PART THREE
Rise of Independent States

CHAPTER 9
PROVINCIAL KINGDOMS

One important feature of the history of India in the eighteenth century was the rise of independent states on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. The extra-Indian Central or West Asiatic, Iranian and Afghan immigrants into India could not be duly controlled or properly utilised when the age of the Great Mughals was over. When the Emperors became puppets and lost their hold even in the capital, the centrifugal forces began inevitably to operate within the Empire. Freed from central control ambitious adventurers and governors of some provinces founded independent and hereditary states, thinly veiled under a legal wig of allegiance to the shadowy Emperor, and thereby contributed to the disruption of the state. The best examples of this development were found in Bengal, the Deccan, the Punjab and Oudh. The ‘founder-viceroyys’ in these areas were exceptionally able and ruled for fairly long periods (as distinct from short-term viceroyys of olden times) and did much good to their subjects, giving peace and order and encouraging economic development. Apart from these, we have also to take into account the Afghan settlements in the Gangetic Doab, the rise of Rohilkhand and Farrukhabad.
Section A

BENGAL 1710 to 1740

Murshid Quli Khan *diwan*, 1710; *Subahdar*, 1717-27
Shuja-ud-din 1727-39
Sarfaraz Khan 1739-40

The rise of the independent Nawabs of Bengal in the first half of the eighteenth century was a natural concomitant of the effete Mughal Empire of Delhi. Bengal had become a province of the empire in 1576 but effective Mughal rule was established over it only by 1613. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the provincial government became weak. Prince Muhammad Azimuddin (Azimussabhan), governor from 1697-1712, had differences with his *diwan*, Murshid Quli Khan (surnamed Jafar Khan Nasiri, Nasir Jang, Mutaman ul Mulk). Leaving aside his earlier appointments in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Murshid Quli virtually ruled Bengal continuously either as *diwan* or as deputy *subahdar* (1710-17) or as *subahdar* (1717-27) for long seventeen years. He refused to send the Bengal treasure to Farrukhysiyar when he was still a competitor for the throne but loyally sent it when the latter became victorious (1713). It was Murshid Quli who founded the Nawabi or the rule of independent Nawabs which virtually lasted till the Diwani grant of 1765, eight years after the battle of Plassey (1757). The period from 1717 to 1757 constituted the last chapter of medieval Bengal. In form the Governors of Bengal still owed their posts to imperial sanction and continued to send revenue to Delhi. But in effect Bengal was left free to pursue her own destiny, unhampered by any imperial interference. Two of the five Nawabs down to 1757, Murshid Quli, a Persianised Brahman, a convert, and Alivardi Khan, a Turko-Arab adventurer, were exceptionally able and left their impress on Bengal. Under Murshid Quli's strong, sound and just rule Bengal enjoyed a long period of prosperity which contrasted sharply with
the general confusion—and unrest elsewhere in India. He reorganised the revenue system of Bengal, which supplied the basis to the British land revenue organisation. He suppressed small rebellions like those of Sitaram Ray of Bhushna and founded an independent provincial dynasty. He was followed by his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din Muhammad Khan (1727-39). Bihar was included in Bengal in 1733. Shuja was succeeded by his son Sarfaraz Khan (March, 1739-April, 1740), who was defeated and killed by Alivardi Khan, deputy governor of Bihar. The degradation and corruption of the Mughal court stand fully illustrated by the imperial sanad confirming the governorship of Bengal son Alivardi. His history will be dealt with in Volume Two.

Section B
THE HYDERABAD STATE (1724-62)

1. Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah 1724-48
2. Nasir Jang Nizam ud Daula, 2nd son of (1) 1748-50
3. Muzaffar Jang, daughter’s son of (1) 1750-51
4. Salabat Jang, 3rd son of (1) 1751-62

1. Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah

Qamaruddin Chin Qilich Khan, 'Khan-i-Dauran, better known as Nizam ul mulk, Asaf Jah, the founder of the virtually independent state of Hyderabad, was one of the principal makers of Indian history during the first half of the eighteenth century. As general, administrator and statesman he dominated this subcontinent from Delhi to the Karnatak and became 'the most outstanding personality' in the Mughal empire for nearly quarter of a century. His grandfather, Khwajah Abid, hailing from Bokhara in Turan or Central Asia came to India in the time
of Shabjahan. His father, Mir Shihabuddin, Firuz Jang-Ghaziuddin, had distinguished himself in Aurangzeb's campaigns in Rajputana and Bijapur. Chin Qilich himself was born in 1671 and brought up in the traditions of Aurangzeb. For his very important role in the siege of Wakinkhera, he was made a first class mansabdar of 5000 in 1705. The unstable conditions in the empire after the death of Aurangzeb led him to adopt a policy of opportunism so as to safeguard his own interests. Though promoted by Azam as governor of Khandesh, Chin Qilich deserted him. Appointed governor of Oudh, as a commander of 6000 and entitled Khan-i-Dauran by Bahadur Shah, he resigned. Though raised to the rank of 7000 he resigned again. As he was won over by Azim us shan, he became the target of the enmity of Zulfiqar, supporter of Jahandar, but was saved from destruction by the intervention of Abdus Samad Khan. Jahandar Shah appointed him governor of Malwa and a commander of 5000. During the rebellion of Farrukhisiyar he was courted by Zulfiqar, promoted to the rank of 7000 and included in the army of Azzuddin, but he remained neutral. After his accession Farrukhisiyar, at the instance of the Sayyid brothers, conferred the title of Nizam ul mulk ('Regulator of the Realm') on Chin Qilich Khan and appointed him viceroy of the Deccan (1713-14). By sending his diwan Haidar Quli away, the Nizam came to acquire supreme control of both executive and revenue affairs of the province. He joined the Emperor against the Sayyids when he was replaced by Husain Ali as viceroy of the Deccan and appointed faujdar of Moradabad. Abdullah, who held him in high respect as an elder brother, sought to conciliate him with an offer of the governorship of Bihar. But at Husain Ali's insistence, the Nizam was appointed governor of Malwa. The latter accepted the appointment only as a long term measure. But mutual suspicion and ill will, reflected in his request to Jai Singh II for joint action against the Sayyids continued.

After the revolt of the Nazam and the fall of the Sayyids
Brothers the Nizam was appointed governor of the Deccan for the second time (1720-22). However, on his appointment as Wazir of the empire, he migrated to Delhi in February 1722, leaving his agents in the Deccan. But he left the court in disgust at the intrigues of the Emperor's favourites early in 1724 and returned to the Deccan. The defeat and death of Mubariz Khan at the battle of Shakarkhera (Shakarkhelda) gave him control over the Deccan. The Emperor 'pardoned' him, and, accepting the fait accompli, confirmed him as viceroy of the Deccan, and even conferred the title of Asaf Jah on him (June, 1725). Nizam ul Mulk made Hyderabad his home and established his dynasty. His territories extended from the river Tapti in the north to the borders of Mysore and the Karnatak up to Trichinopoly.

2. His Administration & Policy

With the foundation of the state of Hyderabad Mughal Deccan now entered a new phase. Aurangzeb's conquest of Bijapur and Golkonda had extended its frontiers as far as Trichinopoly in the south. It was a splendid heritage for the Nizam. But there were six divisions (Khandesh, Berar, Aurangabad, Bidar, Bijapur and Hyderabad) with six separate governors with limited tenures, leading to discord and civil strife among competitors for the viceroyalty. Now there was one strong and masterful ruler over the entire area, virtually independent of the distant Emperor and setting up a benificent administration. The corrupt land revenue system was reformed. The 'amils were ordered to improve the condition of the peasantry and extend the area under tillage. The assessment was made more moderate than before. Illegal cesses were strictly prohibited and officers guilty of extortion were punished. Taxation was thus reduced. Nizam ul mulk changed the character of the government by emphasizing its ministrant functions. The
war-devastated land came to enjoy peace and internal security, favourable alike to the cultivator and the merchant. The state grew in wealth through prudence and strict economy. Nizam ul Mulk claimed that his resources, if well managed, would last for seven generations. Under the Asaf Jahi dynasty Hyderabad came to rank as 'the foremost Muhammadan state in India'.

Nizam ul mulk's political career and more especially his relations with the Marathas (Chapter V) illustrate his realism in politics, opportunism and shrewd diplomacy, calculated to weaken the Marathas. During Nadir Shah's invasion (Chapter III) he was motivated at first by a desire to save himself but his later service as mediator was set at naught by the rivalry of Saadat Khan. Nizam ul Mulk's whole career, full of wars, illustrate his ability as a supreme strategist and tactician, and shows him to be a born leader of men, 'the foremost general of his time in India'. He possessed admirable judgment, sound commonsense and remarkable foresight. He also displayed statesmanlike wisdom and moderation on several occasions, —winning over the surviving adherents of Mubariz Khan, forgiving his rebel son, Nasir Jang, and declining Nadir's offer of the imperial crown of Delhi on grounds of loyalty to the Emperor. Nadir appreciated this but surprisingly he warned Muhammad Shah of the dangerous potentiality of the Nizam. Though an orthodox and devout Muslim he was not a fanatic. He was tolerant towards other religions and appointed Hindus to high posts. Puran Chand was his diwan. Munshi Mansa Ram was his Peshkar-i Sadarat (Chief Secretary). Besides his native Turki language he knew Persian, writing poems under the pen-name of 'Shakir' and loved company of the learned.

His relations with the English and the French on the East Coast were amicable. If they courted him for their commerce, he sought to forestall their alliance with the Marathas. But he had sagacity enough to realise the dangers of taking sides and being embroiled in their political
rivalry. Unfortunately his successors lacked this wisdom, with the result that Hyderabad and the Karnatak became the scene of hectic Anglo-French struggle after 1748.

Before his death (21 May, 1748) Nizam ul Mulk dictated a 17-clause testament which throws light on his ideas of government and which Nasir Jang was asked to follow. Some clauses were as follows: (i) to 'seek peace and agreement' with the Marathas; (ii) to abstain from death penalty unless backed by the qazi; (iii) to shun sloth and lead an active life in tours and campaigns; (iv) to regulate all affairs of the state, attending to general principles as well as details of administration; (v) to act as 'the trustee of the rights of individuals' and not to 'usurp the inheritance' of any person; (vi) to employ the descendants of older rulers according to their merit; (vii) to be loyal to the Emperor, for 'the state of the Deccan is in a condition of subservience'; (viii) to seek to settle disputes peacefully and not provoke war through aggression; (ix) to be on guard against the people of Burhanpur, Bijapur, Gujrat and the frontier province; (x) to practise utmost economy; (xi) to clear the dues of the soldiers at once, by keeping the treasury always near; (xii) to keep the Brahmins in the Deccan, though able, in prison (Pandit Khanah) for their rebellious attitude; (xiii) to treat the younger brothers well—'maintain, educate and train them' like sons.

3. The Period from 1748-62

But all this wise counsel was fruitless. The situation in Hyderabad completely changed after Nizam ul Mulk's death in 1748. It was comparable to that in Delhi after Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Nizam ul Mulk's successors (like Aurangzeb's) were inferior to him both in character and ability, military and civil. They could not choose able officers. Ministers were frequently changed. Finances were mismanaged. The position worsened owing to the growing practice of mortgaging revenues and the admini-
stratification to creditors. The consequential decline in revenues affected military efficiency. On account of arrears of pay soldiers became mutinous. The introduction of western system of warfare demanded regular and punctual payment. The state became dependent on foreign mercenaries as the local Hyderabadi troops became ineffective. The debacle of Udgir (1760) was a natural result of this weakness, as explained before (Chapter V). However, the accession of Nizam Ali as Nizam ul Mulk Asaf Jah (1762) ushered in a long period of stability in the state.

Section C

THE PUNJAB (1713-68)

Abdus Samad Khan 1713-1726
Zakariya Khan 1726-1745
Civil War
Muin ul Mulk (Mir Mannu) 1748-53
Afghan Rule 1750-1768

Sikhs recover the Punjab.

Geography as well as demography contributed to make the Punjab an area of very great strategic importance throughout the course of Indian history. It served as a breakwater of foreign invasions since the time of Alexander the Great. This fertile land of the Five Rivers with its vast impenetrable forests and floods made movement difficult alike for pedestrians and horsemen. It was the home of courageous, hardy, turbulent peoples and predatory rebels,—the Jats, the backbone of the Sikhs, Ranghars, and Gujar, Dogar, and Wattu tribes, not easily amenable to central control. The land became very suitable for guerrilla warfare. Generally speaking, however, during the seventeenth century this frontier province was more peaceful than others, thanks to the strength of the Mughal Empire. But in the eighteenth century on account of the weakness
of the Mughal government the situation changed. The affairs of the Punjab have been discussed earlier (in chapters 3 and 6), and these need not be repeated here. Only the main features are indicated below. This difficult area now needed a strong ruler. Such was Abdus Samad Khan, a Central Asian immigrant, closely related to Nizam-ul-mulk and Itimad-ud-daula I. Appointed governor of Lahore as a commander of 5000 and entitled Dilir Jang (1713), he enforced law and order. For subduing the Sikhs under Banda in 1714-6 he was rewarded with the title of Saif-ud-daula (sword of the state). In 1718 he suppressed Isa Khan of Thara in Sirhind district, a Ranghar landowner, appointed faujdar of Lakhi Jangal by Bahadur Shah, grown rich and powerful through highway robbery (between Delhi and Lahore), and plunder of local faujdars, and backed by the Emperor’s favourite Samsam-ud-daula (Khan-i-Dauran), dominating the country from the Bias to the Sutlej with a fort at Darisa. He also freed the country of another rebel, Husain Khan Khesghi of Qasur. The governor also encouraged Turkish immigrants to settle in the Punjab with lands and army appointments.

In 1726 Abdus Samad Khan was replaced by his son, Zakariya Khan (Azd-ud-daula I Hizbar Jang). Multan was added to his charge in 1739. On the recommendation of Nadir Shah he was appointed mansabdar of 8000 and entitled Saif-ud-daula II. He and his son (Yahya Khan) married respectively the daughters of wazir Itimad-ud-daula I and of the latter’s son Itimad-ud-daula II. The internal administration of Zakariya Khan was strong and just, protecting people from oppression and subduing robber chiefs in the area from Hasan Abdal to the Sutlej. He generously secured the liberation of Indian artisans and prisoners from Nadir Shah’s train. The general mourning on his death (1 July, 1745) was an index to the love of his subjects.

After Zakariya Khan the Punjab fell on evil days. There...
was a civil war between his sons Yahya Khan (Azd-ud-daula II) and Hayatulla Khan (Hizbar Jang II, Shah Nawaz Khan), which destroyed the internal peace, prosperity and happiness established by their father. The rebellion of the Raja of Jammu and the activities of the Sikhs added to the prevailing disorders, caused by lawless elements. There was utter collapse of government. Shah Nawaz Khan invited Ahmad Shah Abdali. The latter invaded the Punjab and captured Lahore and Sirhind (1747-48). He was, however, defeated by the Mughals at Manupur (11 March, 1748).

The victor of Manupur, Muin-ul-mulk (son of Wazir-Qamaruddin), was appointed governor of Lahore by Emperor Muhammad Shah. His task, already arduous on account of the civil war and the Afghan invasion, was rendered extremely difficult by the rivalry of the new Wazir, Safdar Jang, who espoused the cause of Shah Nawaz against Muin. During his second invasion Ahmad Shah got the revenues of the ‘Chahar Mahals’ (Sialkot, Pasrur, Gujrat and Aurangabad) amounting to fourteen lakhs of rupees though these remained under the Mughal administration (1750). The full weight of the revived power of the Sikhs now fell on Muin-ul-mulk who had to continue his crusade against them till his last days. Meanwhile Ahmad Shah came for the third time (1752), defeated Muin-ul-mulk who had to surrender the provinces of Lahore and Multan. The cession was formally approved by the Emperor. Muin-ul-mulk sought now to recreate his dispersed soldiery and restore order in his jurisdiction.

The death of Muin-ul-mulk, the last Mughal governor of the Punjab (3 November, 1753) was followed by a puppet show. The Emperor’s three year old son Mahmud and the late governor’s two year old son Muhammad Amin Khan were appointed respectively governor and deputy governor of the Punjab (13-17 Nov.). Next, Wazir Intizam-ud-daula was appointed (absentee) governor with Mumin Khan as his deputy. But at the end of January, 1754,
Ahmad Shah Abdali appointed the deceased governor's son Muhammad Amin Khan governor with his father's title Muin-ul-mulk (January-April, 1754) with Mumin Khan as his deputy. The latter, though an experienced administrator, could not do anything as all power rested with Mughlani Begam, the masterful but profligate widow of the deceased governor as the regent. All order and decency vanished. There were several rebellions against her authority. Finally Khwaja Mirza Khan, an Uzbek army captain, became governor of Lahore but could not control the administration or the Turki generals. The Begam, made a virtual captive by him, secretly appealed to Imad-ul-mulk the Mughal wazir and Ahmad Shah Abdali. Her maternal uncle, Khwaja Abdulla Khan, backed by Abdali, installed her as governor with himself as her deputy (April, 1755). But soon Khwaja Abdulla seized the government. His rule was tyrannical. The Begam appealed to Imad-ul-mulk, her prospective son-in-law. So Imad came to Lahore (Feb. 1756), expelled Khwaja Abdulla but made the Begam captive and seized her property. Mir Mumin was re-appointed governor.

In October, 1756 Abdali conquered the Punjab, re-installed Khwaja Abdulla as governor with Khwaja Mirza Khan as his deputy. But in spite of all the help that Mughlani had given to Ahmad Shah, the latter appointed his own son, Timur Shah, governor of the Punjab (1757), with general Jahan Khan as his deputy. The Marathas expelled the Afghans (1758) and occupied Lahore for six months. In 1759 Ahmad Shah Abdali conquered the Punjab, which was finally lost to Delhi. The Sikhs recovered the Punjab in 1767-68.
Section D

OUDH (1722-65)

The Persian Shia Nawabs of Oudh played a very important part in the general history of Northern India in the eighteenth century. Saadat Khan showed courage in challenging Baji Rao and fighting Nadir Shah. Safdar Jang controlled the Empire as its wazir for more than five years. Shuja-ud-daula joined Ahmad Shah Abdali against the Marathas and even challenged the East India Company. Oudh’s importance in history continued in the nineteenth century as well.

Saadat Khan Burhan ul Mulk (1722-39)

During the period of the decline of the Safavi dynasty, Mir Muhammad Amin (born about 1680), the founder of the Oudh family, claiming descent from the seventh Imam Musa, migrated from Nishapur in Persia to Patna (1708-09), where his father had already settled earlier. During 1710-19, he served for two years under Sarbuland Khan, faujdar in Allahabad and then governor of Gujrat and under Emperor Farrukhsiyar for six years. In 1719 he joined the Sayyid Brothers. As faujdar of Hindaun and Biana he restored order in Agra province, and cleverly ingratiated himself into the confidence of Husain Ali Mir Bakhshi. But he became a ‘turn-coat in politics’, joined the anti-Sayyid conspiracy and took a leading part in securing the person of Emperor Farrukhsiyar. Muhammad Shah rewarded him with the title of Saadat Khan Bahadur (Lord of Good Fortune) in October, 1720, and appointed him governor of Akbarabad (Agra) and faujdar of gird or dependent parganas (1720-22). For his share in the fight with Wazir Abdullah he was rewarded with the title of Bahadur Jang and the highest insignia (of Mahi and Maratib) and captaincy of imperial bodyguard (1721). The governorship of Agra was a strenuous charge.
Nominally under the Empire, it was the playground of turbulent elements, the Afghans, unruly zamindars and the Jats. Notwithstanding his diplomacy and offensive warfare, Saadat failed to subdue the Jats of Bharatpur, Sinsani, Agra and Mathura following guerrilla tactics and his deputy was killed. Though deputed against Ajit Singh of Marwar (governor of Ajmer and Gujrat), he did not advance against him on account of non-cooperation of jealous nobles.

From Agra he was transferred as governor of Oudh (Sept. 1722-March, 1739) in place of Raja Girdhar Bahadur. Since the days of Babur it was an integral part of the Empire but it was the theatre of virtually independent nobles and zamindars great or small. He captured Lucknow from the Shaikhzadas, descendants of the earliest Muslim conquerors of the area (1722), seized the lands (except in Allahabad) of Mohan Singh of Tiloil, the bravest chieftain of Oudh, killed in battle (1723). By his new revenue settlement he increased the resources of Oudh. He was now rewarded with the title of Burhan ul Mulk. But his ambition to play a leading part in court politics was not fulfilled (1723).

Saadat Khan could not completely uproot the refractory nobles of Oudh, as Persian histories claim. The Rajput chiefs of Tiloil, Baiswara, Unao and Rai Bareilly districts continued to give trouble till the next reign. Raja Nawal Singh of Tiloil headed a Rajput confederacy of 20 tributary chiefs in Southern Oudh (June, 1737). But though the confederacy was defeated, the Raja was not wholly crushed. He, however, kept some of the big landlords in check and sought to maintain order.

Saadat Khan expanded the territory of Oudh in different directions. In the east four sarkars (Benares, Jaunpur, Ghazipur and Chunar) were leased out by their jagirdars to Saadat Khan for seven lakhs of rupees (1728). The western boundary was pushed to near Kanouj by subduing a Chandel chief, Hindu Singh. In the south-east, as faujdar of Kora-Jahanabad (1735) in Allahabad suba, Saadat Khan
crushed the powerful Khichi Rajput chief Bhagwant Singh, zamindar of Ghazipur and foiled the efforts of the latter’s son, Rup Singh, to recover his estate with the help of the Bundelas and the Marathas.

During 1732-38 to checkmate the Maratha push to the north, Saadat Khan urged with the contemporary ‘war party’ in the court (Wazir Qamaruddin, Md. Khan Bangash, Sarbuland Khan, Abhay Singh Rathor and others) a policy of armed resistance and corresponded with the Nizam for holding the Marathas back. Further he suggested to the Emperor his own deputation against the Marathas in return of governorship of Agra and Malwa in addition to his own. But the ‘peace party’ under Khan-i-Dauran and Jai Singh frightened the Emperor of the potential dangers of the possible combination of Saadat and the Nizam to his own position. As deputy-governor of Malwa (1736) Baji Rao prepared for his northern push by sending his agent Baji Bhivrao in advance to secure Bundela cooperation. Saadat Khan instigated the Raja of Bhadwar to resist the Marathas but without any reinforcements from Oudh he submitted to them (1737). After defeating Malhar Rao Holkar (in March) who wanted to prevent a union between the Nawab, the wazir and the Marathas, Saadat sent exaggerated reports of his victory to the Emperor. But Baji Rao’s sudden swoop in April, be-dimmed Saadat’s performance. His offer to drive out the Marathas, if he was given supreme command and the charge of the provinces of Agra, Gujrat, Malwa’and Ajmer, was again turned down by the Emperor under influence of the ‘peace party’. So he returned disappointed to Oudh.

During Nadir Shah’s invasion Saadat Khan showed reckless courage but behaved treacherously. In obedience to the imperial summons he came to the imperial camp at Karnal (February, 1739) with an army of 30,000 horse, well-equipped with artillery and war materials. His baggage train was intercepted by the invader. Without heeding the Nizam and other nobles, he
Irashly advanced against the Persians without artillery and with only a small cavalry and infantry, only to be defeated and captured (February 23). At his advice Nadir invited the Nizam (‘the key of the Empire of India’) during peace negotiations and the war indemnity was fixed at 50 lakhs. But the appointment of the Nizam as Mir Bakhshi in place of Samsam-ud-daula Khan-i-Dauran deceased so excited the jealousy and vengeance of Saadat Khan that he induced the invader to raise his demand to Rs. 20 crores. For his treacherous behaviour, explained earlier, Saadat Khan was appointed Vakil-i-mutlaq (Regent Plenipotentiary) in place of the Nizam, but the Emperor was humiliated. Saadat Khan rose very high in the invader’s favours but two days later he suddenly died. The cause of it is not definitely known. It was due either to physical ailments (e.g. cancer in leg) or to suicide,—as historian Hari Charan Das (an Oudh pensioner) says,—either for inability to satisfy Nadir’s demands or as Nadir came to know of his treachery (as the Delhi Chronicle says).

**Mirza Muhammad Muqim Safdar Jang (1739-54)**

On the death of Saadat (19 March, 1739), the claim of his nephew and son-in-law, Mirza Muhammad Muqim (born about 1708) was contested by his cousin Sher Jang, son of Saadat’s elder brother, but accepted by Nadir. He was also given the title of Safdar Jang (Lion of Battle) and confirmed as governor of Oudh. Highly educated, cultured, trained, in war and administration, during his uncle’s time as his deputy (entitled Abul Mansur Khan), he started well. Rebellious zamindars, Muslim and Rajput, were suppressed including the Rajput Rajas of Tiloi (who tried to regain independence, 1739) and of Nabinagar and Katesar (Sitapur dt. 1741). Emperor Muhammad Shah ordered him to help Alivardi against the Marathas in 1742. But he behaved like an enemy and had to be
recalled. The advance of Balaji Rao from Bundelkhand towards Benares also led him to return.

Desirous of patronising the Irani party after Nadir's invasion on account of suspicions of the Turanis, the Emperor called Safdar Jang to Delhi (1743) and also Amir Khan from Allahabad. Safdar was appointed Mir-i-Atish (Superintendent of imperial artillery) in March, 1744 (in place of a Turani), and also governor of Kashmir in October. The Emperor also arranged the marriage of Safdar's only son (future Shuja-ud-daula) with the sister of Ishaq Khan Najm-ud-daula, an Irani noble (1745). Safdar Jang became the leader of the Irani party on the death of Amir Khan (Jan., 1747). With the wazir sunk in pleasure and the Nizam about to die, Safdar Jang rose very high among the nobles on whom the Emperor depended in diplomacy and official business for his power, experience and sobriety.

In February-June, 1745 the Emperor, instigated by Safdar Jang, took the field against Ali Muhammad Rohilla (at Bangarh). The inefficiency of the Mughals was heightened by internal dissensions among the nobles. Safdar was intent on the Rohilla's ruin, but the wazir and Qaim Khan Bangash supported him. Finally Ali Muhammad was pardoned (June, 1745).

During the first invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali (January-March, 1748) Safdar played an important part. He not only brought a large army and artillery but bore about one-seventh of the entire financial burden. His right wing consisting of selected Irani soldiers of Nadir's army was victorious when the imperial army were on the verge of a disaster. His 1700 musketeers snatched a hillock from the Afghans who failed to dislodge him. He also sent reinforcements to the Mughal van and centre and prevented an attack on Muin-ul-mulk. Safdar was, however, duped by Abdali's clever diplomacy.

Safdar as Wazir (June, 1748-53):

Emperor Muhammad Shah died on 25 April, 1748.
Three days after Safdar Jang arranged for the enthronement of Prince Ahmad in the camp at Panipat and was promised wazirship. But he was formally appointed in June, 1748 only after the death of Nizam-ul-mulk. Promoted to the rank of 8000, given new titles Jamait-ul-mulk Sipahsalar besides his older ones, appointed superintendent of Ghusalkhana, governor of Ajmer (exchanged for Allahabad with his friend Salabat Khan) and faujdar of Narnol in addition to his existing charge of Oudh, Safdar now became the darling of fortune. His only son, Jalaluddin Haidar, became Shuja-ud-daula and promoted to his father's post of Mir Atish.

The wazirship had been offered earlier to the Nizam. Declining it on grounds of age and illness, he had advised Safdar to accept it for 'the interest of the state' and to 'bring the empire to order'. But the task was extremely difficult and complicated. The empire had suffered not only in territory but in moral prestige, and ceased to inspire awe and respect. Ahmad Abdali was a second Nadir, and had the alliance of the Rohillas. The Marathas were raiding the empire and dictating terms to Delhi. Administration had broken down along with financial insolvency and military weakness.

At first Safdar chalked out an ambitious policy.Externally, he wanted to recover the Punjab and Afghanistan with the help of the Marathas and extend the Mughal empire to the south-eastern frontier of Persia and to the river Narmada in the south. He urged the Emperor twice, once after his second enthronement and again in 1752. But the latter did not move under the influence of Javid Khan. Internally, Safdar sought to uproot the settlements of the Jats as well as of the Bangash and Rohilla Afghans. Gradually realising that his bold programme was not feasible, he concentrated on stabilising his position in the court but failed therein too.

Why was it so? To understand this we have to realise the contemporary court politics and the prevailing situation.
It demanded Bismarckian ability and absolute power. Safdar had neither. Far from being strong, his position as wazir was weak and dangerous. His anxiety to save the empire availed little.

In the first place there was a 'clash of personal interests'. To older nobles, claiming office by hereditary right irrespective of merit or imperial selection, Safdar was an interloping foreign adventurer. If he had dispossessed Intizam-ud-daula (son of deceased Qamaruddin) of his father's wazirship, a friend of his, also a foreigner, Salabat Khan, had deprived Ghaziuddin (eldest son of Nizam-ul-mulk Mir Bakhshi) of his father's legacy. Both Intizam, second Bakhshi, and Ghaziuddin, husband of his sister, constituted a close, prestigious and powerful family group. Secondly, this personal rivalry was intensified by racial differences. Safdar and Salabat were both Iranis and recruited mostly Persians, ex-soldiers of Nadir or Irani immigrants. On the other hand Nizam-ul-mulk and Qamaruddin were both Turanis and recruited mostly Turks coming from Central Asia (Ahrar) or settled in India. A third factor of bitterness was religious. The Persian Shias were highly intelligent, polished in manners and very good in civil administration. But in fighting capacity and in power of control, they were inferior to the Turks. Besides the Shias formed a minority group, looking up to Persia for inspiration. Their superior and scornful airs and restrictions regarding marriage stood in the way of their racial and cultural assimilation with the general body of Muslims. Hence the wazir's followers were only 'a fraction of this fraction'. The Sunni Turks, on account of their numerical majority and willingness to amalgamate with other Muslims, through marriage, or social contacts, Indian or foreign, had a wider field of support and co-operation. This constituted an inherent weakness of Safdar in his effort to rule as a dominant wazir over the Emperor and other nobles.

Court conspiracies against Safdar naturally grew in such
an atmosphere. The all-powerful eunuch, Javid Khan, afraid of curtailment of his own ascendancy, resented Safdar’s legitimate exercise of power. The two sons of the deceased wazir, Intizam-ud-daula and Muin-ul-Mulk, were openly hostile to him but were not strong enough to oust him. The former was only the second Bakhshi, and the latter preoccupied in the Punjab. So they had to depend on their cousin, Nasir Jang, heir of the Nizam. Intizam’s conspiracy against the wazir (November, 1748) failed. The latter withdrew from the court, causing an open rupture with the Emperor. Instigated by Javid, and utterly oblivious of the threatening Afghan clouds in the Punjab, the fickle and foolish Emperor (and also Javid) secretly asked Nasir Jang to come to Delhi and supplant the wazir and his friend (Mir Bakhshi) by Intizam and Nasir Jang respectively. But Nasir Jang could not set out at once without making suitable military preparations for the campaign, administration of the Deccan and taking steps against his nephew and rival Muzaffar Jang. Nasir Jang disclosed his real intentions to his brother Ghaziuddin Khan Firuz Jang (then at Delhi). Nasir sought to disarm the wazir’s suspicions by saying that he was coming to chastise the Marathas and reorganise the state with his help (in return for the governorship of the Deccan and the office of Mir Bakhshi), and advising him not to rely on the Peshwa, the ‘great deceiver’.

Faced with such conspiracies, Safdar Jang had to take steps to save himself. He showed Nasir Jang’s letter to Hingane, the Maratha envoy at Delhi. The latter warned him not only of the duplicity of Nasir Jang but also of the Turani conspiracy. Taking suitable defensive measures, the wazir requested the Peshwa, to intervene, as ‘the time for testing our alliance’ had come. But being disappointed, he adopted such bold counter-measures that the craven Emperor accompanied by his mother and the eunuch made a humiliating visit to the wazir and induced the latter to return by promises of support (April, 1749). The Emperor
also countermanded Nasir's northern march from the Narmada (May) and appointed him viceroy of the Deccan.

To counter the plots of the Turanis and cripple them, the wazir deprived Intizam and Firuz Jang of their jagirs. Soon the wazir realised that the Punjab and the Deccan were the main props of the Turanis. Against Muīn-ul-mulk, governor of the Punjab, he first incited Nasir Khan, ex-governor of Kabul and Ghazni and now faujdar of Chahar Mahals. Next he appointed Shah Nawaz Khan, governor of Multan and instructed him to seize Lahore. But both these plots leaked out and failed. Nasir was defeated, Shah Nawaz was killed. During the second invasion of Ahmad Abdali (1749) the wazir did not send reinforcements to the Punjab and gloated over Muīn's misfortune. His conduct was reprehensible as the interests of the state were sacrificed at the altar of personal rivalry. In the Deccan the wazir incited Sadulla Khan (Muzaffar Jang), deputy governor of Bijapur to rebellion against Nasir Jang.

Soon he found his position to be difficult, weak and unenviable. Circumstances apart, he himself was responsible for this. He was selfish. His designs were bold but impracticable. His hatred of the Turanis and the Pathans was implacable but tactless. Without pacifying the eunuch and the Turanis by just, impartial and favourable treatment he intrigued to wipe them out. To check his enemies, the old nobles and hereditary officers, he raised a newer aristocracy, of Persians, Shias and Hindus. By appropriating the most fertile areas, misappropriating the revenues from crown lands and not paying the imperial soldiery and servants, the wazir lost the sympathy and support of the Emperor and his household.

Safdar Jang undertook two expeditions (December 1749 and July 1750) against Balaram alias Ballu of Bharatpur, backed by Suraj Mal to recover the district of Faridabad lying within the jagir of the wazir. Finally,
the made an alliance with Suraj Mal, legalising their acquisitions.

The wazir fared worse in his contests with the Afghans. He had inherited his father-in-law’s rivalry with the Bangashes and the Rohillas. To ruin both he induced the Emperor (July, 1749) to appoint Qaim Khan, son of Muhammad Khan Bangash, governor of Rohilkhand (then under Sadulla Khan, son of the deceased Rohilla chieftain Ali Muhammad). Qaim Khan gulped the bait but was killed (November). The wazir induced the Emperor to confiscate the Bangash territory of Farrukhabad (January 1750). He duped Qaim’s mother by entrusting it not to her son but to his own agent, Nawal Rai. The latter imprisoned Qaim’s mother and brothers and his administration was oppressive. Rescued by her Kayastha servant, she reached Mau and inciting the Bangash chieftains, installed her stepson, Ahmad Khan, as chieftain. During this Pathan rising Nawal Rai was killed (August), the combined but heterogenous army of the wazir and the Jats was defeated by the united Bangash and Rohilla armies at Ram Chatauni (September), and the wazir himself was wounded. The Pathans occupied the imperial territory round Farrukhabad and the wazir’s dominions of Oudh, though Allahabad withstood a prolonged siege. Jaunpur and Benares were disturbed. This disorder led the Hindu zamindars to rise against Safdar but they were opposed by the local Shaikhzadas and Khanazadas.

The Emperor and the wazir’s enemies at the court, Javid Khan and the Turanis, made a capital of the event. The wazir’s property was saved from confiscation by his wife’s defence. His office was saved (from Intizam-ud-daula) by a bribe of rupees seventy lakhs to Javid Khan.

In his effort to regain power and restore his prestige Safdar now invited the Marathas and purchased the help of Malhar Holkar and Jayappa Sindhia in crushing the Bangash and Rohilla Afghans with Rs. 25,000 as daily allowance (1751). This has been criticised as ‘humiliating’
by historians like Elphinstone, Beveridge and Irvine-Srivastava, however, considers this action to be statesmanlike in view of the then situation. The Afghans were in treacherous league with Ahmad Shah Abdali who always came during the next decade not only to relieve his hard-pressed brethren but also to help them in the realisation of their political aspirations. The Turani party leaders, secret abettors of the Pathans, were the sworn enemies of Safdar. So he had to choose between either acquiescing in the Indian Afghan aggressions at the cost of Mughal sovereignty and Oudh dominions, backed by a foreign Afghan invader, or crushing them with the help of the Marathas, once rebels but now loyal friends of the empire. Nor was such an intervention unprecedented: the Sayyids and the Nizam had made pacts with the Marathas in 1718-19 and 1731-32. The Marathas were a good match for the Pathans.

As a result of the combined military movements of the wazir, the Jats and the Marathas during 1751 the Bangashes and the Rohillas had to escape to the Kumaon hills. Rajendra Giri Goswain and his Naga Sannyasi troops volunteered for the wazir but were defeated. By the treaty of Lucknow (February, 1752), hastened by Ahmad Abdali’s invasion, the Rohillas got back their lands promising to pay revenues regularly. Ahmad Bangash paid a fine and retained half of his territory, the other half went to the Marathas (till 1761). The Pathan campaign did not serve the wazir’s interests adequately. Friction with the Marathas over their demand of the holy places like Ayodhya, Prayag and Kashi grew. The Marathas tried to keep both sides pleased. They reaped the harvest, the wazir merely won the day.

Ahmad Abdali came for the third time in 1752 to help his distressed Afghan brethren. The Emperor summoned the wazir to bring the Marathas at once. The wazir entered into a subsidiary alliance with the latter at Kanouj for protection of the empire from external and internal enemies-
but it was too late to prevent the cession of the Punjab and Multan to Ahmad Abdali and it was not enforced (23 April). The wazir’s fond design of expelling the Afghans from the Punjab and recapturing Afghanistan was upset.

At the court Safdar’s enemies had grown powerful during his prolonged absence. Safdar was wazir only in name. Javid had become ‘wazir in all but name’. Backed by the Queen-mother he held the Emperor in his grip. In bitterness the wazir refused to pay court to the eunuch. The latter weaned Ballu Jat from the former. As faujdar of Sikandarabad, the privy purse estate of the Emperor, Ballu started a reign of terror. The wazir had the eunuch murdered (August, 1752). This was ‘worse than a crime, a political blunder’ (Sarkar). Safdar became now permanently estranged from the Emperor, the Queen-mother and the entire imperial household. The court party now came to be led and the Emperor came to be controlled by two high able and ambitious nobles, Intizam-ud-daula and Imad-ul-Mulk.

Safdar now acted as a selfish dictator seeking dominance. The Emperor was virtually a prisoner in the palace, surrounded by the wazir’s men: the Queen-mother was spied upon for her suspected correspondence with Turani and Afghan nobles; and the court became full of his relatives and favourites; most nobles at the court or provinces were antagonised. The people were dissatisfied for his indifference or failure to protect the country.

In this atmosphere a conspiracy was formed against the wazir by the Emperor, the Queen-mother (head of the government de facto), Intizam-ud-daula, Imad-ul-mulk, other nobles and mansabdars. Learning of a coup (17, March, 1753), the wazir left the capital for good (26 March). After six months of civil war peace was made. Safdar got back Oudh and Allahabad, but not his own wazirship. Very soon, however, he was invited by the Emperor, now restive under the dictatorship of Imad-ul-mulk.
Mir Bakhshi, backed by the Marathas. They appointed Imad wazir in place of Intizam, deposed Ahmad Shah and installed Alamgir II. Safdar returned but died (5 Oct. 1754).

Mirza Jalaluddin Haidar Shuja-ud-daula (1754-75)

Safdar Jang was succeeded by his only son Mirza Jalaluddin Haidar (Shuja-ud-daula, born Jan. 1732). After his vain effort to seize the wizarat, there grew an open rupture between him and the wazir (June, 1757). One very important phase of Shuja’s career was his role in the Maratha-Afghan contest, 1759-61, which has been explained earlier (Chapter 5-D). His subsequent career will be dealt in the next volume.