Chapter – 3

TIPU SULTAN AND HIS ATTEMPTED INTERVENTION IN INDO-ARAB TRADE

During the 18th century Tipu Sultan may be considered as one of the chief merchants of India.¹ The novel tradition of state economy laid out by Haider Ali was carefully carried on with better and improved mechanism by his son and successor. Tipu was a planner, strategist and economist in his own right.

Ever since the commencement of his rule in 1782 Tipu’s main effort was to make Mysore into a centre of commercial attraction and improve the quality of its products so that it could compete favourably in international trade. With a view to taking Mysore’s products to different parts of the world, envoys to various countries were entrusted with these commodities to sell them to obtain their own costs of maintenance. Diplomatic missions were thus converted into commercial enterprises.²

One target of Tipu’s commercial activities was Oman. At a very early stage of Tipu’s rule, commercial ties with Oman were

¹. For Haider Ali’s commercial bent of mind see Ghoolam Mohumed, Tarikh-i Tipu Sultan, Russapuylah, 1849, p. 683.
². For one of such many examples, see Mohibbul Hasan, History of Tipu Sultan, Calcutta. 1971, p. 131, (hereafter see M. Hasan).
established with the opening of a commercial depot (Kothi) at Muscat under the charge of a commercial agent (Darogha). Since the beginning of the 18th century the volume of trade passing through Muscat from and to the Persian Gulf had been rising steadily. Oman herself had no less than 15 ships of 400 to 700 tons each besides 3 brigs in the Port of Muscat alone in the time of Sayyid Sultan (1793-1800). The other port of Oman, Sur had at least 100 sea-going vessels of various sizes.¹

With the exception of a few items like sandal-wood and pepper under the control of Tipu Sultan (not a monopoly, as Kirkpatrick and Mark Wilks have asserted)² the ordinary merchants were not barred from dealing with indigenous products of Mysore. As such the Sultan being the chief merchant traded on behalf of the state whereas the merchants of Mysore were at liberty to carry on their own trade and make investments. The same was true about Oman. The Imam owned his own ships and carried on trade. However, ordinary merchants of Oman enjoyed

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¹ S B Miles, The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf, London Fran Cass & Co Ltd. 1966. p 221
² William Kirkpatrick, Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, London. 1911, pp 467-68. see also Mark Wilks, Historical Sketches of the South India (History of Mysore). Mysore. 1830, Vol 2. p 570
reasonable freedom to conduct their trade with any country they desired.

Cloth constituted one of the chief items of export of Mysore. Cloth-weaving industry was mainly concentrated at Bangalore, Waluru, etc. At both places quality cloth was manufactured and was mainly exported to Oman and other Persian Gulf ports. The embassy of Tipu Sultan to Constantinople that was dispatched in 1786 and halted at Muscat carried varieties of Mysorean cloths and shawls to be sold enroute to defray the mission's expenses. These cloths were sold through Maoji Seith and Abdullah, the Jew, both brokers at Muscat and neighbouring ports.2

Evidence on supply of cloth to the Persian Gulf vis-à-vis Muscat are numerous. We have evidence of the supply of Indian piece goods to Muscat merchants for local consumption in Oman. These were supplied by English merchants most probably from Madras and Surat.3

1. Francis Buchanan, Journey from Madras Through Mysore, Canara and Malabar, (Delhi, 1988), (3 volumes), Vol.1, pp. 40, 326 et passim It may be noted that there are various references relating to varieties of cloths, weaving industry, dyeing and spinning in Buchanan's description of Mysore which he wrote immediately after the fall of Seringapatnam. He has also given an elaborate account of prices of cloth at Bangalore. Ibid., pp. 220-21
Rice constituted one of the "gruff goods" in Mysore's regular consignment to Muscat. In 1775 Imam Ahmad sent an envoy to Mysore in an Omani ship called Rahmani to know of the cause of prohibition of rice export to Muscat. The cause for non-shipment for rice was explained by Haider Ali's representative at Mangalore (governed at that time by Tipu Sultan) to the Omani envoy. He returned satisfied to Oman.

Rice continued to be carried to Oman in bulk. Parsons once noted 4 ships of Muscat having rice for their cargo from Mysore. Tipu's own ships besides the ships of ordinary merchants and those of the Imam's ships, carried rice as ships' cargo to Oman.

There seems to have been a great demand for rice in a certain years by the Muscat and Kutch factories. In order to meet their requirements the asifs of Jamalabad, Wajidabad and Malikuttujjar departments were ordered to purchase rice and supply it to those factories. However Tipu was quite hostile to the purchase of rice by the merchants of the Portuguese or the English ports. In a communication he strictly ordered his port

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1. The purpose of the Omani delegate to visit Mysore was also in response to the invitation of Haider Ali to put down piracy frequently committed on the Malabar coast which had caused interruption in the rice export to Oman. S.B. Miles, *op.cit.*, p. 274. It is evident from all available sources that Mysore during Haider's time supplied rice to many foreign ports besides Muscat.


officials of all the sea-ports not to sell rice to merchants from Portuguese or the English ports. The English and Portuguese sent their merchants in the disguise of Muscat traders with money for making rice purchases to Mysore. The Sultan, therefore, informed the Imam that he considered only those as genuine Muscat merchants who had certificate under seal and signature of the superintendents of the Mysore factory at Muscat. Merchants in possession of such certificates would alone be entitled to purchase rice. For issuance of the certificate merchants did not have to pay any money.¹ Ghulam Mohammed, the amil of Bangalore (Incharge of the Muscat factory) had special instruction to sell rice only to those merchants who produced certificates (chitty) from Mir Kazim.²

The amils of Kurial (Mangalore) had special instructions that after the sale of rice to the agents of Maoji Seith, the chief broker at Muscat, if these agents further desired to purchase rice from the inhabitants of the districts under Mangalore they should be allowed without any let or hindrance.³ Maoji Seith must have been satisfied with the Sultan’s order as it is evident from his letter to Tipu received through Ghaus Mohammed and Tarkam Dass (dated 16 January 1786). Maoji was desirous that Sultan

¹ Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op.cit., pp. 241-42.
² Ibid., pp. 282-84.
³ Ibid., p. 239.
would as before, allow his *gumashtaha* (after their purchase of rice from the state managers) to also purchase their requirements of morahs (a weight equal to 80 lbs.) of rice from private parties.¹ Tipu on his part always had an eye on profit. In his letter to Mir Kazim (24 April 1786) he instructs him to sell rice at advantageous price. As far as the fixation of price of rice Tipu did it himself before the opening of the internal market to the outside merchants. It is also evident from the foregoing account that rice was not the monopoly of the state.²

On a later occasion, vide his circular to *Imam* of Muscat, he repeats his decision not to sell a single grain of rice in Mysore to any Nazarens, coming from Muscat or to any others except the merchants of Muscat having the requisite certificates, perhaps to give more force to his previous decision. The *Imam* was, therefore, asked to issue orders to Muscat merchants bound to the ports of Mysore, to bring along certificates from Tipu’s *Vakil* at Muscat, in order that they may be enabled to purchase and carry away (without obstacle) whatever commodities they may require.³

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The Mysore factories (Kothies) of Muscat and Kutch were under the charge of the asifs of Jamalabad and Wajidabad or directly under the charge of Malikuttujjar department. These asifs were ordered by the Sultan to purchase rice, sandal etc., in addition to cinnamon for sale at Muscat and Kutch factories.1 Elsewhere Tipu prohibits the supply of the indigenous products like cinnamon and pepper and asked the men incharge to acquire them and supply them to the Sultan.2 Clearly there were no fixed and permanent rules in this regard and the rules varied from time to time as the situation demanded. The commodities which Tipu wanted to directly control and make profit from their sale are indicated in his correspondence with various commercial agents at Kothies in other countries. For example Mir Kazim, the commercial agent at Muscat, was ordered (17 November 1785) not to dispose of the black pepper and sandalwood under his custody but to wait till the price rose to a reasonable level.3 Similar instructions for the sale of sandalwood, pepper, rice and cardamom on advantageous terms appear in another of his letter. In yet another letter (19 November 1785) Tipu instructs Mir Kazim not to hastily dispose of the cinnamon, sandalwood, black pepper and rice imported from Mangalore and Kushalpur

(Khushhalpur?). He advised him to keep them for sale until the price of those commodities had risen satisfactorily.\textsuperscript{1} Again Tipu asks Mir Kazim and other commercial agents at Muscat (25 November 1785) to keep in store the pepper supplied to him earlier. Accordingly Mir Kazim had to stop the sale of pepper at Muscat. The broker was informed that the stock had been sent to Jedda factory, another commercial depot of Tipu Sultan established in 1786.\textsuperscript{2} The stock should be kept ready and as soon as the price rose to 25 or 30 pagodas a candy it should be put up for sale.\textsuperscript{3} The Sultan is known to have taken recourse to this kind of measures on various occasions.\textsuperscript{4} Sometimes the Sultan himself fixed the prices of different commodities. For example on one occasion Mir Kazim was directed to sell the sandalwood of first sort at 120 pagodas a candy, the second at 100 pagodas a candy and the 3\textsuperscript{rd} at 80 pagodas a candy. The latter also carried orders not to sell the sandal for less than the specified price even if the stock had to be kept for a year or two.\textsuperscript{5} In case of a fall in prices of pepper and sandalwood, their sale had to be stopped until the price had risen to a reasonable level. Cardamom could be sold at

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p. 187.
\item However the details of functioning of the factory at Jedda are lacking. Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 189.
\item Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p. 189.
\item Ibid., p. 233.
\item Ibid., p. 209
\end{itemize}
the current price but in no case at a loss. The rationale behind this was that the loss of weight of cardamom as a result of keeping for long periods could be tolerated but the price of a commodity could not be allowed to fall.¹ This was an important element in market mechanism evolved and strictly observed by the Sultan (Tipu to Mir Kazim, 12 January 1786).

For profit, trade and friendship Tipu sometimes went out of the way to help merchants. On an instance a dhow belonging to Rutnjee and Jeevan Dass, both subjects and merchants of Muscat, having been wrecked, drifted to the coast of Bytekoal (on the coast of Canara), a seaport of Mysore. The Imam of Muscat personally wrote to Tipu for the return of the dhow. Tipu in his reply (11 November 1785) reiterated that the customary law of wreckage followed in Mysore did not permit the return of the ship and its cargo, but because of the cordial relations between the Imam and him the dhow has been returned to its owners.²

One of the many items Tipu desired to be sent to Mysore from the Persian Gulf by his commercial agent was pearls. In a letter to Mir Kazim (6 May 1785) Tipu reminds him to purchase large and brilliant pearls of the finest kind. But he also asks

¹ Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p 231
² Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op cit, pp. 180-81
Kazim to purchase them at low price.¹ Frequent reminders that his commercial agent should purchase quality articles at cheaper cost suggest that the Sultan wanted to train them all that methods applicable in marketing. In another letter Mir Kazim was asked to buy and send more pearls to the Sultan.² Yet in another letter the Sultan ordered Mir Kazim to purchase pearls to the amount of Rs.10,000. But again he was reminded that the purchase was to be made at low rates.³

Besides purchase of pearls, Tipu seems to have conceived the idea of developing a pearl industry of his own. Thus in a letter he asked Mir Kazim to send ten divers, with advance money for their expenses, to Mangalore.⁴ These pearl divers had to be sent from Bahrain and Hormuz along with their families.⁵ On receipt of a sealed packet of pearls with a memorandum of the purchase price of those pearls the Sultan complains to Mir Kazim of the heavy price at which these pearls were purchased.⁶ Mir Kazim in another letter was asked to go to Hormuz for purchase of round pearls as there was no need of small ones.⁷

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¹ Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p 200.
² Ibid. p 458
³ Ibid. p 233.
⁴ Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p. 231.
⁵ Ibid. pp 282-83, 186-87
⁶ Ibid. p 231.
⁷ Ibid. p 209
We have several references in Tipu's correspondence in which he asked his officials in Muscat to send him plants as well as dry fruits. In a letter addressed to Mir Kazim (6 May 1786) Tipu asks him to send young date trees and pistachio plants, almonds as well as saffron plants and saffron seeds besides silkworm, shipwrights and pearl divers along with men having skill in taking care of these plants.\(^1\) In another communication Tipu also reminds Mir Kazim to purchase 30 mans (weight) of pistachio nuts, 200 mans of almonds, 15 mans of monukkas without stones.\(^2\) In another letter he issues instructions to Mir Kazim to annually purchase 100 rails of almonds and 30 rails of pistachio nuts and send them to the amil of Mangalore.\(^3\)

While ordered to send cultured silk-worms and men to take care of them, Mir Kazim was also ordered to procure 1 or 2 mans of saffron seed. A similar letter was also sent to the Dallal at Muscat.\(^4\) Tipu seems to have conceived the idea of establishing sericulture in Mysore. In another communication to the commercial agent at Muscat, Tipu desired the Dallal's agents posted at different places to collect silk worms and send to him

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4. Ibid., p. 188.
persons acquainted with sericulture. Likewise Mir Kazim was also ordered to send some young date trees (khurma-i naunihalan) with persons skilled in management of their cultivation.

In many cases Tipu had personal knowledge of the regions where particular plants or drugs could be acquired. For instance he writes to Mir Kazim that he knew of the regions where saffron was cultivated. In another letter he says it is a native to Persia. Similarly he had personal knowledge that Kishm Island was the place for rearing of silk worms and asks Mir Kazim to send some of the silk worms and their eggs to Mysore together with 5 or 6 men acquainted with rearing silk culture.

Other Major items imported by Tipu from the Persian Gulf regions were sulphur and rock-salt. Sulphur, the main ingredient of gunpowder was mainly imported from Muscat. In one of his orders he says every year 600 raths of sulphur of best quality be purchased from the Muscat factory for preparation of gunpowder. All details regarding the execution of the transaction should be brought to the knowledge of the Sultan.

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1 Select Letters of Tippee Sultan, pp 282-83
2 Ibid, 188
3 Ibid, p 282-83.
4 Ibid, p 188
5 Hukmnamaha-i Tipu Sultan, op cit, fts 141b-142a, 11b-12a

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communication to his commercial consul (17 November 1785) Tipu says that his ship anchored at Muscat should be unloaded in two days and the loading of sulphur, lead, and copper should also be completed within two days. In case the work exceeded 4 days, Mir Kazim would have to bear the extra expenses. He was also charged to report to the Sultan the arrival and departure of ships of the Sultan to and from Muscat.\(^1\) Once the Sultan asked the commercial consul at Muscat to purchase sulphur and copper cheaply.\(^2\) The moderation in purchase price of commodity had always been a matter of special consideration for Tipu. In a letter to Mir Kazim (12 January 1786) he asked him to buy sulphur when price had come down to a moderate level.\(^3\) However Mir Kazim had to see that a regular supply of sulphur was furnished from time to time.\(^4\)

Rock-salt, the use of which was perhaps not known to Tipu, surprises him when he comes to know of arrival of its shipment instead of sapphires. He asked the commercial agent to explain the use of Rock-salt in Mysore with the minutest detail of the mineral. This was to be sent to the amil of Mangalore and the

2. Ibid., p. 209.
4. Ibid., p. 282-83.
sample to the Sultan for information. In another communication Tipu thanked Mir Kazim for having sent the sample of rock-salt to him. Equally in another letter Tipu commends Mir Kazim for his skill in lading the Sultan’s ships with mineral salt instead of sapphires (sang-i nilam) and instructs him to continue sending it.

Mir Kazim on another occasion (6 May, 1786) was asked to buy a large quantity of rock-salt and load on dhows that had carried rice to Muscat for sale. He had further to send the consignment of rock-salt from time to time to the amil of Mangalore together with an account of its cost.

Import of gold and silver, coined or uncoined, has always been a matter of concern to Tipu. Many of his commercial communications contain information on dispatch of gold to him. In one of his orders he says that uncoined gold and silver as much as it is available from Kothies may be purchased.

Horses formed an important item of import from the Gulf to Mysore, mainly through the Muscat merchants. The main source of supply of horses of good breed to the Deccan states was Persia.

1. Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, p. 284.
2. Ibid., p. 283
3. Ibid., pp. 282-83.
4. Ibid, p. 300
5. Ibid.
The regular supply again seems to have been made largely from the Persian Gulf regions. Horse dealers, brought horses for Haider Ali, and on the way if any horse lost its life and the dealer having cut the tail and ear brought these before him, on the verbal assurance of the dealer of the price of the horse, Haider Ali would pay half the price from his own treasury.  

Horses to Tipu were as important as rice to the Omanis. A letter of 20 February 1782 by the Sultan to Mir Kazim directs him to induce the Muscat merchants to visit Mysore in a large number and bring horses in empty dingies for sale and for return cargo purchase rice. Simultaneously the consul was also asked to persuade the Imam of Muscat to issue orders to the same effect to his merchants. Tipu seems to have had a special liking for good breed of horses and mules of Persian origin. The Sultan in another letter to Mir Kazim asks him to dispatch some mules of good stock. In another letter to Mir Kazim the Sultan desired him to send some one to Rustakh and procure five large asses and dispatch them to Mysore.

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1. Tarikh-i Tipu Sultan, op. cit., p. 683.
2. Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 6.
From Tipu's order issued to the six asifs of the Sarkar-i Khodadad we understand that every year 1050 horses were purchased officially. The number of horses to be purchased and paraded before the Sultan were allocated to various Kachehris: Kachehri Zafarabad, 100 horses; Kachehri Faiz Hisar 200 horses; Kachehri Farrukhyab Hisar 100 horses, Kachehri Shikohabad 200 horses and Kachehri Gardoonshikoh 250 horses; Kachehri Azimabad 200 horses. If 1050 horses were officially purchased on behalf of the state in one year, the aggregate purchase in the entire realm of the sultan must have been higher.

Tipu tried to encourage trade by making concessions in customs. Maoji Seith, the dallal of Muscat was granted remission of duty to \( \frac{4}{10} \) of the total whereas \( \frac{1}{2} \) of the total was granted to the Imam of Muscat, who was designated as the chief merchant of Oman. Regarding the remission of \( \frac{1}{2} \) of the duty on the Imam's ships and dhows at the port of Mysore, there is a letter of Tipu Sultan addressed to the Imam. He had issued orders to the governors of his ports. The Sultan asked the Imam to continue sending ships and dhows with merchandise to the ports of

Regarding remission of duty on Maoji Seith, Tipu Sultan instructs the amils of the ports (11 January 1786) to demand only $6/10$ of the duty which it seems was customary since old times. Maoji Seith also enjoyed remission of anchorage duty. Tipu wrote to the amil of the port of Calicut (16 January 1786) to remit the customary anchorage duty in favour of 5 dingies of Maoji Seith.

The reduction of duty on ships of Oman in Mysore was not a one-sided affair. It was reciprocal. While the customs duty in general was $10\%$ on goods of all description at the Oman ports, the duty on merchants of Mysore was only $6\%$. Such customs concessions and facilities were given by Tipu to other merchants coming from outside the country as well. In January 1787 Tipu in his correspondence with some Armenian merchants promises to exempt them from duty on goods that they would bring to Mysore ports.

The Sultan established a royal board of 9 commissioners of trade with 17 foreign and 30 home factories carrying instruction of profit-oriented transaction of exports and imports.

Commodities like tobacco, sandalwood, pepper and precious metals were declared state monopoly. Wilks also endorses the view that the regulations were meant to benefit people at large and motivate them of the participation in trade and commerce of the country.

On deposits Mark Wilks says if the share of depositors was up to the amount of 500 rupees he received 50% at the end of the year and if 500-5000 rupees his annual profit was 25% and that above 5000, 12%. Depositors were at liberty to withdraw on demand any part of the deposit together with their up-to-date interest. Tipu thus collected funds for financing his coastal and the Gulf trade. It has been stated,

"That only two or three years previously to the extinction of his power, he had conceived the idea of creating a very formidable naval force. It may, indeed be reasonably doubted, whether either the resources of his country, or his genius were equal to the realization of so bold a plan, but it is as well, perhaps, that he

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1 Mark Wilks, *op.cit.*, p. 570.
was not allowed time for the experiment”¹.

As to the construction of ships of ordinary merchants he issued order to the asifs of Kachehri Jamalabad, Wajidabad and Majidabad that the merchants of Kachehri Jamalabad should construct 11 sail of three-masted and two-masted ships and merchants of Kachehri Wajidabad and Majidabad 10 sail of three-masted and two-masted ships each. These ships they had to construct at their own cost. He also guaranteed them the supply of cargo for their ships wherever they desired. But for all practical purpose for transportation of cargo bigger ships should be used in trade. They should not trade in smaller ships. Asifs of the three Kachehris were asked to obtain agreement from the merchants of those Kachehris. The merchants were given option to get the ships ready within one year. Till then they could trade in ships of any size.²

On one occasion Tipu in his communication to Mir Kazim at Muscat ordered him to send 10 shipwrights familiar with the construction of dhows together with 100 Khallasis.³ After the arrival of these shipwrights Tipu expresses satisfaction at their skill in construction of dhows and dingies. He again asked the commercial agent to further recruit 4 or 5 shipwrights and send

¹. Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 234.
². Hukmnamaha-i Tipu Sultan, op. cit., fls.139b-140a.
³. Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan, op. cit., p. 234.
them to Mangalore.¹ Once he issued order to his official, Mahmood Ali Khan, on the problem of sheathing (‘Coppering’) ships and asked him to consult shipwrights in the matter of sheathing and enhancement of durability of ships.² Tipu’s ships of war including cargo and pilgrim ships must have been many.³ M.H. Gopal is of the view that for trading purpose Tipu’s government had its own ships.⁴ Mohibbul Hasan is of the view, however, that the Mysore’s ships were technologically ill-constructed and therefore inferior to European ships.⁵ This impression of his emanates from a shipwreck in the Shatt-al Arab.⁶

The Bombay shipyard that had been dependent for its timber on the hinterland of the western coast now obtained easy access for its supply to the forests of Malabar and Mysore after the fall of Tipu Sultan. This placed the British at advantage over her rival, France. For construction of better ships for the Royal Navy the services of Wadia family was made use of.⁷

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2. *Ibid*, p 356
4. M H Gopal, op. cit., p 20
6. *Ibid*
Wilks seems to suggest that Tipu Sultan was quite ignorant of commercial and political economy and therefore in 1784 he ordered the total eradication of all the pepper vines of the marine districts and reserved those of inland growth to trade with the true believers from Arabia. Wilks says that it was not possible for him to understand whether prohibition of growing red pepper was in order to promote black pepper or due to some other motive.

Sultan, according to Mark Wilks, was convinced that since England's power was founded on commercial prosperity and, therefore, he too wanted to enhance his power on the same basis.

The relations of Tipu with Oman were based primarily on reciprocal trade and friendship. In one of his letters to Mir Kazim, Tipu says that the former's deputation at Muscat had the sole purpose of buying and selling and he was always to look to the commercial advantage of the Sultan. However he could indulge in business matters on behalf of Mysore if it was in the interest of the state, even though not sanctioned by the Sultan.

2. Ibid., p. 570.
3. Ibid.
As to funding the trade by local raising of credit, there is no frequent mention of bill of exchange in Tipu's commercial transaction but the evidence suggests the practice was not uncommon either. In a transaction of 160 bales of cloth sold at 13,000 *qurs-i rumi* in the possession of Nurullah, the chief of the embassy to Constantinople sent in 1786, Abdullah, the purchaser of the cloth at Basra, 16 November 1786 issued a bill of exchange of the said amount drawn on a banker at Baghdad.\(^1\) Simultaneously we hear of receipt of 20,000 *hun-i haidari* by the envoys of Tipu Sultan bound to Constantinople. This money was paid to them by Prem and Sewa, both the agents of Maoji Saith at Basra on account of the goods which he had purchased at Muscat.\(^2\)

Tipu's commercial interests extended beyond Oman to Basra. Basra, a strategic commercial port, situated near the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates. In 1786 it was garrisoned with 11 Turkish ships of war and two small ones beside some trading vessels operating in the Persian Gulf.\(^3\) Tipu seems to have visualized its commercial importance much earlier. Next to Muscat the port which could be of a great value and could control the flow of trade was Basra where commercial depot

could be established for transaction of Mysorean products. Tipu, therefore, desired to obtain possession of the port of Basra in farm. With this view in mind the Sultan issued instruction to the chief members of the embassy in 1786 to make every inquiry of the port and possibility of attaining consent of the Turkish governor and his inclination to farm out the port. But nothing came of attempt. Basra's strategic importance lies in the fact that it served as an entreport and distributing centre to Turkish Iraq especially Baghdad vis-à-vis Levant and Europe by the way of Aleppo and Asia Minor and in the north to the Caspian, Iranian and Armenian regions.

Goods of Mysore which had already attracted the attention of merchants of different regions were also popular at Basra. Members of Tipu's embassy proceeding to Constantinople in 1786 during their brief sojourn found ready customers to dispose some of their goods which they carried to meet out their expenses.

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2. Lorimer, op.cit., 1(1B), p. 166.
3. Waqa-i Manazil-i Rum, p. 41; also History of Tipu Sultan, p. 134.