

HISTORY

Nothing is known of the early history of the district. Alexander the Great is said to have sailed down the Jhelum to its junction with the Indus in around 327 BC, while his land forces marched in two bodies on either side of the river. Craterus, who was on the right bank, may have skirted parts of the present district, but there is no evidence of this, even in the Thal, which is admirably suited for the preservation of antiquarian remains. But the very course of the rivers at his time is a matter for speculation so far as this district is concerned.

In ancient times, this tract was probably ruled by the Hindu dynasty of the Rais, which was succeeded by the Brahmin line of the Chach. They ruled over a Jat population who were a branch of the Kshatriya or Rajput race. The Jats formed the majority of the population; all the other tribes were subsequent arrivals.

The Arabs seem to have made their appearance in 664 in the region. First Arab conquerors, however, held Sindh and Multan from 712 – with the arrival of Muhammad Bin Qasim – to 750 when they were expelled by a Rajput tribe called Sumra, whose descendants are still found in the district. In 1351, the Sumras were expelled by the Summas, another Rajput tribe, descendants of whom could be traced among the Unnars of the Tehsil Alipur today. It is during the rule of Summas that an immigration of Rajput tribes, such as the Sials, Gurahas, Bhattis and Chajras is said to have taken place, and that explains the overwhelming presence of the Jats in the district today, many of whom claim a common lineage as of the Rajputs. The Summa rulers all bore the title of Jam. To this day, Jam is used as a title of respect by Jats having a Sindhi origin.

The next event bearing on the history of this district is the establishment of the Langah dynasty in Multan. It ruled from 1445 to 1526. There are still Langahs in the district, and it was during the Langah rule that the independent kingdom of Seetpur was established by the Nahars in what is now the Tehsil Alipur. It was also during this rule that the Balochs first emerged from the Suleman mountains and occupied the country on the left bank of the Indus.

Roughly from that time till the end of the eighteenth century, the territory was held by four separate governments or principalities, which were, during the Mughal period, included in Akbar's *Sarkar* of Multan.

In the southern angle there was the Government of Seetpur held first by the Nahar family, then by the Makhdums of Seetpur and lastly by the Nawabs of Bahawalpur. The west central part of the district, opposite Dera Ghazi Khan,

was governed by the rulers of Dera Ghazi Khan, i.e. first by Mirrani Balochs, then Gujjars and Kalhoras, then by various governors directly appointed by the Durrani kings of Kabul, and finally by the Nawabs of Bahawalpur. The east central part of the district lying on the right bank of the Chenab opposite Multan was nominally ruled by the Multan governors. The northern part of the district, including the Thal, after passing through a stage of anarchy, became subject to the governors of Mankera, who were locally known as the Nawabs of the Thal.

THE FIRST GOVERNMENT – SEETPUR

The kingdom of the Seetpur was established by the Nahar dynasty. In 1455, when Bahlol Khan Lodhi, who had been Governor of Multan, became the King of Delhi, he granted the country lying between the Indus, which then joined the Chenab at Uch, and the Suleman range, south of a line drawn from Harand to Uch and north of Shikarpur in Sindh, to his relation Islam Khan Lodhi. This tract comprised what is now the southern part of the Tehsil Alipur, the southern part of the District Dera Ghazi Khan and the northern part of Sindh. Islam Khan or his descendants took the title of Nahar. Islam Khan's grandsons, Qasim Khan, Salam Khan and Tahir Khan, quarreled and divided the country among themselves. The southern part of the present Tehsil Alipur, the chief town of which was then Seetpur, fell to Tahir Khan, who established his rule there and died in due course of time. There were 27 generations of the Nahar family. The last of the Nahars was Bakhshan Khan, who was *jamadar* of *chaprasis* in Tehsil Alipur, and who enjoyed a small allowance from the Government for looking after the family tombs. After him the incumbents of the office were widows. One of the Nahars built a fine tomb and a mosque in his lifetime, which still exist. His name was Tahir Khan, also known as *Sakhi* or the liberal. Another Nahar, named Ali Khan founded Alipur. No other memorial of the Nahars exists.

At the end of the fifteenth century the Balochs began to come down from the hills, and occupied the country on the left bank of the Indus, from Seetpur to Kot Karor in Layyah. In 1484, Haji Khan, a Mirani Baloch founded Dera Ghazi Khan and established a dynasty the rulers of which alternately bore the titles of Haji Khan and Ghazi Khan. These chiefs expelled the Nahars from the south of the District Dera Ghazi Khan, and pressed the Seetpur Nahars very hard. Treachery was at work at the very doors of the Nahars. Sheikh Raju, the Makhdum of Seetpur, who was a counselor of the Nahars, began to seize the country for himself. He did not entirely expel the Nahars for, when he was later overthrown by the Nawabs of Bahawalpur, parts of the country were still in possession of the Nahars. The greater part, however, of the south of the district was governed by the Makhdums of Seetpur. Until the inroads of Bahawalpur began, nothing more is heard of the Nahars or of the Makhdums.

The Nahars appear to have been indifferent rulers. They left no public works behind them except Tahir Khan's tomb and adjoining mosque. The title of Nahar was given to them for their rapacity. Popular stories attest their want

of wisdom. One winter night the jackals were howling around Seetpur, one legend goes. Tahir Khan, the Liberal, asked his *wazir* what made them howl. The *wazir* answered: "The cold." The Nahar ordered clothes to be made for them. Next night the jackals howled again, and the Nahar asked his *wazir* what they were howling for. The *wazir* replied, "They are invoking blessings on you for your generosity". The Makhdums of Seetpur, on the contrary, were good governors. They dug canals, extended cultivation, and one of them founded the town of Rajanpur.

The divided and weakened state of Seetpur attracted the attention of the Nawabs of Bahawalpur first at the beginning of the eighteenth century. They ruled over a part of the district for a hundred years, and left their mark on it by their public works and by introducing an organized revenue administration. The State of Bahawalpur traces its origin to Sadiq Muhammad Khan, son of Mubarak Khan, a distinguished resident of Shikarpur in Sindh. For some reason not ascertained, Sadiq Muhammad Khan had to flee from the enmity of Nur Muhammad Kalhora, first of the Kalhora governors of Sindh. Sadiq Muhammad Khan left Shikarpur in 1727, and passed with his family and a body of followers through the territory of Muzaffargarh to Bet Dabli on the borders of Layyah. He was closely followed by the Sindhi troops under Mir Shah Dad Khan. A skirmish took place in which the Sindhis were defeated. Sadiq Muhammad Khan then took refuge with the Makhdums of Uch, who sent him to Hayat Ullah Khan, Governor of Multan, with their recommendations. Hayat Ullah Khan granted him a *jagir* south of the Sutlej. Sadiq Muhammad Khan distinguished himself as an extender of cultivation and a suppressor of robbers. His next promotion was the grant of the town and country of Farid, a robber chief whom he defeated and killed with his followers. In 1739, Sadiq Muhammad Khan obtained the title of Nawab from Nadir Shah and, in the anarchy following the invasion of Nadir Shah, succeeded in seizing the country bounded by the Sutlej on the north, Bikaner on the east, Sindh on the south and the Indus on the west. Sadiq Muhammad Khan was succeeded by his son Bahawal Khan, who founded the town of Bahawalpur, and who is remembered as Bahawal Khan the Great. It was in the time of his successor, Mubarak Khan, that the Nawabs of Bahawalpur first established themselves permanently in the district. In 1751, Mubarak Khan seized Mudwala, a village on the right bank of the Chenab between Shehr Sultan and Alipur, just opposite to the junction of the Sutlej and Chenab, from the Nahars. Later, in the same year, he took Bet Doma, a village and tract south of Seetpur, from Makhdum Sheikh Raju of Seetpur. Bahawal Khan II was the next nawab. In 1781, he took the pargana of Jatoi from Makhdum Sheikh Raju.

It was about 1790 that the Indus left its old course which joined the Chenab close to Uch and took the bed it now occupies. The south of the district was thus laid open to the attacks of Bahawalpur, and the nawab at once availed himself of the opportunity. He took Alipur, Shehr Sultan, Seetpur and Khairpur without a contest; and proceeded to take whole of the western and

southern portions of the present day Muzaffargarh from the rulers of Dera Ghazi Khan.

THE SECOND GOVERNMENT – THE RULE BY THE DERA GHAZI KHAN RULERS

It has already been stated that the Balochs occupied the left bank of the Indus at the end of the fifteenth century, and that in 1484, Haji Khan founded Dera Ghazi Khan. His son was Ghazi Khan, and alternate Haji Khans and Ghazi Khans ruled until 1769. As far as this district is concerned, they were good governors, encouraged agriculture and excavated canals. One of them, said to be the first Ghazi Khan, founded the town of Kinjhar on the Indus. Mehmood Khan Gujjar became *wazir* to the last Ghazi Khan and, under the pretext of saving government from conspirators, called Ghulam Shah Kalhora, Governor of Sindh, who took Dera Ghazi Khan, arrested the last Ghazi Khan and carried him as a prisoner to Sindh, where he died. Ghulam Shah left Mehmood Khan as the Governor of Dera Ghazi Khan. He was maintained by the kings of Khurasan too, and received from them the title of Jan Nisar Khan. Mehmood Khan ruled for 30 years, and was succeeded by his nephew, Barkhurdar, who was superseded by governors sent directly from Khurasan. Mehmood Khan enjoyed good reputation as the governor. Besides other works, he built the fort of Mehmoodkot. The Shia Muslims in the district date from the time of the Kalhora invasion caused by Mehmood Khan. After the Gujjars, a number of governors were sent directly from Khurasan. Anarchy prevailed on the left bank of the Indus, which prepared the country for the invasion of Bahawal Khan II in 1791. Here may be left the Dera Ghazi Khan part of Muzaffargarh at the same point where Seetpur was left, and an account given of the part of the district that was subject to Multan. The history of the Balochs will, however, be reverted to in considering the fourth Government.

THE THIRD GOVERNMENT – THE RULE BY THE RULERS OF MULTAN

The Langahs, already referred to, were expelled in 1529 by the Afghans, nominally acting on behalf of Babar, and in Akbar's reign Multan was incorporated in the Delhi Empire as a province or *sarkar*. Of the subdivisions of the Multan, the only two mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* are Rangpur and Seetpur. Though it is known from general history that this district must have been sometimes subject to Delhi and sometimes to Khurasan, neither monarchy had much effect on its internal history, and the local chiefs carried on their public improvements and their little wars without interference from either headquarters. Occasionally, one of two rival competitors tried to strengthen his cause by obtaining a deed-of-grant from Delhi or Kabul. But a strong band of followers proved a better support than any *sanad* or *farman*. A favourite saying of the local historians, in describing the rise of some chief, who, if a settled government had existed, would have been hanged, is

*Udhar Dilhi di sultanat mein fatur;
Idhar shahan Kabul ki nazaron dur.*

(On that side, anarchy in the Delhi kingdom;

On this side, far from the eyes of the kings of Kabul.)

As far as Multan is concerned it has no history connected with the district from the time of the Langahs to the establishment of the Multani Pathans. These were a family of Sadozai Afghans, and a branch of the family to which Ahmad Shah, Taimur Shah, Zaman Shah and Shah Shuja – kings of Kabul – belonged. The first of the family who came to India was Hussain Khan, who held Rangpur in this district in *jagir* in the time of Aurangzeb. Zahid Khan was the first of the family who became Nawab of Multan in around 1738. Between the accession of Zahid Khan and that of his son, Shuja Khan, simple anarchy prevailed. Shuja Khan was invested with the government of Multan in 1767. He founded Shujabad in Multan opposite Khangarh. In his time, the Bhangi Sikhs overran the country and occupied Multan, driving Shuja Khan to Shujabad. The raids and cruelty of the Bhangi Sikhs later became part of the local folklore. After his death, Shuja Khan was succeeded by his son, Muzaffar Khan.

A separate account has been given on Muzaffar Khan, being the founder of Muzaffargarh.

NAWAB MUZAFFAR KHAN

Muzaffar Khan was born in 1757 in Multan. He was the eldest of four sons and one daughter of Nawab Shuja Khan. He was given the best education in religion, civil administration and warfare. He was a man of great qualities and was well-versed in all current disciplines. He offered prayers regularly from the early age and always fasted in the month of Ramazan. He treated everybody with respect and was a man of good manners. He took keen interest in the affairs of the state from the very beginning and got good training under the able guidance of his father. He was only 18 years old when he led a mission to Kabul in January 1775 under the instruction of his father. His mission failed but he attracted the attention of the Afghan King who fixed five thousand rupees as his stipend. He was a brave man and his training was fed with Sikh enmity. He commanded the Afghan contingent during the siege of Multan in February 1775 and showed great bravery. When Ganda Singh had invaded Shujabad, he defended it with great valour and ultimately having realised the greedy nature of the Sikhs, gave them some money. He succeeded his father at the age of 18 in Shujabad on October 18, 1775. Muzaffar Khan could not recover Multan till 1780, when he was reinstated by Taimur Shah, King of Kabul, who expelled the Sikhs and appointed Muzaffar Khan as the Governor (*Subedar*) of Multan with the title of Nawab, at the age of 23.

Nawab Muzaffar Khan's rule was a continuous warfare, but still he paid his attention towards the betterment and development of his people. He realized

the importance of '*Musan de Hatti*' on the road leading from Multan to Dera Ghazi Khan on the other side of the Chenab. He decided to build a fort there, and hence the fort and town of Muzaffargarh were founded in 1794. Similarly, the establishment of forts and towns at Khangarh and Ghazanfargarh are attributed to his sister, Khan Bibi, and brother, Nawab Ghazanfar Khan respectively. In all, the *talukas* of Rangpur, Muradabad, Muzaffargarh, Khangarh and Ghazanfargarh were added to the territory of Multan then. Muzaffargarh became his central town across the Chenab and attracted people, primarily the agriculturists, from other parts of his territory as Muzaffar Khan dug canals, made embankments and extended cultivation.

In December 1807, he sailed to Mecca to perform Hajj. He stayed there for more than a year and on his way back home, he purchased many rare varieties of the date palm which he transplanted in Shujabad, Multan and Muzaffargarh. No wonder many varieties of dates produced in the region might have their origin to those days.

It was a tumultuous time as Ranjit Singh had set his eyes on Multan. After at least a couple of unsuccessful attempts he sent an expedition of 50000 soldiers under the over-all command of his son, Prince Kharak Singh. Nawab Muzaffar Khan, on the other hand, had only 2000 soldiers at his disposal not only to defend Multan but also the town and fort of Shujabad. The Sikhs were able to conquer the city of Multan with relatively less resistance, yet the siege of the fort lasted for 84 days. On June 2, 1818 a small contingent of Sikhs succeeded in making their way into the fort. Nawab Muzaffar Khan, along with a few of his faithful soldiers, checked their advance. The fight went on from morning till afternoon. It was more like a hand-to-hand fight in which both sides used daggers, swords and guns. Nawab gave a heroic fight in which he was accompanied by his sons, relatives, loyal servants and a handful of Afghans. Finally, a bullet from a Sikh soldier gave him the honour of martyrdom. His five sons kept fighting and sacrificed their lives one after another. Not only this but his daughter too followed his father's footsteps and laid her life before the fort finally fell to the Sikhs.

Muzaffar Khan lived the life of a soldier and died as a martyr. All throughout his tenure, he remained busy in the defense of his dominion against the Sikhs. With the demise of Muzaffar Khan, the dynasty of Sadozais also came to an end in Multan. The Sikhs now became the masters of Multan till the time it was annexed by the East India Company in 1849.

THE FOURTH GOVERNMENT – THE THAL NAWABS

The fourth Government comprised what is now, to a great extent, the Tehsil Kot Addu, and parts of the District Layyah. It continued to form part of the Mughal Empire until the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1738 when the area was plundered ruthlessly. In 1739, the area west of the Indus was surrendered by the Emperor of Delhi to Nadir Shah, and passed after his death to Ahmad Shah Abdali. The armies of Ahmad Shah marched repeatedly through the district, the cis-Indus portion of which was, with the rest of the Punjab,

incorporated in 1756 in the Durrani kingdom. During the greater portion of the reign of Ahmad Shah, no regular governors were appointed by the Kabul Government. The country was divided between the Hot and Jaskani chiefs and a number of nearly independent border tribes. Occasionally one of the king's sardars marched through the country with an army, collecting in an irregular way, and often by force, the revenue that might have been assessed without any uniform basis; but little or no attention was paid to the internal administration of the area until quite the close of the reign of Ahmad Shah. Two or three years before his death, Ahmad Shah deposed Nusrat Khan, the last of the Hot rulers of Dera Ismail Khan; and after him, Dera Ismail Khan was governed by Qamar-ud-Din Khan and other governors appointed direct from Kabul. Some ten years later, the descendants of Mehmood Khan Gujjar, who had succeeded the Miranis in the government of Dera Ghazi Khan, were similarly displaced; and in 1786 the old Jaskani family of Layyah was driven out by Abdul Nabi Serai, to whom their territories had been granted by the king in *jagir*. Towards the end of the century, the whole of the present district on both sides of the river was consolidated into a single government, under Nawab Muhammad Khan Sadozai.

Before, however, proceeding further it would be necessary to enter into some detail as to the history of the country under the old Baloch families.

References to the settlement of the first Baloch chiefs along the Indus are found in the work of famous historian, Ferishta, and in a Persian manuscript translated by Lieutenant Maclagan – a British civil servant in India and a historian. The account given by the latter is that in 874 Hijri (1469) Sultan Hussain, son of Qutab-ud-Din, obtained the government of Multan. He held the forts of Shor and Chuniewat (in Jhang) and of Kot Karor (Karor Lal Isan) and Dinkot (near Kalabagh). Soon after, Malik Suhrab, a Dodai Baloch, along with his son Ismail Khan, and Fateh Khan and others of his tribe, arrived from Kech Mekran and entered the service of Sultan Hussain. As the hill robbers were then becoming very troublesome in the province of Multan, Sultan Hussain rejoiced in the opportune arrival of Malik Suhrab, and assigned to him the country from the fort of Karor to Dinkot. "On this becoming known, many Bilochs came from Kech Mekran to the service of Sultan. The lands, cultivated and waste, along the banks of the Indus were assigned to the Bilochs, and the royal revenue began to increase. The old inhabitants of Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan relate that, after Suhrab's arrival, Haji Khan, with his son Ghazi Khan and many of their kindred and tribe, came from Kech Mekran to enter the service of Sultan. When the tracts along the Indus were in the hands of Malik Suhrab and Haji Khan, Malik Suhrab founded a town or *dera* named after Ismail Khan, and Haji Khan another with the name of Ghazi Khan." This account is confirmed, though in less detail, by Ferishta.

We next hear of these chiefs in 1540. In that year the Emperor Sher Shah visited Khushab and Bhera in the District Shahpur, and made arrangements for bringing into submission the south-western portions of the Punjab.

Among other chiefs who then appeared and tendered their submission were Ismail Khan, Ghazi Khan and Fateh Khan – the Dodai Balochs. These were probably descendants of the men mentioned above, it being the custom in these families to have a common name by which the ruling chief for the time being was always known. Thus, the Hot chiefs of Dera Ismail were always called Ismail Khans, while the Miranis of Dera Ghazi were called Ghazi Khans and Haji Khans. The Balochs are spoken of in the accounts of that time as a barbarous and daring tribe that had long been settled in great numbers in the lower Punjab. Mr. Fryer in his Settlement Report of the District Dera Ghazi Khan mentions that the first Ghazi Khan is proved by the date on his tomb to have died in 1494. This would agree with the date in the manuscript quoted above, and would fix the latter half of the fifteenth century as the period when the main Baloch immigration took place. It would also allow sufficient time for the Baloch headmen to have become recognized chiefs of the country by the time of Sher Shah's visit to Khushab in 1540.

The main facts established appear to be that the early settlers were grouped under two leading families: the Ismail Khans and Ghazi Khans. Both of these were probably of one stock, *viz.*, the Dodai Balochs; but this name Dodai disappears altogether, and in the local history Ghazi Khan's tribe is known as Mirani Balochs, and Ismail Khan's as Hot Balochs. The Dodais are, according to the Balochs, a mixed tribe of Jat origin belonging to the Satha-Surma clan, later represented by the Surma of Layyah; Doda, their founder, married a Baloch wife. This tribe owned Dera Ghazi Khan before the Baloch invasion, and retained it, being assimilated by the Balochs. The Miranis of Dera Ghazi Khan were Dodais; the Hots, on the contrary, were Balochs of pure blood. The Hots, according to Baloch tradition, are one of the five main branches into which the Balochs got originally divided, i.e. Rind, Lashari, Hot, Korai and Jatoi, who took their names from the four sons and the daughter of Mir Jalalan, the common ancestor. They could scarcely therefore be a branch of the Dodai. The Governor of Multan seems to have assigned to these two families the land along the Indus, including both banks from its junction with the Chenab upwards. They first established themselves on the right bank, but gradually threw out parties who took possession of the left bank as well. Very little is known about these Hot chiefs. They ruled continuously at Dera Ismail Khan from their first settlement till about 1770, when the last of them, Nusrat Khan, was deposed by King Ahmad Shah and taken as a prisoner to Kabul. In 1794, the government of the province was transferred to Muhammad Khan Sadozai. At that point, the Hots disappear from the history.

Parts of Layyah along the southern boundary of the old District Dera Ghazi Khan appear to have been included in that section of the Indus valley which had been assigned to the Miranis. They are said to have founded Kot Addu, Kot Sultan, Layyah and Naushera. Beyond Naushera the country probably at first belonged, by the terms of the original assignment, to the Hots. The towns above mentioned are said to have been founded about 1550 by the

four sons of the Ghazi Khans. The eldest of these, Kamal Khan, the founder of Layyah, is said to have held a sort of supremacy over his brothers. It appears, however, that the Miranis never held Layyah as an independent government. The Ghazi Khans held Layyah as part of the Ghazi territory, much as the Hots of Dera held Darya Khan. It was under these circumstances that the Jaskanis rose to power. Mir Chakar was a leading man among the earliest of the Baloch settlers of Layyah. One of his descendants, Daud Khan, established himself as a robber chief in the jungles between Karor and Layyah, with headquarters at Wara Gish Kauri. He collected a large number of followers, and at the head of 500 horses he defied both the Miranis of Dera Ghazi Khan and the Hots of Dera, on whose borders he was established. This was during the reign of Emperor Akbar, in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Eventually, Akbar sent a force against him, and he was killed and his band broken up. The tribe seems, however, to have again gathered together, and in the beginning of the seventeenth century Baloch Khan, their chief, received from the Emperor a grant of the land from Mehmoodkot to Khola in Mianwali.

The Jaskanis do not appear, however, to have succeeded in getting possession of the portion of the tract lying to the north of Darya Khan. This was held by the Hots of Dera till the end of the eighteenth century. Probably, the Jaskanis got nothing more than what they already possessed, though perhaps in nominal subordination to the Hots and Miranis. Henceforth they were independent, and the Miranis lost their hold on Layyah altogether. The Miranis are said to have been finally ousted from Layyah around 1620. The leading Baloch tribes of Bhakkar and Layyah all claim descent from Baloch Khan. They are the Jaskanis, Mandranis, Mamdanis, Kandanis, Sarganis and Malianis. Baloch Khan was succeeded by Jasak Khan, Bhakkar Khan, Langar Khan and other chiefs of his family. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Jaskanis ruled over Bhakkar and Layyah as well as across the Thal towards the Chenab. They seem to have been more or less at war with the Sials of Uch, and also came occasionally into contact with the Sikhs, who were then becoming a power in the Punjab. Baloch Khan, the Blind, one of the most famous of these Jaskanis, is said to have been killed in 1746 in a fight with Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, the Sikh leaders. It is probable that the real date of this event was somewhat later, and that this is probably the same Jhanda Singh who took Multan in 1772. In Cunningham's "History of the Sikhs" it is mentioned that, from 1772 to the retaking of Multan by the Kabul kings, the Bhangi Sikhs were predominant in all of the Southern Punjab, and that "they seem to have possessed Mankera as well as Multan, and to have levied exactions from Kalabagh downwards." Another tradition is against Mankera having been occupied by the Sikhs before its final capture by Ranjit Singh, and any expedition made by them in this direction can have been little more than a transitory raid. The history of these times is wrapped in much obscurity, and the accounts, being based only on unauthentic resources, are often contradictory.

Fateh Khan succeeded his father Baloch Khan. Towards the end of his rule, Nusrat Khan Hot of Dera Ismail Khan, crossed over to Bhakkar, and defeated Fateh Khan's son, also named Nusrat, whom he took prisoner with him to Dera. It was with much difficulty that the release of Nusrat was obtained. However, he and his father, Fateh Khan, poisoned themselves through shame at the disgrace. The whole affair was a great scandal; and, as Nusrat Khan Hot bore a bad character as a tyrant and wine-bibber, the king, Ahmad Shah, who was desirous of tightening his hold over these semi-independent provinces, took advantage of the excuse to deprive him of his government and to remove him as a prisoner to Kabul.

Meanwhile, Hassan Khan Laskrani ruled the cis-Indus country in the name of Hayat Khan, the grandson of the former chief, Fateh Khan. Being desirous, however, to keep the government in his own hands, he continued to keep Hayat Khan under close surveillance in the fort of Mankera even after the latter had attained majority. Hayat Khan eventually managed to escape and, getting together a party, he defeated Hassan Khan and took him prisoner. Hassan Khan was soon afterwards murdered by some of Hayat Khan's attendants who were opposed to him. The Government of the Jaskanis, however, was now fast breaking up. The Sarganis, who were then a strong tribe and had been much pampered by Hayat Khan, took offence at an expedition fitted out by Hayat Khan against one Gul Muhammad of Uch, a holy individual who had been trying to establish his independence in the Chenab territory. They accordingly attacked him treacherously and murdered him in his fort at Mankera in 1787. After this the Sarganis, under their chief, Gula Khan, held out for some time against Muhammad Khan, the brother and successor of the deceased Hayat Khan. They were eventually defeated by the Jaskanis under the leadership of Diwan Ladda Ram, and their chief, Gula Khan, having been killed in this action, the Sarganis came to terms with Muhammad Khan, and were bought off with the Munda Shergarh territory, which was granted to them in *jagir*.

Reference must now be made again to the affairs of Dera Ghazi Khan, whose chiefs had always exercised a good deal of influence, if not authority, over the Layyah portion of the Jaskani dominions. The Dera Ghazi Khan history is mostly fragmentary and conflicting. It appears that all through the reign of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1747-73), the old Mirani family was being gradually crushed out in the conflict between the Durrani king and the Kalhoras of Sindh; and during the whole of this time Mehmood Khan Gujar, *wazir* under the last of the Ghazi Khans, was playing a double game, sometimes siding with one party, sometimes with the other. When the country west of the Indus was ceded to Nadir Shah in 1739, he confirmed Mehmood Khan as governor; and the latter seems also to have been continued by Ahmad Shah too when he passed through Dera Ghazi Khan in 1748. All that time, however, the Kalhora rulers of Sindh claimed the sovereignty of the country; and, though Sindh itself was nominally a portion of the territory ceded to Kabul by the Emperor of Delhi, still the hold of the Kabul king, even over

Dera Ghazi Khan, was weak and intermittent, and no revenue could be obtained from Sindh without hard fighting. The Kalhora prince then was Nur Muhammad, generally called Nur Muhammad Serai, and after his death his son, Ghulam Shah. This is the same Nur Muhammad who fought with the Hots of Dera Ismail Khan, and is said to have governed Layyah and the Sindh-Sagar Doab to the Chenab. The Jaskanis continued to hold Layyah till 1787.

At Dera Ghazi Khan the last chiefs of the Mirani line and Mehmood Khan Gujjar who, though titularly their *wazir*, appears to have been more powerful than his nominal masters, also held their government in subordination to the Kalhoras; and, though the rule of the latter, after Ahmad Shah's accession, was rather intermittent, still they do not appear to have given up their claim to Dera Ghazi Khan till they were themselves driven out of Sindh. In 1758, the king sent a force under Kaura Mal, by whom the Sindh party was defeated in a fight near the town of Dera Ghazi Khan. The Miranis, at that time, were split up into rival factions who took opposite sides, and many of them after this event migrated to the neighbourhood of Layyah, where they are still found in considerable numbers. This Kaura Mal was afterwards Governor of Multan, and exercised a sort of authority under the king both over the Miranis of Dera Ghazi Khan and over the Jaskanis of Layyah. In 1769, Ghulam Shah Kalhora again attacked Dera Ghazi Khan, and finally drove out the Miranis. He put in Mehmood Khan Gujjar as governor. Mehmood Khan, as stated above, was succeeded by his nephew, Barkhurdar, who was killed in 1779, when the province was put under governors appointed direct from Kabul. Neither Mehmood Khan nor Barkhurdar exercised any authority over Layyah and the cis-Indus country. They were purely governors of Dera Ghazi Khan. Ghulam Shah took Dera Ghazi Khan in 1769 but in 1772, the Kalhoras were themselves driven out of Sindh by the Talpurs. This threw them entirely into the hands of the Kabul king, and they retired with their following to the District Dera Ghazi Khan, where they were granted considerable *jagirs*; henceforth they are known as Serais, instead of by their old name of Kalhoras. The Serais, finding themselves stranded at Dera Ghazi Khan with a large armed following, now commenced to look about for some territory in which to found a new principality. The Jaskani country, torn by internal faction, and attached by tradition to the province of Dera Ghazi Khan, was close at hand, and in every way suited for the purpose. Armed therefore with a *sanad* from Taimur Shah, the then king of Kabul, Abdul Nabi Serai, the brother of Ghulam Shah, entered into a league with the turbulent Sarganis, and in 1789 marched against Layyah. Muhammad Khan Jaskani was defeated, and fled to the Tiwana country and thence to Bahawalpur. The Nawab of Bahawalpur would probably have assisted him to recover his country, but Muhammad Khan, with the pride of a Baloch, insultingly refused to give the nawab a valuable work on hawking for which he had asked, and ended his days as a dependant on Hasad Khan, the Nutkani chief of Sagar. Thus, ended the line of the Jaskani chiefs after a rule of more than 200 years. Abdul Nabi Serai held the Layyah Government

only for three years. Complaints were made to the king of his tyrannical rule, while an appointment was wanted for Muhammad Khan Sadozai. The latter was cousin to Muzaffar Khan, Nawab of Multan, for whom he had for some time acted as Governor of Multan to the satisfaction of the king. A *sanad* therefore was soon drawn out appointing Muhammad Khan Nawab and Governor of the Sindh-Sagar Doab from Kallur Kot to Mehmoodkot and from the Indus to the Chenab. Muhammad Khan had still to take possession, which was not to be done without fighting. He was met by Abdul Nabi near Layyah, and in the battle that ensued the Serais had at first the advantage, and the Nawab's people fled. The Nawab himself was ready to flee, saying: "What can a king do without an army?" but was stopped by his *jamadar*, as the legend goes, who said: "Better die than flee." Eventually he rallied a part of his forces, and meanwhile some Labanas crept up through a *bhang* field and attacking the Serais from behind, killed Muhamad Arif, the son of Abdul Nabi, who had been the soul of the fight, and the Serais, being disheartened, gave in. The Serais were allowed a day to remove their property and departed by boat to their own country to the south.

Meanwhile, Taimur Shah had died in 1793. He was succeeded by Zaman Shah, whose title was, however, disputed by Prince Humayun. In 1794, Humayun made his second attempt to recover the kingdom from Zaman Shah, but was defeated and fled to Sagar, where Massu Khan Nutkani, Chief of Sagar, assisted him and managed to smuggle him across the Dera Fateh Khan in a ferry. He got to Layyah and stopped at a well, where curiosity was excited by his paying an *ashrafi* for a few sticks of sugarcane that he had taken. The news came to the ears of Nawab Muhammad Khan, who happened to be at Layyah at the time. The Nawab suspected that it must be Prince Humayun, for whose capture strict orders, with promises of untold rewards, had been issued by Zaman Shah. He accordingly collected some horsemen and pursued Humayun whom he overtook at a well in the Thal some 15 miles from Layyah. Humayun had some 20 or 30 horsemen with him, who in desperation made a good fight. Humayun's young son was killed, and Humayun himself was taken prisoner and brought to Layyah. The Nawab at once reported the capture of Humayun to the king, Zaman Shah, who sent orders that Humayun's eyes should be put out and his companions disembowelled. He also conferred on the Nawab the name of Sarbiland Khan, and the government of Dera Ismail Khan in addition to that which he already held. The orders of the king were carried out at Layyah. Humayun himself passed the rest of his life in confinement.

The province of Dera, of which Muhammad Khan now became governor, extended from the Khasor range to the Sagar country ruled over by the Nutkani chief. Nawab Muhammad Khan had his headquarters at Mankera and Bhakkar, and governed Dera by a deputy. He left his mark on the north of the district by the canals which he dug. It is he that is referred to as the Nawab of the Thal. In 1815, he died. He left no son, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Hafiz Ahmad Khan.

Muhammad Khan was undoubtedly a man of great character, and during his lifetime the Sikhs abstained from attacking the Layyah territories. Immediately on his death a demand for tribute was made on Hafiz Ahmad Khan. On his refusal, the forts of Khangarh and Mehmoodkot were occupied by the Sikhs, and great atrocities were perpetrated on the Muslim population of the neighbourhood until Hafiz Ahmad Khan procured the withdrawal of the Sikh garrisons by the payment of a large sum of money, and thus recovered the forts, with part also of the plunder extorted. After this the Sikh Government continued to press the Nawab with all kinds of extortionate demands. Among other things, Ranjit Singh was especially fond of seizing any valuable horses he might hear of, and made the Nawab yield some of his favourites. In 1818 Multan, despite of the gallant resistance offered by Nawab Muzaffar Khan, had been taken by the Sikhs. Hafiz Ahmad Khan had not dared to assist a kinsman in the struggle, and his own turn was soon to come. In the autumn of 1821, Ranjit Singh, disengaged from more serious matters, determined to reduce him. He accordingly marched with an army through Shahpur to a point on the Indus opposite Dera Ismail Khan. He sent a force of 8,000 men across the river, and on this the town was surrendered by the governor, Diwan Manik Rai. Bhakkar, Layyah, Khangarh and Maujgarh were all successively reduced without resistance. Mankera, fortified by a mud wall and having a citadel of brick but protected more by its position in the midst of a desert, was now the only stronghold remaining, and a division was advanced for its investment on the 18th November. Sardar Khan Badozai, a bold, impetuous man, recommended Hafiz Ahmad Khan to march out at once and attack the Sikhs. "To fight in the plain," he is quoted to have said, "is the business of a lion, to hide in a hole that of a fox." Hafiz Ahmad Khan, however, was not to be persuaded, and preferred to stand a siege. The Sikhs now set *baidars* to dig wells for the use of the troops, and in the meantime, water had to be brought on camels and bullocks from Maujgarh. The wells were ready by the 25th November, and Ranjit Singh then moved to Mankera with his main force; and on the 26th November, the investment was completed. The bombardment of the place was continued for ten days after this, but not without loss to the besiegers. At last, one of the minarets of the fort mosque got damaged by the Sikh fire; Hafiz Ahmad Khan, looking on this as an unlucky omen and thinking that enough had been done for honour, proposed terms and agreed to surrender the fort on condition of being allowed to march out with his arms and property, and to retain the town and province of Dera Ismail Khan, with a suitable *jagir*. Ranjit Singh granted the terms, and the place was surrendered accordingly. The Nawab was treated with great civility and was sent with an escort to Dera Ismail Khan. Ranjit Singh now annexed the cis-Indus territory. It must not be imagined that under the Sikhs the whole cis-Indus territory formed one compact government. A great portion of it was held in *jagir*, each *jagirdar* possessing judicial and executive authority in the limits of his *jagir*, and being quite independent of the *kardar* to whom the *khalsa* portion of the district happened to be leased. These *jagirdars* were almost invariably

nonresidents, and put in agents, known as *hakims*, to manage their estates. These *hakims* were more or less in the habit of raiding on one another and lifting cattle. Thus, the entire territory until the time of Diwan Sawan Mal was generally in a disturbed state. These *jagirs* were mostly in the Thal. The whole of the cis-Indus *jagirs* granted by the Sikh Government, with the exception of one or two small villages, were resumed during the British era.

The history of the four Governments has now been brought to a point where they begin to merge under one head. The process was completed between 1790 and 1821. Bahawal Khan II had the territory lying open to him by shifting of the Indus to the west, and having just seized those *talukas* which now form the Alipur Tehsil. In the part of the district which had been ruled from Dera Ghazi Khan there prevailed an anarchy, which followed the rule of Mehmood Khan Gujjar. Between 1790 and the end of the century, Bahawal Khan II took possession of the *talukas* of Arain, Kinjhar, Khor, Mahra, Seri and Trund, which now form the southern and western parts of Muzaffargarh. This portion, along with Alipur, was called Kachi Janubi, opposed to the Kachi Shumali of the Thal nawabs. He and his successor, Sadiq Khan II, and Bahawal Khan III brought the country under a settled government, encouraged cultivation and excavated canals. Bahawal Khan III was the governor that later helped Edwardes at the siege of Multan. In 1818, the Sikhs took Multan, and the *talukas* formerly governed by Muzaffar Khan, *viz.*, Rangpur, Muradabad, Muzaffargarh, Khangarh and Ghazanfargarh, were henceforward administered by the Sikh governors of Multan. The Multani Pathans fled the country, and went for the most part to Dera Ismail Khan, not to return until the British come in 1849.

Ranjit Singh then proceeded to take over Dera Ghazi Khan (1819) and Mankera (1821); and thus, the northern part of the district passed under the rule of Sikhs. The southern half, however, still remained in the hands of the Bahawalpur Nawabs, who accepted a lease of their earlier conquests from the Sikh Maharaja, but when the then Nawab failed to remit the annual amount in 1830, Ranjit Singh sent General Ventura to take charge of their conquests and the Nawab was resultantly pushed across the Chenab, which was set as the boundary between the Sikh Kingdom and the territories of Bahawalpur. The whole of the present district was then united under celebrated Diwan Sawan Mal, Governor of Multan, in 1837. Sawan Mal was an able administrator and through his development and other works was able to revive the agricultural economy, which had suffered much as a result of constant warfare. Though under the Bahawalpur Nawabs, parts of the district had enjoyed a fairly settled administration, Diwan Sawan Mal's government was better than anything that had preceded it. Its sole object was the accumulation of wealth for the Diwan. The execution of public works, the administration of justice, and security of life and property, etc. were secondary considerations, and were insisted on only because without them agriculture would not prosper, and the revenue would not be paid. During his time a large number of Labana colonists from the Punjab were settled in

the district. Diwan Sawan Mal died on the September 29, 1844, and was succeeded by his son, Mul Raj of whom nothing particular connected with the district is known.

In April 1848, Sir Herbert Edwardes, then Assistant to the Resident at Lahore, heard of the news of the outbreak at Multan and the murder of Vans Agnew. He was then at Dera Fateh Khan. He immediately crossed the river to Layyah but retreated on the advance of a force sent by Diwan Mul Raj. The next month passed in movements and counter-movements in the neighbourhood of Layyah. Meanwhile, Edwardes had collected a mixed force made up of mainly Multani Pathans and men of the Pandapur, Ustrana and other border tribes. On the 21st May, he heard of the occupation of Dera Ghazi Khan by a force that he had sent down the right bank of the Indus under Van Cortlandt. He then proceeded to move towards Multan. On his march he fought the battles of Kaneri and Sadduzam, in which his rough levies behaved with great gallantry. These same forces took part in the siege of Multan under General Whish. On the taking of Multan, on January 22, 1849, greater numbers were discharged and returned to their homes; 2,000, however, of Edwardes' levies were retained in the government employment; and the leading sardars all received handsome pensions. On March 29, 1849 the Punjab was annexed and the territories forming the present district, which were for the most part already under the control of British officers, became formally a portion of the British Empire.

The events of 1857 mutiny did not have much bearing on the area and both Khangarh and Layyah mostly remained tranquil. The following account of the events of 1857 is taken from the Punjab Mutiny Report. Major Browne observes on this district:

“The district of Khangarh entirely escaped any ill-effects beyond the alarm felt by the European community at the proximity of the mutinous regiments at Multan and the possibility of invasion of the lower portion by bands of robbers from Bahawalpur.”

Precautions were, however, necessary. Mr. Henderson, the then Deputy Commissioner, fortified the jail, the court-house and the chief and district treasuries, armed all Europeans and vigilantly guarded all the ferries which were not closed. He detached Lieutenant Ferris, Assistant Commissioner, to the banks of the Chenab to establish a chain of posts along it. This object was fully accomplished. The villagers themselves served so willingly that a cordon of 104 posts, extending 26 miles, was soon established. At another time a chain of mounted police was thrown across the district from the Chenab to the Indus to cut off any stragglers of the 14th Native Infantry that might come down from Jhelum. An intelligence department was also organized between Khangarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan and Muzaffargarh.

As stated above, the District Layyah also remained very tranquil. Only one or two slight punishments were inflicted for offences connected with the mutiny. Much anxiety was caused at one time by the arrival of a wing of the

17th Irregular Cavalry under Captain Hockin, but it remained firm. When the Kharral insurrection broke out in September, Captain Hockin marched against the rebels, leaving at Layyah 40 of his men who had fallen under suspicion. The day before he marched news reached Layyah that the whole of the 9th Irregular Cavalry had mutinied at Mianwali. Captain Fendall says: "I certainly at first thought it was a deep-laid scheme for raising the whole country that the 9th Irregular Cavalry were to appear before Dera Ismail Khan, be joined by the 39th Native Infantry, come on to Leiah, pick up the wing of the 17th Light Cavalry, go towards Gugera, coalescing with the tribes and march on to Multan (where there were two suspected regiments of Native Infantry). It was feasible, and would have temporarily lost us the lower Punjab." But this dreaded junction did not take place. The news proved to be an exaggeration. The mutineers of the 9th Irregular Cavalry, who, strange to say, were all men of the cis-Sutlej states, were only 30 in number, and were entirely destroyed in a desperate fight, in which Mr. Thomson, the Extra Assistant of Layyah, was very dangerously wounded.

The British district of Khangarh contained the tehsils of Muzaffargarh and Alipur, and the *talukas* of Maharaja and Ahmadpur, which are now in Jhang. In 1849, at the first division of the province of Punjab for administrative purposes by the British authorities, the town of Khangarh was selected as the headquarters of the district, but in 1859 it was abandoned in the favour of Muzaffargarh. Khangarh contained four tehsils: Rangpur, Khangarh with its headquarters at Muzaffargarh, Kinjhar and Seetpur. In 1859, the Kot Addu tehsil was separated from Layyah and added to this district; and the name was then accordingly changed from Khangarh to Muzaffargarh and was attached to the Multan Division. In 1861, the Tehsil Rangpur was abolished. The *talukas* of Garh Maharaja and Ahmadpur were joined to Jhang, and the rest of the tehsil was attached to the Tehsil Muzaffargarh. The Tehsil Kinjhar was abolished and its *talukas* added to Muzaffargarh. The Tehsil Seetpur was moved to Alipur.

Before annexation, the cis-Indus tract was included in the government of Diwan Sawan Mal. At the first arrangements of the district the trans-Indus tehsils of the old Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu districts were formed into the District Dera Ismail Khan, with headquarters at Bannu. The cis-Indus tehsils, that is, Mianwali, Bhakkar and Layyah and till 1859 the Tehsil Kot Addu of Muzaffargarh, formed the District Layyah, with headquarters at Layyah. This arrangement, though in many respects more convenient than the later one, was set aside in 1861, as the charge of so long a border was considered too heavy for the Deputy Commissioner of Dera Ismail Khan. The northern portion of the two districts was then formed into the District Bannu, the southern into the District Dera Ismail Khan. The original division was longitudinal; the Indus being the boundary, the new division was transverse, sections of the country on both sides of the Indus being included in each district.

The new district of Dera Ismail Khan consisted of five tehsils. Of these, Dera Ismail Khan, Kulachi and Tank were trans-Indus. and Layyah and Bhakkar cis-Indus. On the breaking up of the old District Layyah on January 1, 1861, the headquarters of the commissionership were transferred from Layyah to Dera Ismail Khan, which, from being an outstation, became the capital town of the division. The new Tehsil Layyah included the southern part of the old Tehsil Mankera broken up in 1853-54, when the Chaubara, Nawankot and Maujgarh *talukas* were transferred to Layyah; the village of Paharpur transferred from the Tehsil Kot Addu in 1861, and a strip of riverside villages transferred from the Tehsil Sanghar (now Taunsa) in 1869. In 1874, Sukhani and six other villages were transferred from the Tehsil Sanghar of Dera Ghazi Khan to Layyah.

On the separation of the North-West Frontier Province from the Punjab, a further reconstitution took place, and on November 9, 1901 the District Mianwali was formed out of the four tehsils of Isa Khel, Mianwali, Bhakkar and Layyah; the former two being taken from Bannu, and the latter two from Dera Ismail Khan. The headquarters was fixed at Mianwali, the Bhakkar and Layyah tehsils forming a sub-division, with headquarters at Bhakkar, and the district was included in the Multan Division.

On April 1, 1909 Tehsil Layyah was transferred to District Muzaffargarh, and became its sub-division.

There has been nothing of importance in the later history of the district. During the great war in 1914-15, there was unrest, and a series of dacoities was committed which began in rumors that an invasion by the Germans was about to take place. This was communal and economic though, rather than political, as the Hindus were steadily looted by the Muslims who owed them money. The Hindus, at that time, had an economic hold on the district. The rest of the British period was of comparative calm. The population of the arid and semi-arid tract of this district had little time for taking any active and substantial part in the political struggle of the country.

The year 1947 was momentous as Pakistan came into being. Inflow of refugees took place primarily from the districts of Rohtak, Karnal, Patiala, Hisar, Ludhiana and, in lesser numbers, from other districts of East Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. In 1949, the Thal Development Project was initiated in the districts of Mianwali, Bhakkar, Muzaffargarh, Layyah and Khushab for the speedy development of the area brought under irrigation by the Thal canal, and for the re-settlement of refugees thereon. A somewhat similar project was executed in 1953-58 whereby Taunsa Barrage was constructed on Indus to provide weir-controlled irrigation to originally flood-fed areas on both sides of the river as well as some new lands in the Thal desert.

In 1982, Layyah was severed from Muzaffargarh, and made into a separate district comprising the tehsils of Layyah, Chaubara and Karor.

In 1996, Jatoi was separated from Alipur and made into an independent tehsil. It is how the District Muzaffargarh, after passing through many vicissitudes, finally came into being in its present form.

There have been calls from certain quarters in recent years to convert the town of Chowk Sarwar Shaheed into a separate Tehsil, and Tehsil Kot Addu into a separate and independent district. In this regard, opinion of the District Administration Muzaffargarh was sought by the Commissioner Office as well the Board of Revenue in early 2019. Whereas the proposal of converting Chowk Sarwar Shaheed into a separate tehsil was fully supported, the second proposal could not be endorsed on following grounds:

- I. The Tehsil headquarters of Kot Addu is situated at around a distance of merely 50 km from the district headquarters. In other words, it only takes maximum 1 hour to ply between the two headquarters. Similarly, boundary of the Tehsil Kot Addu starts at a drive of 20–30 minutes from the district headquarters. Furthermore, the Tehsil Kot Addu is linked to the District Dera Ghazi Khan on western side and the District Layyah on northern side. The Tehsil being close/adjacent to district headquarters, and having good connection with Dera Ghazi Khan and Layyah, does not qualify to become a district primarily on geographical/spatial grounds.
- II. As regards the population, as per the last census, the Tehsil Kot Addu is inhabited by 1092775 individuals. This again is not a determining factor as many tehsils of Punjab have more population than Kot Addu.
- III. There is no need of converting Kot Addu into a district on administrative grounds either. In such an era of communication and transportation, it is not difficult for a deputy commissioner based in district headquarters to exercise control therefrom. The inhabitants of Tehsil Kot Addu benefit equally from this improvement of communication/transportation links too.
- IV. Creating a new district entails huge financial burden on provincial exchequer as not only human resource needs would increase by manifold but also infrastructure, including offices and residences of government functionaries, would have to be built. Such a creation shall therefore be resorted to under exceptional compulsions only, which are missing in the given case. This factor becomes all the more important in the backdrop of over-all economic scenario of the province as well the country.
- V. Finally, and most importantly, when an old district is partitioned and a new district is created, it not only breaks the latter from the common past, history and heritage but has an adverse impact on the original district on these counts too.