

HISTORY. HONS. SEM-IV

BALAJI BAJI RAO, 1740-61.

AND 3RD BATTLE OF PANIPAT, 1761.

confinement by Balaji Rao and Chimmaji Appa. Baji Rao's addiction to meat and wine was ascribed to his association with Mastani. Perhaps it was proposed by the members of the Peshwa's family to put Mastani to death, and thus not to give anyone cause of complaint against Baji Rao's unorthodox way of living. When Baji Rao heard of his lady-love's imprisonment, he was completely prostrated. But in fear of public opinion he did not think it politic to proceed to Poona and rescue her by force. He suddenly succumbed to the affliction. When the news reached Mastani, she died in the palace at Poona. It is difficult to say whether her end was caused by suicide or was due to shock.

Balaji Baji Rao, 1740-61 : Peshwa appointed Deputy Governor of Malwa, 1751

Shahu now appointed the deceased's eldest son Balaji *alias* Nana Sahib as Peshwa on 4th July, 1740. The new Peshwa was eighteen years and six months old. Babuji Nayak Joshi, a well-known banker, was also a candidate for the exalted office, but Shahu paid little attention to his request and conferred the robes on Balaji without hesitation. Balaji had received good training in war and diplomacy under his father; but

he was not endowed with his father's dash and military genius. He was a man of sweet and conciliatory temper. On his appointment, he planned an expedition to Northern India in order to secure the formal cession of Malwa which had been promised to his father by Nizam-ul-Mulk.

Accompanied by his uncle Chinnaji he left for Malwa, but Chinnaji had to return from the way on account of ill-health and died at Poona on 27th December, 1740. Though over-shadowed by Baiji Rao's transcendent genius, Chinnaji was a notable soldier and administrator of repute. Not a man of great personal ambition, he loyally served his brother and gave him the credit for his achievements. His son Sadashiva Rao, popularly known as Bhanu Sahib, was destined to rise to fame and to a tragic end.

The Peshwa after due mourning for his deceased uncle resumed his journey and reached Dholpur, where he held a conference with Jai Singh of Jaipur in the last week of May 1741. It resulted in an agreement to the effect (1) that the Peshwa and Jai Singh should act in complete friendship and help each other; (2) that the Marathas should be strictly loyal to the emperor; and (3) that the governorship of Malwa should be secured for the Peshwa within six months. After this diplomatic success Balaji returned to Poona on 17th July. Jai Singh now persuaded the emperor to issue a 'farman' (13th July, 1741) appointing the crown prince Ahmad as Subedar of Malwa and Peshwa Balaji Rao, as his deputy. Balaji Rao thus became the master of Malwa in name as well as in fact. The province had been in Maratha possession since November 1738.

The formal grant of 14th July, 1741 legalised the Maratha conquest of Malwa. The terms of the grant of Malwa were: (1) The Marathas should not encroach on any other imperial territory; (2) The Peshwa should station at Delhi 500 Maratha horse for imperial service; (3) That at the time of necessity 4,000 more Maratha troops should be provided at the expense of the emperor; (4) That the Peshwa should respect the jagirs in Malwa granted by the emperor to individuals and religious institutions before 1741 and that he should not enhance the taxes on the ryots.

Conquest of Karnatak, 1740-41

At the time of Baiji Rao's death Raghunji Bhonsle of Berar was engaged in an expedition in Karnatak undertaken on the invitation of Raja Pratap Singh of Tanjore, descendant of the great Shivaji's half-brother Vyankoji, whose independence was threatened by Dost Ali, Nawab of Karnatak. Raghunji defeated and killed Dost Ali and made peace with his son Salfar Ali. In December 1741, he besieged Chanda Sahib, Dost Ali's son-in-law in Trichinopoly, and sent him a

prisoner to Satara. Trichinopoly was placed in the charge of Murar Rao Chorpade. Raghujji now wanted to besiege Pondicherry, the stronghold of the French who were Chanda Sahib's allies ; but he gave up the attempt and returned to Poona.

Raghujji Bhonsole acquires Orissa, 1751

In order to silence his opposition to him, the Peshwa allowed Raghujji Bhonsole a free hand in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa which were practically independent under Ali Vardi Khan. Raghujji Bhonsole dispatched a powerful army under his revenue minister Bhaskar Pant to enforce his demand of *chauth* on the three provinces. Ali Vardi Khan invited Bhaskar Pant to an entertainment and treacherously massacred him along with his chief officers. But the Khan had to pay heavily for his perfidy. Raghujji carried fire and sword into his territory and compelled him to surrender the province of Orissa with twelve lakhs of rupees annually as the *chauth* for Bengal and Bihar (1751). The Marathas did not establish any civil administration in Orissa, but left it in the hands of the local chiefs. Raghujji's horsemen became a terror to the people of Bengal and Bihar.

Maratha interference with Jaipur ; beginning of friction between Marathas and Rajputs

Sawai Jai Singh of Amber, who acquired fame as the builder of a new capital at Jaipur and as a patron of learning, died on 3rd October, 1743 at the age of 55. His two sons Ishwari Singh, the elder and Madho Singh, the younger (born of an Udaipur princess), quarrelled for succession. But Maharana Jagat Singh of Udaipur supported Madho Singh's claim and the result was a war, which lasted for seven years. The Maharana marched on Jaipur and demanded half of the State for Madho Singh. Ishwari Singh enlisted the support of Ranoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar and defeated Madho Singh in 1745. But as Ranoji died soon after and serious differences arose between his son Jayappa and Malhar Rao, the latter took up the cause of Madho Singh, while Sindhia remained on the side of Ishwari Singh. On 12th March, 1747, a severe battle was fought at Rajmahal near Deoli in which Madho Singh was defeated. The Maharana now sent an agent to Poona to enlist the Peshwa's support. The situation became so confusing on account of the rivalry of Sindhia and Holkar that the Peshwa himself proceeded to the north to settle the dispute. Ishwari Singh had just returned from a campaign against the Abdali invader of Kabul and as he was dissatisfied with the Marathas on account of their selfish conduct in his war with Madho Singh, he did not visit the Peshwa and remained sullenly aloof. But Madho Singh saw the Peshwa at Newai, nearly 40 miles south of Jaipur, and as the result of a conference it was decided that Ishwari Singh should hand over four of his districts to Madho Singh. On Peshwa's return in June 1748,

Ishwari Singh had to use Durin Holkar to had little marched promise demand and died burnt the grief at rage at Ishwari served the discover therefor Th a look closed. from a thousand propert set up and the Sadar Farruk episod Shahu S agains to sec chiefs. Broth Peshw agains submit sable thron Kolha childd reque was, Sham Succ

... was not endowed with his father's dash and military genius. He was a man of sweet and conciliatory temper. On his appointment, he joined an expedition to Northern India in order to secure the formal possession of Malwa which had been promised to his father by Nizam-ul-Mulk.

Accompanied by his uncle Chinnaji he left for Malwa, but Chinnaji had to return from the way on account of ill-health and died at Poona on 27th December, 1740. Though overshadowed by Baji Rao's transcendent genius, Chinnaji was a notable soldier and an administrator of repute. Not a man of great personal ambition, he loyally served his brother and gave him the credit for his achievements. His son Sadashiva Rao, popularly known as Bhanu Sahib, was destined to rise to fame and to a tragic end.

The Peshwa after due mourning for his deceased uncle resumed his journey and reached Dholpur, where he held a conference with Jai Singh of Jaipur in the last week of May 1741. It resulted in an agreement to the effect (1) that the Peshwa and Jai Singh should act in complete friendship and help each other; (2) that the Marathas should be strictly loyal to the emperor; and (3) that the governorship of Malwa should be secured for the Peshwa within six months. After this diplomatic success Balaji returned to Poona on 17th July, 1741 and now persuaded the emperor to issue a 'farman' (13th July, 1741) appointing the crown prince Ahmad as Subedar of Malwa and Peshwa Balaji Rao, as his deputy. Balaji Rao thus became the master of Malwa in name as well as in fact. The province had been in Maratha possession since November 1738.

The formal grant of 14th July, 1741 legalised the Maratha conquest of Malwa. The terms of the grant of Malwa were: (1) The Marathas should not encroach on any other imperial territory; (2) The Peshwa should station at Delhi 500 Maratha horse for imperial service; (3) That at the time of necessity 4,000 more Maratha troops should be provided at the expense of the emperor; (4) That the Peshwa should respect the jagirs in Malwa granted by the emperor to individuals and religious institutions before 1741 and that he should not enhance the taxes on the ryots.

Conquest of Karnataka, 1740-41

At the time of Baji Rao's death Raghujji Bhonsle of Berar was engaged in an expedition in Karnataka undertaken on the invitation of Raja Pratap Singh of Tanjore, descendant of the great Shivaji's half-brother Vyankoji, whose independence was threatened by Dost Ali Nawab of Karnataka. Raghujji defeated and killed Dost Ali and made peace with his son Saldar Ali. In December 1741, he besieged Chanda Sahib, Dost Ali's son-in-law in Trichinopoly, and sent him a

... of Murar
... but he gave

... allowed
... Bhonsle
... Ali Vardi
... treacherously
... to his territory
... Bihar (1751),
... in Orissa, but
... men became a

tion

... the builder of
... died on 3rd
... Singh, the elder
... ipur princess),
... gh of Udaipur
... ar, which lasted
... demanded half
... the support of
... Madho Singh in
... differences arose
... took up the cause
... of Ishwari Singh.
... Rajmahal near
... harana now sent
... situation became
... Holkar that the
... dispute. Ishwari
... e Abdaji invader
... as on account of
... did not visit the
... saw the Peshwa
... the result of a
... hand over 1748.
... in June

Maratha Ascendancy | 413
Ishwari Singh refused to deliver the districts and Malhar Rao Holkar had to use force to compel him to abide by the agreement.
During the rainy season of 1750 the Peshwa sent Sindhia and Holkar to demand *chauth* from Ishwari Singh. The Kachhwaha chief had little money in his treasury and consequently, Malhar Rao Holkar marched on Jaipur with his troops. Ishwari Singh was compelled to promise that he swallowed poison and got himself bitten by the Maratha and died. Three of his wives similarly swallowed poison and twenty hunt themselves on his funeral pyre. The city of Jaipur was filled with grief and consternation. Even Madho Singh was beside himself with rage at the Maratha conduct, and deciding to avenge the death of Ishwari Singh, he invited Jayappa and Malhar Rao for dinner and served them with poisoned food. Before they had begun to eat, it was discovered that the dishes served were contaminated with poison and, therefore, Sindhia and Holkar escaped death.

The next day Jayappa along with his followers was invited to have a look at the city and as they entered, the gates were ordered to be closed. A general massacre of the Marathas commenced and lasted from mid-day to mid-night on 20th January, 1751. Nearly three thousand of them were killed and a thousand more wounded and their property was plundered by the Rajputs. The remnants of the Marathas set up their camp a few miles from the city. Fortunately, the Sindhia and the Holkar had at this time received urgent appeal from the Wazir Sadfar Jang to assist him against the Pathans of Ruhelkhand and Farrukhabad, and therefore, they left Jaipur for the Doab. But this episode brought about a gulf between the Marathas and the Rajputs.

Shahu's last days ; his character

Shahu's last days were far from happy. His queens intrigued against each other. His own health began to fail and Tara Bai's move to secure power and the selfish rivalry between important Maratha chiefs, like Raghujji Bhonsle, Murar Rao Ghorpade and the Angria Brothers, filled him with anxiety. A faction at the court, opposed to Peshwa Balaji Rao, thwarted his measures and made bitter complaints against him to the king. Matters went so far that the Peshwa had to submit his resignation in 1747 ; but he had proved himself indispensable and was, therefore, reappointed.

To these difficulties were added the absence of an heir to the throne. Shahu had no son and he did not like to adopt Shambhaji of Kolhapur. Tara Bai, who lived in confinement at Satara, produced a child who was supposed to have been born of her son Shivaji Bai. He requested Shahu to adopt him. His name was Ram Raja. Sakwari Bai, however, openly opposed by Shahu's queen but did not Shambhaji of Kolhapur attempted to seize the throne whose health was succeeded. Under these circumstances, Shahu whose health was

Shahu was the last Maratha Chhatrapati who exercised *de facto* authority. After him the Maratha king became *roi fainéant*, almost a prisoner in Satara, and all powers passed into the hands of the Peshwa. "Personally, Shahu was neither a clever politician nor a capable commander," writes the historian Sardesai, "but his innate common sense and sympathetic heart enabled him to detect these qualities in others and utilize them for his service. He rightly judged men's capacities and gave them a free hand without grudge or hindrance. He particularly advanced the interest of the ryots, brought barren tracts under cultivation, encouraged plantation of trees, relieved the suffering of the poor, and removed irksome taxes."* The most important trait in Shahu's character was that once he had appointed his ministers he gave them his confidence and support and seldom interfered with their work. This was the secret of his success as a ruler.

Shahu looked upon himself as a faithful vassal of the Mughul emperor and did not like any clash between Delhi and Satara. He was essentially a kind-hearted man. He freely mixed with people and took part in their social festivities. He had preference for the Muslim way of living. This was but natural, as he had been brought up in Aurangzeb's camp. He was fond of hunting, smoking *huqqa* and had a harem. He made no difference between Hindus and Musalmans and tolerated all religions. He is remembered for his generosity to this day.

After Shahu's death Ram Raja was crowned Chhatrapati on 14th January, 1750. Tara Bai kept him under strict control and stopped him from associating with the Peshwa. As Ram Raja revolted against Tara Bai's tutelage, she declared him an impostor. This led to a quarrel between the two. The Peshwa invited Tara Bai and her chief supporter Pant Sachiv to Pooná. He treated Tara Bai with respect, but threw Pant Sachiv into the prison. Then Chhatrapati Ram Raja was also requested to attend a conference at Pooná and was persuaded to sign a document, known as the "Sangola Agreement" by which the Chhatrapati handed over all important offices of the state to the Peshwa's adherents. Henceforth, Peshwa became the real ruler of the Maratha State.

Civil War in Maharashtra : Peshwa triumphs over his rivals

After the "Sangola Agreement" the Peshwa resolving to settle the Maratha dispute with the Nizam of Hyderabad proceeded against the capital of that State. But as soon as his back was turned, Tara Bai hatched a conspiracy to overthrow the Peshwa's domination. As

* G. S. Sardesai : *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, p. 177.

... exercised by the Peshwa...
... the hands of the Peshwa...
... "But his innate... almost a...
... detect these... capable...
... He rightly judged... qualities in...
... trees, brought... hindrance...
... es." The most... the suffer...
... ad appointed... his minister...
... and seldom... interfered...
... ss as a ruler.

Delhi and Satara. He was
mixed with people and took
reference for the Muslim way
had been brought up in
5, smoking *hugga* and had
Hindus and Musalmans and
for his generosity to this day.
owned Chhatrapati on 14th
ct control and stopped him
Raja revolted against Tara
Raja. This led to a quarrel
ator. This led to a quarrel
Bai and her chief supporter
ai with respect, but there
rapati Ram Raja was also
and was persuaded to sign
agreement" by which the
offices of the state to the
became the real ruler of the

... resolving to settle
... proceeded against
... turned Tara Bai
... as

Maratha Ascendancy | 415
powers were swiftly passing from the hands of the Chhatrapati to those of his Brahman chief minister, the Maratha chiefs were feeling jealous of and alienated from the Peshwa. They resented the "Sangola Agreement" by which the Peshwa had managed to secure chief offices of the state for his adherents, and were in a mood to join hands with Tara Bai who seized the fort of Satara, invited Ram Raja to a banquet and threw him into prison. She won over Uma Bai, the widow of Khande Rao Dabhade, who summoned her husband's old officers Damaji Gaikwar from Gujarat to assist her husband's old lieutenant seizing power. Damaji advanced upon Satara at the head of 15,000 troops. But the latter was opposed by Nana Purandhare and some other adherents of the Peshwa. Meanwhile, the Peshwa himself in receipt of news of Damaji Gaikwar's march upon Satara, returned from near Raichur by forced marches, and defeated Damaji, compelling him to surrender half of Gujarat and to pay him an indemnity of twenty-five lakhs of rupees. Not content with this, Peshwa, breaking his word, attacked Damaji once again and took him a prisoner with his son and Uma Bai Dabhade. The breach between him and the Gaikwar became complete and Damaji never afterwards saluted the Peshwa except with his left hand. He resisted the Peshwa's demand as long as he could; but finding no way out, he submitted and was allowed to return to Gujarat where he expelled the old Mughul governor from Ahmedabad and became the virtual master of the province.

Damaji Gaikwar's defeat and submission failed to daunt Tara Bai who held out defiantly in the fort of Satara. She made peace with the Peshwa only after the latter had guaranteed her liberty under a solemn oath. As Tara Bai had declared Ram Raja an impostor, he remained in prison and died in obscurity in 1777. Before his death Ram Raja had adopted a son named Shahu, the younger, who reigned until his death, which occurred in 1810. Thus, after the death of Shahu I in 1749 the Maratha kings had sunk into mere *rois faincants* and the Peshwas had become *de facto* rulers of the Maratha State. For this both the Chhatrapati and the Peshwa were to blame. Shahu I had delegated his authority to his Peshwa who acted in the interest of the king and the state. Shahu's successors were utterly weak and did not know how to reconcile their *de jure* sovereignty with *de facto* power of their chief ministers. Tara Bai cared more for personal aggrandizement than the good of the state, aggravated the situation and became responsible for the Peshwa's usurpation of authority. The change proved ruinous, as it aggravated the centrifugal tendencies of the ruling class in Maharashtra.

Contest with the Nizam, 1751-1760

The triumph over his domestic rivals enabled Peshwa Balaji to undertake an expedition against Hyderabad at the end of 1751. He

supported Ghazi-ud-din Khan, the eldest son of late Nizam-ul-Mulk who had died in June 1748, against his younger brother Salabat Jang. The latter, however, brought into the field corps of trained infantry under the French general Bussy who defeated the Peshwa more than once and penetrated to within 16 miles of Poona. But the Hyderabad troops revolted for want of pay and had to be recalled. Meanwhile the Peshwa's candidate Ghazi-ud-din Khan was poisoned in 1752 and the campaign came to an end. Balaji next organized an expedition into Karnataka and brought huge plunder to Poona. He looted Mysore also. He made an alliance with the Nizam and attacked the Nawab of Savanur and compelled him to pay tribute.

In 1758 fresh hostilities broke out between the Nizam and the Peshwa. That year Bussy, the French general in the Nizam service and recalled by Lally, and the Peshwa, therefore thought that the time was opportune for dealing a blow at the Nizam, and attacked Hyderabad. He captured Ahmadnagar without striking a blow and induced Ibrahim Khan Gardi, the commandant of the Nizam's artillery to enter Ibrahim service. The Peshwa now despatched his cousin Sadashiva Rao Bhanu, son of Chinnaji Appa, at the head of 40,000 troops to invade the Nizam's dominion. Salabat Jang, the Nizam, endeavoured to defend his territory, but was defeated in a battle at Udgir, 200 miles east of Poona, on February 3, 1760. In this battle Ibrahim Gardi's artillery played an important part. The Nizam fell back in disorder upon the fortress of Ausa which was promptly besieged by the Bhanu. The Nizam was compelled to capitulate and a peace was made without loss of time. The Nizam surrendered his territory around Bijapur and Aurangabad yielding an annual revenue of 60 lakhs of rupees, and delivered the fortresses of Daulatabad, Asirgarh, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Burtanpur to the victor. The Bhanu's reputation as a great strategist was established beyond question.

Maratha intervention in the North ; the Treaty of April 1752

While Balaji was occupied in getting over internal dissensions in Maharashtra, events were moving rapidly in Northern India. Towards the end of Muhammad Shah's reign the Punjab was invaded by Ahmad Shah Abdali who had set himself up as king of Afghanistan after the assassination of Nadir Shah in June 1747. But he was defeated at Manupur in March 1748. Muhammad Shah died meanwhile and was succeeded by his son emperor Ahmad Shah who appointed Saidu Jang of Awadh as his wazir.

The new wazir had serious differences with the Pathans of Farrukhabad and Ruhelkhand and consequently he undertook an invasion of the latter's territory. While the wazir was engaged in uprooting the Pathan colony, Ahmad Shah Abdali again entered the Punjab during the winter of 1749 and compelled Muir-ul-Mulk, governor of that province, to pay him ten lakhs of rupees, besides promising the revenue of the four northern districts of the Punjab

Meanwhile, the wazir of Farrukhabad, Salabat Jang, the queen-mother of the foundry of the Peshwa, Khan. He received the assistance of Holkar, Marathas and Raja of Suraj Mal and defeated the wazir in the Kingdom of the Indian ruler. The wazir's orders of recall towards the end of the wazir made the wazir to fight in Delhi to fight in April, 1752, and (1) That t and e;

- (2) That Marat and 2
- (3) That the P
- (4) That Ajme

This treat peace with the was thoroughly Delhi unless it persuaded Gh: proceed to th province with Marathas 30 La Maratha tang impossible for and the emper for his provin remain in his November 17 Marathas bes The trea emperor, rou

Meanwhile, the wazir was defeated by the Pathans in the Doab in September 1750. The Pathans overran the wazir's provinces of Awadh and Allahabad, plundered Lucknow and besieged the fort of Allahabad.

Safdar Jang, who was bitterly opposed by a court clique headed by the queen-mother Malka-i-Zamani and her favourite eunuch headed Khan, found no way out of his difficulty except by seeking Maratha assistance. He engaged the services of Jayappa Sindhia and Marathas Rao Holkar, promising them Rs. 24,000 per day. He also sought the aid of Suraj Mal Jat of Bharatpur. With the help of these allies, the wazir defeated Ahmad Khan Bangash and compelled him to take shelter in the Kumau hills.

The Indian Pathans appealed to Ahmad Shah Abdali to come to their relief. The invader, therefore, again appeared in the Punjab towards the end of 1751. The emperor was terrified and sent frantic orders of recall to the wazir from his campaign in the Punjab. The wazir made an agreement with Sindhia and Holkar in the Kumau hills, to Delhi to fight and drive out the invader. The agreement, dated 22nd April, 1752, contained the following terms :

- (1) That the Peshwa should defend the emperor from his internal and external enemies ;
- (2) That the emperor should pay 50 lakhs of rupees to the Marathas for their help, 30 lakhs on account of the Abdali and 20 lakhs on account of internal foes, like the Pathans ;
- (3) That the Peshwa should be given the right to levy *chauth* on the Punjab, Sindh and the Doab; and
- (4) That the Peshwa was to be appointed governor of Agra and Ajmer.

This treaty was not ratified by the emperor who had already made peace with the Abdali invader and ceded to him Punjab. Safdar Jang was thoroughly disgusted and as Sindhia and Holkar would not leave Delhi unless they were paid the promised sum of 50 lakhs, the wazir persuaded Ghazi-ud-din, the eldest son of the late Nizam-ul-Mulk, to proceed to the Dakhin to take charge of the vicereignty of that province with Maratha assistance. The latter agreed to pay the Marathas 30 lakhs of rupees. The wazir thus succeeded in solving the Maratha tangle. But the opposition of the court party made it impossible for him to function. The result was a civil war between him and the emperor. Safdar Jang was defeated and was compelled to leave for his provinces of Awadh and Allahabad which were allowed to remain in his charge, though he was dismissed from the wazir's post (November 1753).

Marathas besiege Kumbher ; Rupture with the Jats, 1754

The treaty of April 1752, though it was not ratified by the emperor, roused the Maratha ambition and provided them with a

... But the wazir was not...
... organized an expedition...
... He looked Mission...
... out between the Nizam...
... general in the Nizam...
... before thought that the...
... Nizam, and attacked...
... king a blow and...
... Nizam's artillery to...
... his cousin Sadas...
... of 40,000 troops to...
... Nizam, endeavoured...
... battle at Udgir, 200...
... a fell back in disorder...
... besieged by the Bhan...
... peace was made with...
... territory around...
... nue of 60 lakhs of...
... ulatabad, Asirgarh...
... victor. The Bhan's...
... and question.

the Treaty of April 1752

... internal dissensions...
... in Northern India...
... Punjab was invaded...
... as king of Afghan...
... 1747. But he was...
... d Shah died mean...
... had Shah who app...
... with the Pathans...
... differences with...
... consequently he...
... while the wazir...
... Shah Abdali...
... compelled...
... lakhs of rupees...
... and

plausible excuse for capturing the provinces of Agra and Ajmer by force. Agra was coveted by the Rathor king of Marwar. Another plausible excuse to the Marathas was provided by Imad-ul-Mulk's recent invitation to them to invade Bharatpur. The Mughul Emperor was a grandson of Nizam-ul-Mulk, and was appointed Mir Bakshi. He was hostile to Suraj Mal for his alliance with Saffdar Jang. Peshwa had already despatched his brother Raghunath Rao. The eighteen years old, during the monsoon of 1753 to gain his first experience in the north. He reached Jaipur in December, from where he deputed Malhar Rao Holkar to besiege Kumbher, a strong fortress belonging to Suraj Mal. The Jat king tried to avoid war and sent a trusted agent to Raghunath Rao offering to pay 40 lakhs as the price of peace. Raghunath Rao haughtily rejected the offer and ordered the invasion of Kumbher. The siege lasted for four months (January-May 1754) in the course of which Malhar Rao's son Khande Rao Holkar was killed. The Jats put up such a brave resistance that the Marathas not only failed to capture the fortress but were also obliged to accept a mere promise of 30 lakhs to be paid in three yearly instalments. Then he raised the siege.

During the Jat war Malhar Rao in company with Imad-ul-Mulk raided the emperor's camp near Sikandrabad and followed Mir Bakshi to Delhi where the latter put emperor Ahmad Shah to death in June 1754 and raised Alamgir II to the throne. He got himself appointed as wazir. Raghunath Rao and Jayappa Sindhia soon reached Delhi and Imad-ul-Mulk promised them 82 lakhs for their support. For five months Raghunath Rao kept on roving in the vicinity of the capital in the vain hope of obtaining funds from the wazir and the new emperor. Next he crossed the Yamuna into Rajasthan for collecting tribute and was joined by Malhar Rao Holkar. At this time Jayappa Sindhia was conducting a campaign against Bijay Singh of Marwar for realising *chauth* from him. Raghunath Rao wanted to join Jayappa but the latter advised him against it. Consequently, Raghunath Rao left for Gwalior and thence for Pooná. His two years expedition (Oct. 1753-Aug. 1755) not only failed in its objective but even injured the Maratha interests in the north.

Jayappa Sindhia in Marwar, 1755-56 ; Another cause of Maratha-Rajput enmity

While Malhar Rao Holkar interfered in the internal affairs of Jaipur and took sides in a war of succession to its throne which brought about a serious split between the Rajputs and the Marathas, Jayappa Sindhia chose Marwar for his sphere of activity and by his arrogant conduct furnished another cause of a complete parting of ways between the chiefs of Rajasthan and the Marathas who had till 1741 worked together in friendly spirit. Abhai Singh of Marwar died on 20th June, 1749. His son Ram Singh was set aside by his uncle Bakhat Singh,

ing of Raja and Ameer by the Marathas. The Marathas appointed Mir Sadaf Mir Bakhshi Raghunath Jang in December, 1753 to gain the Amber, a strong fortress to avoid war and sent a pay of 40 lakhs as the price for the offer and ordered the son Khande Rao Holkar to assist that the Marathas were also obliged to accept yearly instalments. Then

pany with Imad-ul-Mulk and followed Mir for Ahmad Shah to death throne. He got himself ppa Sindhia soon reached 2 lakhs for their support. ving in the vicinity of the om the wazir and the new Rajasthan for collecting kar. At this time Jayappa Bijay Singh of Marwar wanted to join Jayappa but ntly, Raghunath Rao left o years expedition (Octive but even injured the

Another cause of

in the internal affairs of its throne which Jayappa and the Marathas, arranged ctivity and by his of the complete party had the Marathas who had the Marathas who had the

mother of Abhai Singh. Ram Singh sought the support of Jayappa Sindhia who besieged Bijay Singh, son of Bakhai Singh (who had died in September 1752) in Ajmer. Bijay Singh fell back on Merta to which place he was followed by Jayappa. Eventually, he took shelter in fort of Nagaur where he was closely invested by Jayappa in October 1754. The siege lasted for about a year and caused a great deal of hardship to both the parties. Although in the meantime, Jayappa captured Ajmer (February 1755) and also many other places in Marwar, Bijay Singh tenaciously held on, but at the same time continued negotiations with the besiegers. On 25th July, 1755 while Jayappa had just finished his bath in the open space inside his camp and Bijay Singh's envoys were engaged in negotiations with his men, two beggars who were picking up grain plunged their daggers at his side and wounded him mortally. These beggars were supposed to have been Bijay Singh's agents and, therefore, the enraged Marathas cut the Rajput envoys and their party to pieces, and feeling ran very high between the parties. Jayappa's brother Dattaji continued the siege and in spite of Bijay Singh's frantic appeals to Madho Singh of Jaipur, the the Ruhela chiefs and even to the emperor to come to his assistance and drive away the Marathas from Northern India, the Sindhia chief succeeded in compelling Bijay Singh to pay an indemnity of 56 lakhs and to cede Ajmer and Jalore. Bijay Singh was also obliged to agree to surrender half of his dominion to his cousin Ram Singh. After thus avenging Jayappa, Dattaji raised the siege of Nagaur and while retaining possession of Ajmer, he gave away Jalore to Ram Singh and left for Poona.

Raghunath Rao's conquest of Punjab, 1759-60

It has been pointed out that emperor Ahmad Shah had ceded in April 1752 the provinces of the Punjab and Multan to the Abdali invader who confirmed Muin-ul-Mulk in the viceroyalty of these provinces. In November 1753 Muin-ul-Mulk died and his widow Mughlani Begam was allowed to succeed him as *de facto* governor. This caused confusion in the administration of that province. Taking advantage of this, Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk appointed Adina Beg Khan as governor of the Punjab in February 1756 and had Mughlani Begam brought a prisoner to Delhi.

As the unscrupulous wazir was starving the emperor and his household, Malka-i-Zamani and other Mughal ladies in consultation with Mughlani Begam and Najib-ud-daula, a consummate Ruhela politician, invited Ahmad Shah Abdali of Kabul to invade India and chastise the wazir and his Maratha allies who were the power behind Imad-ul-Mulk and responsible for much of the sufferings in Northern India. Their appeal was reinforced by Shah Wali-ullah of Delhi. The Abdali defeated Adina Beg Khan, occupied the Punjab and then marched on Delhi (January 1757). He committed frightful atrocities on the inhabitants of the capital and sent his troops to attack Agra

and Mathura and collect tribute from Suraj Mal Jat and other chiefs. The Afghans massacred the inhabitants of these regions and returned to join the Abdali, having been compelled by a pestilence and the heat of the Indian summer to retrace their steps as soon as possible.

The invader appointed Najib-ud-daula Chief Bakhshi and charged him with the duty of protecting emperor Alamgir II. The Abdali reinstated Imad-ul-Mulk as wazir, and laden with a rich booty estimated at twelve crores left for Kabul on October 1, 1757.

Mughlani Begam who had been the invader's informant was patronized as long as he needed her services, but at the time of his departure the invader brushed her aside and made no provision for her livelihood. She died in utter disgrace and poverty in 1779.

During the Abdali's invasion Raghunath Rao, who had left Poona in October 1756, was on his way to Delhi. He and Malhar Rao wasted their time in useless wrangles in Rajputana, while the Abdali's troops were slaughtering defenceless pilgrims at Mathura. They reached Agra after the invader had left the place and were welcomed by Imad-ul-Mulk. Najib-ud-daula fearing Maratha vengeance threw himself on the protection of Malhar Rao Holkar. The Marathas quickly proceeded to Delhi and captured it with all the territory in the Doab upto Saharapur (August 1757). Najib-ud-daula was outmanoeuvred and made a captive by Vithal Shivdev. It was completely in the power of Raghunath Rao to make this Ruhela chief, who was their most implacable enemy, a lifelong captive in a distant fortress in the Dakhin. But on account of the vacillating character of Raghunath Rao and the conflicting views and policies of the Sindhia and the Holkar, Najib-ud-daula escaped the retribution that he justly deserved. Malhar Rao accepted huge bribes from him and secured his release pleading that it was wise to utilize Najib's services in strengthening the Maratha hold over Northern India. The colourless Raghunath Rao accepted the advice.

The Marathas now reinstalled Alamgir II on the throne of Delhi, confirmed Imad-ul-Mulk as wazir and appointed Ahmad Shah Bangash Mir Bakhshi. After this Raghunath Rao proceeded of Lahore capturing Kunjpura and Sarhind on the way. In cooperation with Adina Beg Khan he took steps to drive away the Abdali's son Taimur and his general Jahan Khan who had been left by the Shah in 1757 in charge of the Punjab. When this task was accomplished, Raghunath Rao posted Abdus Samad Khan (the defeated commandant of Sarhind) and Abdur Rahman at Sarhind with a large force and instructions to recover Kabul and Kandhar from the Abdali. Leaving at Lahore a strong garrison of Maratha troops under Tukoji Holkar and Sabaji Sindhia, Raghunath Rao left for Poona in May 1758. After his departure Tukoji and Sabaji proceeded to the frontier, occupied Attock and made arrangements for the collection of revenue of the country upto the Indus. Adina Beg was placed in charge of the Punjab

for an annual revenue of 72 lakhs. But he died on 10th September, 1758. This upset the Maratha administration in the Punjab.

Dattaji Sindhia besieges Najib at Shakartal

Raghunath Rao's provisional administration of the Punjab was a temporary expedient and it was left to Dattaji Sindhia to make a permanent arrangement for the defence of that frontier province. The main flaw in Raghunath Rao's administration was the fact that the Punjab had been left in the hands of two Muslim chiefs, Abdus Samad Khan and Abdur Rahman (who could not be expected to be loyal to the Maratha cause), without the association of a Maratha leader of towering personality.

Dattaji had left Poonā in May 1758, met the returning Raghunath Rao near Ujjain in June and arrived at Delhi in December. He proceeded to Lahore and appointed Sabaji Sindhia governor of the Punjab upto the Indus (February 1759). He then returned to the Doab (June) and held a conference with Najib-ud-daula for the settlement of the administration of that region. Najib, however, left the Maratha camp in a huff, declaring that his life was in danger. But he continued negotiation through his agents and took up his position at Shakartal on the western bank of the Ganga, sixteen miles east of Muzaffarnagar.

When the country became flooded on account of rains, Najib took steps to entrap Dattaji and sent urgent appeals to his Ruhela kinsmen, Hafiz Rahmat Khan and other Pathans, to Shuja-ud-daula of Awadh and to Ahmad Shah Abdali of Kabul to come to his assistance with all possible speed. Dattaji, therefore, began counter-measures and made a sudden attack on Najib's camp on 15th September; but it failed, and fighting continued. Dattaji despatched Govind Pant Bundele (21st October) beyond the Ganga to cut off Najib's supplies and prevent the Ruhelas from joining him. But Govind Pant was defeated by Hafiz Rahmat and Dunde Khan. Meanwhile, the advance guard of Shuja-ud-daula's army under Anupgiri Gosain crossed the river by a bridge and joined Najib at Shakartal at the end of October. Dattaji thereupon earnestly besieged Najib's camp.

While Dattaji lay encamped before Shakartal, Ahmad Shah Abdali, in response to Najib's appeal, sent an army under Jahan Khan to occupy the Punjab. But Jahan Khan was defeated and wounded by Sabaji, and had to retreat to Peshawar in discomfiture. This aroused the Abdali king who invaded the Punjab and defeated Sabaji. The slender Maratha army suffered greatly and Sabaji in extreme consternation fled to Shakartal where he arrived on 8th November. The Punjab was lost to the Marathas.

Abdali invades India; Defeat and death of Dattaji

Undaunted by the turn of events Dattaji continued the siege of Shakartal with vigour. Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk was, however, unnerved at Delhi and fearing that the emperor would go over to join the invader,

decisions and returned soon as possible. Chief Bakhshi Aden Alamgir II and October 1, 1757. The ruler's informant made at the time was made no provision for poverty in 1779.

Rao, who had left Poonā and Malhar Rao wasted the Abdali's troops. They reached Agra welcomed by Imad-ul- who threw himself on the sary in the Doab upto s outmanoeuvred and dletely in the power of who was their most fortress in the Dakhin. Raghunath Rao and the ria and the Holkar, ussly deserved. Malhar d his release pleading aghtening the Maratha math Rao accepted the

on the throne of Delhi. pointed Ahmad Shah proceeded of Lahore In cooperation with e Abdali's son Taimur by the Shah in 1757 in omplished, Raghunath ated commandant of ated large force. Leaving th a Abdali. Holkar m the Tukoji. After s under 1758. At the s in May occupied and the frontier. Raghunath

rain and flood. The Marathas were detained for a long time, beyond the Chambal, and could not reach the vicinity of Yamuna in time. Beyond Bhanu was joined by Malhar Rao Holkar and Jankoji Sindhia near Agra. He reached Mathura on 16th July and was met by Suraj Mal Jat who offered to join the Marathas with 10,000 troops and to give shelter to their ladies and non-combatants provided that the Bhanu did not demand *chauth* from him and did no damage to the crops and property of his subjects. The Bhanu accepted the offer. As the Yamuna was in flood it was decided to proceed to Delhi and wrest the capital from the Abdali's agents. This was easily done. The Bhanu entered the capital on 22nd August, 1760.

Even before he crossed the Chambal, the Bhanu had written letters to the chiefs of Rajasthan, to Shuja-ud-daula of Awadh and to other notables to make a common cause with him in driving out the foreign invader beyond the Indus. But the Maratha diplomacy did not succeed. The Rājputs had been antagonized by the high-handed conduct of Sindhia and Holkar and remained aloof. Shuja-ud-daula who looked upon his Ruhela neighbours of the Doab as his greater enemies than the Marathas almost agreed to join the Bhanu. When this became known to the Abdali, he deputed Najib-ud-daula to go to Lucknow personally and bring round Shuja-ud-daula. Najib met the Nawab Wazir at Mehdighat and persuaded him in the name of their common religion and interests to join the Shah. He promised him wazirship of the empire as the Bhanu had done. Shuja-ud-daula could not resist Najib's importunity and Shah Wali-ullah's repeated appeals and assurances of Muslim success and was cordially received by the invader in his camp at Anupshahar on 18th July.

Shuja-ud-daula's alliance with the Abdali was a great blow to the Maratha cause. Yet another blow was the breaking away of Suraj Mal Jat and his return from Delhi to Bharatpur. The cause of the sudden breach between the Bhanu and the Jat raja is variously stated. It is said that Suraj Mal's advice to leave the Maratha baggage, artillery and women at Bharatpur and start guerrilla operations against the Abdali after the traditional Maratha fashion and cut off his supplies, was rejected by the Bhanu, who preferred an open pitched battle. The Bhanu's stripping off the silver ceiling of the Diwan-i-Am in the Delhi Fort in order to pay his troops also offended Suraj Mal. The historian Sardesai, however, observes that Suraj Mal had never agreed to serve the Marathas beyond his own territory and demanded that he should be put in charge of Delhi. But as this could not be done, he left for Bharatpur. "All other alleged reasons," writes he, "are, on historical scrutiny, untenable and false." But it may be questioned as to why Suraj Mal accompanied the Bhanu with his troops to Delhi, if he had never agreed to serve the Maratha cause beyond his jurisdiction. The cause of rupture, therefore, seems to have been a more serious one—the question of policy to be followed vis-a-vis the emperor and against the Abdali.

the heard of Alamb...
the wazir and his
of Shakaral and his
ose the Abdali (17th
occupied Kujipura
aimur had already
rt of his army with
fundele, while with
my. But the Abdali
and encamped at
re a terrible battle
by a chance bullet
caused panic in his

elhi and appointed
ajput chiefs, Suraj
at all sent evasive
e, "You must first
re us that you are
vassals."
rther, but he was
the Marathas lest
n him and other
h Wali-ullah, the
encouraged Najib
e and fight the
country.

a at Ahmadnagar
s cousin Sadasiv
away the Abdali
site ability and
I with troops and
s. Ibrahim Bhanu's
under the Bhanu's
ead of two lakhs
shopkeepers to
His plan was to
invader's ally

From August to October the Bhau with his men numbering one lakh remained encamped at Delhi and consumed the food supplies of the capital and its neighbourhood. Within a short time he began to suffer for want of provisions, money and fodder. The king sent no funds from Poona. The Maratha army, therefore, began feeling its morale.

All this time negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the dispute were afoot. The Abdali who was equally hardpressed for funds and provisions, was not unwilling to an honourable peace; but the negotiations fell through, as Najib-ud-daula was not prepared for a settlement until the Marathas had been driven beyond the line of the Chambal. He circulated a false rumour that the Bhau had crowned Vishwas Rao as emperor, issued coins in his name and was anxious to establish Maratha sovereignty over the whole country. Probably the Abdali and other Musalmans were deceived by this propaganda and therefore, prepared themselves to fight the Marathas to the bitter end.

The Rival Armies at Panipat

On 7th October, 1760 the Bhau left Delhi to capture Kunjapura so as to drive the Abdali to the north and relieve pressure on Delhi instructing Govind Pant Bundele to cross into the Doab and devastate Ruhelkhand. He captured Kunjapura on 17th and took Najabat Khan its commandant, prisoner. The latter died of his wounds, while his important colleagues were put to death. The provisions and money acquired at Kunjapura relieved Maratha distress for some time. The news of the fall of Kunjapura came like a shock to the Abdali invader who decided for an immediate attack and crossed the Yamuna at Baghpat, about 20 miles north of Delhi (25th October). Proceeding along the right bank of the river, Abdali arrived at Sonepat. When the Bhau received news of this great feat on the part of the invader, he turned back from the north and arrived at Panipat within five miles of the Abdali's advance troops. About the end of October the two armies sighted each other and had slight skirmishes. As the Bhau found the enemy prepared for a combat, he gave up his original plan of a surprise attack and on the advice of Ibrahim Gardi entrenched himself on the plain to the south of the town of Panipat with a view to remaining on the defensive and not to attacking the Abdali invader until he had been weakened by starvation. He was encumbered with a large number of non-combatants, including women, and therefore, ruled out a bold attack for cutting through the enemy's ranks as an obvious impossibility.

The Maratha camp extended for six miles from east to west and was two miles deep north to south. A large trench, about 25 yards broad and six yards deep, surrounded it which was further protected by an earthen wall upon which heavy artillery was arranged. The Abdali's camp lay about three miles south with the village of Somepat at his back. It was also fortified with trenches and *abatris* of felled trees.

The Bhau
Panipat
him pr
Abdali
assured
the De
of gra
round
comm
the ne
Kunj
were
const
the E
reach

From August to October the Bhau with his men numbering over one lakhs remained encamped at Delhi and consumed the food supplies of the capital and its neighbourhood. Within a short time he began to suffer for want of provisions, money and fodder. The Peshwa sent no funds from Poona. The Maratha army, therefore, began losing its morale.

All this time negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the dispute were afoot. The Abdali who was equally hardpressed for funds and provisions, was not unwilling to an honourable peace ; but the negotiations fell through, as Najib-ud-daula was not prepared for a settlement until the Marathas had been driven beyond the line of the Chambal. He circulated a false rumour that the Bhau had crowned Vishwas Rao as emperor, issued coins in his name and was anxious to establish Maratha sovereignty over the whole country. Probably, the Abdali and other Musalmans were deceived by this propaganda and therefore, prepared themselves to fight the Marathas to the bitter end.

The Rival Armies at Panipat

On 7th October, 1760 the Bhau left Delhi to capture Kunjpura so as to drive the Abdali to the north and relieve pressure on Delhi, instructing Govind Pant Bundele to cross into the Doab and devastate Ruhelkhand. He captured Kunjpura on 17th and took Najabat Khan, its commandant, prisoner. The latter died of his wounds, while his important colleagues were put to death. The provisions and money acquired at Kunjpura relieved Maratha distress for some time. The news of the fall of Kunjpura came like a shock to the Abdali invader who decided for an immediate attack and crossed the Yamuna at Baghpat, about 20 miles north of Delhi (25th October). Proceeding along the right bank of the river, Abdali arrived at Sonapat. When the Bhau received news of this great feat on the part of the invader, he turned back from the north and arrived at Panipat within five miles of the Abdali's advance troops. About the end of October the two armies sighted each other and had slight skirmishes. As the Bhau found the enemy prepared for a combat, he gave up his original plan of a surprise attack and on the advice of Ibrahim Gardi entrenched himself on the plain to the south of the town of Panipat with a view to remaining on the defensive and not to attacking the Abdali invader until he had been weakened by starvation. He was encumbered with a large number of non-combatants, including women, and therefore, ruled out a bold attack for cutting through the enemy's ranks as an obvious impossibility.

The Maratha camp extended for six miles from east to west and was two miles deep north to south. A large trench, about 25 yards broad and six yards deep, surrounded it which was further protected by an earthen wall upon which heavy artillery was arranged. The Abdali's camp lay about three miles south with the village of Sonapat at his back. It was also fortified with trenches and *abatis* of felled trees.

The Bhau
Panipat, in
him provis
Abdali mo
assured hi
the Doab
of grain a
round the
communi
the north
Kunjpura
were sna
considera
the Bhau
reached

In s
1st Nove
with the
On 19th
surprise
Novemb
him righ
from th
of the M

O
who w
Ghazia
grip of
down
price o
than tv
to neg
but th

The B

as soc
Mara
to hir
to ear
is no
not le
the e
decid
force
of w
non-

even numbering the men consumed the food within a short time for fodder. The time he erefore, began he movement of the dispu ressed for funds, the peace; but the eyond the line of e Bhau had crown e and was anxious country. Probably, this propaganda and has to the bitter end.

to capture Kunjpur ve pressure on Delhi, e Doab and devastate d took Najabat Khan, his wounds, while his provisions and money s for some time. The to the Abdali invader assed the Yamuna at October). Proceeding at Sonapat. When the part of the invader, he pat within five miles of October the two armies

As the Bhau found the original plan of a surprise renched himself on a view to remain until he had been vader until a large number of with a large number of fore, ruled out a bold as an obvious impress s from east to west and trench by about 25 years h was arranged in the village of Sonapat the village of Falled was

The Bhau who was in high spirits for several days after his arrival at Panipat, instructed Govind Pant Bundele to raid Ruhelkhand and send provisions and funds. But the position was reversed when the Bhau moved his camp quite close to the bank of the Yamuna which had him plentiful supply of water and easy communication with the Doab which being in Najib's possession sent him regular supplies of grain and fodder. Moreover, the Abdali posted strong guards all round the Maratha camp and cut off the Maratha supplies and communications with the Doab, Delhi and Rajputana. The country in the north was yet open to the Marathas, but as the Abdali recaptured Kunjpur soon after, the Maratha communications with the Punjab too were snapped. On account of this development there was a considerable suffering in the Maratha camp. No supplies could reach the Bhau from any quarter and for two months no news from Panipat reached the Dakhin.

In spite of great distress the Bhau did not lose courage and from 1st November, 1760 to 14th January, 1761 fought several skirmishes with the enemy, which, however, did not produce any decisive result. On 19th November Ibrahim Gardi's brother Fatch Khan made a surprise night raid on the Abdali's camp, but was repulsed. On 22nd November Jankoji Sindhia attacked the Abdali's wazir and pursued him right upto his camp, but had to return for want of proper support from the Peshwa's troops. On 7th December Najib attacked a party of the Marathas in which more than 300 Ruhelas were killed.

On 17 December Najib's Ruhelas surprised Govind Pant Bundele who was collecting provisions at Jalalabad, ten miles south-west of Ghaziabad, and put him to death. The Maratha army was now in the grip of starvation. The Bhau established mints in the camp and melted down gold and silver ornaments into coins for purchasing grain, the price of which had run very high, but even this did not suffice for more than two weeks. Driven to desperation the Bhau made his last attempt to negotiate peace with the Abdali, offering him a heavy war indemnity, but the proposal was rejected on the advice of Najib.

The Battle of Panipat, 14th January, 1761

The Bhau was now anxious to have a final combat with the enemy as soon as possible, but the Abdali was not in a hurry to provoke the Marathas and asked his impatient allies to leave the military operation to him, but not to bother him with politics. The Marathas had no food to eat and their chiefs approached the Bhau to fight without delay. "Do not let us perish in this misery. Let us make one spirited attack against the enemy and whatever is our destiny that will happen." The Bhau decided for a final battle. On the advice of Ibrahim Gardi, "the whole force was to move slowly on in a square formation, all the ladies and non-combatants were to be protected by heavy artillery. The ladies and non-combatants were to be put in the centre and the whole mass was

to move in a block under the protection of Ibrahim Khan's cannons. In this formation the Maratha troops moved out for attack early in the morning of 14th January. The Bhanu made one final attempt to avoid the conflict and sent a note to Kashiraj, a Maratha officer in the service of Shuja-ud-daula, saying, "The cup is full to the brim, not a drop more can it contain. Please let me have a final reply on the adjustment of the dispute." On the 14th morning the note was delivered to the Shah who wanted a day to think over the matter. It was now too late, for the Maratha army was already in the field.

The Maratha army, 45,000 strong with a large number of non-combatants in the centre, advanced slowly, but their original plan of mass movement could not be carried out. The Bhanu, therefore, reformed his troops in a long line, taking his stand in the centre along with Vishwas Rao, both riding on magnificent war elephants with the Bhagwa Jhanda in their front. To his left was stationed Ibrahim Gardi with his regular battalions, and Damaji Gaikwar on his immediate right. On the Bhanu's right Malhar Rao Holkar and Jankoji Sindhia took their stand. The Bhanu did not keep any part of his troops in reserve. The Marathas made a desperate attack attempting to rush through the enemy ranks which consisted of 60,000 combatants, half of whom were foreigners, and almost all were cavalry men with a small number of foot soldiers.

The enemy centre was commanded by the Abdali's wazir Shah Wali Khan who had the select Durrani cavalry under his charge. Shah Parsand Khan and Najib-ud-daula were posted on the left flank, facing Jankoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar. Shuja-ud-daula was stationed between the Abdali wazir and Najib-ud-daula. On the right flank were Barkurdar Khan and Amir Beg at the head of Ruhela and Mughul contingents. The Abdali himself took his stand at the back of his centre near a picked reserve so as to keep his eye on the development of the action in the various parts of the field.

The Maratha attack began at about 9 in the morning with a fierce discharge of artillery and rockets from Ibrahim Gardi's heavy guns. Gardi's first attack was made on Hafiz Rahmat Khan, Dunde Khan and Ahmad Khan Bangash. The Ruhelas fought bravely, but Ibrahim's guns slew and wounded 8 to 9 thousand of them and pressed them back. The Gardi-Ruhela duel lasted three hours after which in the confused hand-to-hand fighting with the help of the fresh Afghan troops sent by the Abdali, the Gardi battalions were almost annihilated. While this contest was going on, the Abdali's centre under his wazir was attacked by the Bhanu with the whole of the Maratha household cavalry. In spite of the Afghan resistance, the Marathas broke through three of their lines. Shah Wali Khan was bewildered. He dismounted his horse and made a vain attempt to rally his men saying, "Our country is far off, my friends, whither do you fly?" But none listened to him. It seemed, therefore, that the battle was going

against the A
and only the
Najib-ud-dau
Ruhela count
was much su
a secret und
from the fie
in his fresh
raggeders v
surg posted
he reinforc
to find in h
sword-ud-d
Najib-ud-d
guns' moun
gallied
into the
attacks b
the Mara
they con
was such
the clast
about 2
The Bh
hour lo
the Ma
if by er
at full
The A
They
slaught
entire
conve

Mar:
like
noth
as i
he
the
con
ble

...only the Abdali whose right flank was turned, centre was broken and Jai-ud-daula to a Maratha charge ultimately saved the situation. The Maratha contingent that faced Jankoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar was much superior in number to that of the Marathas, but there being a secret understanding between Najib and Malhar Rao, the latter fled from the field, leaving Jankoji to his fate. At this time, the Abdali threw in his fresh reserves and sent round his military police to force the stragglers who were running away to the rear, to proceed to the front. He posted his wazir Shah Wali Khan with instructions to charge with sword in hand. At the same time, he ordered Shah Parsand Khan and Najib-ud-daula to take the Maratha centre in flank. The Afghan swivel guns mounted on camels were now ordered to fire. The enemy camels galloped along the lines and began firing swivels from their saddles into the closed ranks of the Marathas. The simultaneous counter-attacks by fresh troops launched all along the lines at the time when the Marathas were tired and hungry, brought about their collapse. Still they contested the ground, inch by inch, and for full two hours there was such a deadly struggle that nothing could be seen or heard except the clash and rattle of weapons and battle cries of the rival armies. At about 2.15 p. m. a chance bullet struck Vishwas Rao and killed him. The Bhan now desperately threw himself on the enemy, fought for an hour longer and was killed in the confusion. At this, all of a sudden the Maratha resistance collapsed. "All at once," writes Kashiraj, "as if by enchantment the whole Maratha army turned their backs and fled at full speed, leaving the field of battle covered with heaps of dead." The Afghans pursued them to their camp and gave them no quarter. They mercilessly slew all the stragglers that they could find. The slaughter went on during the night also and through the next day. The entire Maratha camp was plundered and women and children were converted into slaves.

When the sun rose on the 15th January, the magnitude of the Maratha losses was revealed to the world. "The field of battle looked like a tract sown with tulips, and as far as the sight could extend, nothing could be discovered but bodies stretched at the foot of bodies, as if they had been asleep or marshalled by art." (Siyar). Thirty-two heaps of the slain were counted, each with 500 to 1,000 dead bodies, the total reaching 28,000. Almost an equal number of dead bodies was found lying in the ditches and around the camp. Nearly 9,000 who had concealed themselves in the town of Panipat were slaughtered in cold blood.

Kashiraj who was himself a Maratha and an eye witness describes the fanatical fury of the Abdali Afghans in these words: "Every Durrani soldier brought a hundred or two of prisoners and slew them in the outskirts of their camps, crying out, "When I started from our country, my mother, father, sister and wife told me to slay as many

Kafirs for their sakes, after we had gained the victory in this holy war, so that the religious merit of this act (of infidel-slaying) might accrue to them." In this way, thousands of soldiers and other prisoners were massacred. In the Shah's camp, except the quarters of himself and his nobles, every tent had a heap of severed heads before it.

One may say that "it was verily the doomsday for the Maratha people." Among the notables that fell on the field were Vishwas Rao, the eldest son of the Peshwa, the Bhau himself, Jaswant Rao Pawar, Tukoji Sindhia and a few others. Jankoji Sindhia was severely wounded and later put to death. Ibrahim Gardi was taken prisoner and also put to death. Malhar Rao Holkar had fled from the field leaving Jankoji Sindhia to his fate, and he safely reached Poona. Mahadji Sindhia, though wounded and lamed for life, saved himself by flight. Antaji Mankeshwar was killed by the Baluchis of Farrukhnagar. In short, the Maratha casualties were estimated at 75,000. "There was not a home in Maharashtra that had not to mourn the loss of a member, and in several houses their very heads, and entire generation of leaders was cut off at one stroke."* About 25,000 Marathas escaped and saved their lives. These included 8,000 who had taken shelter in the camp of Shuja-ud-daula who generously offered them protection and had them escorted to Suraj Mal Jat's territory, financing the journey from his own pocket. Suraj Mal, forgetting the wrong done to him by the Holkar and Sindhia, did his utmost to provide shelter, food, clothes and medical aid to countless Maratha refugees.

Results of the Maratha defeat

Historians hold opposite views about the consequences of the Maratha defeat at Panipat. Modern Maratha writers are almost unanimous in their opinion that the only great disaster suffered by them was the loss of 75,000 of their people, but it did no great injury to their cause. "Notwithstanding the terrible losses in manpower suffered on that field by the Marathas," writes the historian Sardesai, "the disaster decided nothing. In fact, it pushed forward in the distant sequel two prominent members of the dominant race, Nana Phadnis and Mahadji Sindhia, both miraculously escaping death on that fatal day, who resuscitated that power to its former glory.....The disaster of Panipat was indeed like a natural visitation destroying life, but leading to no decisive political consequences. To maintain that the disaster of Panipat put an end to the dreams of supremacy cherished by the Marathas, is to misunderstand the situation as recorded in contemporary documents."† The other view is held by the great historian Sir Jadunath Sarkar who says that "a dispassionate survey of Indian history will show how unfounded this (Maratha) chauvinistic claim is. A Maratha army did, no doubt, restore the exiled Mughul

* Jadunath Sarker : *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 257.

† Sardesai : *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, p. 454.

emperor to t
not as king m
real masters
was secured
1803. The

In the
Maratha arm
one lakh of
that too in
national disa
the Maratha
the authentic
some of the

Second
India his ho
consisting of
of which ha
accomplishe
whatever to
Maratha dro
entire count
at Panipat. 7
concluded i
verdict of 1
north-weste

Thirdl
The Marath
lost their ro
after 1761 r
having, "be
four years t
they had be

Fourth
nearly all t
Peshwa Bal
ambition of
history. Ot
greatest mi
dissensions
the Marath
Maratha d

Fifthl
destruction
in India "fr

Sarkar :

...before it.
...nday for the Maratha
...ld were Vishwas Rao,
If, Jaswant Rao Pawar,
...a was severely wounded
...n prisoner and also
...e field leaving wounded
ona. Mahadji Jankoji
...mself by flight. Antaji
ukhnagar. In short, the
There was not a home
...s of a member, and in
eration of leaders, and in
scaped and saved their
...elter in the camp of
rotection and had them
...the journey from his
e to him by the Holkar
er, food, clothes and

Consequences of the
...a writers are almost
...t disaster suffered by
...it did no great injury
...losses in manpower
...the historian Sardesai,
...forward in the distant
...at race, Nana Phadnis
...ng death on that fatal
...glory.....The disaster
...n destroying life, but
...To maintain that the
...f supremacy cherished in
...uation as recorded in
...is held by the great
...dispassionate survey of
...(Maratha) chauvinistic
...ore the exiled Mughul

emperor to the capital of his forefathers in 1772, but they came then
not as king makers, not the dominators of the Mughul empire and the
real masters of his nominal ministers and generals. That proud position
was secured by Mahadji Sindhia only in 1789 and by the British in
1803. The latter view is reasonable and correct.

In the first place, the battle proved to be absolutely decisive. The
Maratha army with its leaders was completely wrecked and out of over
one lakh of persons only a few thousand reached Maharashtra and
that too in great misery of body and mind, to tell the tale of their
national disaster. So great was the collapse of the military power of
the Marathas that for about three months the Peshwa could not get
the authentic details about the casualties and the fate of the Bhau and
some of the other leaders.

Secondly, although after his victory, the Abdali did not make
India his home, yet the Muslim supremacy over north-western India
consisting of the provinces of the Punjab, Multan and Delhi, the fate
of which had hung in the balance during 1754-60, remained an
accomplished fact and the Marathas hereafter made no attempt
whatever to recover the Punjab and to guard the frontier. In short, the
Maratha dream for the establishment of their domination over the
entire country was gone for good as the consequence of their defeat
at Panipat. The Abdali's desire for a peace with the Peshwa which was
concluded in February 1763, did not, in any way, whittle down the
verdict of 1761 and did not question the Pathan domination over
north-western India including Delhi.

Thirdly, the moral effect of the Maratha defeat was even greater.
The Maratha legions which were hitherto looked upon as invincible
lost their reputation, military as well as political. The Indian world
after 1761 no longer thought that the Maratha friendship was worth
having, "because the Marathas had clearly demonstrated in the last
four years that they could not protect their dependents any more than
they had been able to protect their own selves."

Fourthly, as Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes, this battle by removing
nearly all the great Maratha captains and statesmen including the
Peshwa Balaji Rao, "left the path absolutely open and easy to the guilty
ambition of Raghunath Dada, the most infamous character in Maratha
history. Other losses time could have made good, but this was the
greatest mischief done by the debacle at Panipat." In short, the internal
dissensions in the Peshwa family that brought about the downfall of
the Marathas owe their origin to the circumstances created by the
Maratha defeat at Panipat.

Fifthly, the crushing defeat of the Marathas and the consequent
destruction of their political aspirations freed the British merchants
in India "from the thralldom of insidious neighbours and hastened their

* Sarkar: *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 260.

rise." The path of the British supremacy in India was now left open. "It is significant," writes the historian Sardesai, "that while the two combatants, the Marathas and the Musalmans, were locked in deadly combat on the field of ancient Kurukshetra, Clive, the first founder of the British Empire in India, was on his way to explain the feasibility of his dreams of an Indian Empire to the Great Commoner, Lord Chatham, the then prime minister. Panipat indirectly ushered in a new participant in the struggle for Indian supremacy. This is indeed the direct outcome of that historical event, which on that account marks a turning point in the history of India." On the next day of the battle of Panipat the Mughul emperor, Shah Alam II, was defeated by the British under Carnac, and had to throw himself on British protection. On 16th February, 1761, the British captured Pondicherry and smashed the French power in India. The political star of the English East India Company was now on the ascendant.

Causes of Maratha defeat

The Maratha defeat at Panipat was due to many important causes. Firstly, the Abdali's army was large in number and more effective in fighting strength than that of the Bhau. Sir Jadunath Sarkar has estimated on the basis of contemporary records the Abdali army at 60,000, while the Maratha combatants did not exceed 45,000.

Secondly, the Afghans commanded supplies from the Doab and the Delhi region and had, therefore, more than adequate provisions for themselves, their horses and other beasts of burden. The Marathas, on the other hand, suffered starvation for two months and had to fight on bare stomachs. Such a famished army was not likely to succeed against a well-provided and satisfied enemy.

Thirdly, Ahmad Shah Abdali's force was well-trained and disciplined and the Shah invariably enforced complete order in the camp and the battlefield and rigidly punished every kind of indiscipline and disobedience. Many instances of the Shah's rigorous enforcement of discipline are on record; one of which may be referred here to illustrate the point. Kashiraj writes that some Abdali troops had committed irregularities in Shuja-ud-daula's camp in 1760. "The Shah, hearing of this, had 200 of them seized, and having had their noses bored through with arrows, and a string passed through the holes, they were led in this condition like camels, to Shuja.....to be put to death or pardoned, as he should think proper." On the other hand, the Maratha troops and officers were individualistic and refractory and "hated discipline with the hatred of 'lesser breeds without the law' who extol lawless caprice as liberty and howl against the disciplined self-control and organised teamwork of a true army or school as the mark of a 'slave mentality', and the destroyer of the *elan vital*." It is the organized discipline that wins and not mere physical force. It is

* G. S. Sardesai : *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, p. 455.

no wonder that the ill-disciplined Maratha troops lost the day against the well-organized and well-disciplined enemy.

Fourthly, although the Bhau had a good park of artillery under an able commander, Ibrahim Gardi, his army as a whole was outclassed in weapons and other equipments. The Abdali possessed many hundreds of long swivel guns which were fired from the backs of the moving camels. Whereas the Gardi's artillery became ineffective in a hand-to-hand fighting, the swivel guns continued firing from all directions. The Abdali's troops were armed with muskets as against the Maratha troops' lance and sword.

Fifthly, although the Bhau was a fearless soldier he was eclipsed in generalship by his adversary Ahmad Shah Abdali who was the ablest general of his time. His towering personality as a born leader of men and his genius for war and diplomacy constituted a very material cause of his success. The Bhau, instead of supervising the combatants and keeping touch with all the divisions of his troops, rushed headlong into the fight and after the death of Vishwas Rao plunged himself into the jaws of death like a common soldier.

Sixthly, the Bhau failed to keep his lines of communications intact with Delhi where he had foolishly left only a few thousands of men to hold the imperial city and allowed himself to be entrapped by the enemy. While the Shah maintained full contact with the friendly Ruhela country in the Doab, the Maratha army was completely isolated and besieged many hundreds of miles away from their territory.

Above all, by their wanton aggression and grasping interference with the people of Northern India including the Rajput chiefs and the Jat Raja for more than ten years, the Marathas had alienated the sympathies of the Hindus and the Musalmans alike. The people in Northern India did not, therefore, raise their little finger to help the Bhau in his distress. Inasmuch as popular sympathy and support constitute a second line of defence, the Maratha disaster at Panipat must be ascribed to the people's antipathy as well.

Death of Balaji Rao ; His Personality and Character

As the Peshwa had not received any news from Panipat for over two months and was unaware of the fate of his army, he planned to march to Northern India. His health had been visibly failing for some time and an attempt was made to divert him from his many anxieties by providing music and dance and importing slave girls from Northern India. The Peshwa was even induced to marry a young wife on 27th December, 1760 at Paithan. In this condition he proceeded to Northern India and arrived at Bhilsa on 24th January where he learnt about the defeat of his army from a banker's letter. After a few days' halt, he resumed his journey and reached Pachhar, 32 miles north of Sironj where he got authentic news about the Panipat disaster which unhinged his brain and compelled him to return to Poona to die on 23rd June, 1761.