

Royal Family of the Princely State of Dir: From Heights of Glory to Shadows of Decline



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Abstract: *This research paper deals with the rise and fall of the Royal Family of the Princely State of Dir, founded by an Akhun Khel spiritual and religious figure Mullah Ilyas popularly known as Akhun Ilyas Baba. His decedents (Mullah Ismail, Khan Ghulam Khan, Khan Zafar Khan, Khan Qasim Khan, Khan Ghazan Khan, Khan Rahmat Ullah Khan and Khan Sharif Khan) kept strong standing army and brought the surrounding areas under their sway and ruled over the Khanate of Dir till 1890. In 1890, Umra Khan, a strong ruler of Jandol dethroned Khan Sharif Khan and annexed the Khanate of Dir to the Khanate of Jandol. In 1895, Sharif Khan was restored to the throne of Dir with the help of British government as a result of Chitral relief campaign. He was knitted as a first Nawab of Dir in 1897 and was succeeded by his son Aurangzeb Khan in 1904 who faced both internal and external threats. Nawab Shah Jehan (1925-1960), the successor of Aurangzeb Khan ruled over the state of Dir in a very autocratic manner and did not allow educational and health facilities to his subjects. Different khans, maliks, his brother Alamzeb Khan and son Muhammad Nawaz Khan revolted against the policies of Shah Jehan Khan. Taking notice of his cruel policies, the government of Pakistan deposed Nawab Shah Jehan Khan in 1959 and nominated his son Shah Kisrau Khan as a nominal Nawab of the state. In 1969, the state was merged into Pakistan and became a district in 1970.*

Keywords: Princely state of Dir, Akhun Ilyas Baba, Khanate of Dir, Royal Family, Khan Rahmat Ullah Khan, Umra Khan of Jandol, Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan, Siege of Chitral, Chitral Relief Force, Nawab Aurangzeb Khan, Nawab Shah Jehan.

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Introduction:

Mullah Ilyas, commonly known as Akhun Ilyas Baba, a religious and spiritual figure of Payenda Khel tribe of Kohan, Nehag Dara, Dir laid the foundation of the Khanate of Dir in seventeenth century. By the dint of his qualities of both head and heart, he had a great respect and position among his clan. Slowly and gradually his fame and popularity spread far and wide and got a dominant political power in the area. His successors kept strong standing army by which they captured the surrounding areas and established the Khanate of Dir on strong footings and shifted the headquarter of the principality from Kohan to Bibyawar and from where they fought against the infidels and liberated Dir from their clutches. The Khanate of Dir saw many ups and downs for three hundred years. The descendants of Mullah Ilyas ruled over Dir as Khans till 1890. Umra Khan, the strong and powerful ruler of the neighboring Khanate of Jandol dethroned Khan Sharif Khan and annexed Dir with Jandol. Sharif Khan was put on exile who took shelter with Malik Taj Nur Khan, the chief of Mingora. Intoxicated with the wines of power and expansionism, Umra Khan got himself involved in the war of succession of Chitral and laid siege to the fort of Chitral which led the British government to dispatch Chitral Relief Force to free the besiegers. Chitral Relief Force launched an aggressive operation against Umra Khan under the command of Lieutenant General Robert Low and deposed him from power. Sharif Khan with the support of British government was restored to power and was knitted with the title of first Nawab of Dir in a coronation ceremony held at Chakdara in 1897 who ruled the state of Dir till his death in 1904. He was succeeded by his son Nawab Aurangzeb Khan who faced both internal and external formidable foes during his rule. Muhammad Shah Jehan Khan took over the rein of the state in 1925 in a very dramatic condition and ruled over the state with harsh and ironic policies. Taking notice of his maltreatment meted out against his subjects, the government of General Muhammad Ayub Khan deposed Nawab Shah Jehan in 1959 and was succeeded by his son Nawab Muhammad Shah Kisrau Khan with nominal powers. In 1969, Nawab Muhammad Shah Kisrau Khan was also removed and the princely state of Dir was annexed with Pakistan and became a district in 1970.

Establishment of Khanism in Dir (1600-1895)

Mulla Ilyas Khan, popularly known as Akhun Baba, the founder of the Khanate of Dir, was born in 1626 in a small village of Kohan, situated at Nehag Dara at the house of Toor Khan Baba (Yusufi, 1960). At the age of 14 years, his father sent him to India with Mian Noor of Khal to quench his thirst of religious education. He reached Delhi where he became a disciple of Hazrat Banoor Sahib, a renowned scholar and spiritual leader of his time (Shahid, 2010). As the number of his followers increased day by day, and reached 125000 in number, the Mughal ruler Shah Jehan, vowed Hazrat Banoor Sahib a danger to his throne, so he put him on exile and along with his followers including Ilyas and Mian Noor and left for Makkah (Shahid, 2010). Once busy in worship (Ibadat), Hazrat Banoor called 3 times Mian Noor “**O Mian Noor, O Mian Noor, O Mian Noor** come to me. But unfortunately, he was not present at that time. Akhun Ilyas rashly came and stood with respect and said to his mentor, Mian Noor is absent but Akhun is present. He kept his hand on his back gave him a congratulation and told him that your descendants will be the rulers of your area and the family of Mian Noor will be your ministers (Yusufi, 1960). It is worth mentioning here that Akhundzadgon of Khal remained on prominent positions with most rulers of Dir.

In 1640, while returning from Mecca, the *Murshid* ordered him to start journey towards your parental area and instructed him that at night before going to bed, burn a plant (Tarooky) and whenever you wake up in the morning and see a spark of fire in it, this place would be the ruling seat of your descendants and burn another plant, where a spark live in it, there will be your tomb, shrine (Dirvi, 2013). He continued his journey in accordance to the instructions of his mentor but could not find his destination and after several days of journey, he finally reached a place called "Kalshu" a village opposite to the present Royal Darbar. After a tedious journey, he decided to spend the night under the open sky. He lit a fire at night and when he woke up in the morning, he saw a spark in the fire. It was probably a moment of great joy for him because he had suffered a lot to get that spark. Akhun collected stones and erected walls around this place as a sign of identification (Shahid, 2010). Having found this place, he now went around burning another plant for his shrine. Finally, he found this place near Lajbok Pass. After finding both of his desired destinations, Akhun reached his village Nehag Dara (Kohan) where he started preaching of Islam among the people (Shahid, 2010).

Akhun used to stay in a cell at night and engage in worship and during the day, he used to teach people religious knowledge and soon gained fame in the area and emerged as a renowned scholar. Apart from religious knowledge, people used to bring patients along with them and request prayers for the healing of the patients(Haq, 2014). In case of settlement of the dispute, the people presented him with Seri (land), cash, cattle and goods. This was the reason that Akhun had gathered a lot of property, grain and livestock. At the end of his mortal life, he took his younger son Abdullah and settled at Lajbok where he breathed his last in 1676 and buried there according to his will. It is to be mentioned here that Lajbok valley was also given to him as a Seri(Kakar, 2006b).

Upon the death of Akhun Ilyas in 1676, his eldest son Mullah Ismail took over his father's mace. He was an eminent scholar in religious education and the people used to come to him from far flung areas to find solution to their problems. He had migrated from Kohan to Bibyaware with his wealth and possessions where he passed away in 1752. He was buried in a grave at Bibyaware which is famous with the name of Loye Baba Adera(Sultana, 2024).

Mullah Ismail was succeeded by his son, Khan Ghulam Khan who had inherited a lot of property and wealth from his grandfather Akhun and father Ismail, so he became interested in worldly possessions and governance instead of spiritualism. He established a body of advisors, kept standing army and a large number of servants. He fought against the local sardars and brought them to subjugation. He also waged jihad against the Hindus. He laid the foundation of Khanate at Bibyaware. He is known as the first ruler of the royal family, famous with the name of Khan of Bibyaware (Ali, & Sultana, 2024).

Khan Ghulam Khan died in 1804 and was succeeded by his son Khan Zafar Khan who further strengthened his military and kept a strong standing army and brought the surrounding areas under his sway(Khan, 2016). After strengthening his position among the tribes, he diverted his attention towards the Kohistani Kafirs(heathens) who ruled the area stretching from Dir to the mid of Chitral and imposed a crushing defeat on them with the support of Sultan Khel and Payenda Khel tribes (Anonymous, 2020). He destroyed his fort at Dir and raised a royal fort on the same place which is still existed and is considered to be the symbol of the royal family. He shifted his capital from Bibyaware to Dir khass and declared Dir Khass as the capital of the Khanate of Dir.

Khan Ghulam Khan ruled over the Khanate of Dir for ten years and died in 1814. He was buried at Bibyawar according to his will and his tomb is famous with the name of Warooky Baba. He left four sons behind him namely, Qasim Khan, Naseem Khan, Zahir Shah Khan and Baku Khan (Dirvi,2013).

Khan Qasim Khan ascended the throne of Dir in 1814. Of the Khans of Dir, the name of Qasim Khan stands out prominently as a great conqueror, a consummate, great worrier and able administrator who expanded the frontiers of his empire up to Asmar, Kunar (Afghanistan) and Skhakot, Mardan (Shahid, 2010). He became a strong opponent for his neighboring territories. He had fixed his eyes on the state of Chitral. The ruler of Chitral, Mehtre Chitral Shah Fazil popularly known as Kator-2 in the political history of Chitral soon realized the gravity of the situation and made him his son-in-law to avoid the possible fall of Chitral into the hands of Qasim Khan (Khanam, 2016). He had two wives; from the first wife he had three sons, Muhammad Saeed Khan, Saad Ullah Khan and Azad Khan while Khan Ghazan Khan was the grandson of Mehtre Chitral. Khan Qasim had a great love and affection for his youngest son, Khan Ghazan Khan. Due to which his other step brothers became enemies of Ghazan Khan under the fear that their father will make him crown prince. They instigated one of their brothers Azad Khan who killed his father Khan Qasim Khan. He was buried at Dir and his tomb is popularly known as Khan Shaheed Adera (Dirvi, 2013).

After the assassination of Khan Qasim Khan, a civil broke out among his sons for the accession to the throne of Dir. The royal court of Dir and the tribal chieftains divided into different groups and each group supported its own Khan for the throne (Shahid, 2013). Whenever a Khan established a government, the other brothers were demolishing his government. There was an unprecedented stress and storm in the state. Thirteen years long civil war shackled the very foundations of the state and the people of state got tired of it (Dirvi, 2013). The local Jirga comprised of the chiefs of Akhunkhel, Payenda Khel and Akhundzadgon of Khal was sent to Mehter Chitral Mohtaram Shah, known as Katoor Sani and invited him to attack on Dir. The Jirga ensured him their full support. He sent his nephew and son-in-law Khan Ghazan Khan (who was living in the house of his maternal grandfather after the assassination of his father) at the head of a large number of soldiers (Haq, 2014). He attacked on his step brothers with the help of his father-in-law. Muhammad Saeed Khan was beheaded in

the battlefield while Saad Khan and Azad Khan fled to Bajaur. Thus, at the age of 17 years, Khan Ghazan Khan captured the throne of Dir and put an end to the thirteen years long civil war and disturbance(Haq, 2014). After restoration of peace at home, Khan Ghazan Khan launched many expeditions to expand the frontiers of his empire and brought many areas up to Sakhkot under his suzerainty. He wanted further advancement beyond Sakhkot but the Yousafzai and Mandar tribes came to the rescue of their brother tribes and thus his further advancement was halted. Thus, his state remained till Skhakot, Mardan(Shahid, 2010). He was a strong opponent of British raj in India and sent 12000 contingents under the command of his son Khan Rahmat Ullah who took part in Ambala expedition in 1863. Rahmat Ullah Khan showed great feats of bravery and warship in the course of war but the mujaheddin lost war to the British(Khan, 2021).

Khan Ghazan Khan deserves a prominent position in the history of the princely state of Dir. When he ascended the throne, the dignity of the state had withered away and the Khanate of Dir faced with serious danger due to the war of accession among his brothers (Shahid, 2010). Out of the chaotic situation of the state, Ghazan Khan restored law and order situation and the people welcomed the new regime cheerfully. In the political history of the royal family of Dir, 46 years rule of Ghazan Khan is dubbed as the golden period of Dir (Dirvi, 2013). He died in 1868 and left ten sons behind him from three wives namely;

- Jamdad Khan Rahmatullah Khan Ajabullah Khan
- Habibullah Khan Azizullah Khan Ibrahim Khan
- Khuwaja Muhammad Khan Jumaa Khan Hamidullah Khan
- Sulatan e Mehmood Khan(Gul, n.d.)

The death of Ghazan Khan was once again followed by civil war which shuttered the very foundation of the Khanate of Dir. Jamdad Khan captured the throne by the force of sword but he could not prove himself to be an efficient ruler(Shahid, 2010). So, his younger brother Khan Rahmat Ullah Khan marched against Jamdad Khan and took over the government. On his accession, he found himself confronted with a difficult situation. Rahmat Ullah Khan initially appointed his elder son, Muhammad Sharif Khan, as his successor(Badshah-i-Rome & Panaizai). But, due to differences between father and son, Rahmat Ullah Khan decided to designate another son, Jamroz Khan, as his heir-apparent. His elder son Khan Sharif Khan stood on an open revolt against his

father. Rahmat Ullah Khan tried to reconcile the situation but in vain. So, eventually he exiled Sharif Khan in 1882 who went to Barwa where he took asylum in the court of Umra Khan, who was a strong ruler of the Khanate of Jandol(Asar., n.d.). Sharif Khan was warmly welcomed at the court of Umra Khan. As Umra Khan had old animosity with Rahmat Ullah Khan, because the latter had helped his brother Mir Hassan Khan, the Khan of Munda against him in the battle of Mayar in which the forces of Umra Khan had defeated(Asar., n.d.).

After his defeat at Mayar, Umra Khan promptly focused on reorganizing his army along modern lines, equipping them with contemporary weapons (Halim, 1989). In a short time, he acquired rifles and organized a well-paid and well-drilled infantry. Additionally, he raised a small cavalry unit, the first of its kind in Swat and Bajaur(Badshah-i-Rome & Panaizai). To bolster this effort, two former British servicemen, Aman Malik and Gul Wali Khan, played pivotal role in structuring and organizing the army(Fahim, 1977). Umra Khan also established a factory at Barwa, led by Mistri Ghulam Rasul, where two cannons and numerous rifles were produced. He entrusted the command of his army to his efficient cousin, Abdul Majid Khan. Despite these advancements, the army's weapons in both quantity and quality were insufficient to face powerful adversaries such as the local Khans, the Amir of Afghanistan, and the British(Shafique & Iqbal, 2023). To address this gap, Umra Khan sought to acquire more arms and ammunition while simultaneously earning the trust of the British. During this period, Russian outposts had reached the Pamir region, raising British concerns about the defense of their northwest frontier(Kakar, 2006b). The border between Afghanistan and British India had not yet been demarcated, and the Amir of Afghanistan wielded influence over the Khans of Dir, Swat, and Bajaur. The British, however, distrusted the Amir due to his book advocating Jihad and his history of inciting tribal unrest(Huttenback, 1970). They sought a reliable ally in the Malakand region who could control the tribes and offer assistance in times of need. Umra Khan caught the attention of the British after his victory at Sadbar Kalay in 1881, where he defeated the combined forces of the Khan of Dir, Nawagai, and Asmar. Recognizing his potential as a regional ally, the British saw him as someone who could advance their interests if supported. Following the battle, Umra Khan recognized the urgent need for arms and ammunition(Rehman, 2016). To this end, he initiated contact with the British by sending a delegation to the Chief Commissioner of Peshawar. The British, already

interested in fostering a partnership, readily accepted his offer of friendship and formally recognized the state of Jandol. The British assured Umra Khan of their full cooperation. The British government guaranteed the safety of his territory, while Umra Khan expressed his eagerness to obtain arms and ammunition (Gillett, 2001).

In 1882, the first confrontation between Umra Khan and the Khan of Dir unfolded when Umra Khan's forces, led by his commander-in-chief Abdul Majid Khan and Khan Sharif Khan, the estranged son of Rahmat Ullah Khan, launched an attack on Khazana, Walai Kandao, and Khema (Shahid, 2010). The ensuing battle was intense, resulting in the decisive defeat of the Khan of Dir's forces. Following this victory, Umra Khan annexed these territories into his state, marking a significant setback for Rahmat Ullah Khan. On hearing this Rahmat Ullah Khan dispatched a fresh enforcement to recapture these occupied areas but his endeavour ended in smoke (Asar., n.d.).

After capturing power, Mian Gul Abdul Hanan of Swat began to liberate the occupied territories of Swat from the Khan of Dir. Mian Gul Abdul Hanan entered into an alliance with Umra Khan against Rahmat Ullah Khan. Mian Gul crossed the Swat River at Chakdara and entered Adenzai territory in the winter of 1882 (Shahid, 2010). Upon hearing this, the Khan of Dir advanced through Talash and besieged him. When Umra Khan received the news, he marched towards Adenzai to rescue Mian Gul. A fierce battle ensued between the two forces, resulting in a decisive defeat for the Khan of Dir's forces. Umra Khan captured the territories of Adenzai and Talash, establishing posts in these areas. Notably, Umra Khan himself was wounded during the battle (Dirvi, 2013).

In 1883, after consolidating his position in the territory of Adenzai, Umra Khan marched towards the valley of Maidan via Sar Lara. At the time, Maidan was ruled by Sardar Khan, a nominee of Rahmat Ullah Khan. The valley fell into Umra Khan's hands without much resistance (Agha, 2019). However, upon learning of Maidan's fall, Rahmat Ullah Khan mobilized his forces via *Kalpani Sar* and launched a sudden attack. He defeated Umra Khan's forces and successfully liberated the valley of Maidan. The defeated forces of Umra Khan retreated to Jandol in a state of humiliation (Agha, 2019). After the humiliated defeat at Maidan, Umra Khan lived at Jandol in peace for few months and focused on building upon a strong military force. Meanwhile, Khan Sharif Khan demanded Kotakay, Khazana and Wali Kandao which he had captured from his

father, Rahmat Ullah Khan, with the help of Jandoli Laskar. On this demand, Umra Khan got angry and expelled Sharif Khan from the Khanate of Jandol(Harris, 1971). After securing his position, Umra Khan launched an attack on the fort of Balambat, which was easily captured. His forces then advanced towards Koto Kohnadair. Shahzad Khan, the Khan of Hajiabad, allied with Umra Khan, enabling him to seize this strategic position as well (Shahid, 2010). In response, Rahmat Ullah Khan mobilized heavy forces and managed to recapture the area. However, Umra Khan received reinforcements from Mian Gul Abdul Hanan of Swat, strengthening his position. The combined forces of Umra Khan dealt a decisive defeat to Rahmat Ullah Khan's troops on the battlefield of Shahjadai. Although the Khan of Dir successfully reclaimed the fort of Shahjadai, he recognized the growing threat posed by Umra Khan's expanding power and began seeking allies to counter it(Shafique & Iqbal, 2023).

Khan Rahmatullah Khan defeated Umra Khan in the first battle of Talash and the later failed to capture the Maidan valley. The fort of Shajadai slipped out of the hands of Umra Khan. Umra Khan was passing through a very difficult situation whenever Umra Khan conquer the fort, Rahmat Ullah Khan would take back the fort after inflicting a lot of damage on the army of Jandol(Anonymous, 2018). On the one hand, these tactics of Khan of Dir had a great impact on the military force of Umra Khan, on the other hand, the civil war was gaining momentum in Jandol as well, because Khan Dir's brother-in-law Syed Ahmad Khan was engaged in conspiracies and tactics against Umra Khan. He sought to resolve the conflict through diplomacy, proposing peace by accepting Walai Kandao as the border between the two Khanates. However, Rahmat Ullah Khan categorically rejected the offer, leaving both sides determined to settle the matter on the battlefield (Dirvi, 2013).

Mian Gul of Swat came to the court of Umra Khan and requested him to merge the areas of Talash, Adenzai and Shamozaï to the state of Swat, but Umra Khan flatly refused this demand which converted the friendship between the two rulers into animosity. Disillusioned with Umra Khan, Mian Gul sought assistance from Rahmat Ullah Khan's court, leading to a new alliance between the two rulers against Umra Khan(Fahim, 1977). Together, their combined forces launched attacks on Adenzai, Shawa, and Tendo Dak, ultimately defeating the forces of Jandol. However, upon hearing of the defeat, Umra Khan mobilized about 3,000 fresh reinforcements and personally led a campaign, delivering a crushing defeat to the combined forces of Dir

and Swat. Notably, Mian Gul, along with several prominent figures, was captured and taken to Jandol as prisoners of war. They were later pardoned and set free (Badshah-i-Rome & Panaizai).

When Swat and Dir's army was fighting against the forces of Umra Khan at Adenzai, Khan of Dir suddenly attacked Shajadai fort with the help of his army, where he easily vacated the fort from Umra Khan's modest army. The victorious army of Dir also conquered Kohnadair Fort, and from there Khan's forces marched over Balambat Fort and captured it (Dirvi, 2013). After the victory of Adin Zai, Umar Khan along with a part of the victorious army crossed the river Panjkora at Khazana. Umra Khan gave an impassioned speech to the defeated army which instilled a new spirit in the army. The next morning, Jandol's army launched a counter-attack and captured both Shajadai Fort and Balambat Fort. After capturing these forts, Umar Khan appointed Malik Tor Laali (Khan of Shahzadi village) as the commander of the conquered areas (Shahid, 2010). Umra Khan continued the series of invincible victories and took Timergara and Rabaat forts from Khan of Dir. From Adenzai to Timergara and on the other side from Wali Kandao to Shajadai, all these areas were forcibly included to the Khanate of Jandol. After fighting protracted wars against Umra Khan, Rahmat Ullah Khan breathed his last in 1884 and was buried at the shrine of Khan Shaheed next to his father Khan Ghazan Khan (Shahid, 2010).

The Rise of Umra Khan as a Ruler of the Khanate of Dir and Jandol

Khan Muhammad Sharif Khan captured the throne of Dir with the help of his close aids after the death of his father in 1884. The throne of Dir was not a bed of roses. As he seized power, his brothers were putting pressure on new Khan to get vacate the areas of Dir occupied by Umra Khan (W. R. Hay, 1934). On the other hand, Jamrooz Khan, heir-in-apparent was struggling to seize power from Sharif Khan. One-night Jamrooz Khan and his nephew made a murderous attack on him, but he narrowly escaped. The assailants were killed on the spot by the guards of Sharif Khan (W. R. Hay, 1934).

After consolidating his position at home, Sharif Khan demanded Umra Khan to return the areas of Dir, which had been captured during his father's reign. Umra Khan not only rejected the demand but also insisted that Sharif Khan acknowledge his overlordship (Y. Ali, Husain, & Imran, 2022). This provoked Sharif Khan, who resolved to settle the matter on the battlefield. Seizing the opportunity, he marched out of Jandol and launched an attack on the fort of Rabat. However, Sharif Khan's forces were defeated,

and the forts of Rabat and Rani fell to Umra Khan's forces. Despite this success, Umra Khan's forces suffered a defeat at Barun. Recognizing the sensitivity of the situation, Umra Khan halted further advances and withdrew to Jandol (Rehman, 2016).

From May 1885 to January 1888, Umra Khan focused on consolidating his Khanate by building a strong standing army. In early 1889, he once again unshielded his sword against his arch-rival, the Khan of Dir. Adopting a two-fold strategy, Umra Khan launched military expeditions while also inciting the rivals and opponents of Sharif Khan (Munir, 2012a). By 1889, when the situation was ripe for action, he initiated another campaign against Sharif Khan. To ensure the expedition's success, he divided his forces into two divisions: the northern infantry, led by Umra Khan himself, and the southern infantry, commanded by his brother, Muhammad Shah Khan ("Military Report on Dir, Swat and Bajaur ", 1906).

Umra Khan at the head of 4000 forces marched through Shahi Pass into Barawal valley and stationed at Janbatai. On the way, he was joined by Sardar Khan of Maidan who gave him an additional force (Shahid, 2010). A fierce battle took place between the forces of Umra Khan and Sharif Khan, ultimately resulting in a victorious outcome for Umra Khan. After Janbatai, Umra Khan proceeded toward forts of Barawal Bandai, Sundrawal and Surbat and obtained its submission without any stiff resistance. Buoyed by his victory, Umra Khan advanced to Chukytan, where he set up a camp to await Muhammad Shah Khan, the commander of the Southern infantry (Dirvi, 2003). From the south, Muhammad Shah Khan led a force of 3,000 soldiers through Wali Kandao to Shajadai, where he captured the strategic fort of Shajadai. From there, he marched toward Barun, another stronghold of Sharif Khan, defended by Malak Pamjan. Despite offering fierce resistance, Pamjan was ultimately defeated. From Barun to Bibyawar all these areas fell into the hands of Muhammad Shah Khan without any resistance (Shahid, 2010). It's worth mentioning here that most of the maliks of Sultan Khel and Payenda Khel tribes had been bribed by Umra Khan and they either remained neutral or fought against the forces of Sharif Khan (Dirvi, 2013). The Jandoli forces encountered resistance at the fort of Shamor Gar (near Bibyawar), where Sharif Khan's brothers—Amir Muhammad Khan, Hayat Ullah Khan, and Sher Muhammad Khan—had positioned their troops to confront the enemy (Shahid, 2005). Sharif Khan's forces fought valiantly, displaying extraordinary courage and bravery, but fortune did not favor them. Following a fierce conflict, the fort was taken. Muhammad Shah Khan joined

Umra Khan at Chukytan after being flushed with victories (Dirvi, 2003). Both brothers stationed at Chukytan for few days. Long before Umra Khan had focused his eyes on Sharif Khan's brother Ashraf Khan, popularly known as Panakot Khan. He bribed Ashraf Khan against his brother and promised to hand over Dir to him after victory. After consolidating his forces, Umra Khan led his army toward Dir, the final stronghold of Sharif Khan (Dirvi, 2013). Receiving additional reinforcements from Ashraf Khan, Umra Khan arrived in Dir in May 1890. A battle ensued in which Sharif Khan was decisively defeated. Humiliated, Sharif Khan fled along with his family and a few loyal servants to Nehag Dara and eventually to Mingora, where Malik Taj Nur Khan, the chief of Mingora, offered him shelter. With the capture of Dir's fort, the entirety of Sharif Khan's dominion fell under Umra Khan's control, making him the master of both Dir and Jandol. Breaking his promise to Ashraf Khan, Umra Khan appointed his brother, Muhammad Shah Khan, as Governor of Dir and returned to Jandol (Shahid, 2010).

After solidifying his hold on Dir, Umra Khan was now resolved to expand his state's borders. He captured some parts of Swat, Ranizai and extended the frontiers of his state up to Sakhakot (Shahid, 2010). Intoxicated with the wine of expansionism, Umra Khan embraced all opportunities to expand the frontiers of Jandol to four directions. He took keen interest in the political instability of the Khanate of Asmar (Asmar was a small independent principality, situated on the left bank of the Kunar River, between Jalalabad and Chitral) ruled by Shah Tamas Khan (Thomson, 1895). In 1891, Shah Tamas was assassinated by one of his servants and the rein of government was seized by his nephew Abdul Qadeer Khan at a gun point (Wheeler, 1895). Ghulam Khan, Shah Tamas Khan's brother, was dissatisfied with the existing arrangements and sought assistance from Umra Khan of Jandol, inviting him to invade Asmar and depose Abdul Qadeer Khan. Seizing the opportunity to expand his influence, Umra Khan welcomed the proposal, sent an expedition to Asmar, defeated its governor, and installed Ghulam Khan as ruler (Kakar, 2006b). In response, Amir Abd-ur-Rahman, the King of Afghanistan, dispatched an expedition led by Ghulam Haider Khan. The Afghan forces expelled Ghulam Khan and captured some parts of Jandol (Thomson, 1895). However, with support from the Mohmand and Salarzai tribes, Umra Khan recaptured these areas. Ghulam Haider reported the shifting dynamics to the King of Afghanistan, who promptly sent reinforcements to secure Asmar. A fierce battle ensued, resulting in Abdul

Majid's defeat. To check the influence of Umra Khan in the politics of Asmar, Amir of Afghanistan stationed permanent troops on the soil of Asmar(Hobday, 1898). The British government took serious notice of these activities of Umra Khan and declared it an interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan which acerbated the cordial relations of two former friends(Rehman, 2016).

During Durand Line Agreement, the British government acknowledged Afghanistan's claim over the principality of Asmar which further damaged Umra Khan's ties with the British(Kaura, 2017). He boycotted the ceremony of the Asmar Boundary Commission and put the British government in hot water by interfering in the affairs of Chitral where British officers were stationed to keep watch on the activities of Czarist Russia in the region(Rehman, 2016).

After the death of Aman-ul-Mulk, the Great Mehtar on August 30, 1892, a civil war broke out among the claimants of the throne of Chitral. His younger son Afzal-ul-Mulk captured the throne while his elder son Nizam-ul-Mulk was away from the capital(Khalil, 2020) . On hearing the death of Aman ul Mulk, his step brother Sher Afzal came from Afghanistan (He had been put on exile by Aman-ul-Muk to Afghanistan due to his conspiracies against him), killed his nephew at midnight and seized the government(Israr-ud-Din, 1979). Sher Afzal could not rule for long and was dethroned by Nizam-ul-Mulk (The elder son of Aman-ul-Mulk, who had been exiled by Afzal-ul-Mulk to Gilgit). Found himself surrounded with danger; Mehtar Nizam-ul-Mulk requested the British government to appoint an officer for his assistance. On January 25, 1893, Surgeon Major Robertson and Captain Younghusband arrived in Chitral at the head 15 Sikhs soldiers on the request of Nizam-ul-Mulk (Rahman & Ahmad, 2022).

After securing his position in the Nasrat Valley, Umra Khan turned his focus to Kafiristan. On January 2, 1894, he dispatched an expedition led by his cousin, Mir Aga Khan, but it ended in failure. Subsequent attempts by Abdul Majid Khan and Abdul Ghani Khan also proved unsuccessful(Kakar, 2006a). Frustrated by these repeated setbacks, Umra Khan personally led a force of 2,000 armed men and advanced toward Kamdesh, Gurdesh, Kohi Ghal, and Patchi Ghal. He successfully subdued the inhabitants of these villages. Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, a newly converted Muslim, was appointed as the in-charge of these conquered areas(ur Rehman, 2021). Mr. Dean, the then Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar expressed his displeasure over these

developments and warned Umra Khan to stop further advancement. Paying no heed to Dean's warning, Umra Khan advanced up to Ashret (Badshah-i-Rome & Panaizai). Meanwhile the politics of Chitral took a dramatic turn when Nizam-ul-Mulk was murdered by his younger brother, Amir-ul-Mulk at Bros during hunting expedition. Amir-ul-Mulk hurried back at once from Bros to Chitral and captured power(Thomson, 1895). He demanded recognition from Lieutenant Gurdon, the resident political officer at Chitral, but Gurdon replied that he could not recognize Amir-ul-Mulk as a Mehtar of Chitral without the consent of the government of British India. Infuriated by the reply of Gurdon, Amir-ul-Mulk put siege (Minor Siege) against the fort of Chitral where Gurdon along with other British officers were living which created great commotion in the region(Gurdon, 1934b).

Seizing power after the tragic end of Nizam ul Mulk, Amir-ul-Mulk founded himself surrounded by many formidable foes. The minor siege manifolded his troubles. To cope with the new situation, Amir-ul-Mulk wrote a letter to Umra Khan to come to his rescue(Robertson, 1905). Umra Khan who had been cherishing the idea of the occupation of Chitral, warmly welcomed the invitation. In February 1895, Umra Khan at the head of 4000 personals crossed Lawari pass in heavy snow fall in which many soldiers lost their lives. He occupied the fort at Drosh and mobilised his forces towards Chitral(Youngusband, 1896). The Chitralis opposed the presence of foreign invader on the soil of Chitral and rosed against Umra Khan. Under the para mounting pressure of his subjects, Amir-ul-Mulk wrote to Umra Khan to retire to Jandol but he refused to comply with the order. Dr. Scott Robertson, the British Political Agent at Gilgit, wrote to Umra Khan to stop further advancement and leave the territory of Chitral at once. Intoxicated with the wine of expansionism, Umra Khan disregarded the warning altogether(Harris, 1971). On February 14, 1895 Robertson sent down Captain Townshend to Gehrait with eighty sepoy and seven signalers to form a post of observation to keep vigilant eyes on the movements of Umra Khan. The situation took a new turn when Sher Afzal, escaped from Afghanistan with a number of his followers on February 23, 1895 and joined Umra Khan at Drosh(Woodburn, 1999). To turn the table in his favour, Robertson offered the Mehtership of Chitral to Sher Afzal but he had virtually become a prisoner in the hands of Umra Khan and thus the plot of Robertson failed. Umra Khan and Sher Afzal Khan resolved to confront Robertson on the battlefield. A fierce battle took place at Gherait, where Captain Campbell suffered

a humiliating defeat at the hands of Abdul Majid Khan and Sher Afzal Khan, forcing him to retreat to Chitral (Rowan-Robinson, 1906). Recognizing the growing strength of Umra Khan, Robertson dispatched 200 fresh troops under the command of Captain Whitchurch and Captain Baird to secure the fort of Chitral. On March 3, 1895, Abdul Majid Khan and Sher Afzal Khan, leading a force, advanced triumphantly to Chitral and laid siege to the fort. The siege lasted from March 3 to April 19, 1895, causing a severe food shortage among the besieged forces (Dempster, 1896). During the siege, 104 British soldiers were killed, and 62 sustained severe injuries, while the Jandoli forces also suffered significant losses. When the fall of the fort was imminent, Robertson appealed to the government of British India for military assistance (Huttenback, 1970).

In response to the letter of Dr. Scott Roberson, on March 15, 1895, a division of troops at the command of Lieutenant General Robert Low was ordered to move on Peshawar frontier by the 1st April. After a council meeting at Calcutta, Low was ordered to march straight to Chitral for the relief of besiegers (Henty, 1904). This force was named as Chitral Relief Force. According to Shah Zeb, grandson of Khan Sharif Khan, Khan Bahadur of Mardan, Khawaja Muhammad Hoti, Sarfaraz Khan, Mian Rahim Shah, Yar Muhammad Khan Badrashi and other distinguished elders were called by the Commissioner Peshawar, Mr. Dean to Peshawar. These dignitaries were instructed to search out the opponents of Umra Khan in the region. The notables unveiled that a Khan of Dir has been a refugee in Swat for five years at the hands of Jandol Khan, who had influence over the tribal community (Shahid, 2010). Mr. Dean sent the same elders to Khan Sharif Khan and sought help from him against Umra Khan. When the relief force arrived at Dargai, Sharif Khan came to Dargai and warmly welcomed the troops and the following agreement was reached between Robert Low and Sharif Khan;

1. Security of roads from Peshawar to Chitral.
2. Protection of telegraph.
3. Protection of the British posts on the road from Dir to Chitral.
4. Supply of labor for construction of roads and forts.
5. Arrangement of postage.
6. Free use of the Dir-road and its boundaries without taxation.
7. Sharif Khan was promised that if Umra Khan surrendered, he would be reinstated on the throne of Dir.

8. Before marching towards Malakand, Sharif Khan would go first to spread the rumor of Umra Khan's defeat and refrain his fellow tribes, Sultan Khel and Payenda Khel to join Umra Khan's Laskar (Shahid, 2010).

The Chitral Relief Force commanded by Low crossed Malakand Pass on 1st April, despite of stubborn resistance offered by the people of Dir, Bajaur, Swat, Malakand and forces of Umra Khan headed by his cousin Abdul Karim Khan. On hearing the defeat of Mujahadeen at Malakand pass, Umra Khan at once left Chitral for Jandol (Shafique & Iqbal, 2023). He dispatched an expedition of 4000 men under the command of his brother Muhammad Shah Khan to Chakdara. On April 7, 1895 a fierce battle was fought at Chakdara but the forces of Umra Khan could not stand before well trained British Army equipped with modern and sophisticated weapons (Dirvi, 2013). Gaining victory after victory the British forces reached *Sado* where they established their headquarter. They also constructed a bridge on river Panjkora near *Sado* to be penetrated easily into Jandol. As Umra Khan realized the impending fall of his position, he ordered Abdul Majid Khan, his commander-in-chief, to leave Chitral at once and return to Jandol with the troops. However, Abdul Majid Khan delayed the order, as Robertson had promised him that he would be made the ruler of Jandol after Umra Khan's removal (Shahid, 2010). Understanding his weak position in facing the might of the British army, Umra Khan struggled to unite the different tribes for a final stand against the British. Meanwhile, the British forces continued their advance toward Munda and reached Gosam. After facing several setbacks, Umra Khan sent a message to Robert Low for seeking negotiations (M. K. Ali, Ahmed, & Rana).

Robert Low responded by dispatching Sahibzada Sultan Ibrahim Khan to negotiate with Umra Khan. Following their brief discussion, Lieutenant Edward, a British officer held captive in Drosh, was released and delivered a message from Umra Khan (Badshah-i-Rome & Panaizai). In the message, Umra Khan questioned why British forces had invaded his territory. Low replied that the hostilities had been initiated by Umra Khan and proposed terms: if Umra Khan released all remaining prisoners, ceased hostilities, and assisted the British advance to Chitral, his territory would remain intact. Consequently, Umra Khan released Lieutenant Fowler and the other prisoners. Despite this, Low reneged on his promise and ordered his troops to advance toward Munda (Dirvi., 1989).

Upon reaching Gosam, negotiations were briefly revived. Low sent a letter to Umra Khan, inviting him to meet under conditions of goodwill and neutrality. Umra Khan responded, "I am surrounded by thousands of Mujahideen; they will not permit me to negotiate. Withdraw your army, and I will do the same, and then we shall meet in the field" (Robertson, 1898). Low rejected this proposal, intent on ending Umra Khan's rule and capturing him. With negotiations stalled, a fierce battle ensued at Gosam. Umra Khan's forces suffered a devastating defeat, losing 300 men, while the British sustained only three casualties (Munir, 2012b). After seizing Gosam on April 15, 1895, the British troops advanced toward Munda, joined by Safdar Khan's forces from Nawagai. Together, they attacked Munda Fort, where Umra Khan, with 1,000 men, resisted the assault for two days. Realizing that fighting against such a well-equipped force was futile, Umra Khan fled to Afghanistan on the night of April 17, 1895, hoping to raise an army there to reclaim his territory. Thus, the once-promising rise of Umra Khan faded, and his rule over Jandol came to an end (Badshah-i-Rome & Panaizai).

Establishment of Nawabism in Dir (1895-1969)

The British forces captured Munda fort without resistance, and the Chitral Relief Force moved toward Dir via Janbatai Pass. Robert Low installed Muhammad Sharif Khan, already in Dir, as the new ruler and conferred the title of "Duke" upon him. After Muhammad Sharif Khan's installation, the victorious British forces proceeded to Chitral via Lawari Pass, reached Chitral Fort, and relieved the British forces besieged by Umra Khan's troops. Amir-ul-Mulk was deposed and his fourteen years old brother Shuja-ul-Mulk was raised to the throne of Chitral (Gurdon, 1934a).

At the successful conclusion of the expedition against Umra Khan, Sharif Khan was restored as Khan of Dir at the Durbar, held at Chakdara, on April 13, 1895 chaired by Sir Harold Arthur Dean, the first Political Agent of the Malakand. He was honored with 400 rifle Guns, Rs. 10,000 of annual allowance and gave him Rs.25000 for standing with British government against Umra Khan (Lindholm, 1986). Britain sold the state of Jandol to Nawab Sharif Khan for 80,000 Afghani rupees. Lacking sufficient funds at the time, he had to sell household jewelry to gather the required amount (Shahid, 2010). In 1895, he reached an agreement with government of India under which the boundary of Dir state was restricted from Skhakot to Chakdara. In the spring of 1897, he annexed to his territories the tribes on the right bank of the upper Swat, who had until then been practically independent. He received the title of *Nawab* (Duke) from the government of

India in June 1897. In October 1898, he executed an agreement with the Khan of Nawagai, Safdar Khan defining the boundaries of their respective jurisdictions. In December 1898, he executed another agreement with the Government of India, defining the boundaries of his territories and the boundary of Dir was brought from mid of Chitral (Aashrayt) to Lawari. He also took undertaking not to interfere with or commit aggression on any tribes beyond those boundaries(A. KHAN, 2024). Nawab Sharif Khan visited Calcutta in March 1900 at the invitation of His Highness, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Curzon. He later attended the Viceregal Durbar held in Peshawar in April 1902, as well as the Delhi Durbar of 1903, where he was honored with the title of Companion of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire (C.I.E.) (K. R. Khan, 1986). In December 1904, he suffered paralysis and passed away at the age of 55 in Timergara. His body were moved to Dir, where he was laid to rest in the Khan Shaheed graveyard(Gul, n.d.). Nawab Sharif Khan had four sons from his four wives.

1. Nawab Aurangzeb Khan (Badshah Khan)—Chara Nawab—Dump Duke
2. Nawab Shahrawan Khan (Mian Gul Jan Khan) (Munda Khan)
3. Nawab Zada Sultan-e-Mahmood Khan (Sangar Khan)
4. Nawab Zada Muhammad Essa Khan (Darora Khan)(Gul, n.d.).

Aurangzeb Khan popularly known as *Charaa Nawab* (Dump Duke) was the elder son of Nawab Muhammad Sharif Khan who was born in 1877 at Barawal. At the age of six months, he slept from a maid into a pond of water and become dump. That's why he is popularly known as *Charaa Nawab* (Dump Duke) in the political history of Dir(Khan., n.d.). When his father, Sharif Khan appointed him as a crown prince so at that time Khan Shahrawan Khan (Munda Khan) (Mian Gul Jan Khan) staunchly opposed the decision of his father due to his disability. He believed that he would be unable to run the government affairs efficiently. Munda Khan rebelled against his father's decision who was exiled to Thana Swat where he was found in conspiracies against the government of his father(Shah, 1984). On the complaint of his father, the British government arrested him and was imprisoned in Qilla Balahisar, Peshawar. When Aurangzeb Khan took the rein of Dir, he set free his brother, Munda Khan from jail and honored him with all property which he had inherited from his father. He was made the Khan of Munda, so he became popular with the name of Munda Khan(Khan, 2016).

Munda Khan once again turned against his brother, when Aurangzeb Khan made his son Shah Jehan as crown prince as Munda Khan was expectant to be the next ruler of Dir. Aurangzeb Khan was an Islamic minded person, offered 5 times of prayers while kept fast every Friday. He was a large hearted and open-handed ruler but was not a farsighted politician. He deprived his both step-brothers, Nawab Zada Sultan-e-Mahmood Khan (Sangar Khan) and Nawab Zada Muhammad Essa Khan (Darora Khan) of their inherited property. Sangar Khan sought help from Munda Khan and both entered into a league against Aurangzeb Khan(Shah, 1984).

Both Munda Khan and Sangar Khan chalked out a comprehensive strategy against Aurangzeb Khan. Munda Khan took the elders (Mashran) of Maidan into confidence against Nawab Aurangzeb Khan. He attacked Maidan and reached Lal Qilla without any resistance. He handed over Lal Qilla to his brother Sangar Khan and made him the chief of Lal Qilla Maidan(Shahid, 2010). Munda Khan also entered into an alliance with his uncle and father-in-law, Syed Ahmad Khan against Aurangzeb Khan. According to the war strategy, Syed Ahmad Khan reached Barawal Bandi, facing stiff resistance offered by the forces of Aurangzeb deployed at Kalpani pass. Taking some officers of Nawab Aurangzeb Khan into confidence by offering them positions and lands, Munda Khan at the head of a large army advanced from south and reached Balambat without opposition(Dirvi., 1989). At Balambat he divided his army into two divisions. One division led by Sangar Khan attacked on Talash and Adenzai while the second division headed by Munda Khan progressed to the North, captured Shajadai Qilla and reached Rabat. A large portion of Aurangzeb's army joined the ranks and files of Munda Khan's army which created troubles for later. Shah Jehan Khan and his brother Alam Zeb Khan prepared a new army and tried to stop the advancement of Munda Khan but they were defeated at Akhagram. Gaining victory after victory Munda Khan reached Chukytan and stationed his army there. Realising the delicacy of the situation, Aurangzeb Khan along with his sons, Shah Jehan and Alam Zeb Khan left for Bajaur and next day Munda Khan took the rein of the government of Dir as third Nawab of Dir (Dirvi, 2013).

Muna Khan ruled over Dir with ironic hands. He subdued the people of Dir with oppression and suppression. Taking advantage of the new situation, Aurangzeb Khan took the elders of Sultan Khel and Payenda Khel into confidence against Munda Khan

and plotted to dethrone his brother (F. Khan, 2016). Shah Jehan and Alam Zeb Khan attacked from the south and reached Shahzadai fort while Aurangzeb Khan coordinated from the south (Kohan, Nehag Dara) with the help of elders of Sultan Khel and Payenda Khel. Munda Khan managed a defensive strategy but his forces were defeated at several forts and finally the army (Lashkar) reached Dir Fort (Uddin, 2023). Realizing that the tide had turned, Munda Khan managed to escape to Munda, where he settled in Mian Kali. Munda Khan plotted to depose his brother, tried twice but failed. He was once again put behind the bar in Peshawar, but after four months he managed to flee from jail. In 1912, he was killed by Nawab Aurangzeb Khan through his disloyal servants. After his assassination, Alam Zeb Khan was appointed as a Khan of Jandol (Shahid, 2010).

After the assassination of Munda Khan, Aurangzeb Khan confronted with the ever-increasing power of Syed Ahmad Khan (Maternal uncle of Aurangzeb Khan). Syed Ahmad Khan entered into alliance with Mian Gul Abdul Wadood of Swat and created a lot of problems for Aurangzeb Khan (Gillett, 2001). To check his rising power, Aurangzeb Khan called Abdul Mateen, a son of Umra Khan back from Kabul. With the help of Abdul Mateen, he crushed the power of Syed Ahmad Khan and the whole of Jandol came under the domination of Aurangzeb Khan. Administrative division of Jandol further created differences between Aurangzeb and Syed Ahmad Khan (Iqbal & Nasim). Aurangzeb appointed his kith and kins as in-charge of the strategically important forts of Jandol while Abdul Mateen and his brother were made in-charge of strategically less important forts like Sangipara and Maskini (Qadir, 2015). Abdul Mateen raised a standard of revolt against Aurangzeb Khan with a hope to liberate Jandol. He fought several battles against Aurangzeb Khan and displayed great feats of bravery. In the battle of Kalabaat, he fought to his last but was arrested and put in jail in the fort of Dir. Later on, he was set free at the request of grand Jirga of Babare Mulla and Haji Sahib of Turangzai (Qadir, 2015). Soon he went back of the agreement and attacked on the fort of Barwa in which he was once again arrested and put in a jail in the village of Surbat. The continuous uprisings between Dir and Swat posed significant security risk to British movements along the Dir-Chitral Highway. In 1923, through the mediation of the British government, an agreement was signed between the Wali of Swat (Abdul Wadood) and the Nawab of Dir (Aurangzeb Khan), resolving the boundary dispute between the two rival states. This agreement allowed Aurangzeb Khan to put

an end to the conflicts and insurgencies originating from the state of Swat. Nawab Aurangzeb ruled over the state of Dir for twenty years and passed away in 1924(Nasir, 2020).

Muhammad Shah Jehan was born in 1895 at Barawal Bandy. He got education in Persian from a teacher Fazal Azem Jan at a village (Ouch) but he did not continue his education because of internal disturbance in state. Shah Jehan as a teenager took part in battles against his uncle Munda Khan but ultimately the former succeeded in capturing of the throne of Dir(Shah, 2013). Aurangzeb Khan designated Shah Jehan as a crown prince of Dir who took keen interest in the affairs of the government. Due to illness of Aurangzeb Khan, the governmental affairs were in the hands of some of the courtiers who wanted to take the government from Aurangzeb. Shah Jehan of and on used to visit the Darbar and observed the situation form very close eyes. In the last days of Aurangzeb's life, a war of succession had started between Shah Jehan and Alamzeb Khan and two parties had emerged in the court of Dir(Shah, 1984). Some of the personalities like Mohammad Zarif Khan of Rabet, Mohammad Arif Khan of Shajadai, Sardar Malik of Khungi and Amer Jan Akhundzada were the strong supporters of Shah Jehan while Khan of Rabat, Sher Ullah Khan of Shajadai and Sipahi Salar Safdar Khan were the proponents of Alamzeb Khan. Some of the courtiers convinced Aurangzeb Khan to appoint Alamzeb Khan as his successor instead of Shah Jehan. Sensing the conspiracies of the Darbaris, he poisoned his father and hide his corporal in Doorbacha for three days and spread the rumors of his illness(Shah, 2013). After getting news of his father's death, Alamzeb Khan at once left Jandol for Dir to participate in his father's funeral prayer, but the workers of Shah Jehan halted his way at Janbatai and did not allow him to enter Dir. Before the burial of his father, Shah Jehan captured the power by taking the local lords into confidence(Gillett, 2001). On April 11, 1925, the formal accession ceremony of Shah Jehan was held in Chakdara, which was attended by the Khawaneen of the state and high officials of Indian government and thus Shah Jehan ascended the throne and was formally acknowledged as the 3rd Nawab of Dir(Shahid, 2010). On his accession to throne, shah Jehan found himself to confront four biggest challenges;

1. The British government
2. The opposition of his brother-Alamzeb Khan

3. Sultan Khel/Penda Khel tribes
4. Tarklane tribe (Anonymous, 2018).

After the assassination of Mian Gul Jan, Nawab Aurangzeb handed over the territory of Jandol to his younger son Alamzeb Khan. After wiping out his opponents from the court, Nawab Shah Jehan diverted his attention towards his brother Alamzeb Khan who was given Jandol for his livelihood (Hay, 1933). In the first five years of his rule Nawab treated his brother gently instead of harshly. After cultivating pleasant relationship with the British government, Nawab Shah Jehan attacked on Jandol and after few days he captured the prominent forts of Alamzeb Khan. Alamzeb Khan tried his level best to recapture his territory from his brother but in vain. Eventually, he was forced to sign an agreement with his brother in 1940 under which Shah Jehan gave allowance of 500 Kabuli rupee for his brother and bought some land in Mardan, Gardas for his brother at the amount of 10500 where he lived for the rest of his life (Dirvi, 2013).

Shah Jehan Khan cultivated strong relations with the British representatives and the Political Agent of Malakand to secure their full support. In 1929, Nawab Shah Jehan Khan visited Delhi, where he met with Viceroy Lord Irwin and invited him to visit Malakand. Upon the Viceroy's arrival in Malakand, Nawab Shah Jehan Khan organized a hunting event at Kamrany. Afterward, the Viceroy was taken to Dir Timergara, where he received a warm reception (Shah Jahan Khan, 2020).

Although Shah Jehan Khan maintained a cooperative relationship with the British, he was never in favor of their presence or interference in his dominion. He opposed the free and unrestricted movement of British officers within the state. However, he avoided direct confrontation with British authorities, believing that such a conflict would weaken his ability to govern effectively and protect the state from external aggression (Shahid, 2010). Despite his diplomatic ties with the British, Shah Jehan Khan's rule marked one of the darkest periods in the history of Dir. His governance was characterized by policies that severely hindered societal development. Education and the construction of health centers were entirely banned during his reign. Pursuing education within the state was considered a serious offense, punishable by harsh penalties or even exile. Only a few affluent individuals could afford to study outside Dir, leaving the majority of the population in ignorance and deprived of basic health facilities (Ali, et al., 2022).

The long-term effects of his shortsighted policies were devastating, contributing to Dir's status as one of the most underdeveloped regions in the country. Even more than six decades later, the negative impacts of Shah Jehan Khan's governance are visible in every sector of the society. Construction of large houses was severely restricted, and those who built them were imprisoned, with their dwellings demolished. Any developmental project or infrastructural construction within the state was prohibited (Anonymous, 2018). The only major route linking Chakdara (lower Dir) to the capital, proper Dir, was a single, poorly maintained road. Private vehicles were not allowed, and the few state buses available were in a dilapidated condition. The revenue system under Shah Jehan was highly unjust, characterized by uneven tax collection across the state (Shah, 1984). During the cropping season, a practice known as Nawab's usher involved the appointment of officials in every village to collect grains. Members of the royal tribe enjoyed exemptions from taxes, while others were burdened with paying all duties. Additionally, specific tribes faced unique obligations, such as feeding the ruler's horses and dogs or supplying a fixed number of birds each month (Shah, 2013).

After the creation of Pakistan, Nawab Shah Jahan Khan signed an Instrument of Accession with the Government of Pakistan on November 8, 1947. This accession was formally accepted by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Governor General of Pakistan, on February 18, 1948, officially making Dir State a part of Pakistan (Khanam, 2016). During the 1948 Kashmir War, Nawab Shah Jahan Khan demonstrated his commitment by sending volunteers to support the Armed Forces of Pakistan in their efforts against Indian occupation. Following the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Nawab Shah Jehan made his three sons' governors of different parts of the state; Mohammad Shah Kisrau took over Dir, Shahabuddin Khan was appointed the governor of Munda and Samar Bagh while Balambat and Maidan went to Mohammad Shah Khan (Shah, 2013).

End of Nawabism in Dir:

The policies of Nawab Shah Jehan were resisted by different quarters of people in state. The zealous and brave people of every village and tribe played their role for the liberation from the clutches of Shah Jehan. His family members also supported the freedom fighters to overthrow the Nawab. In this regard his exiled brother Alamzeb

Khan and his son Muhammad Nawaz Khan played a very important role in awakening the people of Dir (Shahid, 2010). The people from different parts of Dir raised a standard of revolts against the harsh and cruel policies of Nawab. Tatay Khan of Samkoot and Mehmood-ul-Hassan of Darora popularly known as *Narhand Mulla* were the first who openly challenged the policies of Nawab. The former was exiled to Mardan and the latter was first exiled and then mercilessly killed at Takhtbai in 1952 (Shahid, 2010). The Nawab of Dir had given vast powers to Sultan Khel and Payenda Khel tribes. On the other hand, Takalani tribe of Maidan had been subjected to forced labor and heavy fines. Disgruntled with the policies of Nawab, this tribe revolted several times but **was** crushed by using the force of Sultan Khel and Payenda Khel. The toppling of such a strong ruler was not an easy job. The house of Alamzeb Khan situated at Gardas, Mardan was a center of rebel leaders where the rebel chiefs of Maidan, Jandol, Khal, Ushari Dara and Nehag Dara used to assemble (Dirvi, 2013). In 1959, a Jirga of these leaders held in the house of Alamzeb Khan and the following scheme was chalked out;

1. Alamzeb Khan would enter Nehag Darra via Swat
2. Badshah Zada (Batai Jan) would attack from Bajaur
3. Bandai Khanan, Muhammad Amin Malik and Speen Lali would prepare a strong force at Maidan
4. Abdul Haseeb would revolt in Jandool
5. Akhundzadgon of Khal would instigate Sultan Khel tribe of Tormang and Ushari Darra against the Nawab (Shahid, 2010).

Nawab's spy was listening to all this in the Kitchen of Alamzeb Khan who communicated the whole plot to Nawab Shah Jehan. Before the implementation of the plot, Nawab's forces raided different areas and arrested the opponents of the government and thus the whole scheme got failed (Bangash, 2015). The Nawab of Dir aimed to make his son, Muhammad Shah Khan, the ruler of the Maidan valley and initiated the construction of forts in the area. However, when Sher Hasan Tahsildar demanded land for these forts, the local Jirga refused, leading to harassment by state authorities. Tensions escalated on June 6, 1959, when soldiers collecting excessive usher clashed with locals, resulting in the deaths of four soldiers. This marked the first direct challenge to the government's authority in Dir (Shahid, 2010). The incident sparked widespread anger, and the Tarklane tribe organized a procession, eventually

besieging the fort of Haya Seeri, Muhammad Shah Khan's residence. Shahabuddin Khan, known as Jandol Khan, arrived with reinforcements, dispersing the protesters. A royal army pursued the rebels, leading to a fierce battle at Bandai village, where the Tarklane tribe united against the Nawab's forces (Anonymous, 2018). The conflict saw extensive bloodshed, including cannon fire on villages, resulting in the army's defeat and heavy casualties, with over 200 soldiers and 40 people killed. Later that evening, fresh reinforcements of 600 soldiers, along with the Payanda Khel tribe reached from Dir, launched a counterattack, driving the rebels to the hills. The Payanda Khel tribe looted villages, stealing cattle, grains, and women's jewelry, leaving a trail of devastation (Shahid, 2010).

The uprisers hid in the mountains for several days. To give them peace, the rebel leaders of Maidan reached Karachi and set up a protest camp in front of President Muhammad Ayub Khan's residence (Shahid, 2010). These people had also taken the blood-stained clothes of martyrs with them. General Muhammad Ayub Khan promised to bring justice to the tribal chiefs of Dir. This attracted unfavorable notice in the press (Shah, 1984). The government of General Ayub Khan launched a military operation against Shah Jehan Khan. He was arrested on October 8, 1960 and put in house arrest at Gulberg, Lahore. Due to illness, he was shifted to CMH, Islamabad where he breathed his last in 1966. He was replaced by Mohammad Shah Kisro and the real power was vested with the political agent of Malakand Agency till 1969 when he too was removed on July 28, 1969, and the state of Dir was formally integrated into Pakistan.

Conclusion

The rise and fall of the Royal Family of Dir reflects a tumultuous history of power struggles, internal conflicts, and external influences, particularly during the British colonial era. Founded by Mulla Ilyas Khan, the Khanate of Dir initially thrived under spiritual leadership, with subsequent rulers like Khan Ghulam Khan, Khan Zafar Khan, Qasam Khan and Ghazan Khan strengthening their military position and expanded the territory of their Khanate. The death of Ghazan Khan followed by a civil war which shaken the **very** foundations of the Khanate. Having ascended the throne of Dir Khan Rahmat Ullah Khan, son of Ghazan Khan faced internal challenges including rebellion from his son Sharif Khan who took asylum with Umra Khan who was a powerful Khan of the Khanate of Jandool. He did a lot to consolidate the foundations of his state and

was ascended by his rebellious son Khan Sharif Khan in 1884. Nawab Sharif Khan's reign marked with a continuous struggle against Umra Khan who eventually lost his khanate to Umra Khan. Intoxicated with the vines of power and expansionism, Umra Khan not only captured the Khanate of Dir, but also expanded his frontier to Asmar and Kafiristan. The siege of Chitral followed by Chitral Relief Force not only relieved the besiegers, but also deposed Umra Khan in 1895 and restored Khan Sharif Khan as a first Nawab of Dir who compromised the sovereignty of the state by signing different agreements with British government. His successors, including Nawab Aurangzeb Khan and Nawab Shah Jehan faced increasing internal dissent, economic instability, and resistance from various tribal factions. Shah Jehan's oppressive policies, particularly regarding education and infrastructure, significantly hindered the state's development, resulting in widespread poverty and unrest. Despite his diplomatic efforts, Shah Jehan's rule came under intense scrutiny, and by the late 1950s, revolts against his administration gained momentum. The eventual intervention of Pakistan's central government, led by General Ayub Khan, resulted in the downfall of the Nawab's regime. Shah Jehan's arrest and subsequent death marked the end of the royal family's rule in Dir, leading to its integration into Pakistan in 1969.

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