

BAHĀRISTĀN-I-GHAYBĪ

A history of the Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar,
Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the reigns of Jahāngīr and
Shāhjahān, by Mirzā Nathan

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how manage to go with his own followers. But the other two to three thousand men will require boats of their own. If it is not possible to provide boats from the State, please order me to procure these boats from the *Bepāris* (traders) either on hire or purchase or by force for the execution of imperial affairs. I will pay the money from my own purse and will also manage to secure boatmen for these boats." Ibrāhīm Khān agreed to this and ordered him to procure (the boats) from whomsoever he could. The Mīrzā returned to his residence and appointed some of his trustworthy officers to accomplish this work. The merchant-princes of Jahāngīr-nagar who were inclined to transact business with him advanced Rs. 100,000 to him against deeds of loan (*tamas-sukāt*). His officers brought the boats of the *Bepāris*. Those who agreed to give the boats on hire sent their own boatmen and gave security for their presence. The rate of hire was fixed and they were paid. Price was immediately paid to those who agreed to sell. Seven hundred boatmen were appointed and they were given two months' salaries in advance. (699)

Nathan kills a rhinoceros. Eleven days after the permission to leave, he left the Khān Fath-jang and started (for Kūch). His first halt was made at Bhāgalpūr and the second halt at Sahād.* At the latter place a rhinoceros came to the house of a Darwīsh and took its stand at the door of the house. The brethren of the Darwīsh came and narrated the incident to the Mīrzā. The Mīrzā decided to take an augury from it: if he could kill this rhinoceros without difficulty, he would gain an easy victory over the rebels. He went there and reached the place where the rhinoceros was standing thereby

* A journey of about 6 *pahārs* or 18 hours from this place took the Mīrzā to Patladhah. The place was therefore in the present Mymensing district by the bank of the Brahmaputra. Mr. Sachse notes the presence of rhinoceros in this part of Mymensing (Gazetteer, Ed. 1917. p. 11.) and we are pleased to note that this was a feature of this region even in the early part of the 17th Century of the Christian Era.

confining the Darwish within the house. The rhinoceros was surrounded from four sides and an attempt was made to drive it from land to the *jheel*, i.e., a pool of water collected during the rains, in order to kill it with ease. But it was of no avail. When, by sunset Mīrzā Nathan could not drive the rhinoceros to the water even after an attempt of one *pahar*, he thought that he would not be able to bring it to the water in the darkness of the night. At this time the rhinoceros came to the water out of its own accord and began to swim. He followed it firing from his gondola and killed it in no time. It sank in the water. Howevermuch he searched for it he could not find any trace of the animal. He said to the boatmen that whoever succeeded in finding out the rhinoceros would be rewarded with a sum of Rs. 5 and then returned to his camp. Some of the fishermen who could dive in deep waters remained behind, and three or four *gharīs* after evening, they found the rhinoceros and reported to the Mīrzā. The Mīrzā sent his men with two State boats in order to bring the rhinoceros within the night. They went there and within two *pahars* and four *gharīs* of the night, they brought the rhinoceros to the Mīrzā from the deep waters, dragging it over water by tying ropes to its legs. The Mīrzā gave Rs. 5 to the man who found it out and Rs. 20 to the men of these two boats who went to bring it. Next morning he waited there for four *gharīs* in order to please the boatmen who wanted to take the flesh of the animal. Then he started. After proceeding for two-and-a-half *pahar* of the day, rest was taken for a short while to enable the boatmen to take their food. Six *gharīs* before evening, the boats sailed again and the journey was resumed. After proceeding for two-and-a-half *pahar* of the night, the boats were tied to the *Hijal* trees which had grown in the water of the *jheel*, in order to give some rest to the boatmen and the Mīrzā also took some rest. Two *gharīs* after morning, the journey was resumed. In this way the way was traversed for four days and nights, resting during the last part of the night according to the usual practice. At this time one special boat of Ibrāhīm

Khān was sent by Khwāja Idrāk the chief officer (*Madāru'l-Mahāmm*) of the Khān Fath-jang, to inquire about the distance traversed by Mīrzā Nathan. The Mīrzā was saying his night-prayers sitting on a boat. He himself shouted,—“O, *Kūsāwalla* (boatman)! Whom do you want?” He replied,—“I am coming from the Khān Fath-jang. I want the Mīrzā.” The Mīrzā called him and became aware of the facts. He immediately took the pen and made a representation to the Khān Fath-jang communicating to him the incident of the rhinoceros and wrote,—“By the favour of the Almighty Lord, I am hopeful that the rebels would be killed and captured by this insignificant person.” Then he gave the servant of the Khān a sum of Rs. 50 as a mark of hospitality and a pair of fine shawl which he was himself wearing at the time of prayers, and he was sent back with the letter. He orally explained to the servant the nature of his journey and said,—“By the favour of the Merciful Lord, I hope to reach Patladah after two *pahars* of the (next) day.” (700)

Nathan halts at Patladah. He (Nathan) proceeded from that place and reached Patladah after two *pahars* and two *gharīs* of the day, and halted there. But as of the swift boats which could frighten the rebels, only seventeen had come with the Mīrzā, so he waited there for nine days till the arrival of the Amīrs with their fleet, one after another. The fleet of Sūnā Ghāzī, Zamīndār of Sarāil, which was proceeding to Hājo and the fleet of Bahādur Ghāzī, Zamīndār of Chawra which had delayed on the way, were taken with him and he proceeded forward. (701)

Nathan occupies Jamra. The spies brought information that the rebels had fortified Jamra. Then he despatched his admiral Muḥammad Sharīf to Jamra along with one of his chief warriors named Maṣṭ ‘Alī Beg with a fleet of thirty boats. This army attacked the impudent rebels at midnight, defeated them and brought Jamra under the possession of the imperial officers. Eighteen small and big boats and four cannon were seized from the rebels. Mīrzā Nathan sent a report of this battle to the Khān Fath-jang giving the credit

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