

Anglo–Maratha Wars (1775–1818)

Overview

- A series of **three wars** between the **British East India Company** and the **Maratha Confederacy**
- Time period: **1775–1818**
- Resulted in:
 - **Collapse of the Maratha Empire**
 - **British paramountcy in India**
- Root cause: **Maratha internal divisions and British expansionist ambitions**

Reasons for the Anglo–Maratha Wars

- **Aftermath of the Third Battle of Panipat (1761)** → weakened Maratha unity
- **Succession disputes** within Peshwaship
- **Confederate nature** of Maratha polity (Gaekwad, Bhonsle, Holkar, Sindhia, Peshwa)
- **British ambition** to replicate Bengal-type dominance in western India
- **Treaty politics & alliances** were exploited by the British
- **Pindari problem** (especially the Third War)

Rise & Weakening of Peshwaship

- **Peshwa** evolved from PM to **de facto ruler**
- **Balaji Vishwanath** → made Peshwaship hereditary
- **Bajirao I** → expanded Maratha power via confederacy
- **Defeat at Panipat (1761)** → weakened central control
- **Death of Madhavrao I (1772)** → factionalism intensified

Maratha Confederacy

- **Gaekwad** – Baroda
- **Bhonsle** – Nagpur
- **Holkar** – Indore
- **Sindhia** – Gwalior
- **Peshwa** – Poona

First Anglo–Maratha War (1775–1782)

Cause

- Succession dispute after the **death of Madhavrao I**
- **Raghunathrao vs Barabhai Council (Nana Phadnavis)**
- **Treaty of Surat (1775)** → British support to Raghunathrao

Important Treaties

- **Treaty of Surat (1775)**
 - Salsette & Bassein ceded to the British
- **Treaty of Purandar (1776)**
 - Raghunathrao pensioned
- **Treaty of Wadgaon (1779)**
 - British defeat by **Mahadji Sindhia**
- **Treaty of Salbai (1782)** → Final settlement

Treaty of Salbai

- Salsette was retained by the British
- Bassein restored to the Marathas
- The British withdraw support from Raghunathrao
- No European power (except the British) was to be supported by the Peshwa
- **Mahadji Sindhia** → guarantor

Outcome

- **Maratha political victory**
- **British diplomatic learning**
- **20 years of peace** between the Marathas & British

Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–1805)

Cause

- Ineffective rule of **Bajirao II**
- Murder of **Vithuji Holkar**
- **Defeat of Peshwa at Hadapsar (1802)** by Holkar

Treaty of Bassein (1802)

- Peshwa accepted the **Subsidiary Alliance**
- British troops stationed at Poona
- Surat ceded
- Chauth claims on Nizam abandoned
- External relations controlled by the British

Course

- Sindhia & Bhonsle resisted → defeated
- Holkar's coalition attempt failed

Outcome

- Marathas reduced to **British vassals**
- British strategic dominance strengthened

Third Anglo–Maratha War (1817–1818)

Causes

- **Lord Hastings’ imperial policy**
- **Pindari menace**
- Resentment against the **Treaty of Bassein**
- End of Company monopoly (Charter Act, 1813)

Course

- Peshwa attacked the British Residency at Poona
- Battles:
 - **Khirki** – Peshwa
 - **Sitabuldi** – Bhonsle
 - **Mahidpur** – Holkar

Key Treaties

- **Treaty of Poona (1817)** – Peshwa
- **Treaty of Gwalior (1817)** – Sindhia
- **Treaty of Mandasor (1818)** – Holkar

Outcome

- **Peshwaship abolished**
- Bajirao II pensioned at **Bithur**
- **The Maratha Confederacy dissolved**
- **Satara State** was formed under Pratap Singh

Impact of Anglo–Maratha Wars

- End of Maratha political dominance
- The British emerged as the **supreme power in India**
- Annexation of Pune, Nagpur, and Central India
- Traditional Maratha nobility weakened
- Expansion of British administrative control