

checking the reckless growth of jagirs and offices. He also tried to compel the *mansabdars* (nobles) to maintain their official quota of troops. An evil tendency encouraged by him was that of *ijarah* or revenue-farming. Instead of collecting land revenue at a fixed rate as under Todar Mal's land revenue settlement, the Government began to contract with revenue farmers and middlemen to pay the Government a fixed amount of money while they were left free to collect whatever they could from the peasant. This led to increased oppression of the peasant.

Many jealous nobles secretly worked against Zulfiqar Khan. Worse still, the Emperor too did not give him his trust and cooperation in full measure. The Emperor's ears were poisoned against Zulfiqar Khan by unscrupulous favourites. He was told that his *wazir* was becoming too powerful and ambitious and might even overthrow the Emperor himself. The cowardly Emperor dared not dismiss the powerful *wazir*, but he began to intrigue against him secretly. Nothing could have been more destructive to healthy administration.

Jahandar Shah's inglorious reign came to an early end in January 1713 when he was defeated at Agra by Farrukh Siyar, his nephew.

Farrukh Siyar owed his victory to the Saiyid brothers, Abdullah Khan and Husain Ali Khan Barahow, who were therefore given the offices of *wazir* and *mir bakshi* respectively. The two brothers soon acquired dominant control over the affairs of the state. Farrukh Siyar lacked the capacity to rule. He was cowardly, cruel, undependable and faithless. Moreover, he allowed himself to be influenced by worthless favourites and flatterers.



*Farrukh Siyar*

In spite of his weaknesses, Farrukh Siyar was not willing to give the Saiyid brothers a free hand but wanted to exercise personal authority. On the other hand, the Saiyid brothers were convinced that administration could be carried on properly, the decay of the Empire checked, and their own position safeguarded only if they wielded real authority and the Emperor merely reigned without ruling. Thus there ensued a prolonged struggle for power between the Emperor Farrukh Siyar and his *wazir* and *mir bakshi*. Year after year the ungrateful Emperor intrigued to overthrow the two brothers; year after year, he failed. In the end, in 1719, the Saiyid brothers deposed and killed him. In his place they raised to the throne in quick succession two young princes who died of consumption. The Saiyid brothers now made the 18-year-old