

CHAPTER V

THE VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGNS OF THE MARATHAS AGAINST THE SIDDIS
AND THE PORTUGUESE (1720-1740).

It may be recalled that the rights and privileges of the Marathas had been duly recognised by the Mughal Emperor of Delhi in 1720. Accordingly, Konkan figured in the Swaraj where only the Marathas were expected to wield their power. The Chitnis was entrusted with the vast allotment in the Konkan region while Kanhoji holding on to portion already conceded by Shahu appeared invincible to all the powers in his neighbourhood¹.

The Siddis, however, still were clinging to the notable fortresses of Raigarh, Mahad, Dabhol, Anjanvel, Gowalkot and Ratnagiri besides other coastal fortifications like Révas, Thal etc. Anjanvel had assumed importance because now the Siddis had started their raiding operations in order to trouble the naval activities and territories of Marathas².

Since the Angria had realised that the Mughals would pose no danger to him, he had to tackle only the Europeans more seriously. Both the British as well as the Portuguese were chalking out their plans afresh to curtail his power which had paralysed their trade activities seriously. They had never witnessed such a deprivation from an Indian navy before. The Portuguese Viceroy in 1721 with a view to regain the lost clout, replenished his fleet in the North by inducting in it two well-equipped frigates. Another crusading naval force was kept at the disposal of the Commander

Antonio Cardim Froes, specially selected for the task, he being well-versed in naval tactics. While getting ready for the assault, the Portuguese pretended that their mobilisation was targetted at the British who at that time had irritated the Portuguese by driving out of the island of Bombay their missionaries. The ruse helped because the British also alerted their navy for emergency. The Portuguese in fact wanted to launch the sudden attack against the Angria in the early hours on the appointed day but the whole strategy ran into trouble as only thirteen ships out of 76-ship fleet could arrive near the fort of Angria as planned. Being helpless and they being prone to his gun fire on account of the proximity were forced to abandon the move. However, subsequently, the Viceroy realised that the fort was garrisoned by only 140 soldiers. The disillusioned Viceroy then appointed an inquiry committee to probe into the inefficacy of the well-drawn plan³. He now was left with the only option of inviting the British, but Kanhoji again deputed Frey Verississimo proposing his terms for peace. However, the Viceroy was in no mood to listen to him. The talks for concluding a treaty with the British were already on as is evident from a letter dated 10th January 1721. Both the European powers, tired of Angria's menace, were now restless to act⁴.

As a first step in this direction, a treaty was signed between the British and the Portuguese on 20th August 1721. A week later the British fleet touched Bombay from London. The treaty stipulating 14 articles reveal that the

allied forces were confident of their success and with this in view even the conditions of sharing equally the war booty in future was included in the treaty. Both the powers had agreed to hand over Kolaba to the Portuguese, and Gheria (Vijaydurg) was to be taken over by the British⁵.

The developments took such a fast turn that the Viceroy himself proceeded to Chaul within two days on 22nd August commanding a fleet of four frigates and six pals. Ten days later, the General of the North as well as some British naval ships joined him on 2nd September. The Portuguese contingents from Daman and other places in the North as well as the British troops of 2400 men from Bombay arrived there before 10th September to swell the strength of the allies to 6000 infantry and 125 horse. Recently arrived British fleet commanded by Thomas Mathew also joined the joint campaign⁶.

As a retaliatory measure, Angria hurriedly arranged provisions and ammunitions in the fort of Kolaba and sent a word to Shahu for the succour. The crossing of the Kundalika river and the march towards Kolaba with heavy guns delayed the arrival of the allied forces in the vicinity of the fort for over a fortnight and this breathing time was adequate enough for Pilaji Jadhav and Baji Rao to rush to battle scene. By 12th December, the allied forces were sighted before Kolaba and later on they realized that they were to face a much larger force of 25000 men with considerably high grade cavalry of the Angria. On reaching there, while the Portuguese commander was surveying the field alongwith Mathews, a Maratha soldier who had waited in ambush pounced

upon Mathews and wounded him with his lance. The Viceroy soon after the arrival fell ill and had retired till recuperated. In the meanwhile, while 500 Englishmen pounded the fort for four hours, the Portuguese tried to control the Marathas settled in the camps outside. But Baji Rao in a swift move swooped upon the Portuguese and chased them away. The British column which was invading the fort was repulsed so fiercely, that they had no option than to retreat. While withdrawing too, the Portuguese troops were threatened and they had to abandon the huge quantity of war material for the benefit of Marathas. Baji Rao exuding optimism offered the peace proposals on behalf of Angria in the very beginning of January 1722, which were ultimately accepted by the Portuguese Viceroy with a pinch of salt⁷.

Elaborating on this, the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco José Sampaio e Castro while writing to the Secretary of State in Lisbon, João Roiz Machado on 8th January 1722 admitted that it was impossible to pass through the river owing to the fortifications built up by the Angria across the river. He explained further that Shahu's General, Baji Rao, soon sent him a word that since the Angria was a vassal of his master and had promised to proceed to Satara to pay him homage, he could not be denied the desired assistance⁸. Though Baji Rao offered to negotiate the peace and the Viceroy too readily agreed, the negotiations continued for several days before the peace treaty was signed between the Viceroy and Baji Rao on 22nd January 1722. It insisted upon the Portuguese that they would not escort the vessels of the enemies of the Marathas

and assist them against the common foes who were at loggerheads with them. The ports of both the sides were to provide free access to the traders of either party. The Portuguese assured the supply of the ammunition to the Peshwa at a fair price. Both the parties also agreed to return to each other the captured vessels⁹. Thus like all hopeful and powerful delusions, this war came to an abrupt end.

The Viceroy Francisco José de Sampaio e Castro while describing in November 1722 the incidents of battle to the Crown acknowledged the fact that the peace proposal of Baji Rao was of great consequence to the Estado da India because it was impossible to gain anything against the skilled army of Kanhoji and it was unwise to provoke hostilities against the entire country which in turn would have exposed the Portuguese territories to the similar danger posed during the period of Conde de Alvor when Shahu's father Sambhaji had invaded their possessions in November 1683¹⁰. That's the reason why he had promptly accepted the peace proposed by Baji Rao and not by the Angria.

Against such a grim backdrop the British did not appreciate the contents of the signed treaty by the Portuguese and ultimately found themselves losers. They too had desired to take the benefit of the peace treaty and it had nothing to offer to them. Ironically, what they got was only a copy of the peace treaty which required to be ratified by them within a week. The British were not in a mood to oblige. So, in resentment they hurried back to Bombay with their ships. They in fact accused the Portuguese Viceroy for

agreeing to the first clause of the peace treaty, which forbade the conclusion of any peace treaty with the Angria, whereas left to themselves they had to deal only with him. The Viceroy justified his action by informing them that the peace treaty was signed with Shahu Raja through his General, Baji Rao and not with the Angria and thus both the allies had been treated on equal footing. The Viceroy was fully aware of the factual position that the Portuguese contribution in men and money to the short-lived war was much higher than that of the British. However, he appeared to be happier to see the British in such a tight situation, and he conveyed this guess of his to the Crown in Lisbon revealing that the British would require a fresh contingent of 1500 soldiers from England as Company's factories could not be safeguarded in Asia without that additional force¹¹.

By and large this indifferent attitude clearly indicates that there did not exist genuine and clear-cut understanding between the two European powers in India and both desired each other's downfall at this time. The treaty in a way boosted the morale of the Angria bringing him an immense prestige and he was more free now to capture any ship of any power which as a power to be reckoned with did not buy his permit or did not have diplomatic relations with him. He started maintaining now cordial relations with the Portuguese, who in the following year sent a copy of the document addressed to Ramchandra Pant ratifying the signed treaty assuring him restoration of all the prisoners of war¹².

Interestingly, the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah was facing the immense trouble from the Sayyid brothers --- Sayyad Hasan Ali and Sayyad Abdulla --- whom the other chiefs as well wanted to get rid of. Asaf Jah later known as Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Deccan played his cards well. The net result was that Sayyad Husan Ali was slain while he was attempting to inflict punishment to the Nizam. On the other hand, Sayyad Abdulla was imprisoned to the rejoicings of the people in Delhi. In February 1722, Nizam-ul-Mulk was summoned to his Court by the Emperor Muhammad Shah who made him his Prime Minister. However, the atmosphere was not conducive for him in Delhi. He soon returned to the Deccan and established himself as an independant, though he showed his regard to the imperial authority till his last days. As a known romantic ruler, Muhammad Shah busied himself in the worldly pleasures despite being lucky enough to occupy the throne for a long period. However, one by one, the Deccan, Oudh and Bengal began to rule as independent ignoring his rule. While the Sikhs became active in Punjab and the Jats near Agra, the Rohillas, the descendants of Afghans also rose high and founded Ruhelkhand. Under this bizarre scenario, Baji Rao invaded Malwa in December 1723. He had the ideal of Hindu Raj (Hindu-pad-Padshahi) before him and the local Hindu landlords (Zamindars) fully backed him there though they suffered a lot of loss in men, material and wealth¹³.

In the meanwhile, the rift between Kanhoji and the British had widened. The former had captured two British Pals in March 1722 in the daring action that was masterminded between Chaul and Rajpuri in which one pal was set afire

while the other slipped. He also took into his custody another British vessel carrying a large number of coins and rich merchandise. The British too retaliated and seized one of his ships. But in October, Kanhoji himself sailed off with the force of 500 men from Kolaba entrusting the fort with his eldest son and announcing that he would not return without eliminating the British authority. But it turned out to be a misadventure because the Portuguese refused to oblige him to conclude a offensive treaty, though he was inclined to give whatever financial aid the Viceroy might demand. The Portuguese shrewdly and diplomatically avoided the risk because after the elimination of the British, it could have been their turn to leave the soil of Indian sub-continent. Again in 1724, he made a fresh bid to rope in the new Governor of Bombay, Phipps, to initiate negotiations. He requested him to send an authorised representative negotiating on a peace treaty. Phipps not only rejected his request, but also accused him of indulging in piracy. Kanhoji retorted: "it little behoved merchants to say that his government was supported by violence, insults and piracies, for the great Shivaji founded his kingdom by making war against four kings, and that he himself was but his humble disciple and was very much willing to favour the merchants trading according to the laws of his country, and offered to release the British prisoners". The parleys for the treaty however did go on and an exchange of POWs took place finally in 1725. Soon thereafter, Kanhoji had to tackle the serious problem created by the Siddi who had arrived near Kolaba fort with a big fleet. Angria was not confident to confront him on the sea. So he settled with the

Siddi allegedly offering him a substantial amount in silver¹⁴. Though nothing is known about this alleged strange deal with the Siddi, one still gets the clue from the repeated complaints made by the Portuguese to the Mughal Emperor about an unusual understanding between the Angria and the Siddi. Under the circumstances, it would not be wrong to presume that the Siddi might have come to secure his share of spoils which was not given to him earlier by the Angria.

Earlier, equally pertinent was a representation which had been made diplomatically to the Portuguese Viceroy João de Saldanha da Gama by Maratha chieftains Pillaji Jadhav and Ramchandra Pant that he should strive for peace between Kanhoji and the British through his good offices. But the Viceroy refrained to do so under the excuse that the relations between the two European powers were not cordial¹⁵.

It may be recalled that Kanhoji had also chastised Phond Sawant II, Desai of Kudal by setting afire Vengurla and many nearby villages. Phond Sawant had sought the help of the Portuguese but they did not desire to be in bad books with Kanhoji. Even inspite of the Dutch attack on Vijaydurg in 1724, Kanhoji did not lose courage and in 1727 he seized the rich British cargo ship Darby besides the capture of several Dutch and French ships. As a matter of fact, the British trade incurred heavy losses because East India Company in order to protect the British trade during this period had to maintain an armed squadron at the cost of £ 50,000¹⁶.

In concert with this approach, the British backed anyone who was on inimical terms with Kanhoji Angria. They also incited the Siddi but he showed disinterest most probably on account of his adjustment in the past with the Angria. The backing of Baji Rao to Kanhoji might be another reason for their non-cooperation¹⁷. The conflict between Sambhaji of Kolhapur and Shahu continued still and the former always backed the Nizam as he envied Baji Rao who was making rapid strides all around. Baji Rao had already annexed Malwa and had humbled the Nizam in 1723. He routed him again in 1728 at Palkhed and compelled him to alienate his supporter, the Raja of Kolhapur¹⁸. The Siddi having sensed the imminent danger tried the support of the Portuguese by approaching the General of Bassein, D. Antonio Casco e Mello. But the Viceroy João de Saldanha da Gama was fully aware how the Siddi had been harassing the Portuguese in the past and therefore directed the General on 13th August 1728 to capture the two barcos the Siddi was awaiting from the Holy city of Mecca, which did not carry the Portuguese cartazes (permits)¹⁹. The Viceroy was ready to make peace with the Siddi provided the latter agreed to honour the earlier treaty signed with him in 1668. He also wanted the Siddi to demolish his newly constructed fort in Madrafaba (Madrafaval) near Diu²⁰. The tough stand taken by the Portuguese mellowed the spirit of the Siddi and he had to adjust a peace with them in October 1728 to their satisfaction²¹. There were solid reasons for the Siddi to come to terms with the Portuguese. Firstly, he was not favoured by the Mughal court as before during the times of Aurangzeb, though he maintained

good relations with the Mughal Nawab of Surat for getting his annual subsidy. On the contrary, the Portuguese were so active in the Mughal Court that on 2nd June 1727, the Viceroy had received the news from Delhi assuring them great fortunes in near future as Fr. Manoel de Figueiredo had informed to Dona Juliana Dias, Emperor's intention to remove the Siddi from his office of Admiralty and hand over that charge to the Portuguese²². The happiness of the Viceroy, Dom Saldanha da Gama knew no bounds as this new favourable development was not only to bring him an immense honour but also the State's poor financial position would have brightened up if the naval charge in Surat was to be entrusted to the Portuguese. However, by this time Dona Juliana Dias was already over 80 years old and she found it difficult to do justice to her assignment in the Mughal Court²³. The second reason of the Siddi's coming closer to the Portuguese was the merciless desecration of famous temple of Lord Shiva built by celebrated Swami Brahmendra near Chiplun, home town of Baji Rao, at the hands of Siddi Saat in February 1727 and the consequent irate reaction of the Marathas which resulted into a serious threat to the Siddi. Swami Brahmendra was beholden by Shahu as his spiritual Guru and most of the Maratha Sardars including the Peshwa held him in high esteem. The Swami naturally exercised a tremendous religious influence over the Hindu population in the Maratha country. He was revered not only by the Angrias but even the Siddi of Janjira paid him high respects which is reflected in contribution of the funds, lands and gifts for the said Lord Shiva temple. The Swami used to organise a big celebration there every year

on the Shivaratri day which in 1727 fell on 8th February. Siddi Saat, in-charge of the fort of Anjanvel, in the vicinity pounced upon the temple on the same day, destroyed it, looted the wealth, disfigured the idols and committed atrocities of serious nature in the absence of the Swami there on the day. The perverse act not only enraged the Swami but also aroused the passions of the populace in the entire Maratha country. The Siddi of Janjira offered his apology immediately for the wanton action of his officer, and tried to restore the entire property. But the enraged Swami pleaded Shahu and other Sardars to initiate war against the Siddi of Janjira. But none came forward to undertake the difficult task. Baji Rao was not so inclined despite the pleas from Shahu and Swami as the expedition would not lead to any immediate gain. Besides, he had not excelled himself in naval operations which were necessary for the purpose. Kanhoji too was not favourably disposed to the war, but after his death, his son Sekhoji in 1729 was willing to start a drastic action against the Siddi²⁴.

Kanhoji spent the evening of his life peacefully and left behind six sons --- Sekhoji, Sambhaji, Tulaji, Manaji, Yesaji and Dondoji. Of these, Manaji and Yesaji were illegitimate. After father's death, while Sekhoji retained Kolaba, Sambhaji took charge of the fort of Vijaydurg and the other brothers were asked to carry out various assignments. It is important to understand the attitude adopted by the Portuguese at this juncture. The instructions of the Viceroy, João de Saldanha da Gama on 4th November 1730 to

Fr. Figueiredo at the Mughal Court reveal that the Portuguese were ready to assist the Mughals with 3000-4000 men for restoring Kalyan and Bhivandi to the Emperor. The missionary was to apprise the Emperor of the collusion of Shahu and the Arabs, with the Siddi who was issuing his own permits to the ships of traders thereby defying the Portuguese King's orders and thereby harming the royal revenue. According to another instruction, the Portuguese offered themselves to take care of Surat and to convoy the Mughal ships to and from Mecca to bring even horses without paying any duties on them because the Siddi was ruining the Mughal trade of Surat and its district. They were ready to do this service on the same yearly subsidy the Mughal Court was providing to the Siddi for the purpose. Still another instruction was aimed at drawing the Emperor's attention towards the growing power of Shahu who could not only conquer Konkan but also was in a position to threaten even his dominions and for that very reason, in the past, even the powerful Aurangzeb had to come down to the Deccan to throw out the Marathas from those places²⁵.

What emerges clearly from these instructions is that they wanted to replace the Siddis, who were the Mughal Admirals in Surat and a possible Mughal attack to check the Maratha expansion.

On the other hand, the British were cautious and they concluded a firm peace and friendship treaty with the chief of Sawantwadi in 1730 against the Angria²⁶. The Marathas were very much on the side of the new Sarkhel, Sekhoji

Angria. In order to avert any possible threat to him, they initiated their assault by raiding the Portuguese province of the North at the beginning of the year 1731. Their possessions in Kalyan and Salsete were besieged. As was expected, the Portuguese were assisted by the Mughals. However, the Mughal army did not prove effective against the Marathas. The Portuguese Viceroy João de Saldanha de Gama reported to the Crown that there existed many Hindu Generals in the Mughal army and this factor had helped Shahu to a great extent. However, the Portuguese were promptly rendered help by the closer European neighbour, the British. On this occasion, the timely British help helped the Portuguese to prevent the island of Salsete from falling into the hands of the Marathas. The Portuguese retaliated by capturing several Hindu women and children in their area and threatened to convert them if the Marathas continued the attack. They had also managed quick reinforcements. The appearance of their fleet also had its effects. Though Sekhoji attacked the Portuguese vessels, the Marathas did not press the Portuguese hard and hostilities soon ceased mainly due to the reasons explained above and partly on account of the successful mediation of Robert Covian²⁷.

However, the Marathas had already taken the recalcitrant stand to take to task anybody who came in their march towards expansion and this latest assault perhaps was to gauge the real strength of the Portuguese. They had also subdued the Raja of Kolhapur, who withdrew his claims under the Treaty of Warna on 13th April 1731 and agreed to be an

honourable vassal under Shahu. The prolonged rivalry that existed between the Peshwa and another chief of Shahu, Senapati, culminated into the settlement though favourable to the former. It also attracted many Sardars to be against him and the Peshwa could take shelter and protection solely under Shahu²⁸. However, the Maratha power showed the consistent progress and growth. The Portuguese on the other hand did not prefer to sever their existing relations either with the Angria or with the Siddi²⁹. However, when Sambhaji Angria captured three Portuguese pals laden with costly goods from Daman in 1732, they were greatly alarmed³⁰. The secret deal between the Angria and the Siddi was no more in existence now. The naval clash also occurred between the naval forces of the Angria and the Siddi in August 1731³¹.

As the Portuguese had seized two barcos of the Siddi two years ago, he deputed his envoy to Goa to get them back. The proceedings of the State Council held in Panelim, Goa on 26th April 1732 throw a flood of light on what was going on in the minds of the Portuguese. They still considered the Siddi as the best among their neighbours. They were well aware that the territories and the sand-bars of this 'unique' neighbour were strategically situated between the lands of the 'pirate' Angria and the rulers of Antequiry and Melondim. Moreover, only the Siddi had lived upto their expectations acknowledging the international norms and always acting upon the dictates of his conscience. For them, he had always fought against the Angria and carried on trade honestly with most of the potentates maintaining peace and systematically

prolonging wars if necessitated under the prevailing circumstances. This role distinguished him from other coastal chiefs. Secondly, the Siddi being the protégé of the Mughal Emperor for generations had been on most friendly terms with them and especially in times of crises such as during the times of the protracted war against the Marathas in 1683 when he had rendered help to them in defending Chaul.

Taking these facts into account, even the insistence of possessing the Portuguese cartazes had been overlooked in case of the ships of the Siddi and this soft corner for him had continued still. So under these circumstances, the Siddi's envoy had come to Goa now to get back his captured vessels failing which the Siddi was to sever his ties with the Estado da India. Since Chaul and Caranja could be besieged by him with ease and the Estado was not in a formidable position to protect them owing to the lack of hands and losses already suffered in the war against the Marathas, the Councillors appeared in favour of supporting the Siddi. The issues of the misfortunes faced by them in the recent past in Mombassa against the Arabs and the capture by the Siddi of one of their war galleys, which had gone to the North carrying a lot of money for paying the salaries to the armed staff in October 1730, and dependence of Chaul on the Siddi were also taken into consideration prior to taking decision on the future course of action. Keeping in view all these factors, the Council therefore resolved to hand over to the Siddi two galíots anchored in the dockyard, one of them navigable and another needing repairs³². When a Councillor proposed war against the Siddi, the Viceroy in a letter of

6th February 1733 wrote to the Secretary of State in Lisbon that the war proposal was rejected because the Siddi was a powerful neighbour at Chaul, always distinguishing himself among all the coastal chiefs, and the Estado had suffered considerable losses on account of wars against the Marathas³³.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, it can be surmised that the war clouds were already there and the Portuguese felt it essential to prepare for any eventuality in future. The Marathas were looking forward for an opportunity to strike at any moment. It was at this juncture, Siddi Rasul Khan passed away in February 1733 resulting into serious discord for succession in Janjira. The Marathas thus seized the opportunity to intervene as the eldest son of Siddi Rasul Khan had been assassinated by other aspirants to power, and Abdur Rahman, the son of the slain Abdulla, fled to the Marathas for his own protection and to seek help in securing the Nawabship. Though the days were approaching monsoon, Shahu at once sent Baji Rao and Fateh Singh Bhonsle with a contingent of 5000 soldiers to attack Janjira. Another contingent was dispatched under Sripatrao Pratinidhi to raid the Siddi's southern areas. Baji Rao took the shortest course traversing through mountainous terrain of Bhor and Pali and arrived near Rajpuri in a week's time on 2nd May. His presence there was so sudden that no opportunity was left for the Siddi to provide adequate protection to Rajpuri and Khokri which were conquered with ease. He also succeeded to capture the Siddi's fleet anchored in the port because the Siddi Chief, Shekhji, was

enticed by the Peshwa with the assurance of a great prize. Shekhji therefore recommended to the Peshwa the simultaneous attacks from the land and sea to seize Janjira and had offered all help to direct the ships in the sea around Janjira. In spite of the rough Arabian Sea in pre-monsoon days, Sekhoji was in constant touch with Baji Rao to organise the assault. He even called on him personally on 6th May at Rajpuri. Though Baji Rao was keen on springing surprise before the Siddis in fortified Janjira, Sekhoji Angria wanted him to put off the plan till the monsoon was over. He suggested that the Peshwa should station himself till then in front of Janjira with a view to disrupt all the channels of communication on land while he himself would strive to secure British and the Portuguese neutrality in the matter and utilise the rainy season to seize Thal, Rewas, Chaul and other points on the coasts with which the Siddis were in touch for their food supplies. He also wanted to capture Underi, prior to his plan to swoop upon the island fortification of Janjira with his fleet³⁴. Baji Rao with great hesitation gave his nod to the suggestions of Sekhoji. On 6th June, Sekhoji informed the Peshwa that the Siddi would not opt for a direct raid on the latter. He therefore advised him to keep his forces on alert against any surprise attack by the Siddi³⁵.

On the other hand, the contingents under Sripatrao Pratinidhi and Fateh Singh Bhonsle, backed by Udaji Pawar and his brothers, Pillaji Jadhav and Bakaji Naik Mahadik and several others were lending help to the Peshwa in his adventure. The fleets under Angria brothers --- Sekhoji,

Sambhaji and Manaji encouraged by the two widows of Kanhoji, Laxmibai and Mathrurabai, lent their full support to this war³⁶. Baji Rao had the secret parleys with Yashwantrao Potnis, to effect the surrender of Raigarh, the capital during Shivaji's time, but subsequently had been under the control of the Siddi since 1689. He dispatched a force of 800 men to subdue the Siddi's garrison which was almost inclined for the surrender but the news of the party bringing the bribe to be paid was leaked out resulting into the swoop on it by the Siddi's men. The Peshwa sought more amount from Satara but by the time it reached, the Pratinidhi was already in Mahad and he made fresh bid with his limited detachment and did succeed in occupying Raigarh in June itself. The recovery of Raigarh was greeted as a great milestone by the Marathas who were emotionally attached to it and the Pratinidhi received encomiums from all quarters though it was not a very significant achievement in reality. But the event perturbed the Peshwa as he was deprived of his prize of labour by his rival. It led to the serious turn to the rivalry. The clandestine modus operandi followed by the Pratinidhi for impeding the Peshwa's strategies annoyed the latter to such an extent that he swore to avenge his insult by the Prathinidhi for declining to call on him at Rajpuri. Obviously, with the discord between the two, a joint action did not materialise and each one of them indulged in the activity of thwarting each other's strategy³⁷.

No wonder then, the other foes took the benefit of the abnormal happenings in the Maratha Court. The British

took unusual interest now in the Siddi and the naval help rushed even from Surat where Tegbakt Khan who ruled it almost independently established the contact with the Siddi³⁸. The Nizam too was sending succour to Siddi Saat as is evident from the news dispatched by Vasudeo Hari to Baji Rao³⁹. The Portuguese State Council at Goa too discussed the issue of Siddi and resolved on 14th April 1733 not only to return his two galiots but some more vessels as they feared at that time that he (Siddi) could impede their trade at Surat, Camboja and other Gujarati ports. It also resolved to ask Siddi to depute a responsible representative to conclude the ratification of the treaty signed with him earlier⁴⁰.

To the chagrin of the Siddi, he had earlier given up the forts in the interior owing to the imminent arrival of the Maratha troops. Baji Rao's forces had garrisoned them before Raigarh was restored. He had also appointed his army officers at Danda-Rajpuri, Nanivali and Kumbharli to frustrate the Siddi's move to procure the food supply from there. Sekhoji Angria raided the northern area and seized the Mughal centre at Chaul. A detachment under Tukoji Kadu while proceeding towards Rajpuri confronted the contingent led by the Siddi Anol. They were chased upto Rajkot, the last remaining relic of Mughal power in Kolaba, which was pounded in June. In the following month, Bakaji Naik Mahadik left Suvarndurg with a view to storm Anjanvel. While passing by the Parshuram temple at Chiplun, on the way, he found a Siddi officer getting ready to demolish the temple as he had already plundered and burnt the houses of Brahmins and indulged in cow-slaughter. The Siddi officer was however

repulsed and pushed back across the river. How the religion played the important role while dealing with the Siddis in this war is clear from the representation forwarded by different communities of the area to the Peshwa. They had expressed their readiness to collect an amount of Rs. one lakh to preclude any religious outrage in future⁴¹. In August, it is noted that one Naroshankar showed the courage to pass on the part of the revenue called Moglai to Murar-Deshmukh, a Sardar from the Maratha side for participating actively in this war against the Siddis⁴².

In a related development, Sekhoji Angria besieged the fortress of Thal from where the Siddi carried provisions to Underi. He pleaded for some cavalymen from Baji Rao as the British, the Portuguese and Nizam's officers had provided immediate aid to the Siddi. On account of quick arrival of the cavalry force from the Peshwa under Keshav Lingoji and Anand Rao Shirke, Thal could be seized in July despite the brave defence put in by the Siddis. More impressive task was achieved by the force sent against Revas fort which was captured despite the stiff resistance offered by the Siddi's garrison there resulting into bloodshed and escapades. Angria thereafter marched towards the island fortress of Underi. But the British came to the rescue of the Siddis openly by directing the vessel Mary with soldiers, artillery and provisions and occupied it. In a diplomatic move, Sekhoji Angria withdrew his agents who had proceeded to Bombay for seeking British neutrality in the war against Siddi and decided to interrupt the European aid from Kolaba

and Gheria including the Portuguese vessels. On the other side, as part of the strategy, the Pratinidhi had left southwards to Anjanvel. He had realised that in order to seize the fort of Anjanvel, the possession of Gowalkot, in the neighbourhood of the temple of Parshuram, was vitally important. Therefore, he proceeded towards Chiplun, where Angria had already stationed 1500-strong detachment under Mahadik and Diwan Raghunath Hari. The Siddi had garrisoned there Mandangad, Bankot, Gowalkot and the strong fortification of Anjanvel. But the Angria succeeded in annexing Bankot and Mandangad by the end of May. Vijaygad was pounded by the Marathas in July, but they were overpowered by the Siddi's vanquished garrisons of Anjanvel, Vijaygad and Gowalkot. However, Mahadik with all his force chased them. The Siddi had been cornered now everywhere⁴³.

As far as Underi was concerned, the Marathas could not capture it as it was already occupied by the British. While the British were involved in aiding the Siddi not to lose the island fort, Shum-Shud-Daula, Secretary of the Mughal Emperor known before as Khan Dauran wrote to the President of the British pleading for aid on behalf of the Mughal Emperor for the Siddi in collaboration with the Portuguese so that the Siddi could retrieve his forfeited lands from the hands of Shahu and the Angria. The British showed willingness to undertake the responsibility only if the Emperor was ready to incur the expenses thereto. But when they received a plea from Siddi Saat on 7th August earnestly beseeching their succour against the Maratha Sardar,

Sripatrao, who had already seized his three forts and endangered the other two as well, they unhesitatingly decided to rush to him the succour⁴⁴.

It is relevant to underline here that Sekhoji Angria did not like Pratinidhi marching towards Anjanvel as he felt that his victory there might prevent him from possessing the strategic part of the coastline as a share of the spoils. He was also backed by the Peshwa against his rival on whose advice he even called back the detachment led by Mahadik, who was almost on the point of attacking Gowalkot. The rivalry between the Pratinidhi and the Peshwa had taken such a serious turn that the latter had allegedly sent some of his elements to the Siddi with a request to resist the former tooth and nail. The Peshwa took another diplomatic step. He urged upon the Portuguese to oppose Sekhoji Angria and even tried to obtain the British help at this time against him. It is on account of such reasons that the Portuguese Viceroy wrote to his Captain of Chaul that it was difficult for the Marathas to capture the fort of Janjira at that juncture for they had turned their attention to capture the forts of the Angria. The Portuguese did not help Baji Rao in his endeavour and the Viceroy opined that though the defeat of the Angria would be beneficial to the Portuguese, Marathas would have proved more harmful to the Portuguese than the Angria. Hence he preferred a prolonged war between Angria and Baji Rao and directed his captain to see that Angria's forts did not fall into Baji Rao's hands. The captain was asked to render help to Baji Rao just superficially so that the

Angria was not defeated. The Viceroy was not sure of Baji Rao's real designs. He suspected that Baji Rao might have planned this short-term war to embarrass the British and the Portuguese because by this way he wanted to deprive Siddi from both the British and the Portuguese, so that he could conquer Janjira with ease. Therefore, he further instructed the Captain to help the Siddi whenever he was in trouble and let know secretly to the Angria about the references made about him by Baji Rao in such a way that he did not come to know⁴⁵.

The Pratinidhi, who was in an embarrassing position, with the help of Mahadik laid siege to Gowalkot and invited its commandant, Siddi Saat, to meet him personally and advised him to join Shahu's service. The Siddi pretended that he was willing to do so but desired that the force of Angria should be recalled as he feared their presence harmful to his own interests. Mahadik showed his willingness to raise the siege. But before finalising the terms of surrender, Siddi Saat showed the signs of hesitation and said to the Pratinidhi that he would hand over the fort only after the monsoon was over. The embarrassed Pratinidhi sought immediately the detachments from Vishalgarh and launched attacks on the Siddi's outposts on 30th July. Subsequently, he reached with his troops just close to the fort from where the Siddi's garrison retaliated with full strength. The Siddi also surprised the Pratinidhi in August. After Sekhoji's death on 28th August, Sambhaji Angria could not send aid to the Pratinidhi as he was engrossed in looking after the affairs at Kolaba. The Pratinidhi however

continued to put pressure on Gowalkot even during rains. But he was defeated by the Siddis with the help of their warships. The forces commanded by Gangadhar and Mahaji Ghatge rushed to capture Anjanvel also did not fare well⁴⁶.

Against this background, the war came to an end, and the Pratinidhi returned to the capital by the end of October. The Portuguese had not joined the war openly but their sympathies were with the Siddis. The Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil in his letter dated 13th December 1733 to the Secretary of State in Lisbon disclosed that the Marathas were victorious, and that they had captured many forts and lands of the Siddi on account of the act of treachery of one of his chiefs. The two main detachments had captured his maritime bases and as the attack was launched on his fort and the lands during the monsoon, he could not be helped by them. He did send Antonio Cardim Froes with two ships to Danda ostensibly to mediate the peace between the two belligerents but his presence there was to help the Siddi openly if it was felt essential⁴⁷.

According to the Portuguese, the Marathas did attack the Siddi for months together but in the end could achieve nothing with regard to Janjira because the Siddi was backed by the British with their two fleets. The Angria's fleet had grown on account of the fresh acquisition of the Siddi's fleet by treachery. He sometimes sought peace with the Portuguese on the one hand and on the other seized their ships clarifying to the Viceroy that he did so as they did not carry his permits. As the Siddi had already lost several

places and the Marathas could neither capture Janjira nor Anjanvel and Gowalkot. Baji Rao suggested to conclude a treaty with the Siddi as the offer had been made by the British to mediate in the dispute. However, the Peshwa had gone away from Rajpuri before the conclusion of the truce that took place in December 1733. A few days later, Siddi Saat and Siddi Masud carried troops in their fleets and besieged the fort of Bankot under Angria. The garrison of Angria led by Dhondoji Angria had to abandon it during the night when it was stormed by the Siddi. Dhondoji Angria had to seek succour from the Maratha chief Vasudeo Joshi to defend Rajkot as the British had joined hands with the Siddis in the attack⁴⁸.

It ought to be noted that the Portuguese did have the ambition to join the war as it was significant for their interests, especially in the North. The British were already siding the Siddis against the Marathas. But they were more interested in harming the Angria. As soon as the monsoon receded, Siddi Saat and Siddi Masud rushed to the British authorities in Bombay to chalk out in detail the future strategy with a view to recapture the lost centres. The parleys ultimately culminated in a treaty which was signed between the seven Siddi chiefs and the government of Bombay in December 1733. Under this treaty, both the parties vowed to join hands on land and sea to fight the war with the aim to eliminate the Angrias. Fortunately, the Angria brothers buried their personal differences to unite after the death of Sekhoji. Sambhaji Angria realising the new responsibilities, beset with problems assigned important tasks to his brothers.

While Dhondoji was asked to look after the civil administration of Kolaba, Manaji was appointed commandant of the fleet. The virtues and skills of Tulaji and Yesaji were not ignored. But Sekhoji's death was definitely a great blow to the whole Angria family in which the opinions were veering round the idea of the stoppage of war itself. Sambhaji Angria had always befriended the enemies of his eldest brother Sekhoji whose disappearance from the scene had totally changed the scenario. The Peshwa made a fresh bid against Janjira. He had also sent a word to Sambhaji to come down to Rajpuri. Sambhaji, however reacted to the emissary that: "His brother was a friend of the Peshwa, not he". In contrast, a strong British fleet sent succour to Janjira in a spectacular volte face on the part of the British who had been harassed mercilessly by the Siddis for long. Since Sambhaji showed disinterest, it was easier for the Siddi's garrisons of Anjanvel and Gowalkot to expedite the aid to Janjira. With no danger from the Angrias on the sea, more and more succour reached Janjira from Surat. Besides, the Nizam and the Portuguese also came to the aid of the Siddi. As a result, the Peshwa recommended Shahu to opt for the peace proposals sent through the Nizam if the Siddi ceded Anjanvel and Underi. But Shahu asked him to extract the Siddi's conditions from the British. Thus, finally truce was announced on 1st December 1733. Siddi Abdur Rahman, the Peshwa's choice was granted Nawabship of Janjira because the Marathas agreed not to demand more than what they had captured actually⁴⁹. However, the Siddi had forfeited all with the exception of Janjira, Anjanvel, Underi and Gowalkot,

while the Marathas gained Raigad, Thal, Revas, in addition to Siddi's territories and outposts.

What can be said with certitude is that Sambhaji Angria had his own differences with the Peshwa because the latter favoured his brother Manaji. Yet, Sambhaji was aware of the new danger arising out of the Siddi's alliance with the British in December 1733. In order to secure the Portuguese neutrality, he returned one of their galiots from Gheria alongwith the priests captured earlier⁵⁰. In reality, he was desperate and strongly desired to conclude a peace treaty with the Portuguese, and to appease them further, he released one more pal which had been seized from Daman. However, his shrewd gestures hardly had any impact on the Viceroy who asked him to return all the Portuguese pals and mend his ways in future if he was interested in peace with the Portuguese⁵¹.

It is difficult to gauge the real cause of dissension between Sambhaji and Manaji. True, the Peshwa lent his support to Manaji against his brother Sambhaji. But then there is also a Portuguese letter dated 13th December 1734 written by the Viceroy congratulating the Captain of Chaul, Caetano de Souza Pereira, for his successful attempt in creating rift between the two brothers. The Viceroy wished that the civil war between both the brothers should prolong and he surmised that Shahu would encourage Manaji, he being the weaker⁵².

In fact, his assumption did not prove unreasonable as

Manaji was fully backed by Baji Rao, Shahu and even the British. To safeguard their own interests, the Portuguese also reposed faith in Manaji. Taking a cue from these developments, the Siddis tried to reassert themselves once again and they recaptured the fortress of Bankot and marched towards Raigad with a resolve to possess it again. An inevitable consequence of these happenings, was that Shahu admonished Baji Rao and asked him to rush to the war field. The Peshwa warned the British to keep off from the war. Soon a strong contingent of 3000 troops reached Raigad in January 1734 from Satara and the Siddis who had besieged Raigad had to face the defeat in the face of the death of their leader Siddi Afwani⁵³. The Marathas then occupied Mahad in February as Siddi Saat had abandoned it to save Anjanvel. In the following month, the Maratha force soon recaptured Bankot. With the recovery of all the lost possessions, they descended upon Gowalkot and Anjanvel forts which had been heavily protected by the Siddi Saat who had also obtained aid from the British and the Portuguese at this critical time⁵⁴.

Shahu did not take any chances. He sent five cannons and issued orders to every Maratha fort to supply one piece of cannon to the besieging force. He also showed keen interest in casting of new guns. However, Siddi Saat resisted gallantly in defending the fort, and even made surprise sorties on the besieging Marathas during April and May under the cover of fire of his guns⁵⁵. The naval force on the side of Marathas that had surrounded Anjanvel could not seize it for several reasons. One reason among them was that the Portuguese and British vessels always obstructed it.

Once the fleet of Angria giving a slip to the Siddi's patrolling ships .. penetrated deep upto Anjanvel and opened fire. But on account of the violent storm, this fleet had to seek shelter of Gheria⁵⁶. Even then, victory was elusive for the Marathas because the Siddi was openly backed by the British and the Portuguese who always waited for opportunities to exploit the situation to their own advantages. Soon followed the civil war in the house of Angrias. In the struggle, Manaji had to escape and seek shelter in the Portuguese fort at Chaul in December 1734 because Sambhaji planned to eliminate him. It was a good opportunity for the Portuguese to play their own game in the matter. While Baji Rao instigated Manaji and promoted his interests, the British and the Portuguese helped him financially and provided all the war material so that Manaji could inflict maximum damage on his brother. He got 7 guns, 200 shots, 30 barrels of powder, 20 slabs of lead, 3000 small shots for portridge and 20 pieces of Dangaree, besides Rs.4000 from the British alone⁵⁸. Consequently, Manaji could soon storm successfully the fort of Kolaba. Being enraged with his brother Yesaji who had been appointed by Sambhaji to look after the fort, he gouged his eyes. Siddi Saat who was with Manaji made fervent appeals to rush reinforcements at Kolaba. The British sensing that he might surrender the fort provided him an advance of Rs.30,000⁵⁹. The Portuguese on the other hand had approached the Nizam who was planning action against the Marathas. Baji Rao is also said to have written to the Portuguese Viceroy that he was negotiating on peace with the Siddi against Sambhaji Angria and wanted to enlist the

support of the English and the Portuguese to defeat him. The Portuguese though liked the destruction of Sambhaji, they never desired the Marathas to become the masters of his forts and hence the Viceroy was for the continuance of war between the Angria brothers. Simultaneously, the Portuguese continued to help the Siddi against the Marathas, lest Baji Rao would create problems for them⁶⁰. Therefore, it can be safely stated that the Portuguese policy was to weaken all their enemies. However, Baji Rao was in a position to humiliate Sambhaji who had to conclude a treaty with him in February 1735 that drove him out to his southern possessions.

Sambhaji retained the title of Sarkhel and Manaji was conferred the title of Vajrath Maab⁶¹. As a result, Sambhaji Angria did not participate in the campaign to acquire Gowalkot. Shahu persuaded Sambhaji to help and support the land forces, who subsequently obliged by deputing the Kiledar of Jaygarh there. But the naval operation was extremely difficult. The fort was required to be subjected to a three-pronged attack if it was to be captured. In the meanwhile, monsoon was approaching fast and the troops had to raise the sieze to lay it again after the monsoon. Till then they encamped near Chiplun⁶².

The successes of the Marathas were communicated to the Nizam by Shahu himself. He wrote to him that the Siddis of Rajpuri had been indulging in tyrannical actions for a long time and had rebelled even against the Mughals. Since they were in no mood to surrender Raigad and other places falling under his own dominion according to the order of the

Mughal Emperor, he resolved to exterminate them and fortunately some officers under the Siddi, who had alienated them on account of their tyranny came over to the side of Marathas seeking shelter thereby handing over forts to Baji Rao and Sripat Rao Pratinidhi. Some among them, however ran away to seek the help of their old master, the son of Siddi Sarur. Therefore the said Maratha officers were planning punitive action against them. He further reported that the Siddi sought peace which was granted and Baji Rao had been asked to negotiate for the peace. But the Siddis did not keep up the promise and occupied the fort of Rairi (Raigad). In retaliation, Udaji Pawar bravely defeated the armies of the son of Siddi Ambar, captured Thana Panchor and raided Mahad where Siddi Saat was staying. He did go from Mahad to Janjira but was chased everywhere. He revealed that Jivaji Khande Rao, Prabhu Chittanvis and Udaji Pawar conquered Bankot, Thana and Mahad and besieged the fort of Golkot. However, a messenger of the English offered to mediate for peace which was accepted⁶³.

In the meanwhile, the rainy season (1735) was utilised by the Siddi to prepare himself for the imminent war. On 2nd May 1735, Nawab Siddi Abdul Rahman wrote a friendly letter to the Portuguese Viceroy Conde de Sandomil inviting his attention to the unique and age-old friendship between the two States⁶⁴. The Viceroy responded soon and in June, Vasudeo Joshi informed the Peshwa the news received by him about the offer made by Inchbird and Siddi Saat to the Portuguese at Bassein to hand over the fort of Caranja to the

Siddi so as to facilitate the water supply for Underi⁶⁵. Another report from Subhaji Mankar discloses that the Siddi had also established rapport with the Dutch who used to bring merchandise from Surat for their disposal at Janjira⁶⁶. As Shahu was personally involved in this warfare, he warned the Raja of Kolhapur, his cousin in October for helping the Siddi secretly⁶⁷. It is observed that in the same month, the Portuguese Viceroy permitted the Siddi to transport the rice from their area badly needed by him. But the Portuguese were very cautious in their actions. They had so far not supported any party openly and they did not help anybody unless they could derive some benefit for themselves. While providing facilities to the Siddi, they had in mind the fort of Madrafaval (Jafarabad in the south-eastern coast of Kathiawar peninsula) which the Siddi had built up and they wanted now to raze it but they were going ahead with utmost caution to attain that end because they were scared of the Siddi's potentiality which could damage their trade interest⁶⁸. The Siddi had deputed his envoy to Goa for seeking the help of the Portuguese navy in the war against Shahu. The Viceroy also learnt from his Captain in the North and the British in Bombay that they were already in the process of sending aid to Gowalkot⁶⁹. As per the information received through the Siddi's envoy, the Marathas were aiming to launch an attack on the island of Salsete⁷⁰.

In an interesting development, as the Nawab of Surat, Tegbakt Khan, had not paid the Siddi his annual subsidy, he captured his several vessels at the mouth of Tapti in August

1735. The Nawab almost acted as an independent ruler there but was compelled by the Siddi to pay him his arrears as well as the current year's subsidy totalling Rs.3,90,000. The Mughal Emperor had no hold over the Nawab since 1733 as he sided the British. The Emperor inclined to allow the British the status and the revenues of Admiral of Surat, but the latter were not to accept the given position forcibly as they were more interested to lay attention on Bombay and its surroundings from where they had to provide the Siddi with money, ships and war materials at that juncture. Since the Marathas were a menace to Surat and the Nawab had to shell out the full compensation to the British in case they were to accept the Admiralty, he was compelled by these circumstances to concede to the Siddi due status in Surat⁷¹.

Curiously enough, the fleet of Sambhaji Angria under Mhaske stationed at Kalusta had cruised one of the channels running deep inside the besieged fort of Gowalkot. We learn from the Portuguese Viceroy's letter dated 3rd October 1735 to the captain of Chaul that he caught the Siddis unawares and destroyed their batteries and camp. But Sambhaji owing to his serious disenchantment with Baji Rao did not offer any co-operation, though Siddi Saat's plight was pitiable. However, the main cause of his disinterestedness was the incoming powerful British fleet which had come there to negotiate for peace. Coincidentally, the Portuguese fleet too was seen moving near Anjanvel posing threat to Suvarnadurg, Vijaydurg and Jaygarh⁷². Therefore, in a conciliatory move, Sambhaji deputed from Vijaydurg, one of his vessels to Goa on

2nd October with a messenger to meet the Viceroy Conde de Sandomil and seek his help (i) to allow his ships in the river Chaul and (ii) to provide his vessels the facilities of water etc. in all the Portuguese ports. The Viceroy asked him to return first his three pals caaptured from Daman if further talks were to be continued on his proposal⁷³.

With the moving out of Mhaske's fleet from the Gowalkot channel, Siddi Saat who had been keeping a low profile suddenly started his attacking spree. He sailed from Anjanvel in his fleet and touched down the seaside villages of Angria setting them afire and looting them⁷⁴. In fact, the Peshwa and Shahu's Court had alienated Sambhaji Angria to such an extent that he even entertained for parleys with Siddi Saat who gladly received his move for aid against his brother Manaji in retrieving Kolaba⁷⁵. Siddi Saat's rise was extraordinary. He seized Bankot again in December slaying the entire garrison in the fort. But while the fresh Maratha detachment from Satara was sighted before Bankot, the fort was abandoned during the night, but the Siddi had taken utmost care to lift away the store material and provisions in his vessels⁷⁶. The Portuguese Viceroy Conde de Sandomil wrote to the Crown in January 1736 that the Siddi was defending his naval forts well while he himself was safeguarding the State's interests by searching the avenues of mediating the peace with all the warring factions⁷⁷. On 8th February, he further expressed his happiness over Siddi Saat's victory at Bankot but was surprised to note its quick recovery by the Marathas. Since the fort had suffered a considerable damage, he felt quite satisfied on learning

about of one more fort of the Angria was almost demolished. The Viceroy hoped that since Baji Rao had gone to a far away place, the war would end soon⁷⁸. Though Siddi Saat had lost Bankot and many of his soldiers, the Marathas too had lost the lives of 40 of their brave warriors including Bakoji Mahadik⁷⁹. By April 1736 Baji Rao's most trusted General, Pillaji Jadhav was entrusted with the task of fresh attack but his strategy to storm Gowalkot from the village of Kalusta did not materialise in time though he himself had made deep inroads in Dhamni channel. As a result, Siddi Saat could not carry provisions from Dhamni. Yet, he manipulated to take the same hastily through Kalusta waters⁸⁰.

To retrieve the situation, the bold and enterprising Siddi Saat then all of a sudden swooped Revas and occupied the fort bravely. There he put the entire garrison to death showing no mercy. He then proceeded towards Kolaba and the helpless Manaji frantically appealed for aid from his benefactor Chimnaji Appa. As for Sambhaji, he had already returned all the cloth pertaining to the merchants of Daman but conveyed his helplessness to send back the seized ships on account of the shortage of sailors who were ultimately supplied by the Viceroy from Goa on 8th May 1736. But inspite of this, the ships were not restored by him to the Portuguese⁸¹.

Manaji in the meanwhile demolished a neighbouring mosque near Rajkot and had positioned himself to face the advancing Siddi Saat. The demolition of the mosque was a matter of little importance for the Portuguese. What they

wondered at was the infringement of the existing peace treaty by Manaji. The absence of Baji Rao did cause some anxiety to the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil, but he greatly relied on Siddi Saat and was eager to hear about the fall of Kolaba in the hands of the latter. The Viceroy was also hopeful of the Mughal attack against Shahu⁸². However, Chimnaji Appa sprang a surprise. He left Satara with his force with such a speed that he arrived near Charhai Kamorle on 18th April. Siddi Saat was unaware of his arrival till last. When Chimnaji's forces suddenly positioned themselves before Siddi Saat, he thought them to be Manaji's detachment. Being entrapped thus unexpectedly, he realised that he had to confront openly now the Maratha cavalry three times its number. To his astonishment, the rush of Maratha cavalry with gusto straight into his formation, proved utterly disastrous for him. Practically, entire Siddi detachment was killed leaving a few who jumped in the boats and escaped. The daring and fearless Siddi Saat with his valiant captains, Siddi Yakub who defended Underi and Subhanji Ghatge were assassinated and his camp was pillaged. With the death of Siddi Saat, Marathas had achieved a significant victory because for the last one decade they had been constantly harassed by the Siddis and hence all the opposition had now abruptly come to an end. There was a great jubilation in the Maratha capital over the victory as it was considered national one over the destroyer of the Swami's temple⁸³.

The sad news of Siddi Saat's demise and total destruction of his force was conveyed to the Viceroy, Conde de

Sandomil by the General of the North in a letter dated 2nd May 1736. The Viceroy felt very much annoyed on learning about the happenings in the North. The General had also expressed his view that the loss of Siddi Saat would further boost the morale of the Marathas to capture Danda which could not be resisted with ease. The Viceroy was also disturbed to learn that Manaji had given to Chmnaji the Caza Forte at Chaul de Sima as a token of reward for his succour⁸⁴.

It is critically important to understand that the death of Siddi Saat rendered both the Portuguese and the English silent and the significant change was also discernible in the attitude of Sambhaji Angria. However, the onset of the monsoon and the failing health of Maratha Sardar, Pillaji Jadhav, delayed the conclusion of a treaty of Marathas with the Siddis, which was signed ultimately on 25th September 1736. The Mahals of Janjira namely Nandgaon, Murud, Shriwardhan, Diwa, Mhasle, Mandle and the part of Gowal were to be directly looked after by the Siddi's officials, while Maratha administration was made effective in the interior Mahals of Tala, Ghosala, Nizampur, Birwadi, Goregaon and the part of Gowal. It was stipulated that both could enjoy the revenues of the eleven Mahals jointly. The port of Rajpuri was to be under the exclusive control of the Siddi, while Roha was to remain solely under the control of the Marathas⁸⁵.

With this treaty, all the opposition of the Siddis vanished forever. However, the feelings of bitterness still prevailed, and just before the signing of the treaty, some

Siddis had sought the authorisation of the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil to enter the Chaul river with ships with force to fight against Manaji and the Marathas. The Viceroy in turn directed his General in the North to ascertain whether the Siddis were really keen to take revenge against Manaji and the Marathas⁸⁶. The General informed the Viceroy that with the death of Siddi Saat, who possessed good qualities and valour, it would be proper for the Siddis to give up the talk of the revenge. Instead, they should select one among themselves who could equal Siddi Saat in valour. If the Siddis were allowed to pass through the river against Manaji, the Marathas might initiate an armed action against the Portuguese. Hence he felt that it would be advisable to render help to Sambhaji Angria to capture Casa Forte, he being its legitimate owner⁸⁷.

In a desperate design, Shahu invited Sambhaji of Kolhapur for a personal meeting in May 1736. The reason behind this meeting appears to be to obtain his co-operation against the Siddi⁸⁸. This can be deduced from the fact that the discussion on the future course of war was going on in the Maratha camp and as early as on 1st September 1736, the British Governor intimated the Portuguese Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil of Baji Rao's real intention behind invading Thana and the passes near it in order to facilitate Marathas' entry into Salsete⁸⁹.

Putting these trends together, Sambhaji Angria bore the grudge against the British because he had been insulted by them. On 26th December 1735, his four galiots and five

ghurabs intercepted the British 'Derby' near Suvarnadurg, and forcibly took it away alongwith the 155 crew members. Interestingly, in the same month, Shahu had brought about a rapprochement between the chiefs of Gheria and Sawantwadi. On completion of the six months' custody in the jail for the British crew, Captain inchbird proceeded to Gheria to bargain for their release assuring peace for the next six months. But, soon, the British violated their commitment and began assaulting Angria's vessels. They even seized one of his ghurabs near Mangalore⁹⁰.

The following year proved not to be so favourable for Sambhaji Angria. However, he being free from any anxiety about Siddi's attacks, the latter having been enfeebled by the Marathas, he regained confidence and stood on his own legs in 1737. The Portuguese were conscious that the war with the Marathas was imminent since they had already crippled the Siddi. When the Peshwa was trying to bring rapprochement between the Angria brothers, the Portuguese had consented to permit the Marathas to set up a factory on the Salsete island in a locality which was to be decided by the Portuguese General of the North, who happened to be a headstrong. When Vyankat Rao Joshi, Baji Rao's brother-in-law and Maratha envoy approached and requested him to choose the site in accordance with the earlier agreement, he was so furious that he called Baji Rao a negro, in violation of the diplomatic niceties. Baji Rao could not bear this insult and made up his mind to avenge it and called for preparations in right earnest with utmost secrecy and speed. When the

Maratha forces began to have their formation on the frontiers, the Portuguese commander of the North was found to be totally unaware of their movements. When he was sounded by the British, he responded stating that when the barbarians would come, he knew how to receive them. And when the Maratha force swooped upon the Portuguese in early 1737, they were taken by surprise. They forced their entry into the half built fort of Thana in April 1737 and succeeded in capturing it. Many Portuguese troops present there retaliated vehemently laying down their lives. Thereafter, the Maratha forces took over Salsete, Parsik, Belapur, Dharavi, Arnala and other places⁹¹.

As a matter of fact, the Siddi knew Baji Rao's secret machinations, but he had the impression that he was deceived by the Portuguese. At that time, Lakshman Hari was the Maratha Agent who resided at Janjira. The report he dispatched to the Peshwa discloses that the Siddi of Janjira was in ecstasy on hearing of Baji Rao's war activities against the Portuguese⁹². It reveals that the Siddi had then adopted friendly attitude towards the Marathas. The change was not unexpected as the Siddi was Shahu's nominee and the fight of the Marathas had been mainly against the hot-tempered Siddi Saat. That the Siddi of Janjira was friendly towards the Marathas is further corroborated by a letter written by Shahu to the Nizam stating that when Siddi Saat was being hotly pursued by Udaji Pawar, he (Saat) left Mahad for Rajpuri, but the Siddi of that place did not allow him entry into the fort⁹³.

It is no matter of surprise that the Marathas did not raid Bassein immediately. As they wanted to ascertain first its internal preparedness, the attack was delayed. The monsoon was utilised by both the parties in preparation for the war. On the other hand, in fray, the Portuguese resolved to join the British and the Siddi to expel the Marathas from their territories. With the help of the British and the Siddi they also tried to have a joint fleet to defend Bassein. In addition, the Portuguese decided to raise an army of 5000 men from Mangalore, Diu, Surat etc. The Viceroy also approached the neighbouring Sunda Kingdom and southern ports to enlist Christian Nairs to send succour to Salsete⁹⁴.

To illustrate the widespread support, the Marathas had the backing of both the Angria brothers and this was considered as a great alleviation. The report sent by Narayan Bhaskar to Chimnaji from Sawantwadi conveying the readiness of the Sawants to join hands with the Peshwa in his campaign against the Portuguese gave a further boost to them resulting into the hardening of the attitude towards the Portuguese⁹⁵.

The Portuguese on the other hand took all the precautions and measures and rushed the supplies to Bassein from all its possessions. The Portuguese managed to get 2000 men from Diu, 260 from Bassein and 500 from Surat and others were to be sent by the Siddi to liberate Salsete. And the Marathas utilised the monsoon season to effect the entry into the Portuguese fort incognito to check their weak points⁹⁶. In December 1737, the Portuguese sent additional force at the

cost of the defence of Goa. They were so desperate that they deputed one Antonio Miz Ribeiro with 20000 Xerafins to procure the men in Siddi's service⁹⁷. However, the Siddi not only did anything but retained the amount with him. At this juncture, the Marathas learnt from Thana that the British, the Portuguese and the Siddis had joined hands to fight against the Marathas and were reported to be planning a campaign against Thana⁹⁸. Khandoji Mankar stationed at Thana again sent a message about the strong fleet of Luis Botelho sighted at Revdanda and his reported aim was to recapture Thana from the Marathas. Therefore, Mankar urged for immediate succour to rescue it⁹⁹.

But the Portuguese had realised that they could not stand against the Marathas for long. Therefore, they tried their level best to seek peace with the Marathas. Their choice for the purpose fell upon Raja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur who had desired the services of two Portuguese Mathematicians for his astronomical research. The Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil wrote to the General of the North on 6th December 1737 that the time was most appropriate and convenient to approach the Raja for negotiating the peace with Baji Rao¹⁰⁰. On the very next day, the Viceroy wrote to the Raja, who was most powerful and friendly to the Mughal Emperor, mentioning the war that was going on with the Marathas and sought his intervention in it. He impressed upon him that Baji Rao was the principal author of this war which made it impossible for the Portuguese Mathematicians to travel as all the ways remained disrupted¹⁰¹.

In the meanwhile, the Marathas had occupied Ghodbandar putting to sword its garrison thereby establishing their authority in the Bassein river. Thus they wanted to prevent the succour reaching the Portuguese. But it had already arrived much before they occupied Ghodbandar. It was extremely difficult for them to oust the Portuguese from there. But they continued to besiege Bassein. However, there being too much pressure on in North India, Peshwa was compelled to withdraw a large number of his forces from Bassein. This encouraged the Portuguese to make a bid to recover Thana in 1738. But though they inflicted the defeat on the Marathas at Asherim, they finally failed to recapture Thana¹⁰².

Confronted with such challenges, the Portuguese were short of time. The captain of Chaul reported on 9th January 1738 that he had acute shortage of provisions and the garrison was already subjected to sufferings because the Marathas had impeded the supply. Since he could not procure anything, he stopped all the trade of Marathas in salt, coconut and other necessary commodities. Consequently, the Marathas had to provide him some rice to continue their commercial activities. However, his soldiers were without payment for months together¹⁰³. The Portuguese General in the North had done his best and his untiring efforts, valour and care in fortifying Thana for defending the island of Salsete were lauded by the people of Bassein in a letter written to the Portuguese King on 14th December, 1738. They mentioned to the Crown that the total calamity was allowed to occur by the Almighty not as a punishment to the brave and

virtuous General but in retaliation of great misdeeds of all.

They added further that the Divine justice had eclipsed by the sign in the sky in the form of a comet seen by all with a prediction of unfailing devastation and fatality which had not made any impression in their hearts till then and they would remain blind to the situation till they experience the effects of such a disastrous and heavy war¹⁰⁴.

When the Marathas launched a general attack on all fronts against the Portuguese, Commandant of Chaul wrote to the Viceroy on 10th January 1739 that he had received the news from the Captain of Bassein that the Marathas had invaded the areas of Daman, scaled the walls of fort 'Cataravara' and also carried away eight pieces of artillery and 3000 bags of rice (Muras de bate), but he himself was doing his best not to let them know about the lack of provisions in the fort of Chaul¹⁰⁵.

It is curious to note that the Marathas had bought ammunition from the British. When the Portuguese lodged their protest, the British Governor pleaded neutrality. Chimnaji Appa who had been upgraded to the position of the Commander-in-chief in November 1738 had chalked a strategy of spearheading a simultaneous assault on all the Portuguese possessions. He, therefore blocked the supplies heading towards Bassein and spread out his troops over the whole region from Daman to Diu under his personal supervision. The British who had so far preferred neutrality, desiring the weakening of both the warring parties changed the stance and began to provide the Portuguese with supplies via sea route. This obviously resulted into the prolongation of the war.

After occupying the neighbouring areas, Bassein itself was the target of an oppressive siege. At the same time, Vyankat Rao Ghorapade occupied Madgaon and marched towards Goa. Viceroy Conde de Sandomil found it extremely difficult to build up a strong defence in Goa and it was apparent right from the start that the Portuguese with all their full preparation would find it virtually impossible to repulse the forceful Maratha attack. In the area around Bombay, Versova, Karanja and Bandra fell in the hands of the Marathas and thereafter the furious fighting veered round the fort of Bassein. Though the Portuguese garrison put up a brave fight against the vigorous attacks of the Marathas, the latter threatened that they would ransack the town and would eliminate the Christian population there. The Portuguese decided to end the war on certain conditions. The Marathas generously allowed the Portuguese garrison to leave the place within eight days with honour. It was an extraordinary victory for the Marathas, the like of which was never witnessed before¹⁰⁶.

It must be acknowledged that the Angria brothers had contributed a lot in this campaign despite their differences and acting in their own way. Had they joined together and blockaded the sea, the Portuguese would have surrendered earlier. They also fought against the British and at the same time assisted the land forces. The Portuguese were so scared in this war that the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil had written to Sambhaji Angria in September 1737 not to apprehend the merchant ships carrying the goods of his tradesmen. He also informed him that a Portuguese Patemar passing through

Anjanvel with provisions would be going to Bassein and from there was destined to reach Goa and hence he wanted that the ship be allowed to pass without any obstruction and the permits may be issued by the Angria to all the traders who wished to carry on their goods from Canara's points coming under his jurisdiction¹⁰⁷. The letter proves the fact that the Viceroy Conde de Sandomil in his anxiety to face the Maratha assaults had sought Angria's permits for his traders, whereas he actually desired to send provisions and succour to his northern territories. Sambhaji in December swooped upon the trading ship carrying 1120 bags of rice from Canara to Goa but set it free later on¹⁰⁸. In the beginning of 1738; a Portuguese pal belonging to Diu surrendered to Sambhaji's men off Dahanu without much resistance¹⁰⁹. Next, he intercepted the Portuguese frigate São Miguel near Gheria. The Portuguese captain thought that he would not be harassed by the Angria but when five pals and eleven galios appeared for its capture, he realised his mistake. He tried to defend and fought for six hours before finally surrendering to Angria's men¹¹⁰. The ship was carrying a rich cargo of ivory and other goods worth 100,000 xerafins. In addition, he seized three parangues and one of them had Rs.40,000 in cash¹¹¹. The Portuguese were upset because for want of the provisions, they would lose Bassein to the Marathas. Thus the attacks of the Angrias had played a very significant role in the Bassein campaign of the Marathas. But the capture of two Dutch vessels by Sambhaji near Barcelore invited trouble from them. The Dutch on 27th February 1739 brought their fleet of eight warships and some light vessels to punish the Angria. The

fleet was welcomed by the Viceroy, Conde de Sandomil at the bar of Aguada in Goa. He at once proposed an alliance not only against the Angria but also against the Marathas. His proposal was that all the European nations should have a joint action against their Asian enemies. And the Dutch fleet did try to attack Gheria, but did not succeed¹¹².

However, Sambhaji Angria desired that the British should have a conditional treaty with him and that is the reason why his fleet continued to harass them near Bombay. In May 1739, the British were so embarrassed that they released his prisoners as the expense of feeding them far exceeded the outcome of their labour. They also expected that Sambhaji in turn would show the consideration of releasing the British prisoners. He did agree to do so without any hesitation, but put forward the proposal that the British should not ply their ships without his permits or in the alternative pay him two crores of rupees yearly in lieu of it. The parleys for peace went on for a long time and the British deputed their Marine Superintendent of Bombay to Gheria with the twin object of negotiating peace and to blockade Gheria if opportunity arose. He however found it difficult to remain off Gheria and therefore proceeded further in search of Angria's fleet and to confront it. But a storm overtook him and he was drowned alongwith three of his vessels. In the meantime, Sambhaji's men succeeded in capturing the British vessel Anne near Diu¹¹³.

In the same year, the Portuguese ship carrying 200

men and the sum of 150,000 xerafins to Nazareth in the North narrowly escaped from falling into the hands of Sambhaji and luckily slipped out unhurt as his attention was diverted by the Dutch vessels¹¹⁴. Towards the South, the well equipped 32-gun Portuguese frigate Nossa Senhora da Vitoria which was under the command of Antonio de Brito Freire had convoyed 47 parangues of salt to the southern ports. While returning, it was carrying 30,000 bags of rice. Sambhaji Angria's ships lay in wait for it as the Marathas were also keen to stop this supply. And when the frigate reached Honavar in the early hours of 5th March 1739, Angria's ships attacked it. The frigate, despite its captain taking all the precautionary measures to position his guns in the proper directions was assaulted from all sides. In the battle that raged for the whole day, Angria's two pals were damaged. But in the end, the frigate proceeded safely to Goa¹¹⁵.

Comparatively, Manaji Angria rendered better cooperation to Chimnaji. He dared to proceed towards the island of Karanja with 40 galiots and 2000 men in early 1739 and easily landed there. The Portuguese garrison there surrendered on 21st March after a siege of only five days¹¹⁶.

The garrison of Bassein also capitulated to the Marathas on the same day and they occupied the fort. However, hostilities persisted as Chaul was still under the Portuguese. The remaining forces of the Portuguese began withdrawing to Goa from Bassein after the rains. On the way, they were attacked by Khem Sawant Bhonsle of Sawantwadi and many of them had a miserable death¹¹⁷.

To make the matters worse for the Portuguese, the Siddi did not supply at all any men despite receiving an advance of 20,000 xerafins for their service and they were perforced to send one Caetano de Souza in December 1739 to recover that amount from the Siddi¹¹⁸. The Portuguese felt so disgusted that they allowed to submerge the village of Madcai in Goa by demolishing the 'bund' of the Khazan lands (cultivable land lying along the coast)¹¹⁹. Goa itself was in danger now as it had been under a constant attack. In 1740, the two Angria brothers caused more loss to the Portuguese than what they had ever suffered before. Sambhaji's fleet first met the Portuguese frigate Oliveira near Gheria but after a few hours fighting left it and departed southwards along the coast. It entered Onor to procure some masts and its men learnt about the certain Portuguese boats, with foodgrains aboard sailing under a strong escort from the south. Only a few stray Portuguese vessels, which had been warned of the movements of the Angria fleet, made good their escape. The main flotilla however proceeded freely. It consisted of two pals, two galiots and a charrua. Caught unawares, it did not take much time for the Portuguese Admiral to surrender. Its capture by Sambhaji was so swift and smooth that almost the whole cargo of foodgrains fell into his hands. The Angria passed with his valuable acquisition within the sight of Anjediv and a little distance off Aguada, but the Portuguese had been so demoralised that they did not venture to start any rescue operation. Sambhaji however did not ill-treat the captives and freed them. The Portuguese chroniclers maintain that he

set free the Admiral and the other captives in order to save the boarding expenses on them but the fact remains that he strongly desired the Portuguese to respect his naval authority and buy his own permits as the Portuguese had been doing the same ever since they landed in India. Manaji Angria, on the other hand, captured a war pataxo of the Portuguese at Diu. Sambhaji Angria now suddenly appeared at Alibag in April and seized Hira Kot and Sagargarh and then attacked Kolaba, the loss of which he could not bear. Manaji in desperation appealed to the Peshwa as well as the British for succour. Baji Rao was no more, having died at an early age, but his successor Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao could not risk the fall of Manaji. The British who had in the beginning turned down the request of Manaji for help later sided the Marathas and sent their squadron against Sambhaji Angria who had no other option than to retreat¹²⁰. Manaji also received assistance from the Portuguese in this operation. The Portuguese feared that Sambhaji might devastate Chaul after occupying Kolaba and therefore they rushed help to Manaji in order to ensure that Kolaba did not fall in the hands of Sambhaji¹²¹. However, Sambhaji succeeded in seizing Bharatgad, Bhagvantgad as well as a considerable part of the possessions of Sawantwadi ruler in the Salshi province. But the Maratha navy under Khandoji Mankar in January 1741 tightened the grip around Chaul which was assaulted fiercely under the command of Chimnaji. Salcete, Bardez and Goa were already under siege then and it was withdrawn by the Marathas only after the Portuguese passed over Chaul to them in the beginning of 1741¹²².

Interestingly, prior to surrendering Chaul, the Portuguese were in a dilemma as how to believe the Marathas that they would withdraw from Goa soon after taking over Chaul. Therefore, they decided to hand over the fort of Chaul to the Marathas through the British who however showed their unwillingness to take it over. The Portuguese garrison at Chaul wanted to deliver the fort to the Siddi on payment and unlike the British he was ready to accept it. But Manaji was not willing to see that all the forts pass into the hands of the Marathas. So he too expressed his readiness to take the said fort by paying the amount to its garrison¹²³. The Portuguese authorities in Goa never liked the idea of handing over the fort to one of their enemies, the Siddi. Hence ultimately it was entrusted to the British in November 1740, who handed it over to the Marathas later on. The treaty of the surrender of Chaul was drawn at Poona between Balaji Baji Rao and the Portuguese Commissary Dom Francisco Baron de Gallenfels¹²⁴. However, Dom Francisco's letter dated 31st October 1740 gives an interesting account of a conspiracy behind passing the fort of Chaul to the Siddi of Janjira. After investigating the matter in detail, he found through the British Captain Inchbird that the Portuguese soldiers at Korlai had opened a treacherous correspondence with the Siddi leading to the cession of Chaul fort in his favour. The plot was investigated into and was found to be true. In fact, the entire garrison comprising 120 men at the fort of Chaul was involved in the plot. It was with the help of the Maratha troops that Dom Francisco kept the Siddi away, who had

encamped in the nearby village of Borde with 900 men for the purpose. The investigations also revealed Manaji's interest in the fort¹²⁵.

Thus, the Marathas achieved a very significant success against the Siddi of Janjira and the Portuguese.

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