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## THE MARATHA EMPIRE

- On 6 June 1674, Shivaji was crowned at Raigarh. He assumed the title of “Chhatrapati” and also assumed the title of ‘Haindava Dharmodharak’ (Protector of the Hindu faith).
- The English ambassador who had attended the coronation of Shivaji with presents from East India Company at Raigarh was Oxendon.
- The Maratha Empire was founded by Shivaji during the reign of Aurangzeb.
- The Marathas played a major role in the decline of Mughal power.
- Samarth Ramadas was the Guru of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
- **Treaty of Purandar** was signed between **Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Raja Jai Singh in 1665.**
- Most of the administrative reforms of Shivaji were based on the practices of the Deccan sultanates. The revenue system of Shivaji was based on that of Malik Ambar of Ahmednagar.
- Shivaji designated eight ministers as the Ashta Pradhan, each holding an important portfolio. Peshwa was the equivalent of a modern prime minister in the Maratha Empire.
- The Council of Ministers of Shivaji was known as **Ashta Pradhan.**
  - The Mukhya Pradhan or Peshwa - prime minister , general administration of the Empire
  - The Amatya or Majumdar - finance minister, managing accounts of the Empire
  - The Walkia-Nawis - Home Minister
  - Sumant or Dabir – Foreign Minister
  - Sachiv or Shuru Nawis- Head of Royal correspondence
  - Pandit Rao or Danadhyaksha or Sadar - Head of Religious Affairs
  - Nyayadhish - Chief justice
  - Sari Naubat or Senapathi - Commander-in-chief, Managing the forces and defense of the Empire
- The Peshwa or the prime minister was the foremost minister in the Ashta Pradhan. Balaji Viswanath was the first powerful Peshwa. And the office of Peshwa was made hereditary.
- After Balaji Viswanath, his son Baji Rao I was appointed Peshwa in 1720 by Shahu.
- Balaji Baji Rao succeeded as the Peshwa after the death of his father Baji Rao I. Known as Nana Sahib, he proved to be a good administrator and an expert in handling financial matters.
- Shivaji collected two taxes, **Chauth** and **Sardeshmukhi**, from the adjoining territories of his empire, the Mughal provinces and the territories of the Sultan of Bijapur. **Chauth** was  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the revenue of the district conquered by the Marthas. **Sardeshmukhi** was an additional **10%** of the revenue which Shivaji collected by virtue of his position as Sardeshmukh.
- The centre of the Maratha administration was the Peshwa Secretariat at Poona.
- The village was the basic unit of administration and was self-supportive. The Patel was the chief village officer and was responsible for remitting revenue collections to the centre. In towns and cities, the chief officer was the Kotwal.
- There were two kinds of cavalry in Maratha army system viz. Bargir and the Shiledar.
- The Kohinoor diamond and the valuable peacock throne were taken away by Nadir Shah.

- Balaji Vishwanath built naval bases at Konkan, Khanderi and Vijayadurg. Dockyard facilities were also developed.
- Nana Phadnavis was called the 'Chanakya of Maratha Politics'.
- Baji Rao II was the last Peshwa of Maratha empire.

## Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj 's Achievements

- In 1670, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj renewed the contest with the Mughals, sacking Surat a second time. During the next four years, he recovered a large number of his forts, including Purandar, from the Mughals and made deep inroads into Mughal territories, especially Berar and Khandesh.
- Mughal preoccupation with the Afghan uprising in the north-west gave an opportunity to Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Further, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj also renewed his contest with Bijapur, securing Panhala and Satara by means of bribes.
- In 1674, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj crowned himself formally at **Raigad**. He was by now, became the most powerful among the Maratha chiefs.
- The formal coronation had, therefore, a number of purposes, including –
  - It placed him on a much higher pedestal than any of the Maratha chiefs;
  - It strengthened his social position and hence he married into some of the leading old Maratha families;
  - Gaga Bhatt, the priest presiding over the function, supported Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and said that Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was a high class *Kshatriya*; and
  - As an independent ruler, now it became possible for Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to enter into treaties with the Deccani sultans on a footing of equality and not as a rebel.
- In 1676, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj undertook an expedition into the Bijapuri Karnataka. Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was given a grand welcome by the Qutb Shah at his capital and a formal agreement was made.
- Qutub Shah agreed to pay a subsidy of one lakh *huns* (five lakhs of rupees) annually to Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj along with a Maratha ambassador who was appointed at his court.
- Qutub Shah, further, supplied a contingent of troops and artillery to aid Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and also provided money for the expenses of his army.
- The treaty with Qutub Shah was beneficial to Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, as it enabled him to capture Jinji and Vellore from Bijapur officials and also to conquer much of the territories held by his half-brother, Ekoji.
- Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had assumed the title of "*Haindava-Dharmoddharak*" (Protector of the Hindu faith), but he plundered mercilessly the Hindu population of the respective region.
- As per the agreement, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had to share treasure (won in the war) with Qutub Shah, but when Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj returned back to home with treasure, he refused to share anything with the Qutub Shah. Hence, Qutub Shah resented with Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
- Karnataka expedition was the last expedition of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, as he died shortly after his return from the Karnataka expedition (1680).



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