

UNIT – 41 – UPSC - Modern India : The Second Anglo-Burmese War

India's History : Modern India : Second Anglo-Burmese war - 1852

The Second Anglo-Burmese War



Causes of the Second Anglo-Burmese War

After the treaty of Yandaboo 1826 (After first Anglo-Burmese War), a large number of British merchants had settled on the southern coast of Burma and Rangoon. Tharrawady, the new king of Burma (1837-1845), refused to consider the treaty of Yandaboo, binding on him. The British Residents also did not get proper treatment at the court and so finally the Residency had to be withdrawn in 1840.

The British merchants often complained of ill treatment at the hands of the Governor of Rangoon. They sent a petition to Lord Dalhousie. Dalhousie was determined to maintain British prestige and dignity at all the costs and so deputed Commodore Lambert to Rangoon to negotiate the redress of grievances and demand compensation.

Declaration of War

At first the King of Burma was inclined to avoid war and so removed the old Governor and appointed the new one. But when a deputation of some naval officers was refused admission, Lambert adopted a very provocative line of action. He captured one of the Burmese King's ships. With this incident, the Burmese did not resist and the war was declared.

On April 1, 1852, British forces reached Rangoon. The famous Pagoda of Rangoon was stormed on April 14, 1852. A month later Bassein, situated at Irrawaddy Delta was captured. Prome was occupied in October and Pegu in November. Dalhousie wanted the Burmese king to recognise the conquest of the Lower Burma. On the refusal of the king to conclude the treaty, Dalhousie annexed Pegu by issuing a proclamation on December 20, 1852.

End of the War

By the annexation of Pegu the eastern frontier of the British Indian Empire was extended upto the banks of Salween. Major Arthur Phayre was appointed Commissioner of the newly acquired British province extending as far as Myede.

