

Chhatrapati Shivaji

Shivaji Bhonsale I, also known as Chhatrapati Shivaji, was an Indian king and a part of the Bhonsle Maratha clan who was born on 19 February 1630 and died on 3 April 1680. Out of the dwindling Adilshahi sultanate of Bijapur, Shivaji carved out his own independent kingdom, laying the groundwork for the Maratha Empire. At Raigad Fort, he was officially crowned Chhatrapati of his realm in 1674. Throughout his life, Shivaji had alliances and conflicts with the Mughal Empire, the Sultanate of Golkonda, the Sultanate of Bijapur, as well as European colonialists. Shivaji's military forces widened the Maratha sphere of influence by capturing and constructing forts and establishing a Maratha navy. Shivaji founded a competent and progressive civil rule based on a well-structured legal system. He resurrected ancient Hindu political customs, and court conventions, and promoted the use of the Marathi and Sanskrit languages in his court and administration, replacing Persian.

Early life of Shivaji Maharaj

Shivaji Maharaj was born in the hill-fort of Shivneri, close to the town of Junnar, which is currently in the Pune district. The Maharashtra government has designated February 19 as a holiday to commemorate Shivaji's birth known as Shivaji Jayanti. Shivaji was given the name after the goddess Shivai, a local deity. Shivaji's father, Maratha general Shahaji Bhonsle, served the Deccan Sultanates. His mother was Jijabai, the child of Lakhuji Jadhavrao of Sindhkhed, a Mughal-aligned Sardar descended from the Devagiri Yadav royal family. Shivaji belonged to the Maratha Bhonsle clan. Maloji (1552 - 1597), his grandfather, was a powerful general in the Ahmadnagar Sultanate who was given the title "Raja". For military expenditures, he was granted Deshmukhi rights of Pune, Supe, Chakan, and Indapur. He was also provided Fort Shivneri as a residence for his family (circa 1590). At the moment of Shivaji's birth, three Islamic sultanates held power in the Deccan: Bijapur, Ahmednagar, and Golkonda. Shahaji frequently switched allegiances between the Nizamshahi of Ahmadnagar, the Adilshah of Bijapur, and the Mughals, but he maintained his jagir (fiefdom) in Pune and his small army.

Context

The Adil Shahi sultanate of Bijapur attacked the kingdoms to its south in 1636. The sultanate had recently joined the Mughal empire as a tributary state. It was aided by Shahaji, who was a chief in the Maratha highlands of western India at the time. Shahaji was looking for an opportunity for jagir land rewards in conquered lands, as well as taxation on which he could obtain an annuity. From his brief Mughal service, Shahaji was a rebel. The Bijapur government supported Shahaji's anti-Mughal campaigns, which were generally unsuccessful. The Mughal army was constantly pursuing him, forcing Shivaji and his mother Jijabai to flee from fort to fort. In 1636, Shahaji joined the service of Bijapur and was granted Poona. Shivaji and Jijabai made their home in Poona. Adilshah, the Bijapuri ruler, dispatched Shahaji to Bangalore and designated Dadoji Kondadeo as administrator. Shivaji took over the administration after Kondadeo died in 1647. One of his first acts was to openly criticise the Bijapuri government.

Conflict with the Bijapur Sultanate

In the year 1646, when Shivaji was merely 16-year-old, he took the Torna Fort, taking full advantage of the confusion in the Bijapur court caused by the Sultan's illness, and seized the large treasure he discovered there. In the two years that followed, Shivaji conquered several essential forts near Pune,

including Purandhar, Kondhana, and Chakan. He also took direct control of Supa, Baramati, and Indapur. He used the treasure discovered at Torna to construct the new fort Rajgad, which served as his capital for more than a decade. Following this, Shivaji moved to the Konkan and took control of the important town of Kalyan. The Bijapur government took notice of these events and sought to intervene. On July 25, 1648, Shahaji was put in jail by a fellow Maratha Sardar named Baji Ghorpade on orders from the Bijapur government in an effort to contain Shivaji. Just after the capture of Jinji secured Adilshah's stance in Karnataka, Shahaji was released in 1649. Shivaji paused his conquests and silently solidified his gains between 1649 and 1655.

Following his father's release, Shivaji restarted raiding and, in 1656, killed Chandrarao More, a fellow Maratha feudatory of Bijapur, and captured the valley of Javali from him, near the present-day hill station of Mahabaleshwar. In addition to the Bhonsale and More families, plenty of others did serve Adilshahi of Bijapur, including Sawant of Sawantwadi, Ghorpade of Mudhol, Nimbalkar of Phaltan, Shirke, Mane, and Mohite, many of which had Deshmukhi authority. To incapacitate these powerful families, Shivaji used a variety of strategies, including marital alliances, dealing directly with village Patil to avoid the Deshmukhs, and fighting them. In his later years, Shahaji had an ambivalent relationship with his son and disavowed his defiant activities. He told the Bijapuris that they could do whatever they pleased with Shivaji. Shahaji died in a hunting accident around 1664 - 1665.

Battle of Pavan Khind

The Battle of Pāvankhind was a rearguard the last stand fought on 13 July 1660 at a mountain pass close to Fort Vishalgad, near Kolhapur, between the Maratha warriors Baji Prabhu Deshpande and Sambhu Singh Jadhav and Siddi Masud of the Bijapur Sultanate. The fight ended with the Maratha forces destroyed and the Bijapur Sultanate achieving a tactical victory but failing to accomplish a decisive victory.

Conflict with the Mughal Empire

Shivaji sustained friendly coexistence with the Mughal Empire until 1657. In exchange for official recognition of his right to the Bijapuri forts and villages, Shivaji provided his assistance to Aurangzeb, the Mughal viceroy of the Deccan and child of the Mughal ruler, in conquering Bijapur. He launched a raid into the Mughal Deccan after being unsatisfied with the Mughal reaction and getting a better offer from Bijapur. The first clashes between Shivaji and the Mughals occurred in March 1657, when two of Shivaji's officials raided Mughal territory near Ahmednagar. The raids in Junnar were followed by raids in which Shivaji stole 300,000 hun in cash and 200 horses. In response to the raids, Aurangzeb dispatched Nasiri Khan, who crushed Shivaji's forces at Ahmednagar. However, Aurangzeb's countermeasures against Shivaji were hampered by the monsoon season and his fight for the Mughal crown with his brothers just after the illness of the emperor Shah Jahan.

Treaty of Purandar (1665)

On 11th of June, 1665, Jai Singh I, military commander of the Mughal Empire, and Shivaji signed the Treaty of Purandar. Just after Jai Singh besieged Purandar fort, Shivaji was compelled to sign the agreement. When Shivaji finally understood that war with the Mughal Empire will only cause damage to his empire and risk heavy casualties among his men, he chose to enter the treaty rather than leave his men in the hands of the Mughals. In the Treaty of Purandar, Shivaji agreed to surrender 23 of his forts, retaining 12 for himself, and pay the Mughals 400,000 gold hun in war compensation. Shivaji consented to become a vassal of the Mughal empire and send his son Sambhaji, together with 5,000 horsemen, to combat as a mansabdar for the Mughals in the Deccan.

Background of Treaty of Purandar

Aurangzeb was enraged by the attacks on Shaista Khan as well as Surat. In response, he dispatched the Rajput Mirza Raja Jai Singh I along with an army of approximately 15,000 men to defeat Shivaji. Jai Singh's forces pressed Shivaji throughout 1665, with their cavalry razing the countryside and siege forces occupying Shivaji's forts. The Mughal commander was successful in luring away a few of Shivaji's key commanders as well as many of his cavalymen. By mid-1665, with the fortress of Purandar besieged and on the verge of capture, Shivaji was forced to reach an agreement with Jai Singh.

Reconquests

Shivaji and the Mughals maintained peace until 1670. At the time, Aurangzeb was suspicious of Shivaji's close ties to Mu'azzam, whom he suspected of plotting to usurp his throne and possibly accepting bribes from Shivaji. At the same time, Aurangzeb, who was fighting the Afghans, drastically reduced his army in the Deccan; most of those disbanded soldiers quickly joined the Maratha army. The Mughals also took Shivaji's jagir of Berar to recoup money lent to him a few years before. In rebuttal, Shivaji launched an attack against the Mughals, recovering a large portion of the territory surrendered to them in four months. In the year 1670, Shivaji sacked Surat for the 2nd time; the English and Dutch factories repelled his attack, but he was able to sack the city itself, along with looting the goods of a Muslim prince from Mawara-un-Nahr returning from Mecca. Outraged by the revived attacks, the Mughals restarted hostilities with the Marathas, dispatching a force led by Daud Khan to intercept Shivaji on his way home from Surat, but instead were defeated in the Battle of Vani-Dindori near present day Nashik.

Shivaji dispatched his forces to harass the English in Bombay in October 1670; because they refused to sell him military supplies, his forces prevented English woodcutting groups from leaving the city. In September 1671, Shivaji dispatched an ambassador to Bombay, this time in search of supplies for the fight against Danda-Rajpuri. The English were concerned about the benefits Shivaji would gain from this conquest, but they also did not want to lose any chance of getting reimbursement for his looting of their factories in Rajapur. The English sent Lieutenant Stephen Ustick to negotiate with Shivaji, but talks fell through over the Rajapur indemnity. Several envoy exchanges occurred over the next few years, with some agreement reached on the arms problems in 1674, but Shivaji was never to pay the Rajapur indemnity prior to his death, and the factory there was closed at the end of 1682.

Coronation of Shivaji Maharaj

Shivaji had amassed vast lands and wealth as a result of his campaigns, but he was still theoretically a Mughal zamindar or perhaps the son of a Bijapuri jagirdar, with really no legitimate basis to rule his de facto domain. A kingly title would address this issue while also preventing any challenges from other Maratha leaders, to whom he was theoretically equal. It would also provide a fellow Hindu sovereign to the Hindu Marathas in a region otherwise ruled by Muslims. In 1673, preparations for the proposed coronation began. However, some contentious issues delayed the coronation by nearly a year. The Brahmins of Shivaji's court were divided: they refused to crown Shivaji as king since that position was confined for those of the kshatriya caste. Shivaji was descended from a path of chieftains of farming villages, so he was classified as shudra (cultivator) by the Brahmins. They observed that Shivaji had never participated in a sacred thread ceremony and did not wear the thread as a kshatriya would. Shivaji summoned Gaga Bhatt, a pandit of Varanasi, who claimed to have discovered a genealogy proving Shivaji's descent from the Sisodias, and thus a kshatriya, although one in need of the ceremonies befitting his rank. To cement this status, Shivaji was given a sacred thread ceremony and remarried his spouses according to Vedic rites.

On 6 June 1674, Shivaji was crowned king of the Maratha Empire (Hindawi Swaraj) in an extravagant ceremony at Raigad fort. It took place on the 13th day (trayodashi) of the very first fortnight of the month of Jyeshtha in the year 1596, according to the Hindu calendar. Gaga Bhatt presided, pouring water over Shivaji's head from a gold vessel filled with the waters of the 7 sacred rivers Yamuna, Indus, Ganges, Godavari, Narmada, Krishna, and Kaveri and chanting the Vedic coronation mantras. Shivaji kneeled before Jijabai and touched her feet after the ablution. Nearly 50,000 people gathered in Raigad for the ceremonies. Shivaji was given the titles Shakakarta ("era founder") and Chhatrapati ("sovereign"). He was also given the name Haindava Dharmodhhaarak (protector of the Hindu faith). Jijabai, Shivaji's mother, passed away on 18th of June, 1674. The Marathas called up Nischal Puri Goswami, a tantrik priest, who asserted that the first coronation had been conducted under inauspicious stars, necessitating a second coronation. On September 24, 1674, Shivaji's second coronation served a dual purpose: it assuaged those who still believed Shivaji was unqualified for the Vedic rites of his first coronation by conducting a less-contestable extra ceremony.

Shivaji's Conquest of South India

Beginning in 1674, the Marathas pursued an ambitious campaign, raiding Khandesh in October, seizing Bijapuri Ponda in April 1675, Karwar in the middle of the year, and Kolhapur in the July. The Maratha navy clashed with the Siddis of Janjira in November, but were unable to dislodge them. Shivaji raided Athani in April 1676, after recovering from an illness and taking full benefit of a civil war which had emerged out between the Deccanis and the Afghans at Bijapur. In the run-up to his excursion, Shivaji made an appeal to a sense of Deccani nationalism, arguing that Southern India should be shielded from outsiders. His appeal was kind of effective, and in 1677 Shivaji paid a month's visit to Hyderabad and signed a treaty with the Qutubshah of the Golkonda sultanate, consenting to reject his alliance with Bijapur and jointly oppose the Mughals. Shivaji invaded Karnataka in 1677 with 30,000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry, supported by Golkonda artillery and funding. Moving south, Shivaji captured the forts of Vellore and Gingee, the latter of which would later serve as the Marathas' capital during the rule of his son Rajaram I. Shivaji planned to reconcile with his step-brother Venkoji (Ekoji I), Shahaji's son by his 2nd wife, Tukabai (née Mohite), who succeeded Shahaji as ruler of Thanjavur (Tanjore). After initially promising negotiations failed, Shivaji defeated his half-army brother's and captured most of his Mysore plateau belongings on November 26, 1677, while returning to Raigad. Dipa Bai, Venkoji's wife, whom Shivaji greatly admired, began new negotiations with Shivaji and also persuaded her husband to separate himself from Muslims.

Shivaji's Death

Shivaji died in the evening of Hanuman Jayanti, around 3-5 April 1680, at the age of 50. The exact cause of Shivaji's death is unknown. Putalabai, Shivaji's childless eldest surviving wife, decided to commit Sati by jumping into his funeral pyre. Sakwarbai, another alive wife, was not permitted to follow suit as she had a young daughter. Soyarabai worked out a plan with various administration ministers after Shivaji's death to crown her son Rajaram instead of her stepson Sambhaji. Rajaram, a ten-year-old boy, was placed on the throne on April 21, 1680. However, after killing the commander, Sambhaji got hold of Raigad Fort, gaining control of Raigad on 18 June and formally ascending the throne on 20 July.

Administration under Shivaji

Ashta Pradhan Mandal

Shivaji established the Council of Eight Ministers, also known as the Ashta Pradhan Mandal, as an administrative and advisory body. It was made up of eight ministers who provided regular political and administrative advice to Shivaji. Except for the Panditrao and Nyayadhis, every other minister held military commands, with deputies performing their civil duties. The following were the eight ministers:

S. No.	Post		Duties
1	Peshwa	Prime Minister	General Administration
2	Amatya	Finance Minister	Maintaining Public accounts
3	Mantri	Chronicler	Maintaining Court records
4	Summant or Dabir	Foreign Secretary	All matters related to relationships with other states
5	Sachiv or Shurn Nawis	Home Secretary	Managing correspondence of the king
6	Panditrao	Ecclesiastical Head	Religious matters
7	Nyayadhis	Chief Justice	Civil and Military justice
8	Senapati or Sari Naubat	Commander-in-Chief	All matters related to the army of the king

Linguistic Policies

Shivaji's court used Marathi instead of Persian, the region's widespread courtly language, and asserted Hindu political and courtly cultures. During Shivaji's reign, Marathi was widely used as a tool for systematic description and comprehension. The royal seal of Shivaji was written in Sanskrit. Shivaji had one of his officials create a comprehensive lexicon in which Persian and Arabic terms were replaced with Sanskrit equivalents. This resulted in the production of 'Rjavyavahrakoa,' the state usage thesaurus, in 1677.

Religious Policies

Shivaji is well-known for his religious policies that are both liberal and tolerant. While Hindus were heartened to be able to practise their faith freely under a Hindu ruler, Shivaji not only permitted Muslims to practise freely, but also backed their ministries with resource endowment. On 3 April 1679, when Aurangzeb levied the Jizya tax on non-Muslims, Shivaji wrote a harsh letter to Aurangzeb condemning his tax policy. Shivaji was not trying to establish a universal Hindu rule. He was religiously tolerant and did believe in syncretism. He advised Aurangzeb to behave similarly to Akbar in regard to Hindu beliefs and locations. Even against Hindu powers, Shivaji had no difficulty establishing alliances with the surrounding Muslim nations. He also refused to fight the Mughals alongside other Hindu powers such

as the Rajputs. Muslim leaders appear early within his own army. In 1656, the first Pathan unit was formed. Darya Sarang, his naval admiral, was a Muslim.

Seals

Seals were used to verify the authenticity of official documents. Both Shahaji and Jijabai sported Persian seals. However, Shivaji used Sanskrit for his seal from the start. "This seal of Shiva, son of Shah, shines forth for the welfare of the people and is meant to command increasing respect from the universe like the first phase of the moon," the seal proclaims.

Military under Shivaji

Shivaji showed excellent skill in establishing his military organisation, which survived until the Maratha Empire's demise. His strategy was based on utilising his ground forces, naval forces, and a network of forts spread across his territory. His ground forces were led by Maval infantry (reinforced with Telangi musketeers from Karnataka) and supported by Maratha cavalry. His artillery was underdeveloped and dependent on European suppliers, further favouring a mobile style of warfare.

Warfare Techniques

Shivaji kept a small but efficient standing army. Shivaji's army was primarily made up of peasants from the Maratha and Kunbi castes. Shivaji was well aware of his army's constraints. He recognised that conventional warfare methodologies were inadequate to deal with the Mughals' large, well-trained cavalry, which was armed with field artillery. As a result, Shivaji used guerilla tactics known as 'Ganimi Kawa'. Shivaji was a guerrilla warfare expert. His strategies steadily perplexed and defeated opposing armies. He recognised that supply was the weakest link in the large, slow-moving armies of the time. To cut off supplies to the enemy, he used his knowledge of the local landscape and the excellent mobility of his light cavalry. Shivaji was unwilling to engage in pitched battles. Rather, he lured his opponents into difficult hills and forests of his choosing, catching them off guard and routing them. Shivaji did not use a single tactic to undermine his enemies, but instead used a variety of methods, including surprise raids, sweeps, and ambushes, as well as psychological pressure. Aurangzeb and his generals derisively referred to Shivaji as a "Mountain Rat" because of his guerilla tactics of targeting enemy troops and then withdrawing into his mountain forts.

Shivaji's Hill Forts

Hill forts were an important part of Shivaji's strategy. He conquered Murambdev (Rajgad), Torna, Kondhana (Sinhagad), and Purandar. He also reconstructed or repaired numerous forts in strategic locations. Shivaji also constructed a number of forts. Each was placed under the command of three officers of equal rank, in case a single traitor was bribed or tempted to deliver it to the enemy. The officers worked together to provide mutual checks and balances.

Naval Force

Shivaji began building his navy in 1657 or 1659, acknowledging the need for a naval capability to keep control all along the Konkan coast, with the buying of 20 galivats from the Portuguese shipyards of Bassein. According to Marathi chronicles, his fleet numbered around 400 warships at its peak, though contemporary English chronicles claim that the count never surpassed 160. With the Marathas conditioned to a land-based army, Shivaji expanded his quest for competent crews for his ships, taking on lower-caste Hindus from the coast (the famed "Malabar pirates") in addition to Muslim mercenaries.

Recognizing the Portuguese navy's strength, Shivaji recruited a number of Portuguese seafarers and Goan Christian converts and appointed Rui Leita Viegas as commander of his fleet. Viegas later defected to the Portuguese, taking away 300 sailors with him. Shivaji fortified his coastline by seizing and refurbishing coastal forts, and he constructed his first maritime fort at Sindhudurg, which became the headquarters of the Maratha navy. The navy itself was a coastal navy, with a focus on travel and battle in the littoral areas and no intention of venturing far out to sea.

