

UNIT-III

TOPIC-1

HARSAVARDHANA

Harshavardhana was one of the most important Indian emperors of the 7th Century. During the peak of his reign, Harshavardhana's empire extended from north India to the Narmada River in central India. His rule was renowned for peace, stability and prosperity, and attracted many artists and scholars from far and wide. Xuanzang, a famous Chinese traveler, heaped a lot of praise on Harshavardhana for his generosity and administrative skills. Ruling from 606 to 647 CE, Harshavardhana became the most successful emperor of the Pushyabhuti dynasty until he was defeated by a South Indian ruler Pulakeshin II. The defeat of Harshavardhana marked the end of the Pushyabhuti dynasty.

Ascension to the Throne

The Pushyabhuti dynasty, also known as the Vardhana dynasty, came into prominence after the decline of the Gupta Empire. Prabhakara Vardhana, the first king of the Pushyabhuti dynasty, was instrumental in consolidating the small republics and monarchical states that had sprung up in North India after the downfall of the Gupta dynasty. When Prabhakara Vardhana passed away in 605 CE, his eldest son Rajya Vardhana became the new ruler. Harshavardhana was Rajya Vardhana's brother and they also had a sister named Rajyashri. Rajyashri went on to marry the Maukhari King Grahavarman. Rajyashri's husband, King Grahavarman, was defeated by the Malwa King Devagupta and Rajyashri was imprisoned. King Devagupta was now ruling over the subjects of King Grahavarman. Also, Rajyashri was ill-treated during her stay in the prison. Unable to tolerate the treatment given to his sister, Rajya Vardhana marshalled his troops into the kingdom of Devagupta and managed to defeat him. Around the same time, a Gauda ruler Shashanka entered Rajya Vardhana's kingdom. Unfortunately, Rajya Vardhana failed to make out the motive behind Shashanka's entry into his kingdom. Shashanka had posed as Rajya Vardhana's friend, and had gained knowledge about his military affairs. But in reality, Shashanka was an ally of Rajya Vardhana's arch-rival. Rajya Vardhana never suspected Shashanka's intentions and he eventually paid the price for it as he was murdered by Shashanka. When Harshavardhana came to know about his brother's death, he waged a war against Shashanka and defeated him convincingly. He then ascended the throne and took over the leadership of the Vardhana dynasty at the age of 16.

Administration and the Empire

Harshavardhana ruled over the entire North India from 606 to 647 CE. It is said that Harshavardhana's empire reminded many of the great Gupta Empire as his administration was similar to that of the administration of the Gupta Empire. There was no slavery in his empire and people were free to lead their

life according to their wish. His empire also took good care of the poor by building rest houses that provided all the amenities required. In many texts, Harshavardhana has been described as a noble emperor who made sure all his subjects stayed happy. He did not impose heavy taxes on his people and the economy was somewhat self-sufficient. His capital Kannauj (in present day Uttar Pradesh) attracted many artists, poets, religious leaders and scholars who traveled from far and wide. He also maintained cordial relations with the Chinese. He even sent an Indian mission to China, establishing a diplomatic relationship between India and China. The famous Chinese monk and traveler Xuanzang spent eight years in his empire. He later recorded his experiences and even praised Harshavardhana for the way he went about ruling his empire.

During the course of his rule, Harshavardhana built a strong army. Historical records suggest that he had 100,000 strong cavalry, 50,000 infantry and 60,000 elephants during the peak of his reign. He was also a patron of literature and art. Thanks to the numerous endowments that were made to the Nalanda University, a mighty wall enclosing the edifices of the university was constructed during his rule. This wall saved the university from attack and invasions by the enemies and that ensured the prosperity of this great centre of learning. Harshavardhana's interest in the field of prose and poetry is well-documented. A famous Indian writer and poet named Banabhatta served as the 'Asthana Kavi' (primary poet of the kingdom) in the court of Harshavardhana. The emperor himself was a skilled writer as he had penned down three Sanskrit plays, namely 'Ratnavali', 'Priyadarsika' and 'Nagananda.'

During Harshavardhana's reign, there was paucity of coins in most parts of North India. This fact suggests that the economy was feudal in nature. People were more concerned about growing their own crops rather than creating a market for the crops grown.

Harshavardhana's kingdom was one of the earliest Indian kingdoms where we can see the practice of feudalism. This was similar to the feudal grants of Europe. Independent rulers, collectively known as 'Mahasamantas,' paid tribute to Harshavardhana and also helped him by supplying military reinforcements. This played an important role in the expansion of Harshavardhana's empire.

Being one of the largest Indian empires of the 7th Century CE, it covered the entire North and Northwestern India. In the east, his empire extended till Kamarupa and ran all the way down to the Narmada River. It is said that his empire was spread across the present day states of Orissa, Bengal, Punjab and the whole of Indo-Gangetic plain. Harshavardhana defeated and conquered many kingdoms during his reign. When he thought of extending his empire beyond the Narmada River, his advisors came up with a plan to conquer South India. He then charted out a plan to attack Pulakeshin II of the Chalukya dynasty. Pulakeshin II controlled a major part of South India. Hence, Harshavardhana's plan to fight Pulakeshin II suggests that he wanted to gain control over the whole of India. Unfortunately, Harshavardhana underestimated Pulakeshin II's military prowess and was defeated in the battle, which took place on the banks of Narmada.

Religion

According to historical sources, Harshavardhana's ancestors were sun worshippers, but Harshavardhana was a Shaivite. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva and his subjects described him as 'Parama-maheshvara' (supreme devotee of Lord Shiva). In fact, 'Nagananda,' a Sanskrit play which was written by him, was dedicated to Lord Shiva's consort Parvati. Though he was an ardent Shaivite, he was also tolerant towards all other religions and extended his support as well. He did not force his religious beliefs on his subjects and they were free to follow and practice the religion of their choice. Sometime later in his life, he became a patron of Buddhism. Records suggest that his sister Rajyashri had converted to Buddhism and that encouraged King Harshavardhana to support and even propagate the religion. He got several Buddhist stupas constructed. The stupas built by him on the banks of the Ganges stood at 100-feet high. He also banned animal slaughter and started building monasteries all over North India.

He built hospices and ordered his men to maintain them well. These hospices served as shelters to the poor and to the religious travelers across India. He also organized a religious assembly called 'Moksha.' It was organized once in every five years. Harshavardhana was also renowned for organizing a grand Buddhist convocation in 643 CE. This convocation was held at Kannauj and it was attended by hundreds of pilgrims and 20 kings who had come from far and wide. Chinese traveler Xuanzang penned down his experience of attending this massive convocation. Xuanzang also wrote about a 21-day religious festival which too, was held at Kannauj. This religious festival was centered on a life-sized statue of Buddha which was made out of pure gold. According to Xuanzang, Harsha, along with his subordinate kings, would perform daily rituals in front of the life-sized statue of the Buddha. It is still not clear if Harshavardhana converted to Buddhism. But Xuanzang has clearly mentioned in one of his writings that King Harshavardhana was not only favorable to Buddhist monks, but also treated scholars of other religious belief with equal respect. This suggests that he might not have converted to Buddhism.

After ruling over most parts of North India for more than 40 years, King Harshavardhana left for the holy abode in the year 647 CE. Since he did not have any heirs his empire collapsed and disintegrated rapidly into small states. The demise of King Harshavardhana marked the end of the mighty Vardhana dynasty.

UNIT-III

TOPIC-2

ARAB CONQUEST

Arab Invasion on Sind: Causes and Other Details

The Arabs had been the carriers of Indian trade to Europe for centuries. After conversion to Islam, they cast their covetous eyes on the fabulous wealth of India as well as they were eager to propagate their new religion in India. However, the opportunity to invade Sind came to the Arabians in the beginning of the eighth century. With the passage of time, the History of India, after the occupation of Sind had entered into its medieval phase. The widespread political instability in India after the death of Harshavardhana, the last independent Hindu King had inspired the foreign elements once again to attack and enter India. The Arabs were no exception to it. After the rise of Islam, the Arabs having successfully implanting it in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia had cast a covetous eye on Sind. In 712 A.D. they were successful in occupying Sind.

Causes:

Several factors were responsible for the Arab invasion on Sind.

They are as follows:

(i) Propagation of Islam:

Propagation of Islam was one of the key factors behind the Arab invasion of Sind. After the spread of Islam in Egypt and Syria, the Caliph Walid I of Damascus had permitted the Arabs to go ahead with their Indian mission. Further the followers of Islam were dead against idolatry practice of the Hindus of India. So they thought the spoliation of the idolaters would be a means of earning.

(ii) Fabulous Wealth of India:

India was known to the world for her fabulous wealth and splendor. So like other invaders of the past, it had tempted the Arabs to grab her wealth.

(iii) Political Condition of India:

The then Political condition of India was also a major factor behind the Arab invasion of Sind. There was mutual rivalry and wars among the kings of petty provinces of India. Dahir, the ruler of Sind was unpopular and not liked by many. The Arabs took full advantage of it.

(iv) The Immediate Cause:

The immediate cause of the Arab invasion of Sind was the looting of the eight Arab ships which carried the gifts and treasures sent by the king of Ceylon to the Caliph, at the port of Debal near Sind. Some Historians have opined that the ships were also carrying some beautiful women as well as valuable articles for the khalifa. This unlawful act of piracy was strongly protested by Hajaj, the governor of Iraq. He demanded compensation from Dahir, the king of Sind. But Dahir refuted Hajaj's demands by saying that he had no control over pirates. This infuriated Hajaj who decided to send military expeditions to Sind. He also obtained permission from the Caliph in this regard. However, the first two expeditions sent by Hajaj against Sind were beaten back by Dahir. Enraged at the repeated failures, Hajaj sent his nephew and Son-in-law Imaduddin Muhammad- bin-Qasim at the head of a huge army to Sind. Muhammad-bin- Qasim was an able and young commander-in-chief.

Invasion of Sind by Muhammad-bin-Qasim:

Muhammad-bin-Qasim was a young man of hardly seventeen years when he was entrusted with the work of invading Sind. He was very bold, courageous and ambitious. The story of his adventures, "Writes Stanley Lame-poole," is one of the romances of history. Reflecting of his rise to power, his achievements and his fall, Ishwari Prasad writes, "His blooming youth, his dash and heroism, his noble deportment throughout the expedition and his tragic fall have invested his career with the halo of martyrdom." However towards the end of 711 A.D. Muhammad-bin-Qasim at the head of a huge army consisting of three thousand infantry, six thousand cavalry and six thousand Iraqian camelmen appeared at the north western border near Makran.

Capture of Debal:

Muhammad-bin-Qasim led his army towards Debal, a famous seaport, where the Arab's ships were looted by some pirates. The port town Debal was well protected by strong fortifications, and it was not easy on the part of the Qasim's army to penetrate into it so easily. A nephew of Dahir was the governor of Debal. Though he had an army of very small size with him, he tried to resist Qasim. But it became futile, when a treacherous Brahmin deserted the fortress and gave Qasim all the information's regarding the secrets of its defence. He also came to know from the Brahman that the strength of the Sind army lay in the massive Hindu

temple inside the fort of Debal and as long as the red flag fluttered atop the temple, he could not defeat the Hindus. The temple was also garrisoned by 4000 Rajput's and 3000 Brahmins serving at the temple. However, after a fierce battle Qasim brought down the red flag and the Arabian army resorted to a massacre. Despite a bold fight, the Hindus of Debal were defeated by the Arabs. The nephew of Dahir who was the governor fled away. Debal was captured and a huge booty with a large number of women fell into the hands of the Arabs. The people were given the option of accepting Islam or death. Many thousands of Hindus including Brahmins were mercilessly killed on their refusal to embrace Islam. The massacre continued for three days. It was very unfortunate that Dahir who had prior information of the Arabian attack, did not care at all.

Fall of Nirun:

Flushed with success, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched towards Nirun, which was under the charge of Dahir's Son Jai Sindh. With the approach of the Arabs, Jai Sindh fled away after handing over the fort to a priest. Qasim captured it without a fight. It is said Nirun fell because of the treachery of some Buddhist citizens. Whatever may be the fact; Dahir had taken the matter lightly and did not attempt to check the further advances of the Arabs.

Fall of Sehwan:

After capturing Debal & Nirun, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched against Sehwan, a town which was under the charge of the cousin of Dahir named Bajhra. The town was mostly inhabited by the merchant class and the priests. Bajhra could not defend the town in the face of the Arabian attack and fled away with panic. After his flight, the people of Sehwan surrendered to Muhammad-bin-Qasim. Sehwan fell because of poor defence.

Fall of Sisam and Victory over the Jats:

Sisam also met the same fate as had happened to Sehwan. It was the capital of the Jats of Budhiya and was ruled by Kaka, a jat king. Kaka had given shelter to Bajhra after his flight from Sehwan. Muhammad-bin-Qasim defeated the Jats who in turn surrendered to the Arabs. But during the encounter, Bajhra and his followers were killed. When so much had happened, yet Dahir did not raise his little finger to check the invader. Muhammad-bin-Qasim then reached the river Mihran where he was detained for some months because most of his horses of his army died of scurvy and he had to wait for fresh re-inforcement from home. Dahir could have taken the full advantage of this opportunity to attack and destroy the Arabs. But he remained inactive. He also did not check the Arabs when they crossed the river Mihran. Probably, Dahir was confident to defeat his enemy in a single encounter and that's why he was waiting for it at Rawar on the bank of the Indus.

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The Battle of Rawar:

Dahir, the powerful king of Sind was waiting for the Arab invader with a huge army of 50,000 sword men, horsemen and elephantry at a place called Rawar. He was determined to finish the enemy once for all. He did not know that the Arab army led by Muhammad-bin-Qasim was also equally strong to face any Challenge. After waiting for some days, both the armies started fighting on 20th June, 712 A.D. It was a serious and severe battle. Dahir was a great warrior. He was fighting with a great spirit and was leading his army from the front. By riding on an elephant he was at the front and was attacking the opponent with great courage and valour. In the mean while an arrow attached with burning cotton struck Dahir's 'howdah' and set it flame. At this the elephant got frightened and rushed towards the river Indus. This made Dahir very much disturbed at the mid of the war. He became restless, inconsistent and inattentive. At this moment he was injured by an arrow and fell from his elephant. Although the elephant was brought to control, Dahir did not wait for it. He immediately rode a horse and resumed fighting. But as he was not seen on the back of his elephant, his soldiers became panicky and fled away from the field of battle. However, Dahir gave a heroic fight and laid down his life after two days of his bloody battle. His widow Queen Ranibai refused to surrender the fort of Rawar and fought the invader to the bitter end She performed jouhar along with some besieged ladies of the fort. Muhammad-bin-Qasim became victorious. Nevertheless he took about eight months to acquire control over Sind because his army had to face tough resistance by the local people of many other towns and palaces including Alor and Brahmanabad.

Occupation of Multan:

After conquering Sind, Muhammad-bin-Qasim marched towards Multan, a major city situated in the upper Indus basin. On the way he had to encounter tough resistance by the local people but over powered them. On reaching Multan he found the city strongly fortified and people in full revolt. But at Multan he was also fortunate to get the help of a traitor who gave him the information regarding the source of water supply to the city Muhammad-bin-Qasim cut-off the source. The people of Multan surrendered at last after fighting bravely against the Arabs. Thus the city fell into the hands of the invader in 713 A.D. The Arabs massacred and plundered the city. Women and children were made captives and a large quantity of gold was collected by the Arabs. He obtained so much gold that they named the city as the 'city of gold'. After completing his mission in Sind and Multan, Muhammad-bin-Qasim was planning to proceed more into the interior of India. In the

mean while there came a tragic end to his life. He was put to death by an order of Calipha, the religious head of the Islamic world.

Death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim:

The Death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim has been put to debate as there are two divergent views by different Historians. Historian Mir Massum in his "Tarik Sind" has described an interesting story about the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim. Muhammad-bin-Qasim during his campaign of Brahmanbad had captured the two virgin daughters of Dahir. They were Surya Devi and Parimal Devi. They were sent to the Calipha as gifts from Muhammad-bin-Qasim. These two girls were determined to take revenge on Muhammad-bin-Qasim. So when they reached Calipha, they told him that they had been used and dishonored by Muhammad-bin-Qasim before they were sent to him. This made the Calipha so much angry that he at once ordered that Muhammad-bin-Qasim should be put to death and his body, being sewn up in the raw hide of an ox, should be despatched to him. His order was immediately carried out. When Muhammad-bin-Qasim's coffin was opened before the calipha, the two girls were delighted at having avenged on the enemy and killer of their father. Their mission was completed and so they declared that Qasim was innocent. This made the Calipha furious. At his order, the two sisters were tied to the tails of horses and were dragged to death. But the other view regarding the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim has been ascribed to a political cause. Some modern historians believe that Muhammad had become a victim of the court intrigues of the Calipha. Calipha Walid died in 715 A.D. and was succeeded by his brother Sulaiman who had enmity with Hajaj, the governor of Iraq and father-in-law of Muhammad-bin-Qasim. He could not tolerate the importance of Hajaj as a result of Muhammad's victorious campaigns in India. To bring an end to this Calipha might have ordered to kill Muhammad-bin-Qasim. Whatever may be the fact? Muhammad-bin-Qasim got a tragic end of his life.

Causes of Arab Success in Sind:

Many factors have been ascribed to the success the Arabs in Sind and Multan. Sind had a heterogeneous population consisting of the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Jains, the Jats, the Meds etc. There was no good relation among them as the subjects of Dahir lack unity at social level. Instead there prevailed hatred among them. So at the time of Arab invasion of Sind, they could not be united for the cause of their motherland. Some historians have opined that it was due to lack of social solidarity among the people of Sind; the country had to face the rath of the Arabs.

Unpopularity of Dahir:

Dahir was not liked by some sections of his subjects as he was proud and arrogant and mainly as a son of an usurper. Dahir's father was a minister who had murdered his king and married the widow queen. Thus Dahir, being the son of an usurper, was not liked by the people. Besides Dahir had enmity with his cousin

brothers for the throne which had led the kingdom to a stage of civil war. Further Dahir's governors were almost semi-independent princes and did not co-operate him at the time of crises. Because of his personal nature he was also not liked by his subjects who were mostly non-Hindus. Owing to his unpopularity he did not get the support of the people of his own kingdom at the time of foreign invasion.

Betrayal and Treachery:

It was the betrayal and treachery of some Indian citizens that had contributed a lot for the success of the Arabs. Debal fell because of a Brahmin traitor who exposed secrecy of the Temple and flag which was inside fort of Debal. At Nirun the Buddhists played treacherous role by joining hands with the invader. At Multan, a traitor informed the invader the source of water supply to the city. Some historians have viewed this as the role of the Fifth column in bringing about the fall of their own country.

Poverty and Backwardness:

Sind was a poor, backward kingdom with a sparse population and limited resources. So it was not possible on the part of the Dahir to finance for a large army or to wage a protracted war. This also had tempted the Arabs to invade Sind.

Isolation of Sind:

Isolation of Sind from the rest of India was also a factor for the Arab's success in Sind. Though there were powerful dynasties like the Pratiharas of Malwa and Kanauj they did not come to the help of Sind. None of them bothered or cared for this incident which marked the beginning of Muslim rule in India.

Religious Enthusiasm of Arabs:

The Arabs were inspired by a new religion and had become fanatic. They thought that they were the forces of God and were engaged in a mission to destroy the faiths of the infidel and spread the blessings of Islam. The Arabs had also a great sense of patriotic feelings. The Indians on the other hand had no such religious enthusiasm or patriotism. Rather they had an indifferent, tolerant and cosmopolitan attitude towards other faiths and other people. Undoubtedly this had resulted, the Arab's success in Sind.

Strong Army:

The Arab army under the leadership of Muhammad-bin-Qasim was superior to that of Sind of Dahir in strength and technique. They were also well-equipped. Dahir's army only at Rawar was nearly on par in number with that of the invader. But they were very poorly equipped as the majority of them were hastily recruited on the eve of the war and had not sufficient military training. This had caused the defeat of Dahir.

Responsibility of Dahir:

Dahir was largely responsible for the success of the Arabs owing to his initial lethargy and foolishness. He had remained inactive while Muhammad-bin-Qasim was conquering Debal, Nirun and Sehwan one after another. Even he had remained inactive when Muhammad crossed the Mihran to enter into Rawar. It was foolishness on the part of Dahir to hope that he would finish the enemy in a single stroke at Rawar. At Rawar also Dahir committed a blunder by not commanding the army as its leader. Instead of commanding the army, he fought like a soldier and died.

Effect of the Arab Conquest:

The Arab conquest of Sind had little effect so far as political factors were concerned. According to Stanley Lane-poole, "The Arab conquest of Sind was only an episode in the history of India and of Islam—a triumph without results." Many scholars have shared their views with Lane-poole. Wolsely Haig writes, "It was a mere episode in the history of India and affected only a small portion of the fringe of that vast country." After the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim, the Arabs were liable to penetrate more into India. Their rule which continued to last only one and half centuries was confined to Sind only. But the task of the foundation of Muslim rule in India was done by the Turk Muslims much later. According to Prof. Habibullah, "The Arab was not destined to raise Islam to be a political force in India, politically the Sind affair led to a dead end. The Indian powers also did almost nothing to drive them out of Sind. Hence the Arab invasion of Sind is regarded as an episode."

UNIT-III

TOPIC-3

First Battle of Tarain

The first battle of Tarain was fought in 1191 between the Ghurids, a Turkish tribe, led by Muhammad Ghori and the Rajputs led by Prithviraj Chauhan and his allies. The resulting engagement ended in victory for the Rajput forces. This article will give details about the battle within the context of the IAS Exam

Background of the Battle of Tarain

Following the decline of the Ghaznavid empire in the 12th century led to a power vacuum in which various tribes fought for control of the empire. Among these, the Ghurids emerged victoriously and managed to sack the erstwhile city of Ghazni by 1149. The Ghurid empire would be led by two brothers Muhammad Ghori (known as Mu'izz al-Din) and Ghiyas al-Din who embarked in an expansion policy which would encompass most of modern-day Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Soon they looked towards expanding their empire east into India. At the time northern India was a collection of loose-states. Of the most powerful ones were the Chalukya dynasty in Gujarat, the Solanki dynasty of Jaichandra in Kanauj and the Rajput Chahamanas of Prithviraj Chauhan based out of Ajmer and Delhi. Muhammed Ghori sent an envoy to the court of Prithvi Raj Chauhan first to come to a settlement. The terms included conversion to Islam and accepting the suzerainty of the Ghurids. Prithvi Raj Chauhan refused. Undeterred, Muhammad Ghori marched his army to the kingdom of the Chalukyas in 1178. He did this as the direct route to Delhi was blocked by the last remnants of the Ghaznavids located in Lahore and Multan.

Events during the First Battle of Tarain

Marching his forces into India, Muhammad Ghori proceeded to capture the important fort of Bathinda. The fall of Bathinda galvanised the Delhi forces into action. Prithviraj Chauhan's gathered his allies and led his army to face Muhammad Ghori in battle. The two armies faced each other on the fields of Tarain, 150 kilometres north of Delhi in 1191. Although contemporary sources placed Prithviraj Chauhan's army at 200,000 in numbers, modern historians agree that it numbered at 50,000. Similarly, the size of the Ghurid forces was thought to be numbered at 100,000 but historians believed it was marginally smaller than Prithvi Raj Chauhan's forces. The Ghurid army had an advantage in cavalry archers, famed for their mobility, putting the mainly infantry Rajput forces at a disadvantage. But the Rajputs had strength in numbers and Elephants. The battle began with a probing attack by the Ghurid cavalry archers who peppered the Rajput formation with arrows. Prithvi Raj Chauhan responded immediately with an all-out attack which surprised the Ghurids. They were unused to the Rajput way of fighting which favoured close combat fighting. The Rajputs pursued the retreating horse archers and covered much ground until they were upon the main Ghurid army. To their credit, the Ghurid army held firm their ground resisting waves of infantry but the Rajput cavalry began to overwhelm the Ghurid flank. It became clear to Muhammad Ghori that the close-quarter fighting favoured the Rajputs immensely. Unable to withstand the pressure on their flank, Muhammad's troops broke ranks and fled. Meanwhile, in the Ghurid centre, Rajput elephants put pressure on the remaining troops and they began to waver. Attempting the salvage a desperate situation, Muhammad Ghori charged into the fray hoping to rally his troops. He came upon the commander of the Rajput forces, Govind Rai. Hurling his spear at Govind

Rai, the projectile was blocked and in turn, Govind Rai hurled his own spear at Muhammad Ghori, its impact knocking him almost unconscious. His life was saved by his bodyguard who spirited him away from the battlefield. Seeing their commander retreating from the field, the morale of the Ghurids was further broken and they ran away from the field. The Rajput army pursued the Ghurids for almost 40 kilometres before Prithviraj Chauhan turned his attention toward laying siege to the fort at Bathinda, which fell in 1192.

The aftermath of the first battle of Tarain.

This would not be the end of Ghurid incursions into India as Muhammad Ghori would return, having learnt his enemies strength and weaknesses and mindful of not to underestimate his opponents in battle. Prithvi Raj Chauhan's inability to pursue and annihilate his foe and consolidate his borders would have detrimental effects in Indian history as the second battle of Tarain would prove

Second Battle of Tarain ;

The second battle of Tarain was fought between the Ghurid army led by Muhammad Ghori and the Rajput Chahamanas and their allies led by Prithvi Raj Chauhan in 1192. The battle saw the defeat of the Rajputs, opening north India to future invasions and domination by Turki tribes.

Background of the second battle of Tarain

Following his defeat at the hands of Prithvi Raj Chauhan during the first battle of Tarain in 1191, Muhammad Ghori returned to Ghazni. He publicly shamed and dismissed the captains and commanders of his forces who showed cowardice at Tarain and took a vow to forego all luxuries until he avenged his defeat. Keeping this in mind he set about rebuilding his forces putting greater emphasis on firepower, mobility and discipline. Prithvi Raj Chauhan meanwhile was elated at his victory at Tarain. Convinced that he had demonstrated the superiority of his forces, he neglected to strengthen his borders, although he did send proposals to neighbouring kingdoms in order to field a larger army should the Ghurids make a renewed attempt.

In the summer of 1192, Muhammad Ghori marched with an army of 52,000 cavalries, nearly half of the army of the Ghurid Army. When he reached Peshawar he decided it would be prudent to forgive his dismissed commanders and implored them to rejoin his army which they did. Muhammad Ghori recaptured the fort at Bathinda when barely a month had passed since it fell to the Rajput forces. Once again Muhammad Ghori sent a demand to Prithvi Raj Chauhan to accept him as suzerain and just like last time it was refused. Prithvi Raj Chauhan marched out to meet Muhammad Ghori once again but the number of men he had raised for his army was below his expectation as he had sent his commanders campaigning elsewhere in the previous months. Although contemporary sources exaggerate Prithvi Raj Chauhan's forces numbered 500,000 men and 3000 elephants, modern historians believed that 100,000 was the correct number with 300 elephants. Facing each other once more on the fields of Tarain, Prithvi Raj Chauhan sent a message to Muhammad Ghori that he was willing to let the Ghurid king return to his homeland without a fight but should he continue his endeavour, he would destroy him. Prithvi Raj was lulled into a false sense of security in which he neglected to carry out scouting mission of his own. The Ghurid army marched out at the crack of dawn, carrying out a surprise raid in the Rajput camp in which several war elephants were neutralised. Unused to such a kind of warfare as their military ethos forbade night-time battles, the Rajputs took time in recovering from their initial surprise until eventually repulsing the Ghurid cavalry attacking them. In their pursuit of the raiding force, the Rajputs found that the Ghurids had already arrayed themselves in battle formation. The second battle of Tarain was about to begin.

Events during the second battle of Tarain

Knowing the Rajput forces were well-disciplined, the Ghurids did not want to engage in melee combat with them. Instead, the Ghurids army was formed into five units, and four units were sent to attack the enemy flanks and rear.

As per historical sources, Muhammad Ghori directed a light cavalry force of 10,000 mounted archers, divided into four divisions, to surround the Rajput forces on the four sides. He instructed these soldiers not to engage in combat when the enemy advanced to attack, and instead feign retreat in order to exhaust the Rajput elephants, horses, and infantry. In hopes of causing a break in the enemy lines, Muhammad Ghori ordered his fifth unit to feign a retreat. The Rajput forces charged the fleeing Ghurid unit, as the Ghurids expected. The Ghurids then sent a fresh cavalry unit of 12,000 and they managed to throw back the enemy advance. The remaining Ghurid forces then attacked and some of the Rajput troops fled in panic, while others stood their ground and fought to the last breath. The Ghurid forces had emerged victorious and Muhammad Ghori had avenged his defeat from the battle a year earlier.

The aftermath of the second battle of Tarain;

As per various historical sources, it is stated that Prithvi Raj Chauhan was captured and summarily executed while other medieval sources state that Prithviraj was taken to his capital Ajmer, where Muhammad planned to reinstate him as a Ghurid vassal. Sometime later, Prithvi Raj Chauhan rebelled against Muhammad and was killed for 'treason'. Whatever Prithvi Raj's Chauhan fate his kingdom fell to the Ghurid forces with relative ease

eventually subjugating the entire Gangetic plain in less than a decade and reaching as far as Bengal. The second battle of Tarain is significant among the Turkish and Arab invasions of India in the sense that though the Ghurid Kingdom would not last, the Islamic presence that it had brought in its wake ensured that it would have a permanent base, influencing the cultural dynamics and history of the Indian subcontinent from that point on.