

Rana Sanga

Sangram Singh I, also known as Rana Sanga or Maharana Sanga, was an Indian monarch of the Sisodia dynasty who was born in 1482 and passed away in 1528 CE. He ruled Mewar, the historic Guhila (Sisodia) kingdom in present-day northwestern India. However, under his skilled leadership, his kingdom rose to become one of Northern India's most potent powers in the early sixteenth century. He ruled over areas of modern-day Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh from his capital Chittor. Several contemporaries loved his rule, notably Babur, who called him the "greatest Indian monarch" of the period, alongside Krishnadevaraya of South India. Along with Prithviraj Chauhan, Mughal historian Al-Badayuni regarded Sanga as the bravest of all Rajputs. Before the Mughal era, Rana Sanga was the last autonomous Hindu ruler of Northern India to control a substantial region. In some modern literature, he is referred to as the Hindu Emperor of Northern India.

About Rana Sanga

Sanga was the son of Sisodia king Rana Raimal and queen Ratan Kunwar a (Chahamana, a Chauhan princess). Although modern manuscripts of Sisodias do not identify the year of his birth, they do describe some of the astrological planetary positions at the time of his birth, which are considered favourable. Historian G.H Ojha computed Sanga's birth year as 1482 CE based on these locations, assuming certain additional planetary configurations, and the Kumbhalgarh inscription. Sanga was the youngest of Raimal's four sons, but due to circumstances and a fierce conflict with his brothers Prithviraj and Jagmal, in which he lost one of his eyes, he eventually succeeded in the kingdom of Mewar in 1508.

Throughout his long military career, Sanga had a string of uninterrupted victories over various neighbouring Muslim kingdoms, most prominently the Lodhi dynasty of Delhi. He marched against the Timurid monarch Babur, uniting many Rajput clans for the very first time since the Second Battle of Tarain. Sanga suffered a devastating setback at Khanwa due to the Timurids' use of gunpowder, which was unfamiliar in North India at the time. His own nobles later poisoned him. His defeat at Khanwa is seen as a watershed moment in the Mughal conquest of Northern India.

Death and Succession

Sanga was taken unconscious from the battlefield by Prithviraj Singh I Kachwaha as well as Maldeo Rathore of Marwar. He took an oath upon regaining consciousness not to go to Chittor unless he had vanquished Babur and captured Delhi. He also ceased wearing a Turban and began wearing a towel wrapped over his head. He was poisoned by his very own nobles who did not want another battle with Babur as he was ready to conduct another war against him. Ratan Singh II succeeded him when he died at Kalpi in January 1528 or on May 20, 1528. Following Sanga's loss, his vassal Medini Rai was beaten by Babur during the Siege of Chanderi, and Babur conquered the Rai kingdom's capital, Chanderi. Medini was offered Shamsabad instead of Chanderi because it was historically significant in the conquest of Malwa, but Rao declined and opted to die fighting. To rescue their honour from Babur's army, Rajput women and children committed self-immolation. Following his triumph, Babur seized Malwa and Chanderi, which were previously governed by Rai.

Military Conquests

After ascending to the throne, Sanga used diplomacy and marital connections to reconcile Rajputana's warring tribes. Babur, the creator of the Mughal Empire, describes Sanga as the biggest infidel (Hindu)

ruler of India, along with Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire in the south, in his memoirs. Babur went on to say that Sanga had recently grown so powerful because of his daring and sword that his empire now encompassed a large chunk of Northern India. Legend has it that Sanga fought 100 battles and only lost one. During different battles, he lost his wrist and was paralysed in his leg. Sanga fought the Sultans of Delhi, Malwa, and Gujarat in 18 pitched wars and enlarged his kingdom by conquering much of modern-day Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, the northern portion of Gujarat, and parts of Amarkot, Sindh. After the fall of the Paramara kingdom in 1305 CE, he re-established Rajput authority in Malwa for the first time. He also abolished the Jizya tax, which had previously been enforced by Muslim rulers on Hindus. He was the last autonomous Hindu king of Northern India to control a substantial region, and he is referred to as the Hindu Emperor in certain contemporary literature.

Battle of Gagraon

In 1519, Mahmud Khalji II of Malwa and Rana Sanga's Rajput Confederacy engaged in battle at Gagraon. Sanga won the battle in Gagraon, which is now the Indian state of Rajasthan. As a result, he captured Mahmud and annexed a sizable portion of the region. A succession dispute broke out between Nasir-ud-Din Khalji, the Sultan of Malwa, and his sons. Mahmud Khalji II won, mostly because of the support of the Rajput chief Medini Rai. The latter grew in power and earned the animosity of the Muslim nobility, forcing even the new sultan to make an appeal to Muzaffar Shah II of Gujarat. Mandu, held by Medini Rai's son, was besieged by a Gujarati force that had been sent there.

The Rajput lord then requested assistance from Rana Sanga of Mewar, who sent his army into Malwa and eventually arrived in Sarangpur. But when Mandu was taken prisoner by the Gujaratis, Sanga was forced to return to Mewar with Medini Rai, who was subsequently put in his employ. Mahmud gathered an army against the Mewaris and marched it through Gagraon as retaliation for them breaching his realm. Sanga confronted Mahmud, who was accompanied by the Gujarat auxiliaries under Asaf Khan, as he advanced from Chittor with a sizable army supported by the Rathors of Merta under Rao Viramdeva. The Gujarati cavalry was charged through by the Mewari, dispersing the survivors. The Malwa army was then defeated decisively after they applied the same strategy.

Mahmud's army had been destroyed, the majority of his officers had died, and he had been wounded and taken prisoner. Even though Asaf Khan himself was able to flee, his son was slain. Gagraon, along with the areas of Bhilsa, Raisen, Sarangpur, Chanderi, and Ranthambore, were soon placed under Sanga's rule. Although Rana is rumoured to have personally attended to Mahmud's wounds, he is claimed to have been held captive at Chittor for six months. After that, he was given permission to make an honourable return to his home country, but one of his sons was still held hostage in Mewar. Later, as gifts, Mahmud sent Sanga a jewel-encrusted girdle and a crown.

Battle of Khatoli

Between the Lodi dynasty led by Ibrahim Lodi and the Kingdom of Mewar led by Rana Sanga, the Battle of Khatoli was fought in 1517, with Mewar winning. Ibrahim Lodi succeeded his father Sikander Lodi as the next Sultan of the Lodi dynasty in the Delhi Sultanate after Sikander Lodi's death in 1518. He was working to put down the nobles' uprisings when word of Rana Sanga's incursions reached him. He assembled an army and advanced on Mewar. The two armies met close to the village of Khatoli on the boundaries of Haravati (Haraoti), in modern-day Lakheri, Rajasthan. Rana Sanga had also assembled a sizable army of Rajput warriors and had advanced to meet him. This conflict with Sanga exhausted Ibrahim's resources, making it difficult for him to continue the battle for a while. He did, however, seek retribution against Maharana Sanga for the devastating setback the Rana Sanga had caused at Khatoli. The Sultan Ibrahim Lodi also organised a sizable army to assault Mewar after the

Islam Khan uprising, which had taken on major proportions, was put down, but was once again routed by the Rajputs and Rana Sanga's soldiers in the Battle of Dholpur.

Battle of Dholpur

Lodi, apparently astonished by the Rajput onslaught (which was unparalleled in the past three centuries), advanced against Mewar again in 1518-19, but was defeated at the Battle of Dholpur. Lodi fought Sanga numerous times, only to be beaten each time, losing his whole land in modern-day Rajasthan, while Sanga's influence expanded all the way to Pilia Khar in Agra. Rana Sanga vanquished Ibrahim Lodi at Ranthambore just after the Siege of Mandsaur, according to the 16th-century manuscript "Parshvanath-Shravan-Sattavisi".

Battles of Idar

The Idar fights were three significant engagements fought in the principality of Idar between the forces of Bhar Mal, who was backed by the Gujarat Sultanate under Muzaffar Shah II, and Rai Mal, who was backed by the Rajputs under Rana Sanga. The main motivation for Sanga's engagement in these fights was to restore Rai Mal to his legitimate throne and to diminish the Gujarat Sultanate's developing influence. Rai Mal defeated Muzzafar Shah II and reclaimed his kingdom in 1517 with the assistance of Rana Sanga.

Rana Sanga's invasion of Gujarat

In 1520, Sanga invaded Gujarat with his mighty force of 40,000 Rajputs and three vassals to settle the succession of the state of Idar. Rao Ganga Rathore of Marwar also joined him, bringing an army of 8,000 Rajputs with him. Rawal Udai Singh of Vagad and Rao Viram deva of Merta were two of Rana's other allies. He defeated Nizam Khan's Muslim army and pushed them to Ahmedabad. Sanga called off his invasion 20 miles from Ahmedabad's capital. He pillaged Gujarat's royal treasures, destroying mosques and replacing them with temples. Following a string of battles, Sanga successfully captured Northern Gujarat and installed one of his vassals as ruler.

War against Mughals

Battle of Bayana

The Rajput Confederacy under Rana Sanga engaged in combat with the Afghans of Bayana under Nizam Khan and the Mughal advance guard, under the command of Abdul Aziz, in the Battle of Bayana or the Siege of Bayana. Wars between the two kings were unavoidable as a result of Babur's march into Delhi and Sanga's progress against Agra. In his memoirs, Babur expresses his animosity toward Rana Sanga, accusing him, among other things, of burning mosques and imprisoning Muslims, as well as of destroying Muslim sovereignty over 200 cities and uprooting their ruling families. Babur coveted possession of Bayana after defeating the Lodi Empire since it was a crucial fort in defending Agra from the Sangas' assault. Nizam Khan, an Afghan warlord, was in charge of the Bayana fort. Ustad Ali Khan cast a terrifying cannon under Babur's command to attack Bayana and other forts. Babur despatched 2500 troops to capture the fort of Bayana along with Afghans led by Nizam Khan's brother Alam Khan, but due to Nizam Khan's numerical superiority, the Mughal force was crushed. Time was of the essence since Rana Sanga was approaching Babur. As a result, Babur announced the jihad against the infidel Rana and invited the Afghan chieftains of Bayana, Dholpur, and Gwalior to join him in the fight.

The majority of the Afghan chieftains, along with Nizam Khan of Bayana, agreed to Babur's suggestion to recognise Jagir since they understood they had no chance against Rana's military might and joined forces with Babur. Sanga prepared a besiegement of the Bayana citadel. Sanga organised his army into four groups, placing his dependable nobles in the lead. The besieged army was routed in the garrison's vain attempt to sally forth and battle, and numerous distinguished officers were killed or injured. The besieged fell into despair and gave the fort to Rana. Babur dispatched a force led by Abdul Aziz to block Rana's advance, but the Rajputs under Rana Sanga routed and dispersed the Mughals. The Mughal forces were further demoralised by the setback at Bayana, which also sparked the Battle of Khanwa. Rana Sanga was able to march safely on Khanwa (about 37 kilometres west of Agra). Despite the fact that Babur and the Mughal historians did not place much emphasis on the battle of Bayana, it stands out as Rana Sanga's final great victory in his tumultuous career. Under his control now are the forts of Chittor, Ranthambore, Kandar, and Bayana, which are crucial locations in central Hindustan. The Mughal army experienced a surge of panic and disappointment as a result of the brief and brutal encounters they had to endure at the hands of the Rajputs on this particular occasion.

Battle of Khanwa

On March 16, a fight was fought at Khanwa, 37 miles (60 kilometres) west of Agra. Because of their cannons, matchlocks, and other guns, the Mughals were triumphant. Sanga was hit by an arrow in the middle of the conflict and was knocked unconscious by his brother-in-law, Amber's Prithviraj Kachwaha, and prince Maldev Rathore. Following his victory, Babur ordered the construction of a tower of enemy skulls, a tactic devised by Timur against all opponents, regardless of religious beliefs. According to Chandra, the goal of erecting a skull tower was not only to mark a tremendous triumph but also to scare opponents. Babur had previously used the same strategy against the Afghans of Bajaur. During the battle, Sanga was also betrayed by Silhadi, who switched sides and supported Babur. The Mughal triumph is seen as a watershed moment in the Mughal conquest of North India, as the conflict proved to be more historic and eventful than Panipat in that it established Babur as the unquestioned master of North India while crushing the menacing and resurrecting Rajput powers. According to historian Andre Wink, after the victory at Khanwa, the centre of Mughal authority shifted from Kabul to Agra, where it remained until Aalamgir's death. According to modern historians, if it hadn't been for Babur's guns, Sanga could have won a historic victory over Babur. Babur's cannons had put an end to obsolete Indian fighting patterns.