

First Anglo-Sikh War - UPSC Notes PDF

The Sikh Empire and the British East India Company fought the First Anglo-Sikh War in and around Ferozepur, Punjab, in 1845 and 1846. It resulted in the fall and partial capitulation of the Sikh empire, as well as the cession of Jammu and Kashmir to British suzerainty as a separate princely state.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46) - Background

- Maharaja Ranjit Singh founded and cemented the Sikh state of Punjab in the early nineteenth century, around the same time that British-controlled lands drew closer to Punjab's frontiers through conquest or annexation.
- Ranjit Singh kept a delicate alliance with the British, relinquishing some area south of the Sutlej River while beefing up his force to thwart British advance and waging war on the Afghans.
- He trained his army, which comprised Hindu and Muslim contingents, with mercenary warriors from the United States and Europe.
- This was seen as a risky step that gave the English excuse to declare war.
- On the other hand, the causes were significantly more complex and can be summarized as follows:
- Following Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death, the Lahore kingdom descended into chaos, with a power struggle erupting between the Lahore court and the ever-powerful and increasingly local army.
- English military attempts to achieve the conquest of Gwalior and Sindh in 1841 and the campaign in Afghanistan in 1842 raised suspicions within the Sikh army.
- The number of English troops stationed near the Lahore kingdom's border has increased.

The beginning of First Anglo Sikh War

- After reciprocal demands and allegations, diplomatic ties between the Sikh Durbar and the East India Company were

severed. The East India Company sent an army to Ferozepur, where a division had already been established.

- The Bengal Army's Commander in Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, led the army, which was accompanied by Sir Henry Hardinge, the British Governor General of Bengal, who was in the military line of command behind Gough.
- The British East India Company's military was based on the Bengal Army, with one British unit for every three or four Bengal infantry or cavalry divisions.
- On the British side, light cannons from the elite Bengal Horse Artillery made up the majority of the artillery.
- During the fight, General Raja Lal Singh, who led the Sikh Army at the time, betrayed the Sikhs together with Tej Singh. On a regular basis, the two generals shared intelligence and even received commands from British officials.
- In reaction to the British move, the Sikh army began crossing the Sutlej on December 11, 1845. Although the army's leaders and principal battalions were Sikhs, infantry regiments from Punjab, Pakhtun, and Kashmir were also present.
- Heavy gun companies created and trained by European mercenaries made up the majority of the artillery.
- The Sikhs claimed they were just marching into Sikh territories on the east side of the river (particularly, the settlement of Moran, whose ownership was contested), but the British saw the move as blatantly hostile and declared war.

Course of First Anglo Sikh War

- When the fight began in December 1845, the British side had 20,000 to 30,000 troops, while the Sikhs had around 50,000 men under the command of Lal Singh.
- The Sikhs were defeated five times in a row at Mudki (December 18, 1845), Ferozeshah (December 21–22, 1845), Buddelwal, Aliwal (January 28, 1846), and Sobraon (January 28, 1846) due to the betrayal of Lal Singh and Teja Singh (February 10, 1846).
- In the First Anglo-Sikh War, there were five battles.

- **Battle of Mudki** - Tej Singh led his army across the Sutlej River to attack and encircle the British station at Ferozepur.
- A detachment led by Lal Singh encountered Gough's and Hardinge's advancing army in the Battle of Mudki late on December 18.
- The British won a clumsy engagement combat, although they suffered a lot of casualties.
- **Battle of Ferozeshah** - The Battle of Ferozeshah was fought between the British East India Company and the Sikh Empire on the 21st and 22nd of December 1845 in the hamlet of Ferozeshah in Punjab.
- The British were headed by Sir Hugh Gough and Governor-General Sir Henry Hardinge, while the Sikhs were led by Lal Singh. The British were victorious.
- **Battle of Baddowal** - The Battle of Baddowal, fought in 1846 near Ludhiana in the present-day state of Punjab, pitted the Sikh Empire against a British East India Company contingent.
- **Battle of Aliwal** - The Battle of Aliwal took place on January 28, 1846, in northern India, between British and Sikh forces.
- The British were headed by Sir Harry Smith, while the Sikhs were led by Ranjodh Singh Majithia.
- **Battle of Sohraon** - The Battle of Sohraon took place on February 10, 1846, between the East India Company and the Punjabi Sikh Empire's army, the Sikh Khalsa Army.
- The Sikhs were decisively beaten in this pivotal action of the First Anglo-Sikh War.
- On February 20, 1846, Lahore surrendered to British soldiers without a fight.

Results of First Anglo Sikh War

- The Sikhs were forced to abandon the lucrative Jullundur Doab region between the Beas River and the Sutlej River in the Treaty of Lahore on March 9, 1846.
- The Lahore Durbar was also forced to pay a 15 million rupee indemnity. Because it couldn't come up with the money, it gave the East India Company Kashmir, Hazarah, and all the forts, territories, rights, and interests in the hill kingdoms

between the rivers Beas and Indus in exchange for ten million rupees.

- Gulab Singh, the Raja of Jammu, eventually purchased Kashmir from the East India Company for 7.5 million rupees and was given the title Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir in a separate agreement (the Treaty of Amritsar).
- In 1846, the estate of Ladwa, which belonged to Ajit Singh, who fought the British at Buddowal and Aliwal, was confiscated.
- The British granted his house in Haridwar to the Raja of Patiala through a 'sanad' on September 22, 1847. Ajit Singh was apprehended and sent to the Allahabad fort as a prisoner.
- Maharaja Duleep Singh remained Punjab's king, and his mother, Maharani Jindan Kaur, served as Regent at first. The Durbar, however, later demanded that the British remain until the Maharaja reached the age of sixteen.
- The British agreed, and the Treaty of Bhyroval, signed on December 16, 1846, called for the Maharani to be given a pension of 150,000 rupees and to be replaced by a British resident in Lahore who would be supported by a Council of Regency with agents in various cities and provinces.
- Sikh historians have long argued that Lal Singh and Tej Singh went to war with the deliberate intent of fracturing their own army in order to maintain their hold on power and Duleep Singh's figurehead leadership.
- After the establishment of the business and the fall of the Mughal empire, the Sikh empire was one of the few remaining kingdoms in India. Despite the fact that the war damaged the Sikh Army, resentment of British meddling in government led to the Second Anglo-Sikh War three years later.

Treaty of Lahore

- Punjab's king, Maharaja Duleep Singh, was to remain in power, with his mother Jindan Kaur serving as regent.
- The Sikhs were forced to hand over the Doab of Jalandhar to the British.

- The Sikhs were also asked to pay the English a colossal war indemnity. However, because they were unable to pay the entire amount, only a portion was paid, and the remainder was given to the English in the form of Kashmir, Hazarah, and all lands between the Beas and the Indus Rivers.
- The Sikhs were supposed to keep their force to a specific size.
- Sir Henry Lawrence, a British Resident, was also appointed to the Sikh court.