Chittagong
- Hugli
- Bandel

The Portuguese power continued to be strong till the middle of the 16th century but with the death of Governor D.J. Castro, the Portuguese power in India began to decline.

### 2.3.1 Factories, Fortresses and Commercial Arrangements

The Italian merchants had established warehouses (factories) in Cairo and Alexandria to carry on trade and commerce. Following this example the Portuguese, too, founded factories on the coastal regions of India and certain other places in Asia. A factory could be defined as a commercial organization having an autonomous existence set up within the country with which another country had commercial relations. Each factory had an officer who was assisted by a number of persons appointed by the Portuguese king. He was the agent of the crown to promote economic, financial and administrative activities of all sorts. In all situations Portuguese national interests were of paramount consideration. Factories also required protection from hostile elements. Therefore, to consolidate and strengthen their power the Portuguese also attempted to fortify their factories. A chain of factories and fortresses came into existence for the support of the maritime trade conducted by the Portuguese. These fortified centres were expected to serve the Portuguese to check the movements of vessels owned by others and to function as areas for the reserve of military and naval forces. The system of factories had a great role to play in the commercial arrangements in the period beginning with the 16th century till the mid-18th century.

#### Western India

In the Malabar region, the Portuguese established their first factory in 1500 at Calicut. However, it could not run for a long time because the Zomorins were against the establishment of such factories. In 1525, finally, the Portuguese closed down their factory at Calicut. This did not stop the Portuguese to establish factories in other places, thus, they established factories in other places such as Cochin (1501), Cannanore (1503), Quilon (1503), Chaliyam (1531), Rachol (1535) Crangannore (1536), and Mangalore and Honaver (1568). Later, in the second decade of the 16th century, NizamulMulk of Ahmednagar granted the permission to the Portuguese to construct a factory at Chaul.

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In the north-west, Cambay (Khambayat) was the main port of call on the route from Malacca connecting Calicut, the ports of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf with the ports of the Mediterranean. Apart from this, factories were established by the Portuguese at Diu (1509, 1535), Bassin (1534), Surat, Daman (1599) and Bhavnagar. Thus, almost the entire coastal belt of Malabar, Konkan and north-west India came under the influence of the Portuguese.

### **Eastern India**

The Portuguese navigators came across several merchants from the eastern coast of India who had trade relations with other South-East Asian centers. The Portuguese collected textiles and other commodities from various port-towns of the Coromandel Coast. Some of these port-towns were Masulipatnam, Pulicat, San Thome, Pondicherry, Cuddalore, Porto Novo and Nagapatnam.

Meilapore known as San Thome to the north of Nagapatnam was also a Portuguese settlement, which was surrounded by walls. The Portuguese also established a fortress at Manar in 1518 on the western coast of Ceylon. This fortress, though not on the main land of India, could contain the movement of vessels to the east from the western side of the subcontinent.

The Portuguese also tried to establish commercial contacts with Bengal from AD 1517. The first effort in this direction was made at Chittagong—the chief port of Bengal during this period. After much manoeuvring, they at last obtained permission from Mahmud Shah, the king of Bengal, to establish factories at Chittagong and Satgaon in 1536. The second settlement at Hugli was granted to the Portuguese by Akbar in 1579–1580. The third one was established at Bandel with the permission of Shah Jahan in 1633. Yet, during the 16th century there were no fortresses on the eastern coast. Still the settlements, with a few artilleries, were able to oversee the movement of vessels carrying commodities.

### **South-East Asia**

With a view to having an exclusive domination over the trade in the Indian Ocean regions, the Portuguese found it necessary to bring under their control the important trade centres in South-East Asia.

They established a few fortresses at Colombo and Batticaloa—all in Ceylon. Subsequently, contacts with Java, Siam, Moluccas, Martaban and Pegu were established. From 1518, the Portuguese started a settlement in China on the island of Sancheu. It was here that St. Francis Xavier, a Christian missionary, died in 1552.

The beginning of factories in various parts of the subcontinent of India and neighbouring Asiatic kingdoms provided an environment suitable for long distance trade to the Portuguese.

### 2.3.2 Commodities of Export and Import

*Advent of the Europeans*

The chief aim of the Portuguese in discovering the sea route connecting the East with Portugal was to collect spices directly from the places of production rather than from the hands of the intermediaries like the Italian or the Muslim traders. Pepper became a necessary ingredient in European food. The demand for pepper went on increasing, especially for the sake of preserving meat. Besides, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, mace, nutmeg and several exotic herbs from the East had a market in Europe.

A special variety of textiles like muslin and chintz and few animals like elephants, too, found their way to Portugal. The commodities which the Portuguese had were not acceptable to eastern nobility, thus, they did not have sufficient commodities to give in exchange to acquire commodities available in the East. They bought silver from the West so that they could buy commodities of the East.

Pepper was the most popular commodity which was traded from Malabar and the Konkan coasts. Ginger, white sandalwood, red sandalwood, sealing wax, indigo, spikenard, tamarind, areca nut, textiles, ivory and turmeric were also traded from the Malabar Konkan coasts to Portugal. In 1498, the Zamorin of Calicut asked Vasco da Gama to send gold, silver, coral and scarlet from Portugal. This shows that these commodities were imported to the Malabar and Konkan coasts.

In 1513, Alfonso de Albuquerque gave a list of commodities to the king of Portugal which he felt could be sold in India. This included items like coral, copper, quicksilver, vermilion, velvet, carpets, saffron, rose-water and clothes of various kinds. All these items were not from Portugal, but the Portuguese started procuring them from various places, like Flanders, Germany, England and other European countries.

Indigo, textiles, silk, handicrafts made of tortoise shells, taffeta, satin, chintz, *malmal*, and tripped cotton clothes were some of the things that were exported to Portugal. Among these items, silks were produced in places like Burhanpur and Balaghat, chintz in Cambay, sandalwood in Coromandel, spikenard in Bengal, calico in the vicinity of Daman, Cambay and Balaghat. The volume of export of textile products increased in the 17th century. Copper, broadcloths and cash in various denominations were sent to north-western coast. In addition to this, a few products such as pepper and other spices from the South were also taken to north-western India for the purchase of textiles. The most expensive item of export from this region was pearl, chiefly collected from the pearl fishery coast. Cotton and silk textiles and embroideries from Bengal were exported to the Portuguese. Ginger in conserve, myrobalans, butter, oil, wax and rice were the other commodities that were collected from Bengal.

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The Portuguese brought brocades, damasks, satins, taffetas, cloves, nutmegs, mace, camphor, cinnamon, pepper, chests, writing desks, valuable pearls and jewels to Bengal. Most of these were from Malacca, China, Borneo, Ceylon and Malabar Coast. Sea-shells or cowries from Maldives, white and red sandalwood from Solor and Timor were also taken to Bengal by the Portuguese.

Various types of spices were collected from Ceylon and other South-East Asian regions. For example, Malacca and Java produced pepper for export. Moluccas produced good variety of cloves. The best sort of cinnamon was produced by Ceylon for export to Lisbon. Timor and Tenneserim produced good variety of sandalwood, which was carried by the Portuguese to Lisbon. Sumatra provided sealing wax for Portuguese consumption. Borneo, Sumatra and China produced good variety of camphor for export to Lisbon. Benzoin from Pegu was also taken by the Portuguese to Portugal. Rhubarb was carried by the Portuguese from China.

In return, the Portuguese took gold, silver, cash and textiles to South-East Asian regions. Most of these textile goods were manufactured in India.

### **Finances of the Portuguese trade**

Taking into account the details of the Portuguese enterprise on the Malabar coast in the period between 1500 and 1506, an Italian estimated in 1506 that the total investment needed for conducting trade with the East was 170,000 ducats every year.

The king of Portugal provided only one-fourth of this amount and the rest was raised by the merchants and financiers who collaborated with the Portuguese king. In 1500, he issued an order permitting natives as well as foreign merchants to send their own vessels to the East. Revenues collected in the form of booty, tributes and taxes levied on ships of the private merchants also provided funds for the conduct of trade with India.

### **European merchant-financiers**

Italians, especially the Florentines, occupied an important position among the financiers in the 16th century. Most of the Italian financiers concluded contracts with the Portuguese king. They supplied cash or materials to the king at Lisbon. The king used them to purchase pepper and other commodities from India. These commodities were given to these financiers at Lisbon in view of the contracts signed. However, some of the financiers also sent their own factors to India. Cash or commodities were always sent under the supervision of the Portuguese authorities to the East.

Indian commodities also attracted the German financiers and merchants. The Portuguese king welcomed them with open arms for he was finding it difficult to finance the Oriental enterprise on his own. Since copper was given in part-payment for Indian commodities, especially pepper and other spices,