

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

ANCIENT PERIOD

The archaeological discoveries prove that the region of Panipat was inhabited by human beings from very earlier times and had been the centre of vigorous cultural and political activity. We know from the hymns of the *Rigveda* (VII, 18,19; V.52,17) that the Bharatas of the Saraswati Valley held sway up to the Yamuna river and defeated Ajas, Sigrus and Yaksus¹. The archaeological heritage of Panipat region can be divided into pre-historic, proto-historic and historical phases. The extent of archaeological sites of Panipat district, numbering 63, can be classified into Pre-Harappan, Harappan, Late Harappan, Painted Grey Ware (PGW), Grey Ware, Early Historical, Early Medieval and Medieval periods².

Alexander Cunningham and Rodgers were the first archaeologists who collected some relics specially coins from a few sites of Panipat. But it was in the year 1952 that B. B. Lal of Archaeological Survey of India discovered Painted Grey Ware and Northern Black Polished Ware from the mounds of Panipat and Sonapat. S. B. Chaudhary also discovered the Painted Grey Ware at Baholi, 13 kilometres to north-west of Panipat³. Subsequent archaeological explorations conducted by a number of archaeologists and recent explorations along the right bank of River Yamuna conducted under the supervision of C. Dorje have resulted to the discovery of Dull Red Ware in Garsh Sanrai in Panipat Tehsil and Red Ware, Red Polished Ware and Dull Red Ware in Jaurasi Khalsa in Samalkha Tehsil of Panipat district. These explorations have brought to light several ancient mounds containing the relics of bygone history⁴.

In the Panipat region, the sites related to the Pre-Harappan and Harappan periods are few whereas sites pertaining to Late-Harappan period are exceedingly great. It indicates the proliferation of human population in the region during the later phase of the Harappan civilization. These relics belong to village settlements of varied dimensions. Afterwards the people using PGW occupied the region. This unique pottery has been found at several sites in the region⁵. The period of PGW continued up to 4th century B.C. On the north-western side of the present day Panipat, where the power house is located, it was found that the Painted Grey Ware lay immediately over the natural soil⁶. Available evidence shows that PGW people lived in the house of mud or wattle and daub in the Panipat region. There is no evidence of kiln-burnt brick, and even that of mud brick is not very satisfactory. Agriculture and cattle breeding seem to have been the main occupation of the people⁷.

It is pointed out that the PGW has been traced from the large number of sites in Haryana especially in Karnal and Panipat region. It has been discovered from several sites mentioned in the later-*Vedic* literature are associated with the *Mahabharata* period. The preponderance of the Ware in the Saraswati and Drishadvati valleys, its chronological position in the first half of the first millennium B.C. and its occurrence at sites alluded to in the later-*Vedic* and Sutra literature might indicate the association of the PGW culture with the later-*Vedic* and the *Sutra* age⁸. For a long time, scholars were puzzled over the clear breach between the Harappans and the Aryans but the excavations at Bhagwanpura (District Kurukshetra) have brought to light for the first time juxtaposition of the Late-Harappan and the PGW cultures as reflected in the continuity of pottery-types in painted designs, and in the terracotta figurines and burials⁹. This is of considerable importance for the historical reconstruction of the region.

As indicated earlier, the region was the home of the Bharatas, a famous *Rigvedic* tribe of the Aryans. In the later-*Vedic* period, it appears that the Bharatas and the Purus were merged into the *Kurus* who commanded the straight plain between the Saraswati and the Yamuna near north-eastern edge of the deserts of Rajputana¹⁰. Bharat's rule (B.C.2350 to B.C. 2300) extended over an area lying between river Saraswati and Ganga. He is said to have named India as Bharat. In his lineage at sixth generation king Hasti settled Hastinapur after his name and made this settlement his capital. One of his progenitors Kuru named the Saraswati tract Kurukshetra (*Kuru+Kshetra*) after his name. King Kuru first of all ploughed fields here on the bank of Saraswati. This means that the then roaming Aryans started a settled life here firstly¹¹.

The 'Kurukshetra' region, which according to the epic *Mahabharata* was divided into a number of *Vanas* or forests, included some urban settlements like Kaithal, Rajaund and Panipat. Panipat is said to have been one of the *Prasthas* which Yudhishtira demanded from Duryodhana as the price of peace¹². The region of Kurukshetra soon witnessed the great Mahabharata war between the Kaurvas and the Pandavas. The *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* also mention a bolt of seven forests. The four points of pilgrimage of this region were marked as *Yaksa* shrines which were: *Arantaka*, *Tanantuka*, *Kapila* and *Mucakruka*. The texts also mention an outer circle of pilgrimages which include Panikhata (Panipat) as one. However, there is another argument that Panikhata is situated at 24 kilometres northwest from Kaithal near Pharal¹³. Al-Baruni also writes about Panipat as an ancient city of the north Hindustan¹⁴.

After the Mahabharata war, the mighty kingdoms were disintegrated and many principalities, popularly known as *Janapads*, came into being. The north-western part of India contained two major *Janapads*, i.e., Kuru *Janapad*

(founded at Kurukshetra or Saraswati tract) and Madar *Janapad* (at the tract of Ravi and Chenab rivers). It is pointed out that when Alexander invaded India, Kuru *Janapad* remained totally unaffected by his invasion¹⁵.

Later on, the region of Kurukshetra and Panipat formed a part of the vast empire of the Nandas of Maghdha. It is not unlikely that its people also took part in the war fought by Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya against the Nandas¹⁶. Under the Mauryans, the region was included in the administrative division called *Uttarapatha* with its headquarters at Taxila. The discovery of NBP ware in Taxila, Udergram, Swat Valley, Charsada and in Sugh (Shrughna) of Yamunanagar district further confirms the Mauryan control over this land¹⁷. The discovery of Ashoka's *Stupa* at Thanesar also indicates it. After the decline of the Mauryan Empire, the Indo-Bactrian Greeks invaded and occupied the region in the 2nd century B.C. The discovery of a large number of coins from Sonapat, Khokrakot (Rohtak), Sugh, Jagadhari, Sadhaura, Karan-Ka-Quila (Thanesar), Theh Polar, Agroha and coin-mounds from Naurangabad leaves no doubt that the Indo-Greeks attacked this region. These coins bear the names of thirteen Indo-Greek kings¹⁸.

The Indo-Greek rule in the region probably ended with the coming of the Sakas towards the last quarter of the first century B.C. or in the beginning of the first century A.D, who now became the masters of the territory between the Saraswati and the Yamuna rivers. The Saka rule in this region is evidenced by the adoption of the Saka title *Mahakshtrapa* by the Yaudheyas and also by their coins which were issued after they became independent of the Sakas¹⁹.

In the first two centuries of the Christian era, the tract was included in the Kushana Empire as is indicated by the discovery of Indo-Scythian coins from Theh Polar and two inscribed red-stone rectangular pillars of Kushana times from Amin village in the Kurukshetra district. In the 3rd century, Kushana power declined and the Yaudheya, an Indo-Iranian clan, rose to power and held sway over the whole region between the Sutlej and the Yamuna. Their coins and other relics have been found all over modern Haryana including Theh Polar, Panipat and Karnal²⁰.

In the first half of the 4th century the Panipat region seems to have been annexed by the Gupta monarchs. The empire was shattered by the attack of the Huns in about 510 A.D. and probably up to the end of the 6th century there was no-man's rule in these parts. At the end of the 6th century A.D., Thanesar became the capital of Raja Prabhakara Vardhana who tightened his grip over the entire Indus region. Actually, his predecessor Yashodharaman Vishnu Vardhana of Mandasor had driven the Huns to the northwest. Thanesar attained a position of prominent place of northern India under Prabhakara Vardhana and his younger son Harsha Vardhana. Under Vardhana rulers, the

region around Thanesar was known as Srikantha *Janapada*²¹. The remains of stone temples found in some villages along the banks of the Saraswati and the Ghaggar rivers are evidence of the times in which Harsha ruled over the region. He was the greatest Buddhist ruler of Thanesar who expended the boundaries of his empire to Brahmaputra in the east and Jhelum in the west. Sindh and Kashmir also formed the parts of his empire. Later on, he shifted his capital from Thanesar to Kanauj. Chinese traveler Hieun Tsang who visited Thanesar during 629 to 645 A.D. has left a beautiful account of the prosperity of this Empire²². The 7th century witnessed a period of eclecticism in religion. Since Buddhism was a declining religion at that time, Hinduism again emerged and new Hindu religious traditions played a considerable role in converting Thanesar into an important pilgrimage centre of India.

It is known from the Khalimpur copper-plate of Dharamapala, the Pala Emperor of Bengal (A.D.770-810) that he held a *Durbar* at Kanauj and seated Chakrayudha, his nominee, on the throne of Kanauj. Since a king of Kuru clan was present at Dharamapala's Assembly at Kanauj, the Panipat region seems to have continued to owe allegiance to the kingdom of Kanauj²³.

With the accession of Pratihara ruler Nagabhata-II (AD 792-833), a new era began in the region. From the account of his conquest as furnished by the Gwalior inscription, it appears that his empire extended throughout north India. The *Skandapurana* reads that 'Brahamavarta' (the region between the Saraswati and the Drishadwati) was in his possession. Further, according to the Gwalior inscription which mentions his conquest of Rajagiridurga (identified with Rajarri), it appears that his empire was extended up to Punjab including, of course, the region of Panipat. Under Mihira Bhoja (AD 836-890), the Pratihara empire extended upto Takkadesha (south-eastern Punjab) in north India. His inscriptions recovered from Pehowa and Sirsa and coins from district Rohtak support his rule over this region. Another Pehowa inscription of the time of Mahendrapala (AD 890-910), the successor of Bhoja, gives the genealogy of the Tomara rulers of this region who were the feudatories of the Pratiharas²⁴.

About the beginning of the 10th century, when the Pratiharas began to decline, the Tomaras assumed power in the region. One of the Tomara rulers, Anangapala, founded the city of Delhi and made it his capital. His successors, Tejapala, Madanapala, Kritpala, Lakhanapala, Prithvipala and Vijaypala were renowned rulers. The Tomaras were challenged by Chauhamanas of Sakambhari who continued to rule the region till the middle of the 12th of century²⁵. This is confirmed by the Palam Baoli inscription (AD 1280) stating that the land of 'Hariyanaka' was first settled by the Tomaras and then by the Chahamanas.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Mahmud of Ghazni, the son and successor of Sabuktigin a Turkish Chieftain of Afghanistan, after defeating Jaipala and his son Anandapala the Shahi rulers of Punjab, marched on to Thanesar in 1011 A.D. He embarked on a definite policy of raiding the rich and politically unstable kingdoms of India. On receipt of the news of Mahmud Ghazni's advance near Thanesar, Vijaypal the Tomar king of Delhi sent messengers to other Hindu chiefs requesting them to join together to defend the sacred city of Thanesar. But nobody joined him to face the invader²⁶.

Mahmud marched with too rapidity through the Punjab to forestall by Vijaypal. He found the holy city of Thanesar undefended. Its wealth had attracted him. In 1011, he plundered the city, and broke a large number of idols sparing the principal one which was carried to Ghazni and placed in a public square for defilement²⁷. In 1018, he marched ahead and plundered Mathura, Kanauj, Gwalior and Kalanjara. He held sway for nineteen years, until the regional forces could regain control of Kurukshetra region in 1030²⁸. The region was subsequently raided by Mahmud's successors Niyaltigin and Masud in 1034 and 1036 respectively. In 1039 his son Sultan Masud annexed this part of the country leaving a Governor at Sonapat (near Panipat) to administer it in his name, though it was re-conquered by the local Hindu chiefs eight years later. In 1059 with the accession of Ibrahim, the son of Masud-I, the region was again raided by foreign invaders several times. Similarly, his son Mahmud, the Governor of Punjab, had also entered this region and marched up to Agra, Kanauj, Kalanjara and Ujjain²⁹. In 1191 Muhammad-bin-sam of Ghor advanced against the Rajput King of Delhi Rai Pithora (Privithvi Raj) who marched to face him with a large army. The rival forces met at Naraina, a village situated at 12 miles south from Thanesar and three miles from Taraori³⁰. The invader was wounded, defeated and his army was routed. When in next year the Sultan returned again to wipe out his disgrace, he found Rai Pithora encamped on the same ground. This time the Rajputs were utterly routed and Rai Pithora was made prisoner and soon put to death. His tragic end is referred in the contemporary sources like *Virudhavidhvansa*, *Prithviraja Prabandha* and the *Prabandhachintamani*. This battle finally paved the way for the establishment of Turkish rule in India³¹. Once again in the vicinity of the Panipat region, Indian history took a decisive turn.

Kutubuddin Aibek was left in India as the representative of Sultan Muhammad Ghori. Aibek, however, became independent Sultan in 1205 at the time of war of succession that followed Muhammad Ghori's death. On the death of Aibek in 1210, Delhi and its environs region was taken by Sultan Shamsuddin Altamash³². His successor Raziya ascended the throne at the end of 1236 with masculine title of Sultan. She managed the empire with ability

but her affection for an Abyssinian slave brought her downfall. Her opponents revolted. She herself was imprisoned in the fort of Bhatinda. She, however, regained her liberty by getting married Altoona, the Governor of Bhatinda. Now with her husband she again advanced to Delhi³³. The details of this campaign are obscure. The author of the *Tabakat-i-Nasiri* says that she met her end in 1240 near Kaithal, but if Ibn Batuta is to be trusted, she was murdered by a rustic for her jewels. Her grave is still there near the Turkman Gate of the present day Delhi³⁴.

The region remained in almost chaotic conditions up to 1266 when Balban assumed power. He made serious efforts to restore stability and order in the Sultanate. He set up a military check post at Thanesar. He also increased the numbers of *Iqtas*. His arrangement continued up to 1290 when after the deposition of the last Mamluk ruler Shams-ud-din, the region came under the control of the Khaljis. Jalal-ud-din was the founder of the Khalji dynasty. The Khalji rulers followed the policy of ruthless financial exploitation and bloody repression of the people which they tolerated under compulsion until the death of Ala-ud-din in 1316. Mubarak Khan, son of Ala-ud-Khalji, spent some time at Panipat to control the region. His tomb still stands in the town³⁵.

However, after this the suffering masses of the region rose up against Khalji tyranny and free themselves. This situation continued until 1320 when Ghiyas-ud-din, a Tughlaq noble, captured power. He brought the people under his control but confined himself to the Sirsa region as long as he remained the Sultan of Delhi. He was succeeded by Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. In his reign no significant event was recorded in the history of our region³⁶. His successors too confined their activities to the west Punjab. Firuz Tughlaq established towns of Fatehabad and Hissar in the region along with the Badshahi Canal (in 1355) which irrigated the country round the Jind, Safidon and Hansi³⁷.

One important incident connects the Tughlak dynasty with the Panipat region. In 1390 Prince Humayun who was in command of the army of his father Sultan Nasiruddin Muhammad Bin Firoz, pitched his camp at Panipat and plundered the tract which was then in the possession of a rebel Abu Bakr Tughlak. The latter, however, defeated him at Pasina, a small village situated at seven miles south of Panipat³⁸. In the early years of Mahmud Shah's reign (1394-1396) Nasiruddin Nasrat Shah was assigned the *Iktas* of Panipat, Sambhal, Jhajjar and Rohtak. In 1397 Mulla Ikbal Khan, one of Mahmud Shah's nobles and Governor of the Fort of Siri, disturbed the local *Iktadar* and captured Panipat region for some time³⁹.

In the year of 1398, the Panipat tract had to witness loot, plunder, and massacre at the hands of Timor, the Amir of Samarkand. After crossing the Indus River in September and marching through the plains of Sindh,

Punjab, and Rajasthan in the succeeding two months, he entered Sirsa in November. Timor made a halt for some time near Rania and soon resumed his march to Delhi. The local Jats, Rajputs and Ahirs challenged him at many places. Thousands of young and brave Haryanvi people laid down their lives while putting hurdles to the march of unscrupulous and avaricious Mongol horde. He reached Panipat on 3 December 1398. The people had deserted the town in compliance to orders from Sultan of Delhi, but he found here 1,00,000 mounds of wheat which he seized⁴⁰. Next day he marched six *Kos* and encamped on the banks of the 'river of Panipat', which was actually a branch of the Yamuna then flowing near the town in the name of the *Burhi Nadi* or old stream⁴¹. Seven days later he attacked Delhi where Mahmud Shah faced him with his large army which included 120 elephants. He defeated the Sultan, plundered the masses and perpetrated a massacre in the city. According to Ferishta- "Timor returned back through Panipat, but this seems to be a mistake for Bagpat"⁴². Next came the Lodi dynasty. Daulat Khan Lodi ascended the throne in 1413. During the reign of Behlol Lodi (1451-1489) his son Nizam Khan, later known as Sikander Lodi, seized Panipat and held it as his *Jagir*. He made it his headquarters and his force included 1,500 cavalry⁴³.

Since Panipat was on the highway from Sarhind to Delhi from the time of Timor to that of Akbar, armies were constantly passing through the tract and many battles were fought here.

Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur was the fifth descendant of Timor and the son of Farghana's king Umar Shaikh Mirza. His mother Qutlug Nigar Khanum was the daughter of Yunus Khan who was descended from Chaghatai Khan, the second son of Chingiz Khan. Born on 14 February 1483 he got his father's precarious throne at the tender age of eleven years and a few months⁴⁴. Prior to the first battle of Panipat which established Mughal empire in India, Babur made many invasions to conquer Hindustan, the first in 1505, then in 1507, again in 1512, 1514, 1519, 1520 and 1524. On 17 November 1525, he started his last and most momentous campaign. On the way, he was joined by Humayun from Badakshan and Khavaja Kilan from Ghazni. When he crossed the Indus River on 16 December 1525 his army amounted twelve thousand men including non-combatant camp followers⁴⁵.

Actually, this time Babur was invited by a discontented party. At that time India was distracted by ambitions, disaffections and rivalries of the nobles. The last nail in Delhi Sultanate's coffin was driven by two ambitious nobles, Daulat Khan Lodi, a powerful noble of the Punjab who was unhappy with Ibrahim Lodi and Alam Khan, an uncle of Ibrahim Lodi and a pretender to the throne of Delhi. Both of them went to the extent of inviting Babur to invade India⁴⁶. Alam Khan's view was that Delhi would be assigned to him after its capture. This was, however, not acceptable to the Mughals.

Consequently, Khan separated from the Mughals and with an army of 40,000 horsemen and himself marched towards Delhi. But Sultan Ibrahim Lodi defeated him and forced him to flee towards Panipat and Indri. Later on, however, Alam Khan along with Daulat Khan and Dilawar Khan again joined Babur. Probably, Rana Sanga had also made some negotiations with Babur about this time⁴⁷.

Babur advanced towards Delhi by the way of Sarhind. Ibrahim Lodi also advanced towards north from Delhi with a big army to meet the invader. Two advance parties of the Afghans fell upon the Mughal army: the first under Hammid Khan, the *Shiqdar* of Hisar-i-Firuz, which was completely routed by Humayun, and the second under Daud Khan and Hatim Khan which too was similarly routed. Now Babur crossed the Sutlej River near Rupa. Soon he reached Ambala. His march along the Yamuna brought him to the historic city of Panipat on 12 April 1526. Here, Babur encamped and prepared himself for the battle which later became famous in the history as the First Battle of Panipat (21 April, 1526)⁴⁸.

Babur stationed the army in such a way that on his right was the town of Panipat with its suburbs, in front the carts (700) and mantelets (shields) on the left. Ustad Aliquli was ordered that his carts should be connected together in Ottoman fashion with slight modification of using ropes of raw hide instead of chains, and that between every two carts 5 or 6 mantelets should be fixed, behind which the match lockmen were to stand and fire⁴⁹.

For eight days from 12th to 19th of April, the two armies stood face to face. With a view to draw the enemy into battle, Babur sent four or five thousand men on 20th April to attempt a night surprise. Though it failed on account of the negligence of the troops, it had the desired effect of making the enemy move. It was for the first time that on this very day canon (*Zarbzan*), as a weapon of open field-warfare, was used in India by Babur in the battle. As per illustrations of the *Baburnama*, the heavy canons were mounted on carriages with two or four wheels. The heavy gun, pulled by an elephant, was called *Gajnal* and the one pulled by a camel was known as *Shutarnal*. On 21st April at dawn, the Afghans were on the move in battle array⁵⁰.

Babur divided his army, which was consisting of Mongol and numerous Afghan and Turk adventurers, into vanguard, left wing, right wing and the centre. The right centre was protected specially by Chin Timor Sultan and Suleiman Mirza and the left centre by the Khalifa Khwaja Mir-i-Miran. In the right wing were placed Humayun, Khwaja Kalan, Hindu Beg etc, while the left front was protected by Mirza Mahdi Khwaja, Adil Sultan, Shah Mir Husain and others⁵¹. There were two flying columns to wheel round on the

enemy and take them in the flank and rear. The advance and the reserve were respectively in the charge of Khusrau and Abdul Aziz, the masters of the horses. Along the front of the entire line, protected by the palisade of carts and breastworks, were placed the artillery under Ustad Ali on the right side and the musketeers under Mustafa on the left. From his key position in the centre, Babur could have a view of the activities of the entire army⁵².

According to *Baburnama*, Ibrahim Lodi's army of 1,00,000 men with about 1,000 elephants consisted mostly of mercenaries much inferior to the Mughal force of 12,000 which was well-equipped with discipline, training and valour⁵³. Lodi was no match to Babur in respect of organization, planning, and military strategy. The Afghan army came straight on at a rapid march and as they came near enemy's defences they hesitated and halted. But the ranks behind pressed forward and caused great confusion among the whole force. Babur seized the opportunity and sent out his flanking columns to wheel round the Afghans and delivered a violent attack on their rear, while his right and left wings charged straight on. He sent timely reinforcement to the left wing under Mahdi Khwaja which was hard pressed, as well as to the right wing which felt the brunt of the Afghan attack. From the centre Ustad Ali with his artillery and Mustafa with his match-locks began their action. Ibrahim's centre gave way and the Afghans, beset on all sides by arrows and fire and crowded into a narrow space with no room to use their arms, could neither advance nor retreat. The battle ended at noon when the Afghans were completely routed and took to flee, leaving some twenty thousand dead, including Sultan Ibrahim Lodi⁵⁴.

The superior generalship and strategy of Babur, the higher discipline and morale of his troops and the discontent rampant among the Afghan troops were the causes of his easy victory. It seems that the efficacy of Babur's artillery at Panipat has been over-estimated by some historians. In fact, Babur had only two guns and even if he had more, it appears from his own description that he won at Panipat a bow-man's victory⁵⁵.

Raja Vikramajit, the last Tomar ruler of Gwalior, was also died in the battle fighting from the side of his friend Sultan Lodi. It is noted that Babur was impressed by the courage of Lodi and exclaimed 'honour' to his bravery. After the battle, he did some constructive works in Panipat town which included construction of a tomb (in the memory of Ibrahim Lodi), a mosque, a tank and a garden popularly known as Kabuli Bagh. Some years later, when Humayun defeated Salem Shah some four miles north of Panipat, he added here a masonry platform and called it *Chabutra Fateh Mubarik*⁵⁶.

According to the *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*, Babur stayed for about seven days at Panipat. He took possession of Lodi's treasury, elephants (1500),

horses (27,000) and other articles, and gained the goodwill of eminent persons of the town by showing generosity towards them. Sultan Muhammad Anghuli who had assisted him with his troops in the battle, was appointed Governor of Panipat with 10,000 horsemen under him. Revenue of one crop was granted for the maintenance of his services⁵⁷. The importance of the battle, great as it was, has also been exaggerated. According to R.C.Majumdar the battle obviously sealed the fate of the Lodi dynasty and also marked the completion of the second stage of Babur's conquest of India. But it did nothing more as it could not finally decide the fate of Hindustan⁵⁸.

Babur entered Delhi on 24 April 1526. On 27th April, three days later, the *Khutba* was read in his name in the Jami Mosque. He visited the local shrines including the tombs of Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Kaki, Ala-ud-din Khalji and Balban. Now this king of Kabul was hailed as the 'Emperor of Hindustan'⁵⁹. From Delhi Babur proceeded to Agra which Prince Humayun had already captured. Agra, the capital of his predecessors Lodis, became Babur's 'new Samarqand'. Here Humayun presented to his father a big and precious diamond which he had received from the family of the late Raja Vikramajit of Gwalior as a mark of gratitude for his chivalrous treatment. This diamond has been identified as the world-famous *Koh-i-Noor*. Babur, however, affectionately returned it to his son as a gift⁶⁰.

The establishment of Mughal rule in Haryana, however, did not go unchallenged. Hisar-Firuzah, Mewat and Kaithal regions revolted against the Mughals. Rajputs of Nardak region, under the leadership of Mohan Mundahir, rose against the Mughals and defeated the local imperial troops. Taking a serious note of the situation, Babur sent heavy reinforcements of 6000 horses and many elephants with Tarsem Bahadur and Naurang Begh. The Mughal chieftains punished the revolting Mundahirs severely. About 1000 of men, women and children were made prisoners. Some of them were slain and a pillar of their heads was raised. Their leader, Mohan Mundahir was too killed⁶¹. Babur also died at the age of forty eight on 30 December 1530 and was buried in Kabul, as per his wishes because he had an unending love for the hills of Farghana, the blue domes and glittering *Minars* of Samarqand and the flowers of Kabul.

As there was no fixed law of succession among the Timorids, every prince belonging to the royal blood aspired to sit on the throne. When Humayun ascended the throne, after the death of Babur, at the age of twenty three, he appointed, as per the advice of his late father, his brothers Mirza Hindal and Kamran as Governors of Mewat and Sarhind-Hisar, respectively. He assigned Sambhal to his third brother Askari. Despite this, however, he couldn't get the support of his brothers⁶². Hence, he did not succeed in consolidating his power. In sum, the history of Humayun appears to us as a

drama in four acts, the first part is the story of the earlier hectic ten years from 1530 to 1540, the second unfolds the tragedy of his exile from 1540 to 1545, the third one is the story of the period from 1545 to 1554 when he did efforts for the recovery of his dominion from Qandahar and Kabul, and the fourth is about the restoration of power by him during 1555-1556 when he succeeded in recovering his dominion, recaptured Delhi and died there⁶³.

Sher Shah Suri (Farid was his original name) was one of the most striking figures in medieval Indian history. Born at Narnaul of Haryana region⁶⁴, he started his life from a humble beginning and eventually revived the Afghan power in north India. Moreover, he established a well-organized administration, hitherto rare in medieval India. He made a great contribution in improving the transport and communication system in north India including Haryana. Grand Trunk Road, now-a-days known as National Highway No.1, passes through Panipat region. There was peace, prosperity and tranquillity in his empire. However, this able Afgan ruler could not live long and died while he was leading an expedition against Kalinjar in May 1545⁶⁵. The second ruler of Sur dynasty was Islam Shah (1545-1554), the youngest son of Sher Shah. He was succeeded by his minor son Firoz Shah and lastly by Muhammad Adil Shah (1554-1556). Sher Shah's successors were not able enough to sustain the Afgan power in India⁶⁶.

As stated earlier, during his exile Humayun continued his efforts to recover his lost empire. Raja Maldev of Marwar had invited him at Jodhpur and promised to help him. When Humayun reached the vicinity of Bikaner on 31 July, 1542 after a difficult journey in which many people died, he found the Raja hostile. Perhaps the threat of an Afghan attack forced him to review his stand. Hence, Humayun was forced to leave Maldev's territory. He reached Umarnot where Rana received him and agreed to help. After stay of about a month and half there, Humayun planned to go to Iran in order to seek help of Shah Husain. While he was on the way, on 15 October, 1542 his wife Hamida Begam gave birth to a son who was given the name Akbar⁶⁷.

After reaching Iran, Humayun concluded a treaty with Shah Husain who agreed to help him. Ultimately, reinforced with 14,000 Persian troops, Humayun arrived at the vicinity of Qandahar. In September 1545, he made a sudden attack on Qandahar and occupied it. The occupation of Qandahar was a turning point in his history. He had now a base for further operations to recover his dominion in India. He appointed Bairam Khan as the Government of Qandahar and started for Kabul. He entered Kabul without any problem in November 1545. The occupation of Qandahar and Kabul made Humayun the master of southern Afghanistan⁶⁸. On 28 May 1555, he captured Sarhind and appointed Shah Abdul-i-Mali as the Governor of Punjab. Since the Sur Empire of Sher Shah Suri was in declining state, Humayun easily recaptured Delhi

where he died on 26 January 1556. His minor son Akbar was crowned as Emperor of India by Bairam Khan on 14 February 1556 at Kalanaur (Punjab) in Gurdaspur district.⁶⁹

The last Afghan ruler was Muhammad Adil Shah. Hemchandra (Hemu) was his Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief. This remarkably brave Hindu was originally a resident of Rewari of Haryana. He was a successful hero of 22 battles which he fought with the domestic enemies of Adil Shah who gave him the title of 'Vikramajit'. Hemu was gifted with extraordinary military and administrative genius and was, therefore, asked by Adil Shah to re-conquer Delhi from the Mughals⁷⁰.

Taking advantage of the death of Humayun, Hemu who was the in-charge of Gwalior at that time, proceeded to Agra with a huge force and occupied it easily. Then he reached Tughlaqabad with a heavy cavalry of 50,000 along with 1000 elephants and 51 canons. Tardi Begh did not make any effort to save Delhi and Hemu took possession of the city and, thus, became the first and the only Hindu who occupied the throne of Delhi during the medieval Indian history⁷¹.

Bairam Khan and Akbar after passing through Thanesar, arrayed their army 10 miles (16 kilometres) north of Karnal, and then marched towards Panipat. Hemu encamped more or less at the same site previously occupied by Ibrahim Lodi which was in the west of Panipat⁷².

The battle started with the attack of Hemu's advance guards on Mughal commander Ali Quli Khan. The advance party was, however, defeated and fled away leaving their guns on the battlefield. Then, Hemu himself advanced with an army of 30,000 Rajputs and Afghan horsemen, with 500 armoured elephants mounted by musketeers and cross bowmen to the historic battlefield of Panipat where he met his adversaries on 5 November 1556 in the battle which later became famous as the Second Battle of Panipat.

Hemu fell heavily on Ali Quli Khan and his 10,000 horsemen. His elephants made a furious charge on the right, left and centre of the Mughal enemy. However, this attack was not fruitful as the Mughal horsemen wheeled along the sides and fell on Hemu's flanks slashing the elephants' legs and targeting the *Mahouts*. The superior archery of the Mughals caused confusion in the ranks of Hemu's army. His elephants could not cross the ravine end; as a result, they could not assault the Mughal centre effectively. Soon the elephants began to fall back. Now, Ali Quli Khan attacked Hemu's army from the rear. Hemu made repeated counter-attacks. In this tough fight two of his commanders Bhagwan Das and Shadi Khan were killed before his eyes. However, he continued fighting with bravery and cheering up his soldiers till an arrow hit his eye and he fell in the *Howdah*⁷³. Finding themselves

leaderless and under great pressure from all sides, his soldiers fled and hence, the battle was lost. According to Abul Fazl, 5,000 soldiers of Hemu were killed in the battle. The elephant driver of Hemu wanted to carry away his master, but Shah Quli Mahram captured him. He took him to Akbar. There Bairam Khan requested the Emperor to kill Hemu. According to Abul Fazl, Badaoni and Nizamuddin Ahmad, Akbar declined to commit this act of brutality and thereafter Bairam Khan put him to death. Arif Qandhari, however, states that Akbar at the request of Bairam Khan hit Hemu with his sword. It seems that Akbar merely touched him with his sword and this very action enabled him to assume the title of Ghazi and it was Bairam Khan who actually killed Hemu⁷⁴.

Hemu's father Purandas and his family was too captured by Pir Muhammad. Abul Fazl thus narrates the tragic end of Hemu's father:

“He was taken alive and brought before Pir Muhammad who offered him to convert his faith, but the old man said, ‘For eighty years I have worshipped God in the way of my own religion, how can I forsake my faith? Shall I, through the fear of death, embrace your religion without understanding it? Maulana Pir Muhammad... gave his answer with the tongue of the sword⁷⁵.’”

The location of the battlefield where Mughals and Afghans fought for the second time has been a matter of considerable difference of scholarly opinion. On the basis of contemporary and other sources G.Khurana has re-examined the issue recently. According to him Al-Badaoni mentions a place named Kharamanda which Hemu reached after starting from Panipat which shows that the battle could not have been fought at Panipat proper. Abul Fazl also mentions plain of Sarai Kaharunda/ Karunda⁷⁶. H. Beveridge who sees a close identity in the places mentioned above by the Muslim historians and further equates it with Kharkhuda (which was included in the Delhi *Sarkar* and is presently in Sonapat district). But H.A.Phakde has doubts on the validity of his argument as Akbar marched to Panipat from Jullendhur following the route via Thanesar and Karnal. This has been accepted by V.A.Smith also⁷⁷.

G.Khurana suggests the identification of Kharamanda with Mehrana (present Madana) situated about 5 kilometres southwest of the old town of Panipat. In support of his argument the scholar points out the existence of Khara at the place which was popularly known as Kharamadana. Further, the famous Sarai Philkhan was situated near the place, about 3 kilometres south of Panipat on the highway to Delhi and about 2½ kilometres east of the then Kharamadana. Thus, the battlefield according to Khurana was extended from Sarai Philkhan to Kharamadana and spread over the area of about two to five kilometres southwest of Panipat. The scholar finds support in the *Tarikh-i-*

Salatin-i-Afghana mentioning the respective positions of the two armies and concludes that Hemu might have camped his army in the vicinity of the Firoz Shahi canal (in the west of Panipat) which assured supply of water for his men as well as animals. Kharamanda was situated on the eastern side of the canal and the battle must have been fought round it⁷⁸.

During the reign of Akbar and his successors, the Mughal Empire was firmly established at Delhi and the Panipat region. In 1573, a rebel Ibrahim Husain Mirza Governor of Baroda, who was defeated by Akbar, moved northwards with the object to create disturbance and passed through this region. He also plundered Panipat and Karnal⁷⁹.

In 1606, Prince Khusrao, escaped from Agra and moved towards Punjab gathering troops on the way. He passed through the Panipat region plundering and pillaging the people. When he reached Panipat he was joined by Dilawar Ali Khan who was at Panipat with an imperial force. Jahangir (1605-1627) himself followed to capture the rebel prince⁸⁰.

The Mughal Emperors always remembered the success which Panipat had brought to their family. The Friday Prayers were regularly held in the mosque of Kabuli Bagh which Babur had built here. This practice continued till the Marathas occupied the mosque before the Third Battle of Panipat (1761). For about two centuries, the region enjoyed peace under the Mughals. Jahangir and Shahjahan followed the policy of *Sulah-i-Kul* and did not disturb the socio-religious life of the people. But Aurangzeb, the last Great Mughal, made people of the land unhappy by his orthodox and repressive policies. As a result, the entire Punjab under Guru Gobind Singh revolted against Aurangzeb⁸¹. The Jats and Satnamis of Haryana also revolted against Aurangzeb. The Jats, under their leader Raja Ram, created a sort of terror for Mughal authorities. After the death of Aurangzeb (3 March, 1707), the Jats continued their rebellious activities⁸². The turmoil which followed death of Aurangzeb caused much harm to the Panipat tract.

With the rise of the Sikhs, however, in Punjab, the Panipat region remained disturbed by the Sikh raiders for about a century. In 1709, Banda Bahadur /Bairagi the disciple of Guru Gobind Singh, in an effort to continue the fight against Mughal oppression, collected an army of Sikhs and local people and occupied the whole of the Panipat region as well as other parts of the lands including Sadhora and Sonapat. He killed the *Faujdar* of Sarhind. He created here the first Sikh State with its headquarters at Lohgarh. He was, however, repressed by Bahadur Shah and brutally assassinated in 1716⁸³.

At this critical juncture, Nadir Shah the King of Persia, after occupying Afghanistan, decided to march on India. He passed through Jalalabad, Peshawar, Wazirabad and caused destruction and disorder

throughout the region between Lahore and Sarhind which according to Sheikh Ali Hazari, a contemporary writer, was a 'complete revolution'⁸⁴. After passing through Sarhind and Rajpura the invading army on 7 February, 1739 reached Ambala, where they plundered one and all. Thanesar was captured on 10th evening⁸⁵.

The Emperor of Delhi Muhammad Shah sent messengers to the Rajputs and the Marathas to come to their aid in this hour of national crisis. The Rajputs made excuses and delayed in coming while the Marathas did not come despite the fact that in a letter addressed to his commander Pilaji Jadhav, Peshwa Bajirao considered rendering help to the Emperor of Delhi in such a time 'a glory to the Maratha State'. The imperial army reached Panipat on 18 January, 1739 followed by the Emperor with his contingent on 27th. Muhammad Shah had set-up his camp along the western bank of the canal of Ali Mardan Khan with the walled town of Karnal immediately south of him. His front and right were protected by jungle and the canal respectively. Under the direction of Sad-ud-din (*Mir Atash*), the camp was protected by a mud wall⁸⁶.

On 15th January, Nadir Shah left Taraori and marching round by the banks of the Yamuna to the back of the city, advanced to a very close position to the Emperor's camp. Meanwhile he sent Prince Nasr Ullah Mirza with a force on the canal close to Karnal. Muhammad Shah was not even aware that the enemy had come to his neighborhood. At this time Saadat Khan from Oudh reached near Panipat with new reinforcements. Now Nadir Shah and Prince Nasr Ullah at once marched ahead to attack. This was the first intimation the imperial army had of their presence⁸⁷. About the strategy of Nadir Shah one account is corroborated by an eminent historian of the subject, H.A.Phadke who writes:

"The plan, admirably worked out as it was, yielded expected results. The Persian army marched to the plain six miles northeast of Karnal a little north of Kunjpura and within the sight of Jamuna. Nadir Shah himself led a search party to ascertain enemy's position and returned unharmed to his own camp. When the news of Saadat Khan and his army's reaching Panipat was received, a division of Persian army was sent to intercept it and another to pressurize the eastern flank of the Mughal army⁸⁸."

Hence, the war strategy of Nadir Shah was far superior to that of Muhammad Shah. It appears that Nadir Shah's strategy was:

"...to avoid a frontal attack and make a wide detour along the east of Karnal, so as to keep in touch with the Jamuna and its

abundant water supply on his left flank and also to cut the Mughal line of communication with Delhi by seizing the town of Panipat in the rear and...to force Muhammad Shah to come out of his lines and accept battle on a field chosen by Nadir or to remain helplessly shut up in Karnal while the Persians would march to Delhi unmolested⁸⁹.”

However, the sudden advance of the Indian army was unexpected to the Persians. Nadir Shah according to the plan already prepared, made swift movements of his army composed entirely of cavalry with artillery consisting of long muskets besides long swivels (*Zamburaks*). In order to baffle the elephants, on which the Indians mostly relied, he made a number of platforms and fixed each across two camels. On these platforms he laid naphtha and a mixture of combustibles with orders to set them on fire in the battle. The elephants were sure to flee away at the sight of quickly approaching fire. The Indians were in a disadvantageous position due to absence of a well-planned strategy of battle, and also the lack of a supreme director of operations. As a result, the Indian army lost the battle by the evening resulting in loss of important Commanders such as Saadat Khan and Khan Dauran and thousands of men⁹⁰.

The shortage of food supply was one of the reasons of the defeat of the imperial army. The army of Muhammad Shah, which had already been encamped for three months at Karnal and had suffered greatly from want of supplies, was now cut off from the open country in the rear, and food became so scarce that a seer of flour could not be brought for four rupees. The outclassed method of warfare, inefficiency in the use of fire arms, bad employment of elephants, ‘a sure engine of self-destruction’, and above all bad generalship were the other causes of the Indian disaster⁹¹.

After the battle was over the Persian marauders plundered the citizens, laying the fields waste and killing the inhabitants who ever resisted. With Nadir’s advancement to Delhi, Panipat, Sonapat and other towns and villages falling on the way were mercilessly sacked and looted. The indignation and humiliation to which the Emperor, his courtiers and the people were put is the saddest chapter of the history of those times⁹².

The region of Panipat was placed under the charge of Zakariya Khan. Nadir Shah’s invasion hastened the process of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. The weakness of the imperial authority brought other powers- the Sikhs, the Marathas and later the Durranis in the region. Panipat being situated on highway from Delhi to Lahore had to undergo tremendous sufferings. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, the region was slipped away from the administrative control of the rulers of Delhi. It was mostly subjected to encroachment of the neighbouring powers. Kamgar Khan

Baluch occupied a vast territory comprising the whole region of Rohtak and Hissar, parts of Gurgaon, Jind and Patiala. Qutb Shah, wrongly called Ruhela (formerly a collector of Saharanpur) usurped the parts of Panipat and Sarhind districts⁹³.

The critical political conditions of India especially of Punjab and Haryana again facilitated the ambitious designs of Ahmad Shah Durrani, an Afghan chief of the Abdali clan who rose to power in Afghanistan after the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747. He attempted a series of expeditions to conquer India, the first in 1748, second in 1750, third in 1751, fourth in 1756, and finally in November 1759 when he set out on his last and most momentous campaign.

In 1748 when Durrani invaded the Punjab, the Mughal forces were sent against him under Prince Ahmad, which passed through Panipat region and advanced to Machhiwara on the Sutlej. On the way back to Delhi, Prince Ahmad was crowned as Emperor of India in a camp at Panipat as Emperor Muhammad Shah had died in the meantime⁹⁴.

In November 1756, when Abdali (Durrani) invaded India for the fourth time he marched from Attock to Delhi without any resistance which indicates the state of degradation of the imperial authority. His kingdom now extended to the river Yamuna up to the neighbourhood of Panipat. This region was placed in charge of Abdul Samad Khan. Abdali left India in April 1757 with immense booty and many captives, leaving his son Timor Shah as his Viceroy at Lahore⁹⁵.

At that time the Marathas had occupied a considerable part of central and north India. In 1758, they captured Lahore driving out Timor Shah Durrani, the son of the Afghan ruler. This was the highest water mark of the Maratha expansion in India where the boundaries of their empire extended in the north to the Indus and the Himalayas and in the south nearly to the extremity of the peninsula. Delhi, however, still remained under the formal control of the Mughals, who were alarmed by these developments. In desperation, they appealed to Abdali to check the threat of their Indian adversaries⁹⁶. This invitation served as seeds of another furious battle in the region on 14 January 1761 that later became famous as the Third Battle of Panipat.

Ahmad Shah Abdali left Qandhar in the beginning of September 1759 and reached Lahore in November, and towards the end of that month brought Punjab under his control. By that time the wicked *Wazir* Imad had conspired and executed the murder of Alamagir-II and declared Shah Jahan-II as the new Emperor⁹⁷.

Soon Abdali moved from Lahore to Sarhind, Ambala and Taraori. The Marathas under Sadashivrao Bhau responded to the news of the Afghans' return to north India by raising a big army and marching to the north. Bhau's forces included the forces of various Maratha chiefs, viz., Holkar, Sindhia, Gaikwad and Gobind Pant Bundela. Suraj Mal of Bharatpur had also joined Bhau though left him midway. This combined army of over 1,00,000 regular troops captured the Mughal capital Delhi in December 1759⁹⁸.

The Marathas' stay at the capital was, however, full of difficulties. They had to face scarcity of food, money and fodder. The situation became worst by the middle of September 1760. Bhau left Delhi on 10 October 1760 for Kunjpura. It was a fortified town on the Yamuna under Najabat Khan who had ensured supplies of money and material from Punjab for Durrani. Abdus Samad Khan was also posted the Governor of Sarhind. In a conflict between the Marathas and the Afghans on 17th October, Abdus Samad Khan and Najabat Khan were defeated and lost their lives. The booty which fell into the hands of the Marathas was six and a half lakh rupees in cash, two lakh mounds of wheat, 3000 horses and many camels, large number of guns and stores of ammunitions. The Marathas celebrated their victory with great enthusiasm on Dussehra, the 19 October 1760. They left Kunjpura on 25th October and reached Taraori where they got the news of Abdali's crossing the Yamuna at Bhagpat. Bhau now hurriedly marched towards Panipat. Abdali's entire army crossed the Jamuna in three days (25th-27th October). At Samalkha, on 28th October, a serious fight started between the advanced Maratha patrols and the Afghans in which about one and a half thousand Marathas and one thousand Afghans lost their lives. The same day Abdali reached Ganaur and stayed there for three days (28th-30th October). He again arrived at Samalkha on the following day and on 1st November camped in the neighbourhood of Panipat, where the Marathas had already gathered. The villages around Panipat which witnessed the battle between Afghans and Marathas were Nimbdi, Raja Kheri, Sua Kheri, Kabli Bagh, Chandni Bagh, Ugra Kheri, Ujah, Risalu and Siwah⁹⁹.

The Maratha camp was set up to the northwest of Panipat close to the Shah canal which was the main source of water supply. The west and the east of the Maratha camp were protected by the canal and the Panipat hill. In front they had a broad, dry and dusty plain. The Maratha entrenchments covering a vast area (about 10 kms in length and 4 kms in depth) had included the city within its defence perimeter and were planned and executed under the able direction of Ibrahim Khan Gardi. As against this, Abdali had made adjustments many a time according to the changing conditions. He shifted to the riverside, to the southeast in order to escape from air and water pollution. Towards end of December, Abdali finally moved to the north side the Delhi road. The main battlefield was now the villages of Risalu and Nimbdi¹⁰⁰.

The strength of the contending parties as given by Kashiraj and Muhammad Jafar Shamlu, the two eye-witnesses, contained divergent figures. On the basis of such information, some scholars have estimated that the Afghan army was consisted of 40000 Afghans and Persians, 3000 Indian horses and 38000 infantry with 30 pieces of canons; whereas the Maratha forces amounted to 15000 infantry, 55000 cavalry, 15000 irregular horses and 200 canons¹⁰¹. But a more rational estimate is given by J.N.Sarkar, according to whom the number of the Afghan army was 60000 half were of which were Abdali's own men (23000 horses and 7000 feet) and the other half his Indian allies (7000 horses and 23000 feet); whereas the Maratha army was consisted of total 45000 soldiers in cavalry, infantry and artillery¹⁰².

The feudal character, lack of common cementing bond between its different contingents, absence of coordination and large number of non-combatants attached to cavalry had been said to be the main disadvantages of the Maratha army. The Afghan army was having better horses and more efficient and mobile artillery and its soldiers were clad in armours which the Marathas hardly wore. J. N. Sarkar has aptly commented upon the superiority of the Afghan army in its leadership, strategy etc.:

“...There was the transcendent genius for war and diplomacy and the towering personality of the master- who had risen like Nadir from dust and attained to almost the same pre-eminence of fortune and invincibility in war as Nadir¹⁰³.”

Between 1st November, when the two armies encamped opposite each other, and 14th January, when the final battle was fought, there were skirmishes nearly every day between the reconnaissance patrols and foraging parties of the two sides and sometimes exchange of fire from distantly-mounted guns. Of these daily bouts probably the most important were three- those of 19th and 22nd November and 7th December. On 19th November Fatah Ali Khan, brother of Ibrahim Khan Gardi, made a night attack on the Abdali's camp. Gardi had taken with him a few pieces of artillery. On 22nd November, when the Marathas were busy with their lunar eclipse rites, Wazir Shah Vali Khan, who was on patrol duty to southwest of Panipat and unprepared for any trouble, was suddenly surprised by an overwhelming Maratha force. A close combat followed in which 3000-4000 men were said to have fallen dead and wounded. The Marathas were at first victorious. But soon reinforcements reached the Wazir. The Durrani had fallen on the Maratha rear when the latter retired to their camp¹⁰⁴. These initial encounters indicate that in beginning the spirit and morale of the Maratha troops was very high. The historians opine that Bhau could not assess the real position of Abdali¹⁰⁵.

The third major encounter between the armed forces of the two sides took place after Abdali had moved to his new position near the river side and

thus was at a little farther away from the range of heavy Maratha artillery fire. It was on 7th December when the Marathas had moved some of their guns to a position opposite the Rohillas in Abdali's camp. The Rohillas led by Sultan Khan, brother of Najib-ud-daula, along with 10,000 horses and 5,000 feet suddenly fell upon the enemy. The Maratha horsemen, guarding the guns, were scattered away. Balwantrao charged the intruders with his men, but a 'Zamburak' ball accidentally hit him, claiming his life¹⁰⁶.

According to Hari Ram Gupta the Maratha chroniclers make out that Bhau set great store by the advice tendered by Balwantrao and this was probably the reason of a lot of bickering and jealousy between the Maratha commanders and other members of the Peshwas's family on the one hand and army leaders such as Malharrao Holker on the other. In Balwantrao's death Bhau sustained a great personal bereavement apart from the loss of a brave soldier and a fearless Commander¹⁰⁷.

The skirmish of 7th December was followed by the death of Govindpant on 17th December who was entrusted with the task of attacking the upper Doab to stop the grain convoys which Najib's men were sending to Abdali's camp and thus to corner Abdali at Panipat and make things difficult for his allies. Govindpant was killed in an action against Atai Khan. This was followed by the massacre of 20,000 non-combatants Marathas, who were at work to gather firewood and fodder, by Shah Pasand Khan and his men in a night patrol¹⁰⁸.

With these series of mishaps, the Marathas came under pressure of the enemy. The road to Delhi had been cut off and Kunjpura the rear had been taken over by Daler Khan. The only direction from which aid sometimes reached the Marathas was the southwest from Alha Singh Jat of Patiala, but this too was soon cut off. The sad plight of the Maratha camp explains the last unsuccessful effort made by Bhau to negotiate with the enemy for a peace at any price. The condition of the Maratha camp on the eve of final battle has been portrayed by J.N.Sarkar in these words:

“There was no food and no firewood for men and no grass for horses. The stench of carcasses of men and beasts lying uncremated and unburied and the effluvia of the evacuations of four lakhs of living creatures made the confines of the entrenchment a living hell for human beings¹⁰⁹.”

In arranging his troops Bhau had to isolate his non-popular commander Ibrahim Khan Gardi. He was placed at the extreme left wing of the army with his nine battalions, approximately 8,000 men of foot-musketeers. He stood on the battlefield in the village of Nimbdi, to the southwest of Panipat. The heavy Maratha canon was placed in front. Behind it the Maratha stalwarts like Damaji Gaikwar and Vithal Shivdeo were placed

with their light cavalry. Next came some captains. In the centre stood Sadashivrao Bhau and his son Vishwasrao Bhau with their personal troops at the Huzurat, two kilometres to the north of village of Ugrakhedi. The right wing was formed by Antaji Mankeshwar, Pilaji Jadav's son Satvoji, Yashwantrao Pawar and Shamsher Bahadur with the Sindhia and Holkar contingents at the extreme end. The lighter artillery was placed chiefly in front of the right wing, though there were some pieces on the left as well as at the centre¹¹⁰.

Hence, the deployment of the Maratha forces was as follows:

<i>Left Wing:</i>	Ibrahim Khan Gardi	8,000 all feet-musketeers
	Damaji Gaikwar	2,500 horses
	Vithal Shivdeo	1,500 horses
	Some Captains	2,000 horses
<i>Centre:</i>	Sadashivrao Bhau and Vishwasrao Bhau	13,500 cavalry troops
<i>Right Wing:</i>	Antaji Mankeshwar	1,000 horses
	Satvoji Jadav	1,500 horses
	Minor Captains	2,000 horses
	Yashwantrao Pawar	1,500 horses
	Shamsher Bahadur	1,500 horses
	Jankoji Sindhia	7,000 horses
	Malharrao Holkar	3,000 horses ¹¹¹

Ahmad Shah Abdali had also worked out his plan carefully. In his camp too, there were such elements (like Najib-ud-daula) whose presence was resented by Hafiz Rahmat Khan, although both belonged to the Indian Rohillas. There was an additional risk - the possible defection, in the event of an adverse situation in battle, of his Indian allies. On his right wing (which faced the Maratha left under Ibrahim Khan Gardi) Abdali placed Barkhurdar Khan and Amir Beg with their Persian horses. Next came Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan followed by Ahmad Khan Bangesh. Together they comprised the Durrani right wing. The centre (facing Bhau and his son) was comprised by the force of Wazir Shah Vali Khan who was in command of 15,000 troops, supported by 2,000 camel swivels and 1,000 Kabuli infantry. The Afghan left Wing (facing the Maratha right) stood on the plain between Risalu and Siwah villages. At its extreme end was Shah Pasand Khan with 5,000 Persian horses. Next came Najib-ud-daula with his 15,000 men and dismounted cavalry followed by Shuja-ud-daula, one third of whose men were

foot-musketeers. From the west of Siwah, where Pasand Khan stood near Chhajpur Khurd, Barkhurdar Khan and Amir Beg were placed¹¹².

In sum, the deployment of Ahmad Shah Abdali's army was as under:

<i>Left Wing:</i>	Shah Pasand Khan	5,000 horses
	Najib-ud-daula	15,000 men and dismounted cavalry
	Shuja-ud-daula	3,000 men, 1/3 foot-musketeers
<i>Centre:</i>	Shah Vali Khan	15,000 troops, 2000 swivels and 1,000 horses
<i>Right Wing:</i>	Barkhurdar Khan and Amir Beg	3,000 horses ¹¹³

After minor scuffles between the Marathas and Afghans which continued for over a year, both of the armies finally jumped into the fierce battle on 14 January 1761. The battle which lasted till 6-7 hours from about 9 a.m. to about 3.30 p.m. passed through three distinct phases. In the first, the Marathas gained initial success which, however, they lost in the second though continued to give a tough fight till the reinforcements thrown in by Abdali turning the battle against the Marathas. The last stage saw the collapse of the Maratha resistance and the complete rout of their army.

Ibrahim Khan Gardi charged the right wing of Abdali's army led by Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan so furiously that about eight to nine thousand of the Ruhelas were wounded or slain. Six of Gardi's battalions were almost entirely washed out and he himself was badly wounded. In another front, Sadashivrao Bhau's cavalry attacked the Abdali's centre under Shah Wali Khan and pressed it very hard. "The fighting was so violent", observed Kashi Raj, "that the earth and sky could not be seen"¹¹⁴. The Afghan casualties were very heavy, and among them was Haji Atai Khan. Abdali's reinforcements of 13,000 fresh troops to the right wing and the centre at this critical stage turned the fight decisively against the already exhausted Maratha army. Bhau did not seem to have left any reserve. However, he continued to fight till the end of the battle. The Abdali's left led by Najib, Shah Pasand Khan and Shuja-ud-daula faced the combined forces of Holkar, Sindhia and some other commanders like Shamsheer Bahadur, Yashwantrao Pawar and Satvoji Jadhav. In the first round there was no activity on this front but at quarter past two in the afternoon a *Zamburak* ball struck Vishwasrao on his forehead. After this the Marathas were utterly routed and many of them were driven into the town of Panipat, where next morning the conqueror brought them out and massacred them in cold blood. The fugitives were followed and killed wherever they were caught. Further, on their way to the Gangetic doab, they were attacked by the Jat peasants of Haryana who were hostile and full of

hatred due to their exploitation by the Marathas. Total 30,000 Marathas were killed in the battlefield, 10,000 in the subsequent massacre and 40,000 were either captured or killed. The Afghan army suffered casualties of nearly 30000 in the battlefield. A fully restive force consisting of 15,000 reserve and well trained soldiers popularly called “*Taza Dum Dasta*” (fresh force) caused the Maratha defeat. Bhau died a heroic death¹¹⁵.

The third battle of Panipat had been called ‘a nationwide disaster’. In the words of Kashi Raj “the Maratha army vanished like camphor and none remained in the field except heaps of corpses here and there”¹¹⁶. The news of this disaster was conveyed to the Peshwa in a codified message reading: “Two pearls have been broken, twenty seven gold *Mohurs* have been lost, and as regards the silver and copper, the total cannot be calculated¹¹⁷.” The two pearls were Vishwasrao and Sadashivrao who were died fighting. The twenty-two gold *Mohurs* included Ibrahim Gardi, Tukoji Sindhia, Yashwantrao Pawar, Santaji Wagh, Janakoji, Antaji Manakeshwar, Shamsher Bahadur etc. The silver and copper were thousands of Maratha captains and soldiers who lost their lives in the battle. It was said that there was hardly any family in Maharashtra which had not to mourn the loss of a member. Several houses lost their heads. An entire generation was washed off at one stroke. However, about 25,000 Marathas were escaped and saved their lives. These included those 8,000 who had taken shelter in the camp of Shuja-ud-daula who generously offered them protection and escorted them to the territory of Suraj Mal, a Jat ruler of Bharatpur. He also provided shelter, food, clothes and medical aid to countless Maratha refugees¹¹⁸. Ahmad Shah Abdali appointed Zaina Khan as Faujdar of Sarhind which included Ambala, Jind, Kurukshetra and Karnal districts¹¹⁹.

Various causes are attributed to the Maratha defeat at the battle of Panipat. Their military system was suffering from the chronic disease of feudal organization. Lack of food supply, too large and heavy artillery, tactical mistakes, inadequate defence and poor diplomacy were some other important causes. Whatever the cause may be of their defeat, the Marathas fought gallantly. They were the only power in India that faced the Durrani attack, while others either sided the enemy or kept aloof. It is also pointed out that the Marathas recovered from these losses soon. In 1769, the Marathas again crossed the Narbada River under Visaji Kishan accompanied by Holker and Sindhia and reached Delhi in 1771. Hence, Marathas resuscitated their political and military reputation which was tarnished at Panipat. The set-back at Panipat, therefore, was ephemeral and by no means the Panipat debacle means *acetum est de republica* to them¹²⁰.

The third battle of Panipat was not a decisive battle as it left the field for the new masters i.e. the Jats, the Sikhs, the Rohillas, the Marathas and the

Europeans who were engaged into mutual conflicts in those days. Ahmad Shah Abdali after having looted Delhi for two and half months left India on 20 March 1761. He appointed Najib-ud-daula as *de-facto* ruler of Delhi, who kept in his possession the entire Panipat region¹²¹.

With the eclipse of the Maratha power in the battle of Panipat in 1761, the region became an easy prey to the rapacity of the Sikh *Misldars*. On 14 January 1764, the Sikh killed Zaina Khan; Abdali's Governor of Sarhind and took possession of the whole region including Panipat. The Sikh *Misaldars* seized various parts of Punjab and Haryana. Raja Gajpat Singh seized Jind, Safidon, Panipat, Karnal and Rohtak. In 1772 he was confirmed as a tributary of the Delhi Emperor¹²².

Najib-ud-daula was, however, alarmed by the activities of Sikhs and sent Maghraj as his emissary to Abdali. Abdali advanced towards Lahore in December 1764 but Sikhs suddenly rushed back to Punjab, and continued to disturb Abdali's troops till March 1765. In 1766, they attacked the *Parganas* of Panipat and Sonapat and succeeded in reaching upto the outskirts of Delhi. They returned back with immense booty. In December 1767, they under the leadership of Jassa Singh again captured north Haryana including Panipat and Karnal. The Sikhs could become the king makers in Delhi Durbar, but they lost the opportunity due to their own differences. In January 1770 the Sikhs again raided in the *Paragans* of Panipat and Karnal and plundered the whole region up to Delhi. Najib-ud-daula did a last effort to subdue them, but failed. His death on 31 October 1770 terminated the Afghan rule over the region¹²³.

After the death of Najib-ud-daula, Zabita Khan succeeded him. The Sikhs now carried several plundering raids into the Panipat region. As a result, complete anarchy prevailed in the whole tract which included the towns of Sonapat, Panipat and Karnal. It became a no man's land between the Sikh and the Maratha powers, coveted by both but protected by neither. In fact, the region became a victim of every freebooter who happened to come this way¹²⁴.

In 1772, Shah Alam, a puppet Emperor was brought from Allahabad to Delhi by Mahadaji Sindhia (1727-1794). The Marathas now attacked Pathargarh and snatched it from Zabita Khan. But there was dispute on the division of the estate. They offered only a part of it to the Emperor. Besides, the Marathas also demanded the *Parganas* of Panipat, Saharanpur and Meerut. The Emperor offered them only the territories of Anupshahar and Karnal. This created a rift between Mahadji Sindhia and the Emperor. On the contrary, Mirza Najaf Khan, one of the Rohilla chiefs, had won the confidence of Shah Alam¹²⁵.

In April-May 1772, Mughal Ali Khan, the Governor-designate of Sarhind was attacked near Kunjapura by the Sikh raiders Sahib Singh, Dyal

Singh, Dana Singh and Laja Singh. A severe fighting took place and continued the whole day in which about 500 men were killed on both sides. This alarmed the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam and the Maratha chief Jankoji. Jankoji immediately moved towards Panipat. However, reached Pehowa and after having a bath in the sacred tank there, returned to the capital. Perhaps his mission was to collect further information about the Sikh raiders. Meanwhile, Rahim Dad Khan was assigned the region by the Emperor Shah Alam who authorized to possess himself of whatever territory he could wrest from the Sikhs, in particular from Gajpat Singh the ruler of Jind. Khan took charge of his post in July 1774 with 2000 soldiers some of whom were Europeans. He captured Gharaunda from the Sikhs who now assembled at Karnal. He, however, found his position weak and resigned his job¹²⁶.

The Sikh attacks continued for many years to come and the Mughal Emperor found it difficult to combat. He deputed Abdul Ahmad Khan to suppress the Sikh revolt. Accompanied by Prince Jakan Shah Farkhuda Bakht, Khan left Delhi for Patiala in June 1779 and marched through Panipat and Karnal with a army of 20000 troops. On the way, many Sikh chiefs were subdued and asked to pay the annual tributes. On 13 September 1779, Amar Singh of Patiala also sent his Diwan Nanun Mal with a tribute of five lakh rupees on the condition that imperial army would leave Karnal. Khan did not except his condition and marched towards the territory of Patiala. A battle was fought in October 1779 in which Khan got success. Meanwhile, Amar Singh got secret assistance from other Sikh chiefs and compelled Khan to return back. It is said that Amar Singh followed him up to Panipat. Mirza Najaf Khan now sent Mirza Shafi Khan against the Sikhs in the Sonapat-Panipat region, who wrested the territory from them¹²⁷.

However, with the death of Najaf Khan on 6 April 1782, a period of uncertainty, anarchy and confusion again prevailed. The Mughal Emperor formally accepted the sovereignty of the Sikhs over the region situated at the west of the Yamuna and even accepted their claims in the Upper Ganga Doab¹²⁸. The peace, however, lived short. In 1782, Emperor Shah Alam was again forced by the circumstances to seek the protection of Mahadaji Sindhia and appointed him as his Wazir and the Commander-in-Chief. Sindhia dominated the politics of north India for a decade to come. The presence of the Sikhs in the Ganga Doab alarmed him. He won over Begam Samru of Sardhana, a woman of masculine intrepidity and correct judgment, added some *Parganas* to her *Jagir*, in the west of the Yamuna in order to keep a check upon the Sikhs. Sindhia also appointed Ambaji Ingle as *Faujdar* of Sonapat and asked him to supervise the administration of the territory. Ambaji moved towards Panipat to subdue the Sikh freebooters¹²⁹.

At Bakhtawar village (13 miles north of Delhi), a group of nine Sikh chiefs of the Panipat-Sonepat territory met him on 27 March 1785. He concluded a treaty on 10 May 1785 with them in which the Marathas accepted the political supremacy of the Sikhs in the Punjab while the latter promised to refrain from raiding the adjoining territories of Delhi. But the treaty remained short lived¹³⁰. In 1786, the Sikhs again commenced their plundering raids. Now Sindhia dispatched his commanders to overawe the Sikhs into submission. He soon received submissions from the Sikh chiefs of Thanesar and Kaithal and also received rupees five lakhs from Dewan Nanun Mal of Patiala. In 1787, Ambaji Ingle, under orders from Mahadaji, led an expedition into the Sikh territories with an object to receive tributes from the remaining Sikh chiefs. After taking action against some Sikhs, he appointed Bakshi Shyam Rao as his deputy at Karnal and returned back to Delhi. Shyam Rao, not being able to maintain his position at Karnal, handed over the area to Bhag Singh of Jind. He proceeded to Delhi ceding Panipat to Begum Samru on the way¹³¹.

The sudden rise of Ghulam Qadir, grandson of Najib-ud-daula and son of Zabita Khan, had proved that the anti-Maratha elements were still powerful in north India. He reached Delhi on 24 August 1787 and deposed and blinded the old Emperor, plundered the Imperial Palace and placed Mirza Bedar Bakht, son of Ahmad Shah II on the throne. The old Emperor sent message to Mahadaji Sindhia requesting for his earliest arrival and help. Sindhia rushed back to Delhi. Ghulam Qadir was put to sword by the Marathas on 3 March 1789. On this success, Shah Alam called Sindhia as 'his dear son'¹³².

At that time the northern Haryana was again re-captured by the Sikh chiefs. In 1789, Ambaji Ingle marched towards Panipat region to beat the Sikh raiders. He concluded a treaty with the Sikhs with the help of Baghel Singh. In 1794, he divided Haryana region into four districts Delhi, Panipat, Hissar and Mewat. The Panipat district was constituted of the present districts of Karnal, Sonepat, Ambala and Kurukshetra¹³³.

After Mahadji Sindhia's death on 12 February 1794 Gopal Bhau appointed Devji Gaula and Bapu Malhar at Panipat and Apa Khande Rao at Delhi. In November 1794 Daulat Rao Sindhia appointed Lakhwa Dada as his Viceroy of the North India in place of Gopal Bhau. Lakhwa Dada appointed his deputy Nana Rao at Karnal and allowed him to collect the revenue from the Cis-Sutlej region. The Sikhs, however, declared themselves independent of the Mughal Empire and refused to pay any tribute to him or acknowledge his authority. Thus as regents of the Mughal empire, the Marathas continued their efforts to suppress the Sikhs chiefs of the Cis-Sutlej region¹³⁴.

In 1795, George Thomas, an Irish adventurer also appeared on the political scenario of the region. The Maratha General Apa Khande Rao had firstly appointed him as the in-charge of *Paragans* of Sonapat, Panipat and Karnal with 2000 infantry, 200 cavalry and 16 pieces of field artillery. Finding that Thomas would be a helpful hand, Bapuji Malhar, Governor of Saharanpur, took him into his service in 1797. When Sikhs intervened into the affairs of the Saharanpur, Thomas marched to Karnal in 1798 where a body of Sikhs had gathered against the Marathas. Here four fights were held between the both. Thomas's artillery proved superior to the tactics of the Sikhs. He lost 500 men whereas the Sikh nearly twice of this. An agreement was then concluded and in accordance with its terms the Sikhs evacuated the region¹³⁵.

After some time, differences arose between George Thomas and his master Bapuji Malhar who dismissed him from his service. Thereafter, he became a freebooter. He soon became ambitious and thought of carving out an independent principality in the region. He soon succeeded in establishing a state at Hansi. This state was situated in the west of the Rewari-Delhi-Panipat districts and the south of Patiala¹³⁶.

In 1801, George Thomas intervened into the region of Karnal and Panipat. The Sikhs requested the Marathas for help against him. Daulat Rao Sindhia who was alarmed by Thomas's progress, agreed to do so on the Sikhs' promise to become his subsidiaries and pay him five lakhs of rupees. Sindhia sent General Perron against him. In a battle Thomas lost all of his conquests. He returned to British territory and soon after died on his way to Bengal at Berhampur on 22 August 1802¹³⁷.

MODERN PERIOD

The Panipat region remained under control of the Marathas till 1803. On 11 September 1803, an Anglo-Maratha war was fought for occupying the territory. General Lake overthrew the Marathas out of the region. He also subdued the Sikhs, but made them friends. Lal Singh of Kaithal, Bhag Singh of Jind and later Bhanga Singh of Thanesar helped the British¹³⁸. The battle of Laswari was fought on 1 November 1803; the Maratha power was vanished from Northern India. On 30 December 1803, Daulat Rao Sindhia ceded all his "forts, territories, rights and interests in the countries north of Jamuna" to the British East India Company through the Treaty of Surjijanjan Gaon¹³⁹. Hence, the treaty of Surjijanjan Gaon marked a turning point in the history as it started the British colonial hegemony in the region.

The British soon established themselves in Delhi territory including most of the territories of present Haryana including Panipat region. They kept their direct control over these territories. Major part of these territories, which

was called 'Assigned Territory', was placed under the administration of a Resident and the rest was given to different chieftains. Though the British respected the Mughal Emperor of Delhi and did not dispossess him. He was, however, now only a shadow ruler of the land. His possessions were further reduced by appropriation of all portions of the territories situated on the right bank of the river Yamuna, in lieu of which the British provided ₹90,000 per annum for maintenance of the royal family¹⁴⁰. However, the people who inhabited in the territory offered resistance at many an occasion to the British rule. Meos, Gujjars and Ahirs of Gurgaon; Jats and Ranghars of Rohtak; Bhattis, Ranghars, Panchhadas, Bishnois and Jats of Hisar and Sikhs of Karnal, all were strongly opposed to the new colonial regime. They often challenged the authority of the British in as much as the land revenue had to be collected with the help of army¹⁴¹.

Hence, the Panipat region had witnessed various political disturbances in the 18th century. These were evidenced with the proverbs prevailed in the region like "*Singhshahi Ka Ram Raula*" or "*Bhaugardi*" (the "Sikh hurly-burly" or the "Maratha anarchy"). The Mughal authority had lost its total grip over the region. The Sikhs, however, never succeeded in establishing their grasp over the region and held only some feudatories. The East India Company at that time being not in favour of acquiring territory west of the Yamuna distributed the region among petty chiefs. The sovereignty of the Rajas of Jind, Kaithal, Ladwa, Thanesar and Shyamgarh and the Nawab of Kunjpura was confirmed. The British maintained these states as buffer states of their Empire¹⁴².

In the meantime, Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Sukkarchakkia Sikh Missal had established Lahore State in 1799. The British policy of maintaining buffer states was endangered by the encroachments of Ranjit Singh in south of Sutlej. He made three attacks during 1806-1808 in this region. The British colonial masters were apprehended by the advancement of the Lahore ruler towards the British frontier. Hence, an appeal from the petty Sikh chiefs of the region for their protection against Ranjit Singh was gladly entertained. Soon, the British troops moved towards Ludhiana in order to safeguard the interests of their feudatories. Ranjit Singh decided to avoid conflict with the British. Accordingly, under the treaty of Amritsar, signed on 25 April 1809, the Maharaja accepted Sutlej as the eastern boundary of his kingdom¹⁴³. The British hegemony now became stronger in the region. In 1819, Panipat was included in North Division of the British colonial empire. In November 1834, the Agra Presidency, which was later called North-Western Provinces since 1836, was created and Haryana region had become one of its six divisions namely the Delhi Division. The division included district of Panipat also¹⁴⁴.

In the first Anglo-Sikh war (1845), the local Sikh chiefs were asked to supply men, money and ammunition, who helped the British against the trans-Sutlej Sikhs. Perhaps this was the first occasion that these states had to fulfil their obligations contracted under the treaties made in 1809. But some Sikh chiefs showed no eagerness. Consequently, the British deprived such chiefs of the sovereign authority. Some of the chiefs were removed and their lands were confiscated¹⁴⁵. In 1849, all chiefs of the region were deprived of their civil, criminal and fiscal jurisdictions and were considered as no more than ordinary subjects of the British rule having possession of certain exceptional privileges. The chiefs of Kunjpura, Thanesar and Shamgarh were treated in this manner. The revenue was still to be collected by them but was to be assessed by the British officers and according to the British rules. The final step was taken in 1852 when the revenue settlement maintained for British villages was extended to the villages of the chiefs. Thereafter, the chiefs were reduced to the position of *Jagirdars*, who retained a right to the revenue assigned to them in perpetuity. In this way the British extended their direct control over Cis-Sutlej territories which included the Panipat region¹⁴⁶.

The dispossession of the chiefs and suppression and exploitation of the people caused resentment in the region against the colonial rule. The resentment soon appeared in the form of a great revolt in 1857. A number of factors contributed to the uprising in the region. Land revenue rates were very high. Interference in the old institutions like Panchayats too caused widespread discontentment. The peasants were convinced that excessive irrigation caused impotence among men and infertility among women in the canal villages. Jats of dry areas refused to give their daughters to the men of Panipat and other heavily irrigated areas. Malaria became a serious health-hazard of Karnal and Panipat region. Attack on *Dharma* again made the people the enemy of the British. The Christian missionaries had started their campaign of conversion in the region too. For example, Ram Chander, a Kayastha teacher of Panipat posted in Delhi College, embraced Christianity on 5 May 1852. The news perturbed hundreds of Hindus and Muslims who condemned this action and also criticized the British Government¹⁴⁷.

The news of the outbreak of the Uprising at Meerut and Delhi was greeted with joy in every corner of the Haryana region. The districts of Gurgaon, Rohtak, Hissar, Ambala, Thanesar and Panipat came under the influence of the rebels in no time. The Panipat and Karnal *tehsils* comprised the then Panipat district. Mr. McWhister, the magistrate of Panipat, who was then at Delhi, was killed there. Mr. Richards, the Deputy Collector, immediately took over the charge. Though every other European fled and the fugitives from Delhi warned him, he bravely stayed at his position and kept more or less order in the district. He was active in collecting supplies for the

troops passing through the Grant Trunk road and for the army besieging Delhi, and succeeded in collecting more than seven lakhs of revenue which he sent to the army. For these services he was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the 1st Class rank¹⁴⁸. In fact, the district of Panipat on account of its location remained under the control of the British. It was a frequent sight for the civil population to see British forces marching to and from Delhi and the Punjab. Besides, all the important towns of the district were heavily guarded by the forces of the Patiala and Jind chiefs, who, to protect their own interests, were aligned to the British¹⁴⁹. For instance, the Raja of Jind reached Karnal on the 18th May and prevented the local opposition from gathering strength. He then marched down the Grand Trunk road in advance of the British columns. After recovering Panipat and Samalkha from the rebels, he kept the road open for the British forces between Karnal and Delhi.

In the city of Panipat, people fought under the leadership of the Imam of the Shrine of Bu Ali Shah Kalandhar but they were defeated and the Imam was arrested and hanged. Many other people were also hanged¹⁵⁰. However, the civil population rose in almost every big village of the district. Consequently, the civil administration was thrown out of gear and even many *Zamindars* and village officials were in no mood to help the British. In Panipat, the *Bangar* comprising 16 largest Jat villages in the Naultha *Zail* refused to pay their revenue and joined the rebels and went to Delhi. They returned after 22 days and threatened to attack the collector's camp¹⁵¹. Another 19 large villages, mostly in the Bhalsi and Korana *Zails* rose in opposition, burnt some Government buildings, committed various robberies and murders and refused to pay revenue. The Gujjars of the district also plundered the British properties etc. All these villages were suppressed¹⁵².

Some of the large villages of the district caused much anxiety, e.g. Balla (Bullah) and Jalmana; where the inhabitants, Muslim Rajputs, refused to pay the land revenue. The villagers of Balla resisted to a regiment of cavalry under Major Hughes and killed a native officer and some soldiers, but accordingly received severe punishment at the hands of the loyal chief, Ahmad Ali of Karnal¹⁵³. In Jalmana also the Rajputs, armed with intention of getting the prisoners of the Thanesar jail released made an unsuccessful effort of revolt. Nardak region showed extreme reluctance to give in and refused to pay their revenue. Captain McNeil marched against the region. He firstly reached Balla. The Balla people redeemed their fault to some extent by giving material assistance in coercing their neighbouring village Munak. This skirmish had a very good effect upon the countryside; and when Captain McNeile marched upon Jalmana, it submitted at once. Hence, the rebels of the region were subdued. The rebels had to pay heavily for their courage. The British became merciless towards them after the uprising was suppressed. All the rebel

villages, besides being fined heavily, were punished in various other ways. For helping the British, the Raja of Jind was later on conferred with the title of *Daulat-e-Englishia*, i.e., an asset of the British Empire¹⁵⁴. Thus, the loyalists were rewarded and the rebels were punished.

The events of 1857 brought the East India Company's rule to an end. India was henceforth to be governed directly by Britain and in the name of Her Majesty. The seat of the Government remained at Calcutta and Delhi was relegated to a secondary position¹⁵⁵. Along with other districts of the Haryana region, the newly formed Karnal district (which included former Panipat district) was tagged with the Punjab in February 1858 and detached from North-Western Province. As a measure of punishment, the district was not considered for any of the development programs¹⁵⁶.

In the second half of 19th century, 'new winds' of socio-political awakening flourished in Haryana. In the Panipat region, Wahabi Movement was the first which initiated such awakening among the people. This movement was started by Syed Ahmad of Rai Bareilly (1786-1831) in 1820's. It aimed at liberating India from the clutches of infidels. Subsequently, it assumed anti-British character. Some of its important centres in Haryana were Thanesar, Ambala, Pehowa and Panipat. Muhammad Qasim of Panipat was one of its notable leaders. He was one of the closest associate of Syed Ahmad. He went to Sithana, the headquarters of the movement in North West Frontier Province and worked with the tribal chief Syed Akbar Shah. He also wrote inspiring letters to Maulvis Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali, the leaders of the Patna centre. In 1863-64, the network of the organization was exposed by Ghuzzan Khan, a Pathan Police Sergeant at *Chowki* Panipat. As a result, some of the leaders of this movement were arrested and punished with sentences of imprisonment. After this the movement virtually 'met its doom'¹⁵⁷.

The introduction of English education opened the doors to modern ideas and influence. This change affected the whole country in varying degrees and the Karnal district was no exception, though its pace was slow here. The Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharma Sabha in Panipat were established during 1890's and played important role in the socio-political awakening. Like in other parts of Haryana, Arya Samaj was more popular in the region in comparison to Sanatan Dharma Sabha. In sum, both of these movements played a big role in reformation of Hindu society in the region¹⁵⁸.

The World War-I broke out in 1914. The Karnal district contributed its share in the supply of manpower. It also contributed substantially to the Imperial Indian Relief Fund, Comforts Funds and the War Loans. After World War-I, people had hoped that the defeat of Germany would usher in an era of relief and peace for them. This hope, however, did not come true. The

prevailing abnormal conditions became aggravated, particularly in relation to high prices. There was widespread famine in the country owing to the failure of the monsoon in 1918, and the prevalence of influenza and epidemics had resulted in a very heavy mortality¹⁵⁹. In such state of affairs, the ordinary people naturally became discontented with their lot.

In Punjab, the Government was criticized by the educated and politically-minded classes. The passing of Rowlett Acts aggravated the situation. Soon political demonstrations were started. Mahatma Gandhi also supported the agitation and advised the people to do passive resistance against these obnoxious Acts. In response to his call, partial *hartal* was observed in many districts of Punjab including Panipat on 30th March 1919. A meeting was held in the town. An Urdu handwritten pamphlet appealing for passive resistance was noticed by the people in the *bazaar* at Karnal. To observe *hartal* on the 6th April, mass meetings were held at Karnal on 4th and 5th April. The *hartal* was observed successfully at Karnal but it failed at Panipat. However, on 9th April, *Ram Naumi* was celebrated at Panipat and in *Rath Yatra*, Hindus and Muslims did organized demonstrations in honour of Mahatma Gandhi. On the 11th, a complete *hartal* was again observed at Panipat against the arrest of Gandhi at Palwal. At Panipat, a 'contribution' was levied by the people on a shopkeeper who had not observed *hartal* on the 11th April¹⁶⁰.

The massacre of Jallianwala Bagh became the turning point of the national movement all over the country. There were demonstrations throughout the Karnal district against this horrible holocaust of 13 April 1919. At Panipat people marched into a procession followed by a public meeting. On 18th April, it was noticed that 'considerable excitement' prevailed at Panipat owing to influence of some Delhi freedom fighters¹⁶¹.

In 1920, Gandhiji, in association with the Khilafat leaders, launched a non-violent non-cooperation campaign throughout India against the colonial rule. Henceforth, the course of events in the district was in line with what happened nationwide. The Congress movement was started in the district that year and Congress Committees were formed at various places. The Khilafat movement was also started and Khilafat Day was observed at Panipat on 10th March 1920, where non-cooperation resolutions were passed. A District Political Conference was organized at Karnal with Lala Lajpat Rai as its Chairman. For the propagation of his movement, Gandhi himself visited the region and attended Haryana Rural Conference at Bhiwani on 15 February 1921 where he appealed the people to follow the Constructive Program including abolition of untouchability¹⁶² and give liberal donations. In compliance with Gandhi's appeal for funds, Lajpat Rai toured the Panipat district also to propagate the constructive programme and collect funds. The

people responded enthusiastically and a huge sum was collected. To suppress the movement, the Government arrested many of the leaders and people of Panipat¹⁶³.

After the termination of non-cooperation movement on 12 February 1922, the Congress party became weak in Haryana. The frustration of the people appeared in other ways. Soon Hindu-Muslim conflicts started. In August 1923 a riot occurred at Panipat. The cause of the disturbances was Muslims' objection to 'Aarti' (worship) being performed in Hindu temples as well as Hindus' objection to 'Azan' being performed in the mosques. Rumours of the Muslim's intention of sacrificing cows on a large scale on the *Bakr-Id* festival further increased the tension. The Mahabir Dal and the Ali Ghol were formed by communalists. In August 1925, the troubles again rose in Panipat. There was some attack on Muslims elsewhere where they were in minority; the Muslims being in majority at Panipat took the revenge against Hindus of the city. The period from 1923 to 1928 witnessed at least 14 riots in Haryana, of which Panipat had the highest number of 4 riots¹⁶⁴.

Communal disturbances caused a temporary blow to the freedom movement from 1923 to 1928 but the arrival of Simon Commission changed the scenario. The famous Delhi leader Dr. Ansari was elected as the President of the Congress and under his able guidance the Commission was boycotted with a great success in the whole of the country. There happened, however, some tragic events such as *Lathi-charge* on Lala Lajpat Rai at Lahore, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant at Lucknow. Lajpat Rai's injuries caused by the *Lathi* blows took his life. This caused tension in the whole province. The boycott movement continued. However, the All-Party Conference, which met at Delhi in March 1928 to offer a united protest to the Commission, did not achieve any result. The Simon Commission, however, helped to increase the political resentment in Haryana including Panipat¹⁶⁵.

In 1930, the Indian National Congress decided to achieve complete independence of India. It authorized the All India Congress Committee to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement on 6 April 1930. Accordingly, the work of reorganizing Congress Committees and enrolment of the members was taken in hand. In Karnal district, Congress Committees were formed in all *tehsil* centres including Panipat. *Satyagraha Sabhas* were organized and volunteers were enrolled to go jails after violating the salt law. At Rohtak, salt law was breached on 10 April and at Panipat, the next day¹⁶⁶. Many villages in the district showed signs of political unrest. On his visits to Salwan, the Commissioner of Ambala Division was greeted with black flags. A police party was posted there as a measure of punishment. Many arrests were made throughout the district. The Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended in 1931 after the conclusion of Gandhi-Irwin Pact. On its renewal in 1932, the

Civil Disobedience work was again organized by the Congress volunteers throughout the district. On request, three parties consisting four volunteers each from villages Gagsina and Salwan proceeded to Lahore and courted arrests there. Total 45 persons from Karnal district (including those of Panipat, Salwan and Urlana Kalan) were arrested¹⁶⁷. The movement continued unabated until May 1934.

After the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress decided to participate in the elections of 1937 to the legislatures and local bodies. Eminent leaders of Congress visited the Haryana region. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu addressed election meetings at various places including Panipat on 14 January 1937. Political activities were kept alive on the basis of local and national issues after the elections of 1937. Sir Chhotu Ram along with Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, who were prominent leaders of the Unionist Party of Punjab¹⁶⁸, toured Panipat and addressed meetings of peasants. Protests were organized against *Begaar* (forced labour) and the high-handedness of local officers.

In 1942, the leading persons of the district unanimously approved the 'Quit India Resolution' adopted by the Congress leadership. Soon all top leaders including Mahatma Gandhi were arrested and the Congress Committees were declared unlawful by the British Government. This led to a strong reaction among the local people. Karnal district took the lead in Haryana where people protested against the arrest of national leaders. There were explosions in the Karnal Post Office which were aimed at setting fire to the *Dak* (posts). At several places, Government buildings were damaged. When many of the political workers in the urban areas had been arrested or had gone underground, workers from rural areas came forward. For instance, a batch of workers came from Gagsina village to hoist the national flag on the *tehsil* building at Karnal. A severe *lathi-charge* was made on them by the police, which resulted in serious injuries to several persons. The Government took stern action and curbed the movement by putting political leaders including Dr. Krishna of Panipat behind the bars¹⁶⁹.

During the World War-II the youth of the area serving in the British Indian army in Southeast Asia joined the Indian National Army (INA) in large numbers and fought with valour under the leadership of Subhash Chander Bose. Total 119 soldiers of Karnal district joined the INA. Subsequent events like the trial of INA personnel, who were regarded as national heroes, caused a great stir in the public mind in the district, like elsewhere¹⁷⁰.

Ultimately, freedom came to India after a hard struggle of 90 years, i.e. from May 1857 to August 1947, and the Independence Day (15 August 1947) was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the region. With the partition

of the country, however, influx of a large number of displaced people from West Punjab created gigantic problem of settlement and social re-adjustment. Total 3,25,173 displaced people were accommodated in the Karnal district¹⁷¹, of them about 59,435 were settled in Panipat (19,614 in rural areas and 39,821 in urban areas). The Panipat district remained a part of Punjab till the State of Haryana was created on 1 November 1966 by the Parliament of India through the Punjab Reorganization Act of 18 September 1966¹⁷². In the new State, Panipat continued to be a part of Karnal district till 1989. The Panipat district was formed by including the areas of Panipat and Assandh *tehsils* of the then Karnal district on 1 November 1989. The district remained abolished from 24 July 1991 to 31 December 1991 and was revived again on 1 January 1992¹⁷³.

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- ³⁰ The name of the village where the battle was fought was not Narain or Naraina but Tarain, called Taraori in *History of Medieval India* by Ishwari Prasad, Allahabad, 1966, p.133, fn. 6. The location of this site is the subject of some controversy. Minhaj calls it Tarain. Nizamuddin and Firishta follow Minhaj, but some Punjab historians call it Narain. It happened probably due to an inadvertent orthographical mistake in which the two dots of 't' have been reduced into one. Firishta, however, makes a further statement and says that it was also known as Taraori.
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- ⁵³ Al-Badaoni in *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh* (tr. by Ranking, Vol.I, p. 440) puts this number at 15,000 including cavalry and infantry. Babur's daughter, Gulbadan Begum in *The History of Humayun* (tr. by A.S.Beveridge, p.44) kept this number at 12,000 but added that out of it only 6000 to 7000 were serviceable. Ahmad Yadgar, however, in *Tarikh-e-Shahi* (tr. by A.A.Rizvi, p.452) puts fighting force of the Lodis at 50,000 and that of Babur 24,000.
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- ⁵⁶ Babur planned the garden on the pattern customary in Kabul. He had a wife namely Kabuli Begham and E. Colebrook says the name of the garden may possibly be derived from her name. See David Ross, *Haryana Sketches: Historical and Descriptive*, Monograph No. 13, JHS, 1974, K.U.Kurkshetra, pp.10-11.

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- ¹⁰² Kashiraj wrote *Ahwal-e-Jung-e-Bhau-va-Ahmad Shah Durrani*. James Browne translated it into English in 1791 which was published in *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. III, 1799. It was again printed and edited by H.G. Rawlinson for the University of Bombay in 1926. Rawlinson named it as "An Account of the Last Battle of Panipat." Kashiraj was in service of Shuja-ud-daula and witnessed the Panipat battle. The account is very useful. In *Indian Historical Quarterly* of June 1934 J. N. Sarkar published translation of a big part of this valuable work. Muhammad Jafar Shamlu wrote *Manzil-ul-*

- Fatuh*. The author was with Abdali when the latter invaded India. The work gives us a glimpse of Abdali's expedition from Qandhar to Delhi via Ghazni, Kabul, Peshawar and Lahore and also the Durrani- Maratha conflict. See J.N.Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1934 (2nd ed., 1971), pp. 226-228.
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- ¹²⁰ Hari Ram Gupta, *op.cit.*, p.262. The view here expressed in respect of the effects of the Panipat disaster on the vicissitudes of the Maratha fortunes is in the line with that of G.S. Sardesai, the renowned Marathas historian who bases his thesis on a close study of contemporary records. According to him: "...The disaster of Panipat was indeed like a natural visitation destroying life, but leading to no decisive political consequences. To maintain that the disaster at Panipat put an end to the dreams of the supremacy cherished by the Marathas, is to misunderstand the situation as recorded in the contemporary documents".(*New History of the Marathas: Expansion of the Maratha Power, 1707-72*, Vol. II, Bombay,1948, p. 454). However J.N.Sarkar dismisses this view by saying, "A dispassionate survey of Indian history will show how unfounded this chauvinistic claim is." (*Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 260)
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