

ARAKAN RULE IN CHITTAGONG (1550--1666 A.D)

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Arakan had firmly established its authority over Chittagong by the middle of the 16th century and retained its control for over a hundred years. The Portuguese actively cooperated with the Arakanese and the union of Portuguese navy and Arakanese army was a formidable combination. In this paper I wish to throw some light on the history of this period.

Arakan is separated from Burma by a long deep range of mountains through which there are only two serviceable passes. The Arakanese of today are basically Burmese with an unmistakable Indian mixture. Although Buddhists they have been influenced by long centuries contact with Muslim Bengal. The Burmese do not seem to have settled in Arakan until the 10th century. The Arakan king, Tsu-La-Taing- Tsandra (951-957 A.D.), invaded Chittagong and defeated the local chieftain (probably a successor of Kanti Deva) in 953 A.D. in memory of this victory, he erected a monument with the words Tsit-ta-gung (there shall be no war) inscribed on it. It is said that this monument had been erected on the south of Kaunia Charra near Kumira. According some historians the modern name of Chittagong is derived from the inscription on this monument.

Anawrahta (1044-77 A.D), one of the greatest king of Pagan in Burma, visited the Indian land of Bengal in course of his expedition. Harvey¹ thinks that he visited Chittagong and planted magical image of men there. According Burmese history, the Burmese king Alaungsitha (1112-62 A.D) who was a very powerful monarch visited "the Indian land of Bengal" -- probably Chittagong -- where he found the images set up by Anawrahta. According to Rajmala the Tipperah king Mukut Manikya sent some presents to the Arakan king Mengdi in 1395. Presumably, Chittagong was at that time under the control of Arakan king. According to Harvey, Sithabin was on the throne of Arakan in 1395 and Myinhxinggyi in 1397.

In 1406 the Arakan king Meng, Soamwan (Nara Meikhla, 1404-34) was dethrone by the army of Burmese king. He then fled to Gaur and sought the protection of the king there. The Arakan king resided at Gaur for 24 years. When army of Ibrahiim Sharqi, king of Jaunpur, invaded Gaur in 818 A.H., (1416 A.D), the refugee king, at the request of Nur Qutbul 'Alam, rendered Raja Ganesa assistance. At last in 1430 A.D. Jalaluddin Mohammad dispatched an army to restore the Arakanese king on the throne. Wli Khan the general, who was sent restore the Arakan king, betrayed his trust. He came to terms with usurper (Shua Mangji) and took possession of Chittagong for himself. According to Burma Research Society's Journal ² it was Nasiruddin Mahmud who restored the Arakanese. But Nasiruddin Mahmud did not come to the throne till 1442. Apparently the Burma Research Society had, followed Stewart's History of Bengal had wrongly shown Nasiruddin Mahmud as the king of Bengal in 1430. Nara Meikhla escaped to Gaur. The Sultan sent a second army who restored the king on the throne after killing Wali Khan. Out of gratitude for his restoration the king built Santkai mosque near Myochaung. The Arakan king became a tributary to the Sultan of Bengal and undertook to assume a Muslim name and strike coins with Kalima. An increase Bengali Muslim influence is undoubtedly noticeable in Arakanese life from that period. This custom of assuming Muslim name continued in Arakan for nearly 200 years during which period 8 kings had ascended the throne. Meng Khari (1434-59) called himself Ali Khan, Basoapya (1459-82) Kalima Shah, Gadzabadi or Gajapati (1523-31) Iliyas Shah, Meng Beng (1531-53) Zabauk Shah (apparently a misleading for Mubarak or Barbak), Meng Phaalaung (1571-93) Sikandar Shah, Meng-radzagvai (15593-1612) Salim Shah and Meng Khamaung (1612-22) Hussain Shah. This practice probably was first introduced in fulfilment of the promise made by Meng Soamwan but was continued in later times as a token of sovereignty in Chittagong which was recognised as being geographically beyond the country of the Arakanese race. Though Meng Khari (Ali Khan 1434-59), successor of Nara Meikhla, occupied Ramu and Chittagong and shook off the Muslim authority, the Arakan kings continued to assume Muslim names and strike coins with Kalima inscribed till 1622. These coins were first struck in Bengal but later the Arakanese king had their own mints. Some of the coins had Chittagong inscribed in them. When Meng Khari occupied Ramu in 1434-35 the Chakmas on the frontier had put up a strong resistance on behalf of Muslims. But as no re-inforcement arrived from Gaur, (where Shamsuddin Ahmad -(1432-35), the worthless son of Jalaluddin, was the reigning king), the Chakmas were compelled to cede some part of Ramu to the Arakan king. The village of Rajakul and Chakmarkul near Ramu commemorate that invasion.

However, the Muslims were not long in shaking off the authority of the Arakan kings from Chittagong. From the inscription in the mosque at Fatheabad (near Hathazari) it appears that the mosque was built by Majlis-I-Ala Rastikhan in 878 A.H. (1473-74 A.D.) during reign of Barbak Shah.

Bhabanatha (17th century) of Chakrasala wrote "Ramchandrer Abhisek" in which he mentioned king Jaychanda of Chakrasala. Jaychanda was, according to D.C. Bhattacharjee, a Magh chieftain at Chakrasala under the Arakan king during the period 1482-1531).³ His domain probably consisted of the area between the rivers Karnafuli and Sangu. According to Portuguese accounts of his period, the king of Chittagong was called "lord of Dianga, Saquescala and Ramu". Saquescala seems to be Portuguese version of Chakrasala. Jaychanda was a Buddhist king. But he had respect for Hindu gods also. Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharjee thinks that Jaychanda's coronation took place in 1478 A.D. Jaychanda defeated and killed Bharat Rudra, chieftain of Bhatikhain, who had revolted against him.⁴

In the beginning⁵ of sixteenth century there was a triangular fight between Hussain Shah, Tippera King Dhanya Manikya (1463-1515) and the Arakan king Minyaza (1501-23) for the conquest of Chittagong. The first army sent by Hussain Shah was defeated. Hussain Shah next sent his general Gaur Malik at the head of a huge army. There was a fight near Comilla between Hussain Shah's army and the Tippera king's army under general Chaychag in which Tippera army captured the fort at Meherkul and advanced upto the capital at Rangamati, (Dr. S.K. Chatterjee⁶ thinks Chaychag was a tribal chief). Meanwhile the Tippera army constructed a dam across the Gumti river drying up the lower bed of the river. When the Muslim army started crossing the dried bed of the Gumti the Tipperas cut the dam causing the river to overflow its banks. The Muslim army was thrown into confusion when Chaychag attacked them and compelled them to retire. Hussain Shah next sent another army under General Hatian Khan who, however, could not fare better. According to Rajmal, Dhanya Manikya captured Chittagong in 1513 and extended his domain upto Ramu and Chatrasik in Arakan in 1515. He struck coins to signify his victory in Chittagong. The Tipperah king's general in this campaign was named Rasagaamardan (victory of Arakan). At last Hussain Shah himself led an army and after a successful battle at Kasba, conquered a part of Tipperah. This is clear from an inscription dated 919 A.H. (1513 A.D.) in which Khawas Khan is described as the officer-in-charge of Tipperah⁷ and Muazzamabad. The expedition to conquer Chittagong from the Tripura king was led by the crown prince, Nusrat Shah. It continued in possession of Hussain Shah till 1517 in which year the Portuguese traveller, Jaode Silverio, found him occupation of Chittagong. When Nusrat Shah was pre-occupied with his enemies to the west, Chittagong slipped from his hands in 1517-18.

According to Arakanese history, the Arakan king, Min Yaza in 1517-18 sent an invasion to conquer Chittagong in charge general Sendaija who travelled by land with 4000 soldiers. The Arakan prince, Iremong, commanded the navy. The Mughal governor of Chittagong, (Yasin?) fled to Sonargaon. Prince Iremong occupied Sandwip and Hatiya and established his headquarters at Lakhipur. The Arakan king visited the newly conquered territory of Chittagong and Dacca in 1517. In 1518 the Chakma king Chanui made submission to the Magh king and sent four ministers with two white elephants. Dharangri, the Magh governor of Chittagong, reported this to the Magh king who was at Dacca. Meantime General Sendaija who was on a visit to Chittagong, examine the gift of elephants and found that these were not really white elephants but ordinary elephants rubbed over with lime. He became annoyed and detained the ministers of the Chakma king. When came to the notice of the Magh king he took his general to task saying that the Chakma king had followed the tradition of making presents of white elephants to the Magh king and should not be punished. The Magh king was pleased to bestow the title, "Kulangphru" to the Chakma king. When the Magh king was returning to Arakan in 1520 he married the daughter of the Chakma king at Chittagong.

According to Rajmala, the Tipperaa king Debmanikya occupied Chittagong in 1522 after defeating Maghs. The Arakan king Minbin (153-53), who was a capable ruler, occupied Ramu and Chittagong in 1531 and struck coins in which Chittagong and his Muslim name Zabauk Shah were inscribed. It was during Minbin's time that the Maghi system of land measurement in drones was introduced in Chittagong district. The Maghi calander is still in vogue in Chittagong and was mentioned in documents till recently. It is 35 years behind the Bengali year. It is said to have been introduced by the Burmese king, Thenga Raja or Pouk-Pa Sau who had come to throne in 620 A.D. Minbin engaged a forced of Portuguese mercenaries. His sea power based on Chittagong was the terror of the Ganges region, and his country was on the threshold of the greatest period in her history.

Arakan entered the greatest period of her history with the accession of Minbin in 1531. The king of Arakan firmly established their authority in Chittagong during the great part of the sixteenth century. Only for a short period during

the reign of Mahmud Shah and Sher Shah in Bengal, Chittagong was in Muslim hands. According to an inscription in a silver plate found in a Buddhist Kyang in Chittagong, the Kyang was built in 1542 by Chandilah Raja who was probably Arakanese governor for the Chittagong.⁸

In 1555 Muhammad Khan, the Sur victory of Bengal who had declared independence under the title Shamsuddin Shah Ghazi raided Arakan and struck coins there. He must have captured Chittagong before raiding Arakan. Dr. Habibullah however thinks that Muhammed Khan did not occupied Arakan. Sir J.N Sarkar and D.C. Sarkar do not agree with him. In 1556 Tippera king Bijoy Manikya invaded Chittagong. Rajmala gives a detailed description of this invasion. Momarak (Mobarak?) Khan, the brother of Bengal Sultan's wife, was the leader of the Pathan force defeating Chittagong. He came at the head of 3000 cavalry and 10000 -foot soldiers and held Chittagong. The Tipperah king laid a seige for 8-moths but failed to occupy Chittagong. Bijoy Manikya became annoyed and deputed Kalanazir, the conqueror of Sylhet, to lead the invasion. In the ensuing fight the Tipperah army was defeated and Kalanazir himself was killed. After the engagement the Pathans retired to the camps and started preparing their meals. The Tipperah army renewed their attack at night and occupied upto Ramu. Monarak Khan was taken prisoner and scarified before the goddess at the instigation of the royal priest, Chantai. Momarak Kahn was probably brother-in-law of Bahadur Shah (Ghyasuddin I) who was a weak ruler and was pre-occupied with internecine quarrel. Kailash Sinaba wrongly thinks Sulaiman Karrani was the king whose brother-in-law was killed. But Sulaiman had come to the throne much later.

According to Arakanese history, Nusrat Khan son of Hamza Khan, the Pathan governor of Chittagong made submission to the Arakanese king Sawlha (1553-64) and sent him presents, Nusrat Khan had clashes with the Minseyta (1554-71), successor of Sawlha, and was killed by the Portuguese, who were supporting the Arakanese, in 1569-70. Caesar Frederico has also referred to this incident. Ralph Fitch who was in Chittagong in 1585 expressly stated that it was often under the Arakan king. He wrote *"From Satgaon I travelled by the country of the king of Tipperah or Porte Grande with whom the Mogones or Mogon (Maghs) have almost continual wars. The Mogon which be of the kingdom of Rocon (Arakan) and Ramu, be stronger than the king of Tipperah, so that Chittagong is often times under the Kingdom of Recon."* Amar Maaikya (1577-86) sent a large army to invade Chittagong and Arakan in 1585 under his son Rsjdhamarayan. Some Pathans and Portuguese soldiers also formed part of this invading force. After reaching Chittagong they put a dam across Karnafuly and crossed it. Rajdhar occupied six camps of Arakanese forces and halted at Ramu. They were preparing to attack the domain of Uria Raja (Ukhia) when Maghs attacked them. The Portuguese treacherously went over to the Maghs and made over the camps to them. The Maghs also blockaded the Tipperah army and prevented the supply of rations. The Tipperah army then turned back and proceeded towards Chittagong. They were pursued by the Maghs who decimated them mercilessly. Rajdhar then encamped at Chittagong. At this time the Arakan king sent his subordinate chief, Uria Raja, with proposals for a truce which was readily accepted by Amar Manikya. But as soon as Rajdhar had returned to the capital, the Maghs went back on their word and captured Chittagong with the help of the Portuguese. When this was reported to Amar Manikya, he at once deputed another army under the command of Prince Rajdhar. They soon reached near Chittagong and encamped. The Magh king sent an envoy with a gold-plated crown of ivory for the Tipperah prince with the intention of getting information about the strength and disposition of the invading army. The three royal princes quarrelled about the possession of the ivory crown. The Magh army then marched towards Tipperah through the jungles, as they wanted to avoid clash with Tipperah cavalry which was noted for its prowess. There was an engagement in which the impetuous prince, Jujha Manikya, was accidentally killed by his own elephant. Prince Rajdhar was also wounded by a shell. The Tipperah army took to their heels and returned to the capital. At this time Adam Shah, the chieftain of Ramu and Chakaria, who was subordinate to the Arakan king had taken shelter with the Tipperah king after a quarrel with his overlord. The Arakan king demanded surrender of Adam as a condition for peace. Amar Manikya refused to betray a chieftain to whom he had given shelter and himself took the field at the head of the army. The two armies confronted each other near Isapur (south of Chittagong). There were two thousand Pathan cavalry in the Tipperah army. When the Magh army, which according to Rajmala consisted of 200000 men, came forward, the Pathans took to flight assaulting and robbing the Tipperah soldiers. Amar Manikya withdrew through Dhoomghat and deserted his capital Udaypur. He then committed suicide. The Maghs entered Udaypur, looted it and camped there for 15 days. This happened in 1586 when Meng-Phalaung alias Sikandar Shah (1571-93) was the king of Arakan. Meng-Phalaung went up to Dacca and stationed two battalions at Jugdia and Alamdian. He held all Chittagong, and parts of Noakhali and Tippera. His son, Minnala, was the governor of Chittagong. Jalal Khan (son of Nusrat Khan, grandson of Hamza Khan) had supported the cause of Amar Manikya during this war. When the Tipperah king, Amar Manikya, was defeated in 1586, Jalal Khan is said to have died out of fear. Jalal's son, Ibrahim Khan, was

the Uzir of Chittagong only in name. The real power was exercised by the Magh governor who was usually the second son of the Magh king.

In 1599 the Arakan king, Meng Razagvi (1593-1612) attacked Pegu. In this expedition he employed a flotilla from Chittagong and the Ganges delta. On the return journey the wise minister Mahapinnyakyaw, lord of Chittagong, died. His compilation on legal precedents was well-known in Burma. During the Arakanese occupation of Chittagong there were forts at Hinguli, Kumira, Garjis and Koterpara (near Hathazari). The Arakan king, Meng Radzagyi, who called himself king of Bengala and Tippera, issued from Chittagong trilingual coins in 1601 in Arabic, Burmese and Devanagiri characters with his Burmese and Muslim titles. For a short time during his reign the Arakan dominion extended from Dacca and the Sunderbans up to Moulmein. Under the Mughal kings Chittagong was divided into three principalities e.g. Dianga, Chakrasals and Ramu. Under Arakanese occupation the governor of Chittagong was either a son, brother or faithful kinsman of the Arakan king who was supported by an Arakanese garrison. Every year the king sent a hundred boats full of troops, powder and ball and then the garrison, and boats sent in the previous year returned home to Arakan. Imports, and exports were subject to taxation during the Arakanese rule in Chittagong. Taxes were also levied on fisheries, salt, dry fish and fruitful trees. The king had a monopoly in minerals, teak wood etc. Fees were realised for granting permission to dig tanks and canals, erect bridges and temples, and make roads. The union of the Portuguese freebooters with the Arakanese ushered the greatest period in Arakanese history (1550-1666) during which Chittagong was mostly in Arakanese hands.

Towards the latter part of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese settlement at Chittagong was in a flourishing state. The king of Arakan who held it, was favourably disposed towards the Portuguese. According to Ain-i-Akbari (1590) "To the east and south of Bengal is an extensive kingdom called Arakhang. The port of Chittagong belongs to it." The Portuguese had a skirmish with the Arakan king and one Antonio Godinho had about the year 1590 captured by force of arms the fort of Chittagong and made the island of Sandwip tributary to it. Chittagong itself seems to have been recovered by the Arakanese king shortly afterwards. The Portuguese, however, did not get full possession of Sandwip until 1602, when Carvalho captured it from the Mughals who had deprived Kedar Ray of Sripur of it. But the inhabitants of Sandwip having risen against the Portuguese, Carvalho appealed to the Portuguese of Chittagong for help. Manoel De Mattos who was captain of the Portuguese at Dianga came to the succour of Carvalho with 400 men and put the enemy to flight. This victory placed Sandwip completely in the hands of Carvalho and Mattos who divided it between them.

In recognition of their brilliant services, the king of Portugal created Carvalho and Mattos nobles and bestowed on them the Order of the Christ. The king of Arakan who had many Portuguese in his kingdom was highly enraged at their conquest of Sandwip and apprehended that they might prove a source of danger to his kingdom. He therefore prepared a fleet consisting of 150 jaleas, caturms and other larger vessels well equipped and armed with guns and cannons. Kedar Ray also joined the king of Arakan and sent 100 cosses from Sripur to help him. The Portuguese of Dianga and Caranja having got scent of the impending attack took to their ships and sailed off with all their goods since they could not face the enemy's enormous forces. The Portuguese at Chittagong also began to escape with their most precious things doubting the intentions of the governor of Chittagong who was uncle of the king of Arakan and who outwardly pretended to be a great friend of the Portuguese. On 8-11-1602 the Arakan fleet appeared in the port of Dianga where Mattos was in a boat with many other Portuguese in their jaleas, which being badly equipped drew in the rear. The boat of Mattos bore the brunt of the attack in which many Arakanese were killed. Only one Portuguese was killed and 7 were wounded of whom Mattos himself was one. The Arakanese captured four Portuguese vessels and in honour of their victory they drank and feasted in wild joy.

Two days after the tide turned, as Carvalho came with relief from Sandwip. He and Mattos got up 50 vessels among which were 2 boats, 4 catures, 3 barques, the rest being jaleas. With this fleet they set out early in the morning and made surprise attack on enemy's ships with such fury and violence that they were completely routed. They became masters of all the Arakanese ships numbering 149 with all ammunition muskets and other implements of war. Many Arakanese lost their lives in this engagement, notably Sinabadi, the uncle of the king of Arakan who was governor of Chittagong. Some escaped by jumping into the sea and swimming across to land.

When the news of Portuguese victory reached Chittagong, all were panic-stricken. The people thinking that the Portuguese would march on the city began to run away carrying their valuables and the Governor's wife herself mounted

on an elephant and took to flight. The Portuguese, however, did not follow up their victory though they could easily have taken possession of the fort of Chittagong as there was nobody to defend it.

The king of Arakan revenged himself on the Portuguese who were in his kingdom. He sacked their homes and imprisoned men, women and children in his fortress and subjected them to many cruelties. A treaty was, however, patched up between the Portuguese and the king of Arakan and peace was restored for a time.

The Portuguese were now becoming very powerful in East Bengal and Burma. The king of Arakan dreading that the Portuguese might oust him from his kingdom decided to attack Sandwip a second time and sent an enormous fleet of a thousand sails consisting mostly of frigates, catures (a light rowing vessel from Arabic Kativeh a small craft) and Cosses against Carvalho. Carvalho with 16 vessels destroyed the fleet of the Arakan king. Nearly 2030 Arakanese were killed and 130 of their ships destroyed while the Portuguese are said to have lost only 6 men. The Arakan king was very annoyed at this defeat and punished his captains by forcing them to put on women's clothes. Though the Portuguese had won a brilliant victory their ships were badly damaged. Carvalho soon found out that he could not withstand another attack from the king of Arakan whose resources were unlimited. The Portuguese with their native converts, therefore, evacuated Sandwip and transported all their possession to Sripur, Bakia, Chandecan (Jessore) whereupon the king of Arakan became master of it. Carvalho stayed with 30 frigates at Sripur, the seat of Kedar Ray. His career was brought to a tragic end by the treachery of Pratapaditya, king of Chandecan. This unscrupulous chieftain desired to make friends with the king of Arakan, who after taking possession of Sandwip and conquering the principality of Bakia, had become very powerful and menaced Chandecan. As he knew that nothing would please the king of Arakan more than the death of Carvalho he invited the latter to his court at Chandecan and had him treacherously murdered. Thus ended the career of Carvalho who had won a legendary reputation for being a very brave and intrepid sea captain.

Brito-Nicote, a Portuguese commander, who had occupied some parts of Burma formed the plan of taking possession of Dianga in 1607. As he exercised great influence over the Arakan king he sent his son with a fleet asking the king to grant him that port. The king suspecting that Nicote wished to deprive him of the whole of his kingdom invited Nicote's son and his men to his court and put them all to the sword. A general massacre of the Portuguese in that kingdom was ordered and about 600 Portuguese who were peacefully residing in Dianga were murdered in cold blood. The king of Arakan at this time owned both Chittagong and Dianga and in letters patent granted to the Portuguese fathers styled himself "the highest and the most powerful king of Arakan, of Chacomas and of Bengala".

From the massacre by the Arakan king in 1607 about 10 Portuguese escaped with their ships and one of them was Sebastian Gonsalves. Tibau who was destined not only to revenge this grim massacre but also to play an important part in the history of East Bengal. In 1609 dispute arose between the heir apparent of Arakan and his brother Anaporan. The prince actually fought a battle against his brother, who, being defeated, fled to Gonsalves, ruler of Sandwip. Gonsalves promised to succour him and kept his daughter as a hostage. He and Anaporan combining their armies marched against the king of Arakan but as the latter came with an army of 80000 men and 700 fighting elephants, they returned to Sandwip. In the sea fight, however, Gonsalves's brother Antonio captured 100 sails of the enemy with only 5 vessels on his side. Anaporan brought over to Sandwip his wife, children and all his treasure. Gonsalves married Anaporan's daughter. Shortly after Anaporan died and as Gonsalves seized his treasure it was suspected he caused his death. The Portuguese took the son of Anaporan who was 8 years old and a minor daughter to Hughli. In 1614 Meng Soa Pya, son of Nandabayon, king- of Pegu, succeeded Anaporan as governor of Chittagong. In, 1630 for war service against the Mughal he was given the title of Bohmong, This service was rendered during the Arakanese raid up the Meghna which just failed to reach Dacca.⁹

The Mughals since the death, of Daud Khan in 1575 were in possession of Bengal and had over thrown the Bhuiyans by 1612. They were now planning the conquest of Bhulua. As this place was close to Sandwip, Gonsalves and the king of Arakan, thinking that the Mughals would be a danger to their kingdoms, forgot their enmity and entered, into a mutual agreement to combat them. They planned in 1614 to invade. Bengal the Portuguese in a fleet by sea, and the king of Arakan, Meng Khamaung, with an army by land. The king of Arakan entrusted the whole of his fleet to Gonsalves keeping his nephew as hostage. During these negotiations Gonsalves gave back the widow of Anaporan who afterwards married the governor of Chittagong. The king of Arakan and the Portuguese attacked in. 1614-15 the Mughals and drove them out of the principality of Bhulua and took Lakhipur, while Gonsalves barred their advance from the sea.

In 1616 Quasim Khan, Subhadar of Bengal, launched an offensive against the Raja of Arakan with Chittagong as first objective. He himself advanced to Bhulua (February, 1616), whence he despatched Abdun Nabi with a force of 5000 cavalry, 5000 musketeers, 200 war elephants and a fleet of 1000 war boats towards Chittagong. The Arakan king, Meng Khamaung (Hussein Shah) decided to check their advance by making a fort at Katghar, a strategic point about 20 miles north west of Chittagong (a village 2 miles south of Barabakunda). He sent his chief officer Karamgiri with a force of 100,000 infantry besides 400 elephants and 1000 war boats to complete the fort and hold it. He personally started from his capital for the defence of his stronghold of Chittagong with an army of 300,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry, besides a large number of elephants and war boats. Informed by spies that the new fort was not yet complete and that the garrison in the fort of Chittagong was also very small as the Arakan king had not yet reached with his force, Abd-un-Nabi hastened to Katghar leaving behind Sarbad Khan and Shaik Kamal to make a fort and hold it for the purpose of keeping up communication and food supply to the invading army, and delivered a vigorous assault on the unfinished fort in the early hours of the morning. The Arakanese were taken by surprise and though they greeted the Mughals with a heavy shower of shells, bullets, arrows, bombs and stones the latter quickly overcame the resistance and pressed the garrison, so hard that the fall of the fort seemed imminent. At this stage, the Mughal commander, owing to his want of experience and judgment, was easily induced by some of his officers to suspend hostilities for the day, and this single mistake turned the tide of the whole campaign.

When the attack was resumed next morning, the situation had entirely changed. The garrison had recovered from the shock of the sudden assault and offered such a determined resistance that the idea of storming the fort had to be abandoned, and a siege decided on. But the siege operations dragged on and the besiegers themselves were soon reduced to the position of the besieged as a result of the activity of the commandant of the enemy fort. At the threat to the food supply of the main army, the Mughal commander raised the siege and retreated towards Dacca, leaving behind his heavy artillery and destroying about 500 mds. of gun powder (May, 1616). The Imperial army had halted at Nizampur which had been in possession of the Arakanese. The local Zaminder surrendered to the Mughal commander. But after the departure of the Mughal army, the pargana with a revenue of Rs. 600/- was re-occupied by the Mughls.

In March, 1621 Ibrahim Khan launched his long deferred Arakan campaign with Chittagong as his objective from his new base at Tipperah. The route was more direct no doubt but it lay through a hilly region clad with dense forests, with a bad climate, and involving considerable difficulties in regard to transport and food supply. Ibrahim Khan was ill-advised to adopt this new route and the expedition failed, primarily because of his initial mistake in regard to the choice of the route. Leaving the fleet in the big Feni river, the viceroy proceeded with the land army slowly along the new route to Chittagong, clearing the forest as he passed by. In some places the forest was so thick that even the horses and the elephants could not move without great difficulty. The scarcity of food and pestilence in his camp forced Ibrahim Khan to withdraw with the ranks much depleted and the morale of the army much shaken. In 1625 the twelve chiefs who ruled Chittagong on behalf of the Magh governor rebelled at the instigation of the Mughal viceroy. Thiri Thudamma marched with his army, the navy following him, and crushed the rebellion. He raided Bhulua during this campaign.¹⁰ He then proceeded unopposed to Khizirpur along the Dulai to the outskirts of Dacca, defeated the Mughal officers who had at last come out to face them, entered the city and sacked it and retired with a large booty and a number of captives. At this time Mahabat Khan was the governor of Bengal but the administration of Bengal was in charge of Khanzad Khan, son of Mahabat Khan, a lazy, pleasure-seeking king youth. This was the last raid by Mughls during the reign of Jahangir. Though Mirza Bagis, the Bhulua banadar had been¹¹ supplied with 700 cavalry and 300 war boats he could not check the Arakan force. During the Arakan occupation Chittagong there was close contact between the peoples of Chittagong and Arakan. A large number of Muslim noblemen who had left Gaur after its fall had gone to Arakan and settled in the capital. They were the chief courtiers of the Arakan king whose court followed Muslim manners and customs. The Muslim courtiers of the Arakan king were great patrons of Bengali literature. Poets like Daulat Qadi and Alawal flourished at Arakan during this period and received patronage from Syed Musa, Magan Thakur and others. Magan Thakur, who practically exercised the powers of a chief minister, was himself a poet.

Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) had rebelled against his father and occupied Dacca after killing Ibrahim Khan, the subahdar in 1624. At this time Thiri Thudamma (1622-38) sent his envoy to Dacca with rare gifts worth rupees one lac as peshkash. The Arakan raja through his envoy swore loyalty to the prince. The prince sent a valuable dress of honour with many precious gifts to the Arakan king and issued a farman confirming the sovereignty of his territory which then included Chittagong.

An event occurred in 1638 which gave an additional impetus to the game of piracy in its most frightful form. Mangat Ray or Mukut Ray, governor of Chittagong, rebelled against the king of Arakan. After an unsuccessful attempt to raid Arakan he fled to Bengal for safety along with his leading partisans. He marched towards Bhulua and wrote to the Imperial thanadar of the frontier post of Jugdia for protection from the pursuing Magh fleet. By Islam Khan's command the thanadar of Jugdia drove away by gun fire 200 Magh jalias which were obstructing Mangat Rai and ferried him over the Feni river into Mughal territory. Taking advantage of the confusion of civil war in Chittagong over 10,000 people of Bengal who were held in slavery there by the Feringhis escaped to their home land. The Feringhi settlers and pirates of Chittagong who had backed Mangat Rai in his abortive rising, now abandoned that city in fear of the Magh king's vengeance. Most of them migrated to the Portuguese possessions and a few came over to the Mughals with their families and boats. In course of time most of the latter embraced Islam and became merged in the local population.

Mangat Rgi's family and supporters with 14 elephants and nearly 9000 men (both Arakanese and Tailang) reached Dacca and were welcomed and provided for by the Subahdar. To revenge on the Bengal kingdom, the king of Arakan made friends with the Portuguese adventurers, took them into his service, paid them high salaries and settled them in Dianga. With their help he built vessels large enough, to carry cannons. Thus equipped he began ravaging and laying waste the Mughal territory and launched a naval attack which was repulsed by Islam Khan.¹² These cruel practices of the Arakanese and the Portuguese to which the people of Bengal were subjected continued till 1666 when Shaista Khan conquered Chittagong and broke their power forever.

When the luckless prince Shah Shuja was defeated by Mir Jumla, he proceeded from Chittagong by road to Arakan for shelter. On his way to Arakan he is said to have visited Govinda Manikya, the exiled king of Tripura in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Govinda Manikya gave him a warm reception and helped him as far as he could in the circumstances, Shnja was so pleased with the reception that he presented Govinda Msnikya with a diamond ring and a Neemcha sword as token of gratitude. There is a mosque called after Shaja in Comilla. According to tradition Shuja conquered Coniilla and built this mosque as memento of his conquest. It is said that the village Shuja-nagar in Tipperah contained the property given in waqf for the maintenance of this mosque. The place in Cox's Bazar subdivision where Shuja had said his Eidul Fitr prayers in 1660 during his ill-fated journey is known as Idgaown. The high road from Daudkandi in Tipperah district to Arakan through Chittagong is still known as Shah Shuja's Road. Presumably, it was built during Shah Shuja's viceroyalty in Bengal. There are a number of mosques on the side of the road from Daudkandi to Comilla which are said to have been built by the camp followers of Shah Shuja. Shah Shuja requested the king of Arakan to give him shelter and provide ships so that he could go to Mecca.

The king Sandathudamma (1652-84) consented and Shuja with his family and followers were brought to Mrouhaung, the capital city of Arakan, in Portuguese gellases from Teknaf. He arrived at Mrohaung on 26th August, 1660 and was favourably received by the king who assigned him a residence near the city. Shuja kept aloof from the king repelled by his table manners. The Arakanese had never seen the like of his treasure, six or eight camel loads of gold and jewels; moreover the Mughals offered large sums for his extradition. Eight months went by, yet the king never provided the ships he had promised. Finally, he asked for Shuja's eldest daughter, and Shuja, a blue-blooded Mughal of the Imperial house, felt that his cup of bitterness was full. He was helpless and could not get away. Shah Shuja, realising his peril, made a desperate attempt to escape from the country. But his plans miscarried, and when the populace got upon his followers the latter ran amok and set fire to a large part of the city before they were rounded up and massacred. It was given out that Shah Shuja had attempted to seize the place. The king, it was said, had been dissuaded by his mother from having him killed. She argued that killing princes was a dangerous sport for which his own subjects might acquire a taste. But on 7-2-1661 Shah Shuja's residence was attacked and there was another massacre. Shah Shuja was never seen again. It was rumoured that he had fled to the hills with his sons but had been caught and put to death. The chief of the Dutch factory at Mrohang reported (the prince Shah Shuja is believed, though with no certainty, to have perished in the first fury, but his body was made unrecognisable by the grandees in order the better to be able to deck their persons with the costly jewels he wore. His three sons, together with his wives and daughters, have been taken; the wives and daughters have been brought to the King's palace and the sons after being imprisoned for some time, have been released and permitted to live in a little house. Every day the gold and silver which the Arakanese have taken, are brought into the King's treasury to be melted down.')

As soon as Mir Jumla heard through the Dutch factory at Dacca of Shah Shuja's murder he commanded a Dutch ship to carry an envoy to Mrohaung with a peremptory demand for the surrender of Shah Shuja's children. It was refused

and the king protested to Batavia against the use of Dutch ship by a Mughal envoy. In July 1663 a desperate attempt to rescue the three captive princes failed. Thereupon the king burnt his boats 'by having them beheaded and slaughtering a large number of Bengalees and Moslems at the capital. A mournful ballad about the tragic life of the daughter of Shuja is current in Chitta-gong and Arakan and has been collected in East Bengal Ballads published by the Calcutta University.

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