

"There is a wheel on which the affairs of men revolve, and its movement forbids the same to be always fortunate." Herodotus

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) of Macedonia had endless desire for conquest, glory and wealth, the latter to finance his army and its campaigns. His greatest adventure began in 327 BC. Though he did not go much beyond the Punjab, Greek sources considered it as conquest of India. The Persian Empire had once stretched east up to the Indus River. Alexander intended to proceed far beyond the Persian frontier to the ocean, to what he believed to be the edge of the inhabited world. He found himself contending with war elephants, the monsoon, and the unfamiliar phenomenon of great rivers with strong currents. With his military genius, strength of mind and courage, he was able to overcome all these real obstacles. But one obstacle even Alexander failed to overcome was the opposition of his war-weary troops.

In the course of his Indian campaigns, Alexander had crossed the rivers Indus, Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi, and reached the shores of River Beas, a distance of about 390 miles from the Indus crossing. He wanted to move further eastward to Bengal and beyond. One of the purposes of invading Bengal was to plunder its wealth to make the soldiers' long many years' of fighting in unaccustomed climate and territory, worthwhile. The troops were, however, very anxious to return to



Alexander, launching an attack on Darius (Darayawush), the king of the ancient Achaemenid Empire of Persia.

Alexander the Great

Bengal Unconquered

Baggio

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family and their own homes. Alexander was thwarted in his ambitions to cross the Ganges. The recalcitrant soldiers and their officers were in mutiny.

The homesick troops had been in India for some years in an inhospitable and hot climate. By that time, they had amassed a wealth of war booty. Fear of crossing the mighty Ganges and the elephants and other animals in the swampy territory of Bengal were also bearing heavily on their minds. Alexander tried to pacify the fears of his troops and persuade them to march on to Bengal. He appealed to their love of king, country and the Greek gods. He shed tears in public