

Maratha War Council
DRS International School
Hyderabad, India

***Agenda: The Siege of Hindavi Swarajya: Defying
Aurangzeb's Imperial Expansion at
Purandhar, 1665
Freeze Date: 10th June 1665***

Note: Delegates are expected to read and understand the historical context provided in this Background Guide. However, the Background Guide is intended solely as a reference and should not serve as the basis for delegates' arguments or research. The information and inferences presented herein reflect the perspective of the Executive Board (EB) and must not be quoted or cited as an authoritative source to substantiate arguments. Delegates are expected to independently research the subject matter and substantiate their arguments using credible and verifiable sources. All copyrights over the contents are held by the DRSMUN Team for the DRSMUN 2026 Edition.

Letter From the Executive Board

Greetings Members,

We are honoured to be serving as the Executive Board of this Maratha War Council. We look forward to 3 days of exhilarating and an intellectually rewarding simulation of one of the most consequential moments of Indian history.

The Agenda for the Discussion and the Freeze date are critically important and multifaceted in nature. We shall have multiple stakeholders in the committee and we expect the deliberations to happen taking into consideration the vast number of stakeholders at place. The aim of this background guide is to only guide the delegate through important historic events and only provide a basic understanding of the agenda at hand. Hence, delegates are expected to go well beyond this background guide for research.

We also remind you that this Guide at times may prompt you in a certain direction, by no means does that validate nor does it refute that perspective, and thus we expect each delegate to conduct thorough research of their own portfolios keeping in mind their factions and its past.

This guide cannot and will not be accepted as proof of statements during committee proceedings under any circumstances.

We are looking forward to seeing you on the day of the conference.

Regards,

Chatrapati,
Roshan Patnaik

Peshwa,
Tanuj Edulakanti

Senapati,
Yashwanth

Purpose of the Committee:

The purpose of this committee is not merely to recreate the events of the Siege of Purandhar, but to place delegates at the centre of the political and military crisis that surrounded it. The committee seeks to explore the competing interests of the major political stakeholders in the Deccan, the strategic calculations of their leaders, and the diplomatic choices that ultimately shaped the course of the conflict. Delegates will be expected to navigate questions of warfare, diplomacy, territorial control, political legitimacy, and imperial ambition while operating within the circumstances and limitations of the period. The objective is to understand not only what happened at Purandhar, but why it happened, what alternatives existed, and whether history necessarily had to unfold as it did.

Freeze Date and Nature of the Simulation

The committee shall operate with a **freeze date immediately preceding the signing of the Treaty of Purandhar in June 1665**. Delegates must therefore treat all events occurring after the designated freeze date as unknown. The committee is **not a simulation of the Treaty of Purandhar, nor is it a reenactment of the historical events that followed it**. The Treaty, its terms, and its consequences shall not be treated as predetermined outcomes.

The purpose of establishing this freeze date is to place delegates at a moment when the outcome of the crisis remains uncertain. While delegates may draw upon all events and developments that occurred up to the freeze date, they must not use hindsight to influence their decisions. The committee therefore operates on the premise that the future remains unwritten: **the Treaty of Purandhar is a possible outcome, not an inevitable one**. The actions, negotiations, alliances, military strategies, and political decisions undertaken by delegates during committee may consequently alter the course of events.

Historical Context

To understand the Siege of Purandhar, one must first understand what came before it. History after all, is never a lone event but rather a chain, each link forged by the one before it. No siege, no battle, no treaty can be lifted from its context and studied in isolation, to do so is to read only the final page of a story and call it the whole tale. Before the walls of Purandhar fell under siege, a long and turbulent history had already set the stage and it is there that our story must begin.

1. Aurangzeb, the War of Succession, and the Deccan Vacuum:

Aurangzeb as Deccan Viceroy (1636–44, 1653–58)

Long before ascending the throne as Emperor, Aurangzeb served as the Mughal Empire's Viceroy of the Deccan under his father, Shah Jahan, holding this key administrative post across two distinct terms (1636–1644 and 1654–1658). During this first assignment Aurangzeb was largely isolated from the center of Mughal power at Agra, spending his time consolidating Mughal authority in the Deccan rather than at court. After a decade spent governing Gujarat, then Multan and Sindh, and fighting a frustrating campaign against the Safavids for Kandahar, a militarily bruised Aurangzeb was reassigned to the Deccan for a second term in 1652, once again at a remove from the imperial court.

It was during this second tenure (1653–58) that Aurangzeb truly honed his administrative prowess and military acumen. Though he launched aggressive campaigns against the neighbouring regional powers of Bijapur and Golconda, imperial intervention from Shah Jahan fueled by rival court factions, notably Dara Shukoh's supporters halted his advances just prior to securing total conquest.

These repeated interventions reinforced Aurangzeb's perception that the imperial court could obstruct his ambitions in the Deccan, deepening his rivalry with Dara and his frustration with Shah Jahan's policies.

Aurangzeb and his relationship with Dara Shikoh and the war of succession for the mughal throne

The rivalry between Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh is one of the most dramatic and decisive chapters in Mughal history. It was not just a fight between two brothers, but a battle that changed the future of the Mughal Empire and its ideology. As the eldest surviving son of Shah Jahan, Dara occupied a position of extraordinary

privilege at the imperial court. Shah Jahan openly favoured him, entrusted him with proximity to the throne, and increasingly treated him as the natural successor. The main reasons for this intense rivalry between the two were as follows:

Ideological and religious difference

- Dara Shikoh was a Sufi, Scholar and a liberal thinker. He translated the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads into Persian. He sought to highlight the philosophical and spiritual similarities between Hinduism and Islam. His belief in religious accommodation and his relatively inclusive outlook were viewed with suspicion by orthodox and radical Muslim nobles.
- Aurangzeb on the other hand was a staunchly conservative Muslim and considered Dara's liberal ideas as apostasy. By positioning himself as a defender of orthodox Islamic values, Aurangzeb managed to secure the support of several Muslim nobles who, despite recognising Dara's administrative prowess, were wary of his religious outlook.

Shah Jahan's part in the rivalry

- Shah Jahan wanted to make Dara Shikoh his heir and kept him with him in the royal court. Seeing Dara getting all the facilities and power, a sense of dissatisfaction and jealousy prevailed in the mind of Aurangzeb (who was constantly fighting wars on the southern borders).

When Shah Jahan fell seriously ill in 1657, a struggle for the throne began among the four brothers (Dara, Shuja, Aurangzeb, and Murad):

- **Battle of Samugadh (May 1658):** In this decisive battle, Dara Shikoh's large army was defeated by Aurangzeb's war strategy. Dara fled the field.
- **Battles of Khajwa and Devrai:** Aurangzeb continued to pursue Dara and finally defeated him completely in the Battle of Devrai.

After Dara Shikoh was captured, Aurangzeb paraded him in the streets of Delhi in disgrace. Dara was later declared a 'traitor' by a religious court and executed in 1659. Aurangzeb sent Dara's severed head to the ailing Shah Jahan during his imprisonment in the fort. While Aurangzeb's fortunes rose and fell at Agra, a parallel story was unfolding in the Deccan itself.

The Rise of Raje: Shivaji's Growing Influence in the Dakkan

The Deccan of those years was marked by political uncertainty. Bijapur was steadily weakening, while the Mughal court at Agra remained preoccupied with affairs beyond the Deccan. Between these two powers stood a region where authority was increasingly contested, and where ambitious commanders often found their plans constrained by the interests of their own rulers.

It was within this shifting political landscape that Shivaji was born, a figure who would eventually transform the balance of power in the Deccan and leave a lasting mark on the history of Bharat.

Shivaji was born in 1630, inside the fort of Shivneri to Shahji Bhosale and Jijabai. His father, Shahaji Bhonsle, was a general who served successively under Ahmednagar, the Mughals, and Bijapur over the course of his career. After 1636, Shahaji was posted to the southern Deccan for extended periods, and was largely absent during his son's upbringing. In his absence, the family's Pune jagir was administered on Shivaji's behalf by Dadoji Kondadev, who oversaw his early training in military and administrative matters.

Shivaji began acting independently from a young age. In 1645, he captured Torna, a fort held by Bijapur, and followed this with the capture of Kondana. These actions were carried out without the sanction of his father or Dadoji Kondadev. It is around this period that Shivaji's ambitions are first recorded in explicitly political terms. A letter attributed to him, written around 1645 to Dadoji Kondadev, refers to the goal of establishing **Hindavi Swarajya** self-rule of the land, as opposed to continued governance by Bijapur or the Mughals. Whether this specific letter is entirely authentic is debated among historians, but the concept of Swarajya is consistently associated with Shivaji from this early period onward, and would go on to define the political character of the state he eventually built. By this period, Shivaji had also begun using the title of Raja.

After Dadoji Kondadev's death in 1647, Shivaji assumed full control of his father's jagir without a regent. Following Shahaji's imprisonment in 1648 by Mohammed Adil Shah, Shivaji agreed to temporarily halt his expansion and surrender certain gains to secure his father's release. Shahaji was released in 1649, after which Shivaji largely consolidated his existing territories for several years before resuming major expansion, notably with the conquest of Javli in 1656.

Hence the first serious attempt to crush Shivaji's rising power would come not from the Mughals but from the Bijapur Sultanate, still technically Shivaji's overlord.

2. Bijapur's Crisis, Afzal Khan, and the First Great Test (1656–1659)

Bijapur After Muhammad Adil Shah's Death (1656)

For nearly thirty years, Bijapur had been held together by Muhammad Adil Shah- a ruler who gave the Sultanate a stability of the throne it would sorely miss. When he died on 4 November 1656, the crown passed to his son Ali Adil Shah II, a minor whose own legitimacy was already disputed and whose mother, Badi Sahiba, had effectively governed in his father's name since the mid 1640s, when Muhammad Adil Shah had first fallen seriously ill. A sultanate that had once projected power across the southern Deccan now found itself governed, in practice, by a regency contending with factional nobles, autonomous frontier commanders, and a court more occupied with its own survival than with distant vassals.

For years, Bijapur had simply been unable to spare the attention Shivaji deserved, first distracted by a Mughal invasion under Aurangzeb during his second Deccan viceroyalty in 1657, then consumed by the very succession dispute that had put Ali Adil Shah II on the throne in the first place. But by 1658–59, two things had changed: a hasty peace treaty had settled matters with the Mughals, and Ali Adil Shah II's succession, however shaky its legitimacy, was at least no longer actively contested. For the first time in years, the Bijapur court could look northwest and actually see what it had been ignoring, a former vassal capturing Bijapuri forts, raiding neighbouring territory and a rebellion that challenged the authority of the Bijapur Sultanate.

The Bijapur Sultanate had to act and act quickly to suppress this rebellion from who was supposed to be a jagirdar under the throne. It was at the behest of Badi Saheba, (the widow of Muhammad Adil Shah), that Bijapur turned to one of its most formidable commanders: *Afzal Khan*.

Afzal Khan's Expedition

Afzal Khan, a veteran Bijapuri commander already known for subjugating the Nayaka chiefs of the old Vijayanagara territories in the sultanate's southern campaigns, and a general whose reputation alone was meant to do half the work. Afzal Khan's reputation reached the courts of his rivals before he did, he was known to be cruel and unwavering in his approach on the battlefield.

Khan marched with a sizeable force, confident that Shivaji could be crushed through superior numbers and conventional warfare. Shivaji, however, understood that meeting such an army in open battle would surrender his greatest advantage, the terrain. He therefore withdrew towards **Pratapgad**, deep within the forests of Jawli, while simultaneously opening negotiations with Khan.

What followed was a carefully calculated confrontation. On 10 November 1659, Shivaji and Afzal Khan met at the foot of Pratapgad under the pretext of negotiating a settlement. The meeting turned violent, with both sides prepared for betrayal. Shivaji survived Khan's attack and fatally wounded him with his concealed weapons. As the encounter outside the pavilion descended into violence, Jiva Mahala protected Shivaji from Khan's bodyguard Syed Banda, while Sambhaji Kavji Kondhalkar pursued the wounded Khan and beheaded him.

The observations being made above may or may not be accurate and are only derived from historical references from scholars and their books

The death of Afzal Khan became the signal for the larger Maratha force concealed in the surrounding hills to attack. Using the forests and difficult terrain to their advantage, Shivaji's forces overwhelmed the disoriented Bijapuri army and seized substantial quantities of arms, horses, elephants and treasure. The victory at Pratapgad transformed Shivaji from a troublesome provincial rebel into a serious military power in the Deccan and demonstrated the effectiveness of a strategy built on terrain which would go on to become the cornerstone of the Maratha's way of warfare i.e the Guerrilla Warfare.

This growing power could no longer remain confined to the attention of Bijapur. The rise of Shivaji now drew the attention of the Mughal Empire, whose emperor could no longer dismiss him as merely a local disturbance. What had begun as a rebellion

against a weakening regional power was steadily becoming a challenge to the wider political order of the Deccan and eventually, to Mughal authority itself.

3. Shaista Khan and the Mughal Counter-Offense (1660–1663)

The Mughals establish control over Pune(1660)

Having secured the throne through Dharmat and Samugarh and disposed of his rivals, Aurangzeb turned, almost immediately, to the one loose thread his own years as viceroy had left behind. He appointed his maternal uncle, Mirza Abu Talib commonly known as Shaista Khan as Viceroy of the Deccan in January 1660. The mandate of the throne was simple- crush Shivaji and his rebellion and secure important trade routes that were otherwise under jeopardy from the attacks of the notorious Shivaji. It is to be understood that the clashes between Mughals and Marathas at least in the early 1660's were purely political in nature and saw almost no religious impact.

Shaista Khan was sent to resume control over the Deccan and was accompanied by a large army(if historical estimates are to be believed they had close to ~1 lakh soldiers ,large amounts of cavalry and foreign canons).The scale of this army was nothing like the Marathas ever witnessed earlier.

Shaista Khan approached the plain lands of Poona in the early part of 1660 and Pune almost fell immediately,without the benefit of terrain on their side-Marathas received heavy blows in this encounter and Shivaji and his troops had to retreat his forces to the fort of Rajgad.The Marathas were dealing with not one but two enemies at once with the Adil Shahi general *Siddhi Johar* attacking the Marathas from the South at the Panhala Fort and the Mughals fast approaching from the North.

Shaista Khan, hungry to prove a point, made Lal Mahal his military base, the very palace where Shivaji Raje had spent his childhood.This was a bold statement made from the Mughals asserting their dominance not just on the territory but also on the man and the idea of Swarajya.

After Shaista Khan captured Pune, he laid siege to Chakan to strengthen its security. The fort's commander *Firangoji Narsala*, with only 300 Maratha soldiers, fought bravely for 56 days against a Mughal army of 20,000, but in the end, the fort fell to the Mughals due to heavy artillery fire. This solidified the Mughal control over Pune.

As Swift as it can get-The Maratha Surgical Strike(1663)

Shaista Khan controlled Pune for nearly three years. In the eyes of the emperor, the Mughals had succeeded in containing what was still perceived as the rebellion of a local chieftain. With Shivaji seemingly pushed onto the defensive, Aurangzeb's larger vision of extending Mughal authority across the Deccan no longer appeared a distant ambition, but a reality within reach.

It was after this long wait that Shivaji finally found an opening to strike at Pune, on the night of 5 April 1663. Shaista Khan had taken residence in Lal Mahal, Shivaji's childhood home, and governed the city under tight security, restricting contact between the occupying army and the local population. The opportunity came when a wedding procession was granted permission to enter Pune. Shivaji used this cover to bring in roughly 400 of his men disguised as members of the wedding party. Other Maratha soldiers entered separately, dressed as labourers and as soldiers already serving in Shaista Khan's own camp. Shivaji, who had grown up in Lal Mahal, knew the layout of the palace well. Late at night, his men broke in near the kitchens, killing the palace cooks in the process, and moved toward Shaista Khan's private quarters. The noise woke Shaista Khan's maidservants, who alerted him just before the attackers reached his room. In the fighting that followed, Shaista Khan's son, Abul Fateh, and around forty attendants were killed. Shaista Khan himself attempted to escape through a window; Shivaji cut off three of his fingers in the process, but Shaista Khan managed to get away.

Outside the city, a separate group of Maratha soldiers created a diversion using torches to draw Mughal forces away from the main escape route. Shivaji and his men used the resulting confusion to withdraw from Pune and retreat safely to Sinhagad.

For the Mughal Empire, the humiliation was total and impossible to soften: a governor with a hundred thousand strong army at his command had been maimed in his own bedroom by a man his emperor had sent him specifically to destroy. Aurangzeb was furious at the failure of Shaista Khan, he was recalled and reassigned to Bengal. This attack could be viewed with the same lens of what Afzal Khan's death did to the Adil Shahi Dynasty, the Mughals could no longer ignore the growing mischief of that chieftain and Aurangzeb realised Breaking Shivaji would need something more deliberate, more calibrated and had to be commanded by a general that Aurangzeb trusted the most. But before that new strategy took shape, Shivaji delivered an economic blow that made the conflict unavoidable: *The raid on Surat*.

4. Surat Sacked and the Economic Impact on the Empire

The Raid of Surat(1664)

In early January 1664, Shivaji launched one of the most audacious operations of his career: a raid on **Surat**, the richest port city of the Mughal Empire on the west coast. The attack was not a random plunder but a carefully planned strategic strike aimed at the empire's finances, prestige, and control over trade.

WHY SURAT?

Surat was the principal Mughal port for commerce with West Asia and Europe. It handled:

- Massive volumes of trade in textiles, spices, precious stones, and other goods.
- Pilgrim traffic to Mecca and Medina, making it a religiously significant city as well.
- Substantial customs revenue for the imperial treasury.

For Shivaji, striking Surat meant:

- Replenishing his treasury after years of warfare, especially following Shaista Khan's devastating campaign in the Deccan.
- Demonstrating that he could hit the Mughal Empire at its economic heartland, not just on its Deccan frontiers.
- Sending a political message: the Maratha power was no longer a local disturbance but a serious rival to imperial authority.

The Course of the Raid

Shivaji arrived outside Surat with an estimated force of around 4,000 cavalry in the first week of January 1664. Before attacking, he sent a firm message to the Mughal governor of the city, Inayat Khan, demanding that he and the city's leading merchants appear at the Maratha camp.

When Inayat Khan refused to cooperate and instead took shelter in the city's castle, Shivaji began the raid. Over the next three to five days, Maratha forces systematically looted the city:

- Targeting wealthy merchants, foreign trading houses, and Mughal establishments.
- Seizing cash, gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and fine clothing.
- Setting fire to parts of the city, especially Mughal administrative and commercial buildings.

Contemporary estimates place the total plunder at around one crore rupees (ten million rupees), an enormous sum for the time.

European Factories in Surat

The city also hosted factories of the English East India Company, the Dutch VOC, and the Portuguese. During the raid:

- The English factory, under Sir George Oxenden, fortified its compound, mounted guns, and successfully defended itself while the rest of the city was looted.
- The Portuguese similarly held their fortified positions.
- The Dutch, with a smaller presence in Surat itself, observed events closely from their wider western-India network.

Shivaji did not press a full assault on these fortified European compounds. This suggests a calculated restraint: his primary targets were Mughal and merchant wealth, and he preferred not to unnecessarily antagonise all the European powers at once.

Immediate Aftermath in Surat

By the time Shivaji withdrew, Surat lay in ruins:

- Large parts of the city had been burned or sacked.
- The Mughal governor, Inayat Khan, was widely criticised for fleeing and failing to organise any meaningful defence.
- European traders, though shaken, had largely protected their own compounds and goods.

The raid sent shockwaves through the Mughal Empire. The World was watching Shivaji challenge the Mughal Empire and Aurangzeb's reign. Aurangzeb now intended to orchestrate a full blown attack against Shivaji and such an assault would need his best commander for the job.

Aurangzeb chose Mirza Raje Jai Singh.

5. The Siege Begins.

Aurangzeb's appointment and Jai Singh's choice

Aurangzeb appointed Mirza Raja Jai Singh to the Deccan command on 30 September 1664. His instructions were to prosecute war against both Shivaji and the Adil Shah of Bijapur, with the objective of breaking Maratha power and reasserting Mughal authority in the region.

Jai Singh assessed that pursuing both objectives simultaneously would overextend his forces. In communications with the emperor, he is recorded as arguing against attacking both these armies, he insisted it would prove detrimental in nature on the reasoning that:

- Applying maximum pressure on Shivaji without first isolating him diplomatically risked pushing the Marathas into a more unified and desperate resistance.
- A focused campaign against Shivaji, combined with diplomatic containment of Bijapur rather than open war against it, offered better odds of a decisive outcome.

Aurangzeb initially favored a dual-front campaign but allowed Jai Singh operational latitude, prioritizing results specifically, ending Shivaji's raiding capacity, securing the Deccan, and restoring Mughal prestige after the Surat raid.

Jai Singh's resulting strategic approach had three components:

1. **Treat Shivaji as the primary target**, deferring direct confrontation with Bijapur.
2. **Position the Mughal army between Shivaji's territory and Bijapur**, in the eastern part of Maratha territory. This allowed the option of threatening Bijapur without committing to a full campaign there, while also limiting Shivaji's ability to shift operations into the Western Ghats or Konkan, where Mughal logistics would be weaker.
3. **Target the fort network rather than field armies**, capturing or neutralizing key forts protecting the Swarajya core, using siege warfare and attrition to bring Shivaji to negotiation from a position of weakness.

Within this framework, Purandar was identified as the primary initial objective.

March to the Deccan: Aurangabad to Pune (February–March 1665)

Jai Singh departed the imperial court with a large force including elite Mughal cavalry and infantry, Rajput contingents under his direct command, and a siege train of heavy artillery, mortars, engineers, miners, and construction labor. Named commanders accompanying the campaign included Diler Khan, Daud Khan Qureshi, and Kirat Singh Kachhwaha, among other mansabdars.

The march followed established Mughal supply corridors from north India into the Deccan plateau. Jai Singh reached Aurangabad, the main Mughal administrative center in the Deccan, by mid-February 1665. There he met with the imperial prince governing the region, coordinated with local Mughal officers on logistics and intelligence, and reviewed the existing disposition of Mughal forces already engaged in prior, less successful operations against Shivaji.

Jai Singh left Aurangabad on 13 February 1665 and marched toward Pune, arriving on 3 March 1665. At Pune, he assumed command from Maharaja Jaswant Singh, who had held the viceroyalty on an interim basis and departed for Delhi immediately on imperial order. Pune became Jai Singh's operational base for the remainder of the campaign, providing access to routes toward Rajgad, Purandar, and other Maratha forts, as well as communication lines back to Aurangabad and the north.

Selection of Purandar as the First Objective

Jai Singh and his commanders assessed Shivaji's fort network shortly after arriving at Pune. Purandar was identified as the primary target based on the following factors:

- Geographic position: Purandar sits on a high, flat-topped hill in the Pune district, overlooking surrounding valleys and routes, and guards approaches to the core Maratha territory around Pune and Rajgad.
- Defensive structure: Purandar, together with its adjoining outwork Vajragad (also called Rudramal), formed a layered defensive system controlling movement between the Deccan plateau and the Konkan.
- Political significance: Purandar was one of the forts closely associated with Shivaji's rise, making its capture a demonstration that even established Maratha strongholds were vulnerable to Mughal force.

Diler Khan at Purandhar(30 March 1665)

Jai Singh did not personally command the direct assault on Purandar, delegating field operations to Diler Khan while retaining overall strategic direction from a separate command position.

Diler Khan arrived before Purandar on **30 March 1665** with a substantial detachment and formally began siege operations. Initial dispositions included:

- **Encirclement:** Mughal pickets and cavalry patrols established a loose ring around the fort to prevent reinforcement or escape and to intercept messengers and supply movement. Key approaches and passes were blocked or placed under observation.
- **Reconnaissance:** Engineers and officers surveyed the fort's walls, gates, water sources, and storage facilities, identifying weak points in the defenses, locations suitable for artillery batteries, and potential routes for trenches and mining.
- **Forward positions:** Diler Khan established camps on the lower slopes and nearby plateaus, used as staging areas for infantry, platforms for artillery once constructed, and bases for construction labor.

Jai Singh's main camp was positioned on elevated ground nearby, traditionally identified as the Narayanpur plateau, from which he maintained visual contact with Purandar and nearby forts, coordinated movements between Mughal detachments, and received reports without direct involvement in frontal operations.

Capture of Vajragad (13–14 April 1665)

Before attacking Purandar directly, Jai Singh and Diler Khan moved to neutralize Vajragad, its adjoining outwork. Vajragad sits on a ridge overlooking part of the approach to Purandar and controlled a section of the fort's lower fortified plateau (machi). Its capture would provide a forward artillery position, remove a Maratha observation and defense point, and tighten the encirclement of Purandar's main summit.

The Marathas believed that Vajragad was integral to Purandhar's safety and that if Vajragad fell, the fall of Purandhar was inevitable, purely due to the structure of these forts.

13 April: Mughal batteries, partially established on nearby heights, opened preparatory fire on Vajragad's walls and towers, aimed at suppressing defenders' musket and artillery fire and damaging parapets rather than achieving an immediate breach. Mughal infantry, supported by Rajput and Afghan contingents, then advanced up the slopes toward the outer enclosure, meeting resistance from Maratha musketeers

positioned in fortified enclosures partway up the hill. Mughal troops eventually stormed the outer tower, pushing defenders back into an inner enclosure. Contemporary accounts record seven defenders killed and four wounded in this phase, though these figures are likely underestimated given the scale of the engagement described.

14 April: The Vajragad garrison surrendered by evening, facing continued Mughal firepower and encirclement. Mughal troops occupied the fort, mounted additional guns on its walls, and used it as a forward artillery position against Purandar's lower defenses. The ridge connecting Vajragad to Purandar was secured, setting up the next phase of the siege.

The loss of Vajragad reduced the depth of the Maratha defensive system and gave Mughal forces a material advantage in both terrain and artillery positioning going into the siege of Purandar itself.

Siege Operations Against Purandar (Mid April–May 1665)

With Vajragad secured, Diler Khan directed operations against Purandar through systematic siege methods rather than direct assault:

Artillery: Mughal batteries were positioned on Vajragad (overlooking Purandar's lower machi and portions of the main walls) and on nearby ridges identified during earlier reconnaissance, in some cases using raised platforms to improve firing angles. Targets included outer walls and bastions, gates and posterns used for sorties, and water cisterns and storage areas, intended to strain the garrison's logistics over time.

Trenches: Mughal forces dug parallel trenches along the hill's contours and zig-zag approach trenches (saps) to advance troops and guns toward the walls while limiting exposure to defensive fire, along with covered positions for infantry to assemble before assaults. Labor for these works continued under military guard despite Maratha sniper fire and night raids.

Mining: Mughal engineers began tunneling under sections of the fort's walls, intending to pack the tunnels with gunpowder charges to breach or collapse the defenses. This work was slow and vulnerable to counter-mining but represented a longer-term structural threat to the fort.

Maratha countermeasures: The garrison, under killedar Murarbaji Deshpande, conducted sorties aimed at spiking Mughal guns, destroying sections of trench and battery, and targeting labor parties and forward pickets. Defenders used the fort's terrain to concentrate musket and arrow fire on advancing Mughal troops, and worked to conserve water and supplies. Despite these measures, the Mughals held a

substantial resource advantage, with the capacity to replace losses and sustain a prolonged siege in a way the garrison could not match.

Command Roles During the Siege

Jai Singh, from his command position, received regular reports on the state of siege works, casualties, and morale; coordinated with other Mughal detachments operating against nearby Maratha territory; and managed a parallel diplomatic track, sending envoys to Shivaji to explore terms for a negotiated settlement that would bring Shivaji into imperial service without further military cost. The siege functioned simultaneously as a military operation and as leverage for a political outcome.

Diler Khan directed the assault phases of the campaign directly, leading Afghan and Rajput troops in person during key engagements, including the Vajragad assault and subsequent operations against Purandar. Mughal and later secondary accounts describe him as a commander known for aggressive, front-line tactics.

Murarbaji Deshpande, as killedar of Purandar, organized the fort's defense, led sorties in person, and did not surrender the fort despite the deteriorating military situation. One tradition holds that Diler Khan offered Murarbaji a position in Mughal service in recognition of his conduct in battle, and that Murarbaji declined; the exact content of any such exchange is not verifiable and should be treated as tradition rather than confirmed historical record, though Murarbaji's continued resistance until his death is corroborated across sources.

“Mi Shivaji Rajacha Shipai Haay”-Murarbaji Deshpande and his resistance against Diler Khan

When the Mughal army under Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Diler Khan arrived before Purandar in March 1665, the imperial forces expected a conventional siege: surround the fort, bombard its defences, exhaust the garrison, and compel its surrender. Instead, they encountered a defence that transformed Purandar from a strategic fortification into a symbol of Maratha resistance.

At the centre of this defence stood **Murarbaji Deshpande**, the *killedar* or fort commander of Purandar.

Origins and Early Career

Murarbaji was born into a Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu family, a community with a long tradition of scholarship and military service in the Konkan and western Deccan. His early life was shaped by the turbulent political landscape of the Deccan. His father served under Chandrarao More, the powerful ruler of Javali, and Murarbaji himself entered military service at a young age, initially fighting in defence of the More kingdom against the rising power of the Bhosales.

Entry into Shivaji's Service

The decisive turning point in Murarbaji's career came in 1656, when Shivaji defeated the More kingdom and incorporated Javali into his expanding Swarajya. Rather than simply eliminating former opponents, Shivaji sought to recognise military ability and loyalty where he found it. Murarbaji subsequently entered Shivaji's service in 1656. His bravery and organisational ability soon distinguished him, and Shivaji eventually entrusted him with the command of Purandar, one of the most strategically important forts within the Maratha network.

By 1665, Murarbaji had become more than a military commander. As *killedar* of Purandar, he stood as the principal guardian of a fort that represented Maratha sovereignty in the Pune region.

When Diler Khan laid siege to Purandar on 30 March 1665, the disparity between the two forces was considerable. Mughal forces possessed numerical superiority, artillery, engineers, and the resources necessary to sustain a prolonged siege. Murarbaji, by contrast, commanded a considerably smaller garrison. Traditional accounts place approximately 700 Mavle troops under his direct command for offensive sorties, with the total garrison potentially numbering around 2,000 infantry. The precise figures remain disputed, but the strategic imbalance was clear: the Mughals could sustain losses on a scale that the defenders could not.

Murarbaji's task therefore extended beyond simply holding the fort. The defence sought to inflict sufficient losses and delays to make the Mughal siege costly, maintain morale within the garrison, and buy time for Shivaji to manoeuvre elsewhere politically and militarily. His strategy consequently combined static defence with aggressive counter-attacks.

Defence in Depth: Walls, Sorties and Morale

Murarbaji ensured that the fort's walls, bastions, and gates remained continuously manned, while musketeers, archers, and lookouts monitored Mughal movements and the construction of siege batteries. The natural geography of Purandar further strengthened the defence: steep slopes, narrow approaches, and successive defensive positions allowed smaller groups of defenders to resist larger attacking forces.

However, the defence was not purely passive. Murarbaji understood that allowing the Mughals to construct trenches, batteries, and siege works without interference would eventually make the fort increasingly vulnerable to artillery. He therefore led sorties designed to disrupt Mughal operations, destroy sections of siege works, and undermine the morale of the besieging army.

Accounts emphasise that Murarbaji frequently participated in these sorties personally, fighting at the front with sword and shield. His presence served not merely a tactical purpose but also demonstrated leadership by example.

His leadership also became central to maintaining morale within the garrison. The defenders were aware of their numerical disadvantage, the uncertainty surrounding relief, and the consequences that could follow the fall of the fort. Murarbaji's continued presence therefore became a source of confidence, reinforcing the perception that Purandar was being defended not merely as a military position, but as a symbol of *Swarajya*.

Murarbaji and Diler Khan

Opposing Murarbaji was Diler Khan, one of Aurangzeb's most aggressive commanders. The Mughal approach relied upon sustained pressure, artillery bombardment, repeated assaults, and the systematic exploitation of weaknesses in the fort's defences. As the siege continued through April and May, the effectiveness of Murarbaji's resistance became increasingly significant to both sides.

The Great Sortie and Murarbaji's Death

By mid-May 1665, the situation within Purandar had become increasingly desperate. Mughal batteries positioned on Vajragad and the surrounding heights continued to bombard the fort, while trenches and mines brought the imperial forces progressively closer to its defences. Casualties, exhaustion, and dwindling supplies placed further pressure upon the garrison.

Recognising the danger of allowing the Mughal siege works to continue unchecked, Murarbaji is traditionally described as having led a major sortie with approximately

300 Mavle troops. The objective was to break through the Mughal lines, damage the siege infrastructure, and create sufficient disruption to delay the assault on Purandar.

The attack initially succeeded. Maratha forces reportedly overran forward Mughal positions, disrupted artillery and siege works, and advanced dangerously close to Diler Khan's position. Later accounts describe Diler Khan as being impressed by Murarbaji's courage and offering him service under the Mughal emperor. Murarbaji famously replied with "***Mi Shivaji Rajacha Shipai Haay***"-translates to I am the soldier of Shivaji Raje, thereby showing utmost devotion to the King and the idea of Swarajya despite extreme casualties from his end. Murarbaji is traditionally said to have rejected the offer, reaffirming his allegiance to Shivaji.

The attack eventually turned against the Marathas. Mughal reserves rallied and counter-attacked, and Murarbaji was mortally wounded during the ensuing engagement. Different accounts provide different circumstances surrounding his death, including the claim that he was struck by an arrow fired by Diler Khan or one of his men. The precise date is also disputed, with some accounts placing his death on **16 May 1665**, while later traditions associate it with the final phase of the siege in June.

The Aftermath of Murarbaji's Death

Murarbaji's death did not immediately bring about the surrender of Purandar. Accounts emphasise that the garrison continued to resist even after the loss of its commander, with his sacrifice becoming a source of continued morale. The fort ultimately remained under pressure until negotiations between Shivaji and Jai Singh produced the terms that would lead to the Treaty of Purandar.

The significance of Murarbaji's defence therefore extended beyond the circumstances of his death. His resistance demonstrated that the Mughal army's numerical and material superiority did not automatically translate into a swift victory. The Mughals could overcome a commander, breaking the will of the garrison was another matter entirely.

6. Swords and Parleys: The Parallel Diplomatic Track, April–10 June 1665

While Diler Khan's guns continued to batter the walls of Purandar and Murarbaji Deshpande led desperate sorties against the besieging forces, the campaign was also unfolding through negotiation. Envoys carried proposals between the opposing camps, while letters and private discussions attempted to determine whether the conflict could be settled without further fighting.

This diplomatic track became an important part of the Purandar campaign. From April to early June 1665, Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Shivaji engaged in a series of negotiations over the terms on which hostilities might be brought to an end. By the 10th of June, no final treaty had yet been signed, but the core deliberations for diplomatic negotiations were already taking shape. Negotiations did not begin simply because Jai Singh arrived at Purandar. They emerged from a rapidly changing strategic situation in which both sides began to recognise the limits of continued warfare. By mid-April 1665, the Mughal campaign had begun to yield significant results. Vajragad (Rudramal) had fallen on 13 April, while heavy artillery batteries, trenches, and mining operations steadily tightened the pressure around Purandar. These successes gave Jai Singh confidence that Shivaji could be compelled to negotiate rather than merely contained through continued military pressure.

For Shivaji, however, the situation was becoming increasingly precarious. Murarbaji's defence had imposed considerable costs on the besiegers, but the fall of Vajragad and the progress of the Mughal siege made the eventual loss of Purandar increasingly difficult to prevent. Losing the fort outright would have damaged both the defensive depth and prestige of Swarajya. A negotiated settlement, even on unfavourable terms, therefore offered Shivaji a means of preserving the core of his power rather than risking its destruction in a prolonged siege.

Jai Singh also understood that a purely military victory was not necessarily the most advantageous outcome. His objective was not simply to destroy Shivaji, but to bring him into the Mughal political order and potentially employ his military strength against Bijapur and Golconda. A negotiated settlement that secured Mughal control over a substantial number of forts while bringing Shivaji into imperial service could therefore achieve what a prolonged campaign might not: the submission of Shivaji without the destruction of the political and military force that made him useful to the Mughals. It was at this intersection of Mughal military pressure, Maratha strategic necessity, and Jai Singh's political calculations that negotiations finally became possible.

The Channels of Communication: Envoys, Letters, and Secret Missions

As the siege tightened around Purandar, communication between the Mughal and Maratha camps became increasingly important. Negotiations were conducted through a combination of formal envoys, written correspondence, trusted intermediaries, and private discussions, allowing both sides to explore possible terms without prematurely committing themselves before their armies.

One of the important figures in Shivaji's diplomatic efforts was **Raghunath Ballal Atre**, a senior Maratha official traditionally associated with the title *Pandit Rao*. Around 20 May 1665, he is described in historical accounts as having been sent to Jai Singh's camp to discuss the terms for a negotiation.

Historical sources indicate that by late May and the first days of June 1665, certain broad ideas were being discussed:

- The possibility that Shivaji might cede a number of forts to the Mughals while retaining a smaller core.
- That he might accept some form of imperial service and loyalty, with his son Sambhaji enrolled in Mughal ranks.
- That compensation for lost revenue could come in the form of rights to collect from certain Bijapuri territories in the Konkan and the Ghats.
- That Shivaji would receive guarantees of safe conduct for any personal meeting with Jai Singh.

Crucially, however, **none of these points had been finalised by 10 June 1665**. No treaty text had been signed. No definitive list of forts had been agreed. No binding formula for service, revenue, or honour was yet in place.

Maratha Swarajya and their Systems

Before you step into committee, it helps to understand exactly what Swarajya was in 1665 because it is not what most delegates will picture when they hear "Maratha kingdom." There was no crowned king yet. Shivaji would not be formally titled Chhatrapati for another nine years. There was no fixed capital, no standing bureaucracy, no rulebook of offices and ranks.

This matters for how you should think about your portfolio. The titles and powers available to you in this committee are not the polished, formalized version of the Maratha state that would exist by the 1670s, they are whatever existed, informally and often personally, in June 1665. Losing one commander or one fort in this period is not a bureaucratic setback; it can mean losing an entire function of the state, because that function often lived in one person's hands and nowhere else. Let us now understand how the Marathas worked in the 1650's

Political Structure

- As of June 1665, Shivaji had **not yet been formally crowned** (coronation: 1674) and had not yet adopted the title of Chhatrapati. In 1665 he functioned as a regional chief/sardar who had built a de facto independent administration while nominally still a Bijapuri jagirdar in origin.
- The **Ashta Pradhan** (Council of Eight Ministers) as a formalized institution dates to the 1674 coronation, not 1665. For your committee's period, administrative and military functions were already being performed by identifiable individuals, but without the fixed Sanskritized titles and structure later associated with the Ashta Pradhan. Delegates should not treat the full eight-minister system as already in place at the freeze date, this is a common anachronism to flag and avoid.
- Functions that existed in some form by 1665, performed by named individuals (later formalized into ministerial roles):
 - **General administration / civil affairs** — associated with figures such as Moropant Trimbak Pingle (later given the Peshwa role).
 - **Military command** — a senapati-equivalent function, held in this period by Netaji Palkar (later titled Sarnaubat).
 - **Finance/revenue administration**, this was necessary given fort-based tax collection but not yet institutionally separated into the later Amatya role.

Military Systems under the Maratha

The Maratha military approach under Shivaji is generally referred to as **Ganimi Kava** (commonly known as the Guerrilla Warfare), a form of irregular warfare built around speed, surprise, terrain, and avoidance of direct, sustained confrontation with larger conventional forces. Its core features included:

- **Hit-and-run engagements:** Maratha forces would strike an enemy camp, supply line, or isolated detachment, then withdraw before the enemy could bring superior numbers to bear, the 1663 raid on Shaista Khan's residence at Lal Mahal and the 1664 Surat raid both follow this pattern.
- **Use of terrain:** The Western Ghats and the Deccan's hill-fort network gave the Marathas a defensive advantage that offset their generally smaller force sizes. Forts such as Rajgad, Pratapgad, and Purandar allowed a numerically small garrison to hold ground against a much larger besieging force.
- **Mobility over mass:** Maratha forces prioritized light cavalry and infantry capable of rapid movement through difficult terrain, rather than the large, slow-moving combined-arms formations typical of Mughal armies.
- **Disruption of supply and communication:** Rather than committing to prolonged pitched battle, Maratha forces frequently targeted an enemy's supply lines and lines of communication, aiming to wear down a larger force's ability to sustain a campaign rather than defeat it outright in the field.
- **Cavalry:** The core of Maratha offensive capability was light, mobile cavalry, suited to rapid raids, ambush, and terrain exploitation rather than pitched battle against numerically superior forces reflected in tactics used at Shaista Khan's camp and at Surat.
- **Infantry:** Used primarily in garrison and fort-defense roles, and in assaults on fortified positions (e.g., the defense of Chakan by ~300 infantry under Firangoji Narsala).
- **Fort commanders (killedars):** Central to Maratha strategy given the fort-network model of control described earlier. Killedars held significant autonomous authority in defense and were often drawn from trusted, non-noble backgrounds rather than hereditary elites, a point historians note as distinctive of Shivaji's system.
- **Intelligence network:** Shivaji is widely credited with maintaining an extensive espionage and informant network across Maratha, Bijapuri, and Mughal-held territory, which contributed to the element of surprise in operations such as the 1663 Lal Mahal raid (identifying a security gap via a wedding procession) and Pratapgad (anticipating Afzal Khan's intentions).

The Mughal Empire and their Systems

Political Structure

Unlike Swarajya's still-forming administration, the Mughal Empire by 1665 operated through an established, decades-old imperial bureaucracy and military ranking system.

The **Emperor (Aurangzeb)**, based in the north, set overall campaign objectives and held final authority over major strategic decisions, but delegated direct command of the Deccan campaign to a trusted subordinate standard Mughal practice for frontier operations of this scale.

The **mansabdari system** structured the army itself: Mughal nobles and officers (mansabdars) held ranks obligating them to maintain and bring a set number of cavalry on campaign, meaning the army was assembled from multiple semi-independent contingents rather than a single standing force. Diler Khan, Daud Khan Qureshi, and Kirat Singh Kachhwaha were mansabdars operating within this system, each commanding a contingent under Jai Singh's overall direction.

Military Systems

Cavalry: Mughal and allied Rajput cavalry drawn substantially from Jai Singh's own Amber contingent and other Rajput mansabdars formed the mobile component of the army, used for escort, patrol, and set-piece engagement rather than long-range raiding.

Artillery: The core of Mughal siege capability heavy guns and mortars used to batter walls, suppress defensive fire, and target infrastructure such as water cisterns. Moving and supplying this artillery required extensive logistics, including large teams of draft animals. Mughal and Rajput cavalry were generally better armored and better mounted than Maratha light cavalry, reflecting their role in direct engagement rather than rapid raiding.

Engineers and miners: A standing, specialized component of the Mughal siege train, responsible for reconnoitering a fort's defenses, planning battery and trench placement, and conducting mining operations beneath walls a level of dedicated technical capacity the Maratha side did not field to a comparable degree.

Strategy: Mughal campaigns relied on methodical siege warfare rather than speed encirclement before assault, sequenced objectives (taking Vajragad before Purandar itself, to gain an artillery position), and combined pressure through bombardment, trenches, and mining run simultaneously.

TIMELINE THAT LED TO PURANDHAR,1665

- **1636–1644:** Aurangzeb's first term as Mughal viceroy of the Deccan.
- **1636:** Shahaji Bhonsle (Shivaji's father) enters Bijapuri service; Pune jagir eventually assigned to the family.
- **1645:** Shivaji, aged ~15, captures Torna fort from Bijapur , conventionally marked as the start of Swarajya's territorial expansion.
- **1646–47:** Capture of Kondana (later Sinhagad).
- **1647:** Death of Dadoji Kondadev; Shivaji assumes direct control of the Pune jagir.
- **1648:** Mohammed Adil Shah imprisons Shahaji to pressure Shivaji into halting expansion; Shivaji temporarily restrains activity.
- **1649:** Shahaji Bhosle released.
- **1653–1658:** Aurangzeb's second Deccan viceroyalty.
- **4 November 1656:** Death of Mohammed Adil Shah of Bijapur; succession of the minor Ali Adil Shah II, regency under Badi Sahiba.
- **14 May 1657:** Sambhaji, Shivaji's son, is born at Purandar fort.
- **September 1657:** News of Shah Jahan's illness reaches the Deccan; onset of the war of succession.
- **February–May 1658:** Aurangzeb defeats Dara Shikoh's forces at Dharmat (April) and Samugarh (May); Shah Jahan imprisoned in Agra Fort (July).
- **1659:** Bijapur deposes Afzal Khan against Shivaji.
- **10 November 1659:** Afzal Khan killed at Pratapgad; Bijapuri army routed.
- **January 1660:** Aurangzeb (now emperor) appoints Shaista Khan as Mughal viceroy of the Deccan, with orders to subdue Shivaji.
- **Early 1660:** Shaista Khan advances on Pune; Shivaji retreats to Rajgad. Simultaneous Bijapuri offensive under Siddi Johar against Panhala.
- **1660:** Siege of Chakan; Firangoji Narsala's garrison holds 56 days before the fort falls.
- **1660–1663:** Shaista Khan occupies Pune, resides at Lal Mahal.
- **5 April 1663:** Maratha raid on Shaista Khan's residence at Lal Mahal; Shaista Khan wounded (loses three fingers), his son Abul Fateh killed. Shivaji withdraws to Sinhagad.
- **1663–64:** Shaista Khan recalled, transferred to Bengal.
- **5–13 January 1664:** Sack of Surat; Mughal governor Inayat Khan besieged in the castle; English factory under George Oxenden successfully defended; loot transported to Rajgad.
- **30 September 1664:** Aurangzeb formally appoints Mirza Raja Jai Singh to lead the Deccan campaign.
- **13 February 1665:** Jai Singh departs Aurangabad for Pune.

- **3 March 1665:** Jai Singh arrives at Pune, assumes command from Jaswant Singh.
- **30 March 1665:** Diler Khan invests Purandar.
- **13–14 April 1665:** Vajragad falls to Mughal forces.
- **16 May 1665** Murarbaji Deshpande killed in action against Diler Khan's forces.

PORTFOLIO DISTRIBUTION AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE COMMITTEE

1.Maratha Swarajya

Sambhaji Bhosale	Shivaji's heir and a key bargaining chip in negotiations with Jai Singh. His future position could determine the Maratha–Mughal relationship.
Netaji Palkar	One of Shivaji's principal cavalry commanders, crucial for offensive operations and disrupting Mughal forces.
Annaji Datto	Annaji Datto's importance lies in administration, royal correspondence, and implementation of Shivaji's orders.
Raghunath Ballal Atre	The diplomatic face of the Marathas, Raghunath Ballal Atre is essential to negotiate terms with the Mughals and other forces
Prataprao Gujar	Prataprao Gujar is a major military portfolio, giving the Maratha side a capable field commander and cavalry leader.
Moro Trimbak Pingle	Moro Pingle is essential to maintaining the machinery of Swarajya during a military crisis. He can advise Shivaji on the political and administrative consequences of surrendering territory while coordinating the state behind the army.

Yesaji Kank	Trusted commander and close associate of Shivaji, important for security and military operations.
Kavji Kondhalkar	Experienced Military Commander useful for communicating fort defence and local military operations.
Ramchandra Pant Amartya	Senior administrator who can assess the financial and territorial consequences of the proposed settlement

2.Mughal Sultanate

Aurangzeb Alamgir	The Mughal Emperor determined to subjugate the Deccan and eliminate Shivaji's independent power. He control imperial policy and the terms for negotiation with Shivaji
Mirza Raja Jai Singh I	Commander in chief of the Mughal campaign against Shivaji and the chief negotiator at Purandhar
Diler Khan	Senior Mughal commander leading aggressive operations against Purandar and other Maratha positions.
Daud Khan Qureshi	Mughal commander responsible for field operations and pursuing Maratha forces around the Deccan. He can reinforce the siege and maintain pressure if negotiations fail
Rai Singh Sisodia	Rajput commander serving under Jai Singh in the Mughal campaign.
Sujan Singh Bundela	Bundela commander serving with the Mughal army against Shivaji.
Kirat Singh Kachhwaha	Jai Singh's son and a Mughal field commander closely involved in the operations against Maratha forts.

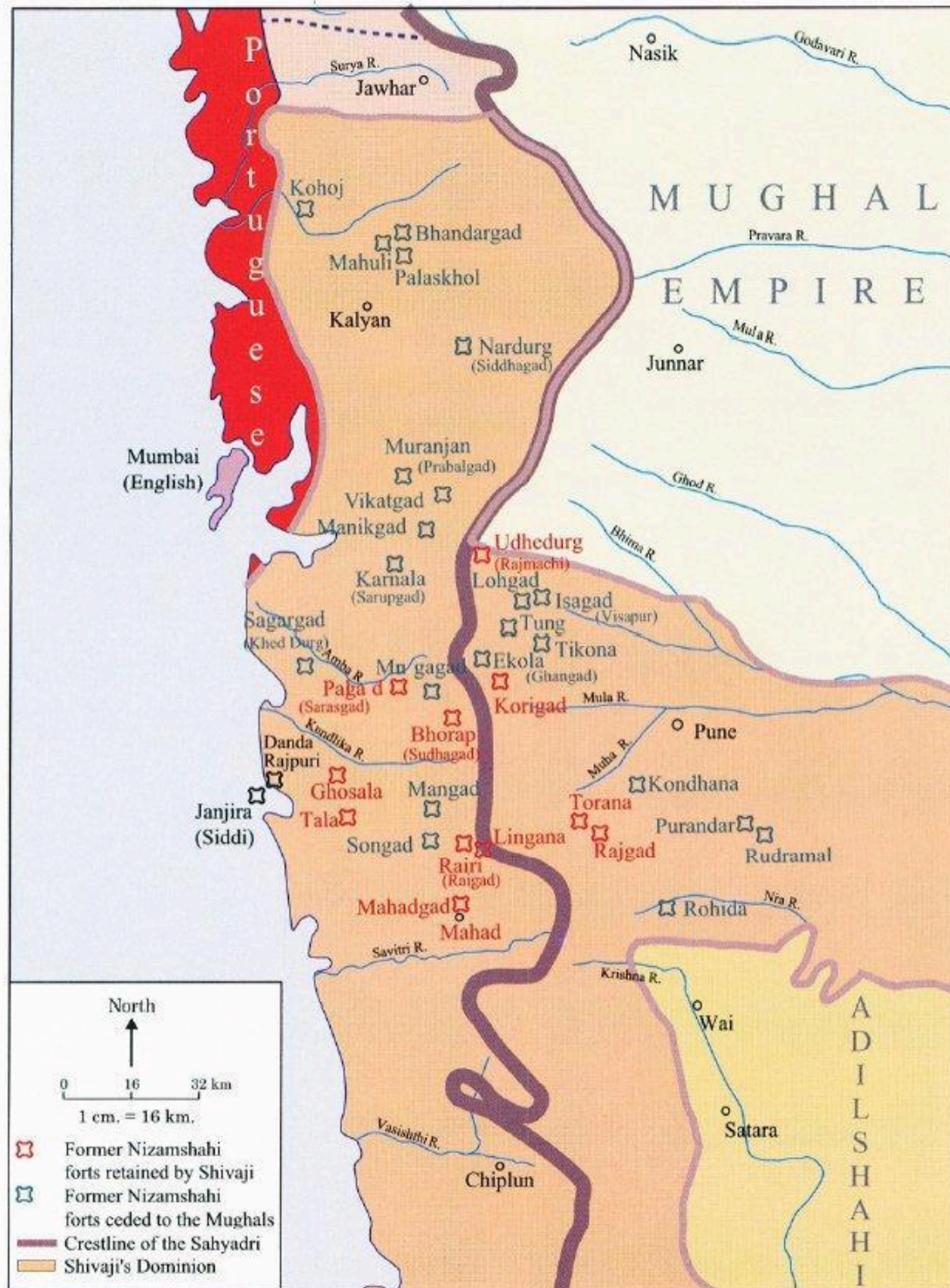
Ihtisham Khan Shaikhzada	Mughal officer involved in the military operations surrounding the Maratha forts.
Qubad Khan	Mughal commander - provides additional military pressure to support Jai Singh's campaign.

3.Other Important Portfolios

Ali Adil Shah II	Sultan of Bijapur fighting to preserve his kingdom against Mughal expansion and Shivaji's territorial ambitions. His decisions can determine whether Bijapur exploits the Mughal-Maratha conflict or risks becoming the next target.
Sharza Khan	Senior Bijapuri commander responsible for military operations against Mughal and Maratha interests.
Bahlol Khan	Powerful Bijapuri Afghan commander commanding a large military following. His loyalty and forces are crucial to Bijapur's ability to resist Mughal pressure and influence the Deccan balance.
Abdullah Qutb Shah	Sultan of Golconda seeking to preserve the Sultanate's independence amid Mughal expansion and Deccan instability
Akkanna,Madanna	Senior Golconda official with influence over military and state administration.
Siddi Kasim	Senior Siddi commander of Janjira, controlling a strategically placed naval fortress on the Konkan coast. His fleet and coastal position make Janjira a major obstacle to Shivaji's expansion.
Siddi Sambal	Siddi naval commander whose forces help maintain Janjira's control of the Konkan coast.

Siddi Yakut Khan	Siddi military figure connected to Janjira's powerful naval establishment.
Soma Shekhar	Ruler of Keladi, controlling territory and resources in the Kanara region south of Shivaji's sphere.
Jayaba Mukne	Ruler of Jawhar, controlling a strategically located hill state north of the Maratha heartland. His allegiance can provide Shivaji with access, intelligence, or a northern buffer.
Vikramshah Mukne	Mukne ruler with influence over Jawhar's territory and local chiefs. His position makes him relevant to Maratha expansion and control of the northern Konkan.
António de Melo e Castro	Portuguese Viceroy in Goa seeking to protect Portuguese territory and trade from both Shivaji and expanding European rivals. His control of Goa gives Portugal significant diplomatic and maritime leverage.
Luís de Mendonça e Furtado	Senior Portuguese statesman with experience in the administration of the Estado da Índia. He can provide institutional knowledge and strategic counsel on Goa's response to the Deccan conflict.
George Oxenden	President of the English factory at Surat, responsible for protecting English trade within the Mughal commercial system. Shivaji's previous attack on Surat makes Maratha relations and intelligence particularly important to him.
Henry Gary	Acting English Governor of Bombay

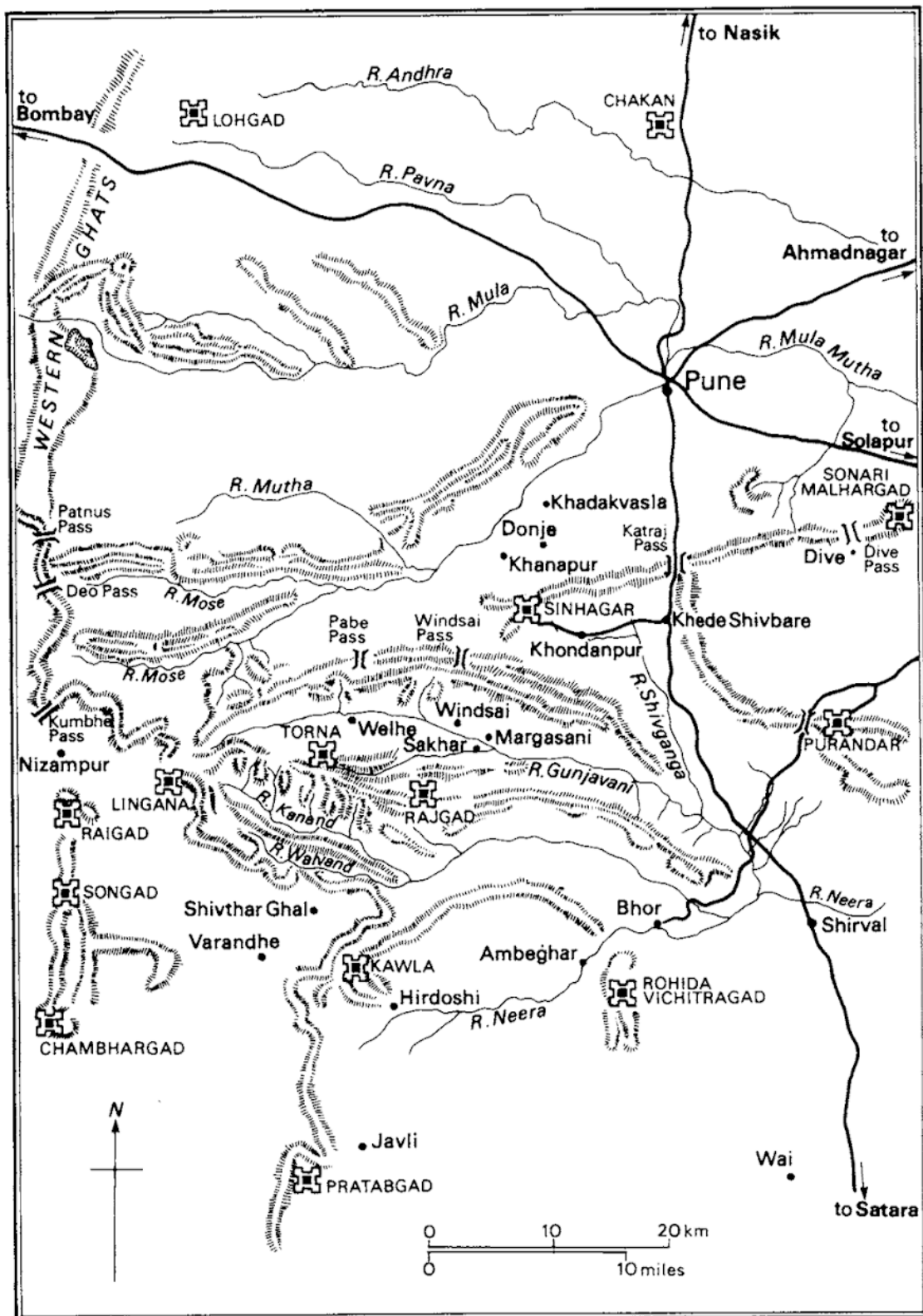
Important Maps that the delegates could use:



TREATY OF PURANDAR 1665

DECCAN TRADE & MILITARY ROUTES — 1665





Map 4. Main roads and forts of the Pune region c. 1660 (adapted from Ramesh Desai, *Shivaji, The Last Great Fort Architect* [Bombay, Government of Maharashtra, 1987]).

This committee is a **simulation of a historical crisis**, not a reenactment of fixed events. The Executive Board does **not** expect delegates to simply roleplay their characters and mechanically reproduce what happened in 1665. If the goal were only to replay history, there would be no need to convene this committee at all.

The core purpose of this crisis committee is to explore the decisions, dilemmas, and possibilities that were genuinely open in June 1665. By the freeze date of **10 June**, the Treaty of Purandar had not yet been signed. The military situation was dire, negotiations were underway, but the outcome was still uncertain.

In this room, you are free to:

- Negotiate different terms than those historically agreed.
- Pursue alternative strategies: continued resistance, different diplomatic alignments, or new military plans.
- Attempt to **discard the Treaty of Purandar entirely** and craft a different political settlement or no settlement at all.

Your task is not to mimic history, but to engage with the same constraints, information, and pressures that real actors faced, and then decide how *you* would act. The past gives us the setting; your choices determine the outcome.

