



Controversy Over Jaisalmer as Part of Maratha Empire

Why in News?

A historical controversy has erupted following a **claim in the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training)** textbook where Jaisalmer is depicted as part of the [Maratha Empire](#).



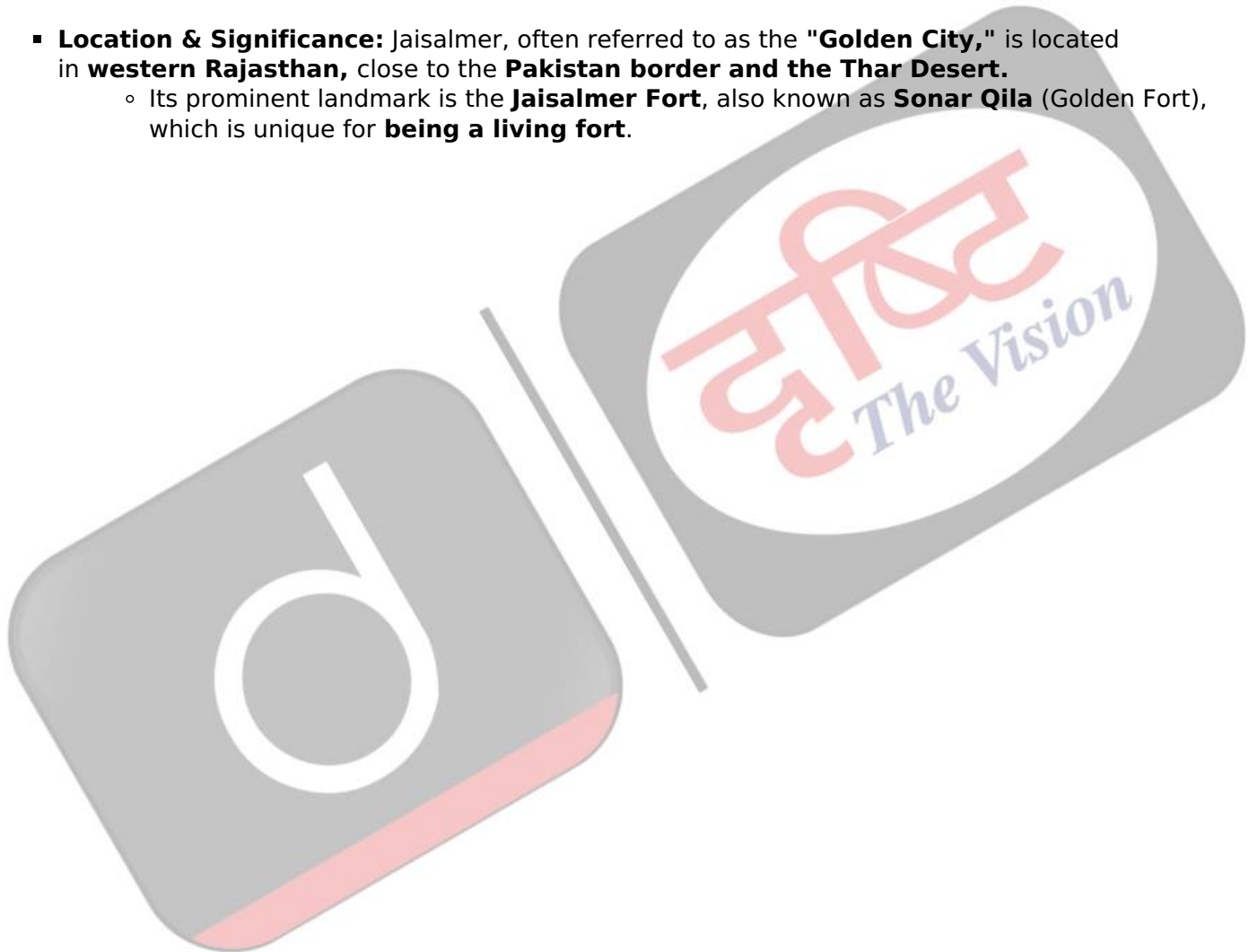


Historians' Arguments on Maratha Relations with Jaisalmer

- **Rajput's Arguments:** The **royal family of Jaisalmer, led by Chaitanya Raj Singh, the 44th Maharawal of Jaisalmer**, has strongly objected to this portrayal, calling it a grave historical error and highlighting that there is **no evidence of Maratha influence in Jaisalmer**—a region that remained independent throughout various invasions, including those by the Mughals and the British.
 - Historical accounts reveal that the region's Rajput rulers defended their sovereignty, and there was **no Maratha intervention or taxation in Jaisalmer**.
- **Maratha's Arguments:** **Maratha historians** cite the **1752 Ahadnama** (a pact between Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah Bahadur and Maratha commanders Malharrao Holkar and Mahadji Shinde) and argue that, while the **Marathas did not have direct day-to-day control, Rajput states**, including Jaisalmer, were **made to pay [chauth and sardeshmukhi taxes](#)**.
 - Pandurang Balkawade (historian from Pune) points to Peshwa administration records showing regular collection of **chauth from the Ajmer (Mewar) region**.

Jaisalmer

- **Location & Significance:** Jaisalmer, often referred to as the "**Golden City**," is located in **western Rajasthan**, close to the **Pakistan border and the Thar Desert**.
 - Its prominent landmark is the **Jaisalmer Fort**, also known as **Sonar Qila** (Golden Fort), which is unique for **being a living fort**.





- **Historical Background:** Jaisalmer was founded in **1156** by **Rawal Jaisal**, a **descendant of the Yaduvanshi clan**. After being passed over for the throne of Lodurva, Jaisal sought a new capital, guided by the prophecy of sage Eesul (local hermit).
- **Cultural Heritage:** Jaisalmer's **cultural and architectural beauty** is shaped by its **Rajput heritage**, with influences from the **Bhati Rajputs**.
- **Geological Significance:** The **Wood Fossil Park (Aakal)** in **Jaisalmer** shows fossils from the **Thar Desert** for a glimpse into geological history, dating back 180 million years.
- **Post-Independence:** **Jaisalmer State** signed the [Instrument of Accession](#) with India on **7th April 1949**, merging with the Indian Union.

Marathas

- **Origin & Language:** The Marathas (speak **Marathi** language) are native to the Deccan Plateau, mainly present-day Maharashtra.
- **Shivaji Maharaj & the Rise of Maratha Power:**

- **Born (1630):** Shivaji, from the Bhonsle clan, aimed to establish **Swarājya** (sovereignty).
- **Military Campaigns:** At 16, he began capturing forts in the Pune region, growing his influence.
 - Utilized guerrilla tactics against the Bijapur Sultanate, including defeating General Afzal Khan.
- After Shivaji's death, Sambhaji (**Shivaji's son**) became the Chhatrapati. He was **captured and executed by Aurangzeb**.
- **Maratha Structural Transformation:**
 - **Decentralization:** After Shivaji's death, the Maratha power became more decentralized, with the **Peshwa gaining influence**.
 - **Expansion:** The **Marathas expanded across India**, briefly **controlling parts of Lahore, Attock, and Peshawar**.

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