



Shivaji Maharaj and Surat Raid

For Prelims: [Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj](#), Rajkot Fort, [Sindhudurg Fort](#), [Island of Kurte](#), [Arabian Sea](#), [Siddis](#), [Tapi River](#), [Battle of Surat 1664](#), [Francois Bernier](#), [Jean Baptiste Tavernier](#), [Kondana Fort](#), [Ashtapradhan](#), [Chauth](#), [Sardeshmukhi](#).

For Mains: Legacy of Maratha empire and need to preserve them.

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, a 35-foot statue of [Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj](#), unveiled at **Rajkot Fort** in Malvan in **Sindhudurg district**, collapsed in less than a year.

- It is in contrast with the [Sindhudurg Fort](#), built by Shivaji Maharaj **357 years ago**, **remains resilient** and has played a significant role in **military activities** such as the Surat raids. A major portion of [Sindhudurg Fort](#) was financed by Surat raids.

What are the Key Facts about the Sindhudurg Fort?

- Construction:** The fort's construction began on **25th November 1664**, and was completed on **29th March, 1667**.
 - The fort was built on the **island of Kurte in the Arabian Sea** after a thorough examination by Shivaji Maharaj and an expert (**Hiroji Indulkar**).
- Cost of Construction:** The construction of the fort was estimated at a cost of **one crore hons**. Hon was a **gold coin** used as currency during the reign of Shivaji Maharaj in the **17th century**.
- Maritime Dominance:** Shivaji Maharaj's vision was to establish [maritime control](#) and enhance economic stability through a powerful navy.
 - The fort was strategically located to dominate maritime access and defend against foreign powers like the **Siddis, Portuguese, and other colonial forces**.
- Architectural Excellence:** The fort was built with a **serpentine wall** covering four kilometres, standing ten metres high with **45 stairways**, and included facilities for guards and cannons.
 - It featured a south-facing statue of Hanuman at the entrance and was complemented by smaller forts like Padmagad, Sarjekot, and Rajkot for additional security.
- Current Status:** Sindhudurg Fort remains an **impregnable symbol** of Shivaji Maharaj's military and strategic prowess. It stands as a historical testament to [Maratha naval strength](#) and fortification techniques.

What were Surat Raids Conducted by Shivaji?

- Strategic Importance of Surat:** Surat was known as **'the greatest emporium of the Orient and the richest jewel of the Mughal Empire'**.
 - Surat was strategically situated along the southern bank of the [Tapi river](#).
 - It was central to Mughal trade with Europeans, Iranians, and Arabs as well as a transit point

for pilgrims en route to [Mecca \(Gateway to Mecca\)](#).

- Targeting Surat was a strategic move to **disrupt the Mughal economy** and assert Maratha dominance.
- **First Raid on Surat (January 1664):** Shivaji Maharaj raided Surat in **January 1664**, catching Mughal forces off guard.
 - Surat's governor, **Inayat Khan**, also sought refuge, leaving the city defenceless.
 - The [Battle of Surat 1664 \(Sack of Surat\)](#) yielded wealth, including cash, gold, silver, pearls, and fine clothing, estimated at **one crore rupees**.
 - The wealth seized **funded** the construction of **Sindhudurg fort** and expanded the Maratha Navy.
 - **Impact:** Shivaji Maharaj's actions in Surat **alarmed the English** to move their warehouse from **Surat to Bombay**. By May 1664, the **Portuguese had gifted Bombay to the English**, and Shivaji Maharaj's legendary exploits became widely known.
- **Second Raid on Surat (October 1670):** In 1670, Shivaji Maharaj launched a **second raid** on Surat, seizing wealth worth approximately **Rs 6.6 million**.
 - The Dutch and English merchants were spared as Shivaji Maharaj's **primary target** remained the **Mughals**.
 - The loot included gems, gold, and coins worth around **five million rupees**.
- **Strategic Significance of Surat Raids:** The raids aimed to **disrupt Mughal economic stability** and showcase Maratha power. Shivaji Maharaj's **careful planning and strategic execution**, combined with his restraint in sparing civilians, were designed to weaken Mughal rule while minimising harm.

What are Key Facts About Shivaji Maharaj?

- **Birth:** He was born on **19th February 1630** at Shivneri Fort in District Pune in the present-day state of Maharashtra.
- **Early Life:** As a teenager, he successfully got control of the **Torna Fort** which was under Bijapur. He also acquired the [Kondana Fort](#) from Adil Shah of Bijapur.
- **Death:** Chhatrapati Shivaji died on 3rd April 1680 at Raigad, after running a fever for three weeks.
- **Important Battles:**

Battle	Parties
Battle of Pratapgad, 1659	Between the Maratha forces led by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the Adilshahi general Afzal Khan
Battle of Surat, 1664	Between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Inayat Khan , a Mughal Governor.
Battle of Purandar, 1665	Between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Mughal commander Jai Singh .
Battle of Sangamner, 1679	Between the Mughal Empire and Maratha Empire. This was the last battle in which the Maratha King Shivaji fought .

- **Title:** He was crowned as the king of the Marathas on **6th June 1674**, at Raigad.
- He took on the titles of **Chhatrapati, Shakakarta, Kshatriya Kulavantas and Haindava Dharmodhhaarak**.
- **Administration:**
 - **Central Administration:** The King was the supreme head of state who was assisted by a group of eight ministers known as the '[Ashtapradhan](#)'.
 - **Revenue Administration:** [Chauth and Sardeshmukhi](#) were important sources of income.
 - **Chauth:** It amounted to **1/4th** of the **revenue demand** which was paid to Marathas as a safeguard against Shivaji's forces raiding Non-Maratha territories.
 - **Sardeshmukhi:** It was an **additional levy of 10%** on those lands on which the Marathas claimed **hereditary rights**.

What was the Journey of Marathas after Shivaji?

- **Turbulence After Shivaji Maharaj's Death:** Following Shivaji's death, his son **Sambhaji**, ascended to the throne but his reign was short-lived due to his capture and **execution by the Mughals in 1689**.
 - Following Sambhaji's death, the empire was led by regents and **Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj, Shivaji's younger brother**.
- **Maratha's Rise Under Peshwa:** The appointment of Balaji Vishwanath as Peshwa in 1713 marked a turning point. His diplomacy and reforms laid the **foundation for Maratha expansion and consolidation**.
 - **Baji Rao I (1720-1740) extended Maratha's control into northern India**, and his strategic vision and military acumen solidified Maratha's dominance.
- **Maratha Confederacy:** By the early **18th century**, the central power of the **Maratha Empire weakened** due to internal strife and external pressures.
 - The Confederacy was **not a centralised state** but rather an alliance of various Maratha states and leaders, including the **Peshwa of Pune, Holkars of Indore, Gaekwad of Baroda and the Scindhias of Gwalior**.
- **Maratha Struggle with the British:**
 - **First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-1782):** The war ended with the **Treaty of Salbai 1782** which led to the cession of **Salsette Island** to the British and opened up the Maratha ports of **Surat and Broach** to British trade.
 - **Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-1805):** The British army under **Arthur Wellesley** defeated the combined armies of **Sindhias and Bhonsle** and they were forced to accept the [Subsidiary alliance](#).
 - **Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-1818):** It marked the **final defeat** of the Marathas, this war led to the dissolution of the Maratha Empire.

Conclusion

The debate surrounding the statue emphasises the need for **respect and preservation** of historical figures, ensuring that **modern tributes** reflect the true legacy of historical achievements. The intensified public criticism of contemporary administration and project management should lead to better preservation of **historical figures** and reinforce their value as [cultural heritage sites](#).

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Drishti Mains Question:

Q. How did Shivaji's strategies and leadership shape the Maratha resistance against Mughal expansion?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q.What was the immediate reason for Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India and fight the Third Battle of Panipat? (2010)

- (a) He wanted to avenge the expulsion by Marathas of his viceroy Timur Shah from Lahore
- (b) The frustrated governor of Jullundhar Adina Beg Khan invited him to invade Punjab
- (c) He wanted to punish Mughal administration for non-payment of the revenues of the Chahar Mahal (Gujarat, Aurangabad, Sialkot & Pasrur)
- (d) He wanted to annex all the fertile plains of Punjab up to the borders of Delhi to his kingdom

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q.Clarify how mid-eighteenth century India was beset with the spectre of a fragmented polity? **(2017)**

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