**The third battle of Panipat**

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Panipat is a city in the Indian State of Haryana which is located 60 miles of north of Delhi. The area is famous for two battles that were fought there; the first was fought on April 21, 1526, between Babar and Ibrahim Lodhi–marking the beginning of the Mughal Empire. The second was the battle of Panipat which was fought on November 5, 1556, between the forces of Akbar and Hemo and resulted in the decisive victory for Akbar’s generals, Bairam Khan and Khan Zaman.

After the death of Aurangzeb Alamgir, there was infighting for the throne which created chaos and confusion. Some of the states broke away from the center and became independent like Daccan, Oudh, Bengal and Sindh. The Mughal Empire was declining and was open to all kinds of invasions and intrigues. Foreign forces, like the British East India Company, the French and the Portuguese, were also establishing a firm hold besides the Sikhs and Mahrattas. In view of the situation, Nadir Shah of Iran ceased the opportunity, invaded India and sacked Delhi. This was also the time when Mahrattas were gaining strength through an organised guerilla force. Their general, Raghunath Rao, marched to Delhi with a large army to capture it along with Agra, Sirhind and Lahore. He was also supported by some of the Muslim rulers of faraway principalities.

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The region where the Mahrattas were ruling was the suzerainty of the Mughals and the administration of those areas was given to Balaji who was later replaced by his son Baji Rao I in Peshawar where his aim was to end Muslim power in India. His forces were supported by Nawab Wazir of Oudh against Bangash. The Mahrattas also attacked Punjab and drove out the son of Ahmad Shah Abdalli Taimour. Upon hearing the news, Ahmad Shah Abdalli immediately left to rescue his son. In return, the commander of the Mahrattas’ army ran to Poona without a fight. At the same time, Hindu Rajput rules of Jaipur and Marwar also sought Adbull’s help against the Mahrattas who gathered an army of three lacs through Balaji’s cousin. They were accompanied by Balaji‘s son named Biswas Rao.

The mission was to defeat the Mughals, declare Biswas Rao as the king of India, stop Ahmad Shah Abdalliat Attock and attack Afghanistan to capture it. In the meantime, the Mahrattas occupied the Red Fort and Delhi. The shyth of Mahrattas’ two lacs infantry soldiers against 40000 Afghan soldiers and cavalry of one lac compared to 26,000 of Afghanistan’s gave the Mahrattas more than a 4 to 1 numerical super city. Ibrahim Khan Gardi, a Muslim general belonging to South India, was also on the side of the Mahrattas. His forces consisted of a cavalry and infantry. He was promised governorship in case of Mahrattas victory.

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The opposing armies marched towards Panipat –Abdalli crossed Jamuna and put his forces between the Mahrattas and Delhi. His forces dug a trench around the position in order to stop the enemy from attacking at night. The ditch was 20 yards wide and 12 feet deep. Similarly, the Baho occupied Panipat and built a rampart and ditch around the town. Abdalli employed a superior tactic by using a network of spies and succeeded in cutting off Mahrattas’ army supplies by establishing a blockade though his forces. Abdalli deployed his army in the formation of right, center and left but reserves were kept at the rear. The main Mahratta attack came from the left flank under Ibrahim Gardi and Bhau. The battle started on January 14, 1761, and lasted the whole day.

The Abdalli reserves, comprising of 6000 slaves, attacked from the left and right flank along with the center to defeat the Mahratta army. The counter attack launched by Biswas Rao failed and he was killed. Ahmad Shah Abdalli launched another reserve of 8000Durranis in the battle which resulted in the killing of Bhau. The Mahrattas’ troops fled and Abdallis cavalry chase killed most of them. It was a complete victory for Abdalli since the Mahratta army was completely destroyed. Ibrahim Gardi was taken to prison and executed. The news of this disaster killed Balaji Baji Rao. It is said that the dead bodies of Mahrattas were scattered in an area of 20-30 miles. It is estimated that two lac Mahrattas were killed in the epic battle by the Abdalli forces.

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India made a movie of the third battle of Panipat where Ahmad Shah Abdalli was misrepresented as he was shown as a savage king. The true historical facts were distorted in BJP-RSS’s re-writing of Muslim history. Mahrattas were represented as Indians and Abdalli represented Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan named its supersonic and tactical surface to surface short range ballistic missile “Abdalli” after Ahmad Shah Abdalli. Abdalli was the founder of the Durrani dynasty which attacked India five times and during the epic battle of Panipat, crushed Mahrattas power. The battle of Panipat was fought in difficult conditions when Muslims in India had lost the control of India. The battle proved that if Muslims are united and led by able commanders and leaders who harbour a strong faith, there is no force in the world that can defeat them.