

Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (13th November 1780 - 27 June, 1839) also called "Sher-e-Punjab" ("The Lion of Punjab") was the principle Sikh ruler of the sovereign country of Punjab and the Sikh Empire. The Maharaja was born on 13th November 1780 in Gujranwala now in modern day Pakistan. Ranjit Singh succeeded his father as the misaldar, at the young age of 12. After several campaigns, his rivals accepted him as their leader, and he united the Sikh factions into one state and he took the title of Maharaja on April 12 1801 (to coincide with Baisakhi day), with Lahore serving as his capital from 1799. In 1802 he took control of the holy city of Amritsar. He brought law and order, yet was reluctant to use the death penalty. He stopped India's non-secular style and practises. He treated both Hindus and Muslims equally. He banned the discriminatory religious tax the "jizya" on Hindus and Sikhs which had been imposed by the various Muslim rulers. The gold and intricate marble work at Golden Temple were conducted under the patronage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a generous patron of the shrine and is remembered with much affection by the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh also built two of the most sacred temples in Sikhism. These are Takht Sri Patna Sahib, the birth place of Guru Gobind Singh, and Takht Sri Hazur Sahib, the place where Guru Gobind Singh took his final rest or mahasamadhi, in Nanded, Maharashtra in 1708. This great warrior, fearless soldier, able administrator, clement ruler, statesman and liberator of Punjab died on 27 June 1839. His Samadhi (memorial) is located in Lahore, Pakistan.