

The Maharaja's Grand Durbar at Lahore has also been recreated in the panorama hall through a large three-dimensional dioramic presentation where the Maharaja is seen with his chiefs, nobles and also the poor and destitute. The other landmarks in the vibrant life span of the Maharaja have been presented through eight smaller dioramas in the ground floor halls. Several other important anecdotes associated with the Maharaja, which have immortalized him, are also presented in the panorama building through murals, sketches and canvas paintings. The interactive touch screen multimedia kiosks placed in the panorama provide detailed information of the subject to the visitors.



### **MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH - THE LION OF PUNJAB**

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa or the Commonwealth became the most potent force in the Sikh life. The policy of persecution that was followed by decadent Delhi monarchy did much to mould the Sikh nation. The ring dance of repression and revenge that had begun continued during the period of Banda Singh's temporal leadership of the Sikhs (1708-1716) and even afterwards. The visibly increasing weakness of the Delhi monarchy encouraged the Sikh warriors and they began to organize themselves into small bands, to resist the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali, who were able to conquer but not retain. They defeated the Sikhs on several occasions but could not crush them.

The earliest known ancestor of Ranjit Singh was Budh Singh who was transformed from an ordinary tiller of land into a saint soldier. On Budh Singh's death, his elder son Naudh Singh came forward to fight the Abdali invader and met his end in the battlefield in 1752. Charhat Singh, the eldest son of Naudh Singh, succeeded him. As chief of the Sukarchakia Misl, he made significant contribution in consolidating the territories of his misl through many conquests. Mahan Singh, son and successor of Charhat Singh, further extended the boundaries of the principality he had inherited. On 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1780, Mahan Singh became the proud father of a son who was destined to play a unique role in Indian history by