

### PERSIAN INVASION

The ruling Achaemenian Dynasty of Persia was constantly striving to expand its borders. The first Achaemenian ruler, Cyrus, had already captured Babylon, Media and Assyria and made an unsuccessful attempt to invade India too. He could not capture the Hindukush and Gandhara regions, but had incurred a heavy defeat at Jeddrosia. He was succeeded by Cambyses, the second ruler of this dynasty, who had little interest in India and, therefore, carried on his Egyptian conquest ignoring India. During the time of the third emperor of Persia, Darius (522-486 BC), the Magadha Empire has grown bigger after the north-western Indian kingdoms were merged into it. The regions of Afghanistan, Gandhara and Baluchistan (Indus), which now were under the Magadha rule, were the first to be attacked by the Persian rulers. The small administrators and rulers of these regions were in close contact with the Persian rulers and they helped Darius to attack these pockets of the Magadha Empire. Darius divided the entire empire into 24 provinces (satraps), with the captured Indian regions of Gandhara and Indus forming his 24th province. He also recruited many Indian soldiers into his army and gave them high rank. He was succeeded by his son, Xerxes (486-465 BC), who came to throne at an age of 18 in 486 BC. He was a great warrior and was helped greatly by his Indian soldiers during his war with the Greeks. However, after him, the Persian Empire disintegrated by the end of fourth century BC and the Indian province became independent of Persia. But India was then divided into several small kingdoms which were not united. They had mutual disregard and grudges against each other and so fought among themselves. The major kingdoms were the

Malwas, the Gandharas, the Kshudrakas, the kings of Jhelum and Ravi (Porus), Taxila (Ambi) and Abhisara. The state of India was then a natural target for possible invasions from formidable foreign empires like Macedonia and after the conquest of Bactria, Alexander invaded India through the Hindukush Mountains.

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