

Second Anglo-Sikh War - UPSC Notes PDF

The Second Anglo-Sikh War (First War of Sikh Independence) was a military confrontation in 1848 and 1849 between the Sikh Empire and the British East India Company. It led to the fall of the Sikh Empire and the East India Company's acquisition of the Punjab and what would later become the North-West Frontier Province.

Second Anglo-Sikh War – Causes

- The Sikh community felt humiliated after losing the First Anglo-Sikh War, thus the Second Anglo-Sikh War was fought to make amends.
- Sir Lawrence also ordered Rani Jind Kaur, the then-Regent of the Sikh Empire, into exile, a decision that was not well accepted by the Sikh community.
- Sir Lawrence also accused her of conspiring against him and had her deported from Lahore.
- They were also forced to relinquish control of Punjab's land.
- Multan was administered by Dewan Mulraj, a Hindu Viceroy who was unhappy with the Court in Lahore's demand for higher taxes and revenues.
- Sir Frederick Currie took over as British Resident of Punjab from Sir Henry Lawrence at this time.
- He undercut Dewan Mulraj's authority by sending another Sikh nobleman, Sardar Kahan Singh, and another British agent, Patrick Vans Agnew, to Multan.
- When Vans Agnew and another officer, Lieutenant William Anderson, arrived in Multan in 1848 to take command of the city, they were brutally murdered by Dewan Mulraj's men.
- This act caused agitation throughout Punjab, and many Sikh soldiers loyal to the Lahore Durbar joined forces against the British.

Second Anglo-Sikh War – Course

- The war's primary battlegrounds were Ramnagar and Chilianwala.

- For several weeks, Commander Sher Singh's force defended the Chenab River's line against Sir Hugh Gough's army.
- On the 13th of January 1849, Gough met up with Sher Singh's force at the Jhelum River, where the Battle of Chilianwala took place.
- The decisive combat took place near the banks of the Chenab River in Gujrat (Punjab territory, now Pakistan), and was won by the British troops.

Second Anglo-Sikh War – Aftermath

- On March 29, 1849, Lord Dalhousie declared the annexation of the Punjab.
- Henry Miers Elliot, his foreign secretary, came in Lahore to seek signatures from members of the Council of Regency and Maharaja Duleep Singh, the minor king.
- The young Duleep Singh signed the paper that stripped him of his throne and kingdom at a darbar held in the Lahore Fort, with British forces on his right and his helpless Sardars on his left.
- Lord Dalhousie then issued a proclamation annexing Punjab in accordance with the Treaty of Lahore.
- Maharani Jind and his son were separated and transported to Ferozpur.
- Sir Lawrence was the first Chief Commissioner of Punjab, and he was in charge of the administration.
- The famed diamond 'Koh-i-Noor,' which was originally in the hands of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was to be transferred to the British government as part of the Treaty of Lahore, according to the British government.
- The Maharaja had intended to give the diamond to the Puri Jagannath Temple in Odisha, but the British prevented this from happening.
- The East India Company renamed the captured Punjab the North-West Frontier Province after the war.