

Shivaji Maharaj

February 20, 2021

In News: Shivaji's date of birth was 6 April 1627 but 19 February 1630 , Celebrated Shivaji Jayanti is observed on this day.

Biography

- Shivaji was born to Shahaji Bhonsle, a Maratha general who held the jagirs of Pune and Supe under the Bijapur Sultanate.
- Shivaji's mother was Jijabai, a pious woman whose religious qualities had a profound influence on him.
- Shahaji had also served the Ahmednagar and Deccan sultanates.
- Shivaji was given excellent training in military warfare and administration.
- Shivaji displayed his military zeal for the first time in 1645 when as a teenager, he successfully got control of the Torna Fort which was under Bijapur.
- He also acquired the Kondana Fort. Both these forts were under Adil Shah of Bijapur.
- He achieved great name when he defeated Afzal Khan, a veteran general of Adil Shah.
- In the Battle of Pratapgarh in 1659, Shivaji's forces vanquished the Bijapur Sultanate's army. From this victory, he acquired a large number of weapons and horses which greatly added to his growing Maratha army's strength.
- In the same year, another battle was fought with the Adilshahi camp at Kolhapur where Shivaji's outnumbered army defeated the enemy force. Shivaji displayed great military prowess during this battle. This victory now alarmed Aurangzeb.
- Shivaji raided Mughal territory near Ahmednagar and in Junnar. Aurangzeb's forces under Nasiri Khan did defeat

Shivaji at Ahmednagar in 1657 but the Mughal prince soon became engaged with his own battles with his brothers for the possession of the Mughal throne upon his father's illness.

- Shivaji defeated a large force of Shaista Khan (Aurangzeb's maternal uncle) and the Bijapur army in Pune. In 1664, the wealthy Mughal trading port of Surat was sacked by Shivaji.
- In June 1665, the Treaty of Purandar was signed between Shivaji and Raja Jai Singh I (representing Aurangzeb). Shivaji signed this agreement realising that a war with the Mughals would cost him men and money. As per this treaty, many forts were relinquished to the Mughals and it was agreed that Shivaji would meet Aurangzeb at Agra. Shivaji also agreed to send his son Sambhaji as well.
- At Agra in 1666, when Shivaji went to meet the Mughal emperor, the Maratha warrior felt he was insulted by Aurangzeb and stormed out of the court. He was arrested and kept prisoner. The clever escape of Shivaji and his son from imprisonment in disguise out of Agra is legendary today.
- After that there was peace between the Marathas and the Mughals until 1670. After that, the jagir of Berar which was granted to Sambhaji by the Mughals was taken back from him. Shivaji in response attacked and recovered many territories from the Mughals in a short span of four months.
- In October 1670, he also harassed the English forces at Bombay for their support of the Mughals.
- Through his military tactics, Shivaji now acquired a large part of the land in the Deccan and western India. He was crowned as the king of the Marathas on June 6, 1674, at Raigad. He took on the title of Chhatrapati, Shakakarta, Kshatriya Kulavantas and Haindava Dharma Dharak.
- The Maratha Kingdom founded by Shivaji was about 4.1% of the Indian subcontinent but it grew larger over time and

became the dominant Indian power in the early 18th century.

- Shivaji fell ill and died of ill-health on 3 April 1680 at Raigad.
- Shivaji laid the foundations of a great empire which played significant parts in modern Indian history. He established a strong army and a navy across the Konkan coast. His admiral Kanhoji Angre is called the 'Father of Indian Navy'. Shivaji was also considered a master of guerrilla warfare.

Administration

Under his reign, the Maratha administration was established where Chhatrapati was the supreme sovereign and a team of eight ministers were appointed to oversee the proper enforcement of various policies

These eight ministers were –

1. The Peshwa or Prime Minister, who was head of general administration and represented the king in his absence.
2. The Majumdar or the Auditor was responsible for maintain the financial health of the kingdom
3. The PanditRao or Chief Spiritual Head was responsible for overseeing the spiritual well-being of the kingdom, fixing dates for religious ceremonies and overseeing charitable programs undertaken by the king.
4. The Dabir or Foreign Secretary was entrusted with the responsibility of advising the king on matters of foreign policies.
5. The Senapati or Military General was in charge of overseeing every aspect of the military including organization, recruitment and training of soldiers. He also was the strategic advisor of the king in the time of a war.
6. The Nyayadhish or Chief Justice saw formulations of law and their subsequent enforcement, civil, judicial as

well as military.

7. The Mantri or Chronicler was responsible for keeping elaborate records of everything the king did in his daily life.
8. The Sachiv or Superintendant was in charge of royal correspondence.

Relationship with The English

- Initial days of his reign, Shivaji maintained cordial relationships with the English till they supported the Bijapuri Sultanate in a confrontation against him in the capture of Fort of Panhala in 1660.
- So in 1670, Shivaji moved against the English in Bombay for them not selling him war material. This conflict continued in 1671, when again the English refused their support in his attack of Danda-Rajpuri, and he looted the English factories in Rajapur.
- Numerous negotiations between the two parties to come to term failed and the English did not lend their support to his endeavors.