



# 7



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## BATTLES OF MUGHAL ARMY

In the previous lesson, you studied the factors that encouraged Babur to invade India, composition of the Mughal Army and their war equipment and weapons. You also learnt that the Mughal artillery was a new weapon of war and terrifying to the enemies. The gunpowder played a vital role in winning battles and in the establishment and expansion of the Mughal empire.

In this lesson, you will study the three important battles fought by Babur which laid a solid foundation of the Mughal rule in India. Panipat (a town in Haryana) has been described as the pivot of Indian history for 300 years. And its story begins in the first great battle that took place in 1526. The victory at Panipat, significant as it was, did not allow Babur the luxury to sit back and savour the moment for long. For there were other enemies such as that of Rana Sanga, the powerful ruler of Mewar to be subdued in land called Hindustan. After capturing Delhi, Babur lived for only four more years. His son Humayun and grandson Akbar continued the consolidation of Mughal power after his death.

Although Mughal influence reached its political peak during Akbar's time, the foundation was laid by Akbar's grandfather.



### Objectives

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the first battle of Panipat and battle field tactics of the Mughals and
- discuss the power-struggle that existed during the early years of the Mughal Dynasty.

### 7.1 The First Battle of Panipat

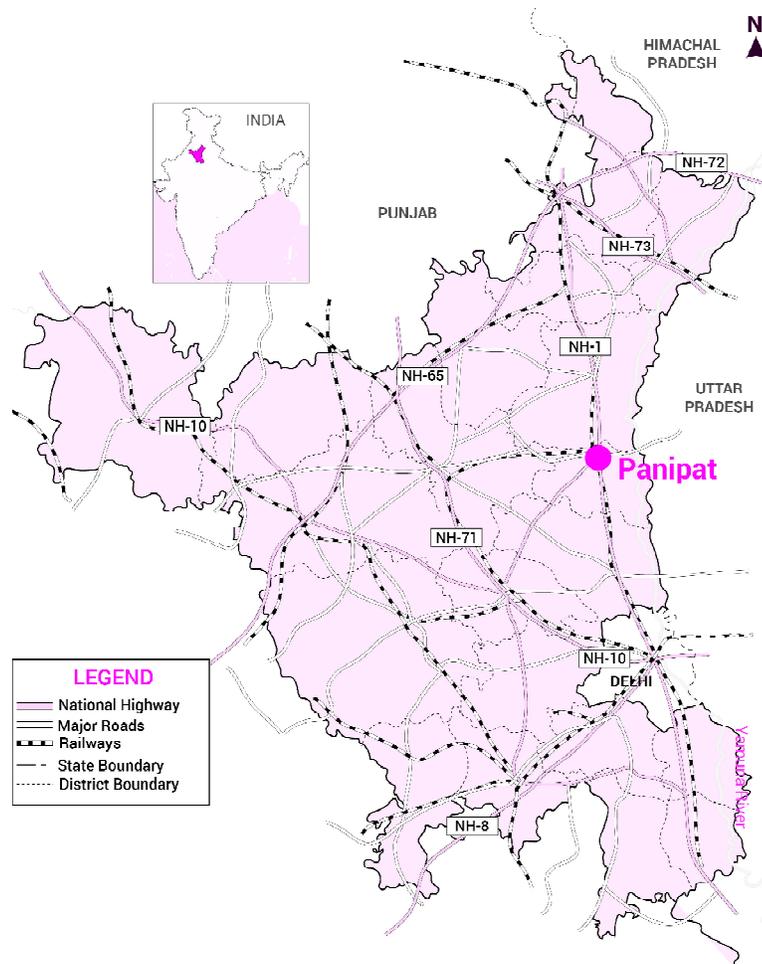
The First Battle of Panipat took place in 1526 between the invading forces of Babur and the last of the Delhi Sultanate Empire under Ibrahim Lodi. It took place at Panipat (Haryana) and marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire. The significance of this battle was that this was one of the earliest battles involving the use of gunpowder as

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Note

firearms and field artillery in India.



Map 7.1 - Battle of Panipat

### 7.1.1 Why was the Battle Fought?

Ibrahim Lodi the last king of Lodi dynasty attempted to extend the royal authority and asserted his absolute power over his citizens. He was a cruel king and the people hated him. This made the governor of the Punjab, Daulat Khan Lodi, invite the Mughal ruler Babur, to invade India. Babur accepted the offer and inflicted a crushing defeat on Ibrahim Lodhi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526. Ibrahim was killed where upon the loose aristocratic confederacy of the Lodis faded.



### Intext Questions

7.1

1. What is the significance of the Battle of Panipat?
2. Why did Daulat Khan Lodi invite Babur to invade India?

### 7.1.2 Military Tactics of the First Battle of Panipat

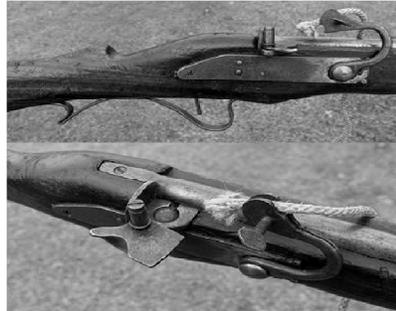
According to estimates, Babur had 15,000 men whereas Ibrahim Lodi's forces numbered 100,000. This means that Ibrahim forces were numerically superior to that of Babur's forces. Babur's army was a mixture of Turks, Mongols, Iranians and Afghans and consisted of cavalry and gunners with gunpowder matchlocks and cannons while Ibrahim Lodi's forces consisted predominantly of war Elephants and heavy Cavalry besides Infantry. Victory depended on the battlefield tactics.



Note

#### What is a matchlock?

It is a device that is used for igniting gunpowder. It was during the 15th century A.D. that this mechanism was used. The Mughals brought this technology to India and used it in the first battle of Panipat.



*Fig. 7.1 Matchlock*

Babur succeeded in winning the battle owing to new tactics introduced by him such as the Tulghuma and the Araba. Tulghuma is a tactic aimed at dividing the whole army into small units and placing them on the flanks. Araba meant carts that were placed in large numbers in rows facing the enemy and tied to each other with ropes.

Babur further divided the divisions on the flanks into Forward and Rear divisions. Babur knew that his army was less in number and hence the best way for him was to split his army into formations so as to encircle the enemy from all sides. Behind the carts cannons were placed, protected and supported by mantlets which could be used to easily maneuver the cannons.

These two tactics made Babur's artillery lethal. The cannons could be fired without any fear of being hit, as they were shielded by the bullock carts held in place by ropes. The heavy cannons could also change their direction for new targets, as they could be maneuvered by the mantlets which were on wheels.

Babur's tactics at Panipat showed the influence of a mix of two military traditions - The Ottoman and the Mongol-timurid traditions. The adoption of the cart-wagon line allowed them to create artificial defenses for their infantry.

On the other hand, Ibrahim Lodi's, army relied heavily on Elephants and Cavalry. Besides, he also had infantry which was not well developed. They were predominantly foot archers and Pashtun tribal foot soldiers. The battle field tactics of Ibrahim Lodhi consisted of five-fold division such as the vanguard and the units on, the right, the left, the centre and the rear. Ibrahim Lodhi tactic was to use his strike forces of Elephants and heavy Cavalry.



Note

Babur's men used gunpowder effectively against Lodi's army, with the help of two experienced Ottoman gunners specially brought for the purpose. Then, taking Lodi by surprise, two wings of Babur's army attacked from the rear and side. It was a grim affair. Thousands died on both sides. In less than three hours, Ibrahim Lodi was killed and the Delhi Sultanate was history.

**Aftermath :** The victory of Babur's invading army in the First Battle of Panipat, led to the establishment of one of the great empires of medieval India - the Mughal dynasty. Even then Babur had to encounter several other opposition to his rule and the first one came in the form of the Rajput King Rana Sanga, the ruler of Mewar who fought Babur at Khanwa.



### Intext Questions

7.2

1. What is Tulghuma and Araba?
2. What was the outcome of the battle of Panipat?

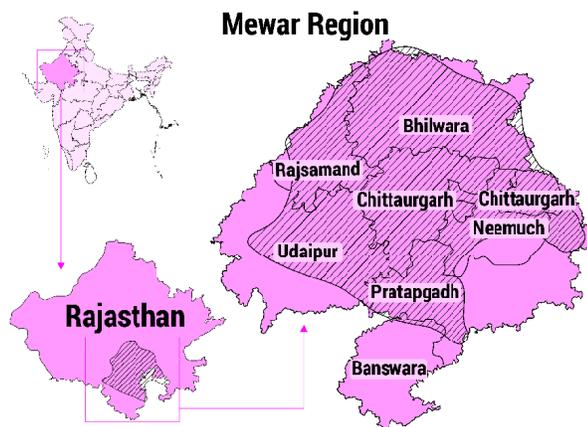
### 7.2 Battles during the early years of the Mughal Dynasty

At the time when the Mughals captured Delhi, the Rajputs were still ruling some parts of North West India. By the beginning of 16th century, their strength reached its height under the rule of Rana Sanga (Rana Sangram Singh), who was the king of Mewar in Southern Rajasthan and who was also able to unite many other neighboring Rajput kings to fight against foreign rulers. However, Rana Sanga was defeated in a fierce battle by the Mughal invader Babur, and the splendour of a united Rajput polity waned rapidly. It is largely from that period of Rajasthan's history that the view of the Rajputs as valiant warriors is derived. It is important, therefore, to briefly highlight Rana Sanga. He fought three battles with Babur.

#### Rana Sanga of Mewar

Maharana Sangram Singh (12 April 1484 - 17 March 1527) known as Rana Sanga, was the Rajput ruler of Mewar, which is now located within the geographic boundaries of present-day Rajasthan. He ruled from 1509 and 1527.

Rana Sanga succeeded his father, Rana Raimal, as king of Mewar, in 1508, following a fierce power struggle with his brothers. Upon assuming the throne he set about consolidating his power. One of Sanga's first acts as the ruler was to attack **Malwa**, which was suffering from internal dissension between its Sultan Mahmud Khilji and its Rajput Wazir, Medini Rao.



Map 7.2 Mewar Region

Rana Sanga emerged as a powerful ruler after conquering Malwa. He then turned his attention towards north-eastern Rajasthan, which was then under the control of Khilji's ally, Lodi. He invaded the region and was successful in capturing several major areas, including the fort of Ranthambore.

Lodi retaliated and invaded Mewar. Sanga's forces proved to be too strong for Lodi's Afghans. The Battle of **Khatoli** which Rana Sanga fought against Ibrahim Lodi was a big success for the Rajputs. In the battle, the Maharana lost an arm and became lame for life but this did not deter his spirit. Later, in another battle at **Dholpur** against Ibrahim Lodi, the Rana Sanga once again defeated Lodi and captured most of present day Rajasthan.

With his growing stature as a powerful ruler in India, he gained much recognition. Owing to his repeated success in the northern territories of India, he set his ambitions high and planned to capture Delhi and bring the whole of India under his control.

### 7.2.1 The Battle of Khanwa

Initially, Rana Sanga believed that Babur had plans to leave India. But intelligence gathered suggested that Babur was getting ready to consolidate his newly gained successes. Therefore, Rana Sanga, decided to wage war against the Mughal invader. At first, he forced Afghan fugitive princes like Mehmud Lodi and Hasan Khan Mewati to join him. Then he ordered Babur to leave India.

As Rana's and Babur's troops faced each other in Khanwa, near Fatehpur-Sikri, in 1527, a bloody battle followed, resulting in death and destruction. Although, the Rajputs had surrounded Babur, but his technically superior army won the battle.

The reason for Babur's success was that even before the battle took place Babur had carefully inspected the battle site. Like in the Battle of Panipat, he strengthened his front by procuring carts which were fastened by iron chains. These were used for providing shelter to horses and for storing artillery. Gaps between the carts were used



Note



**Note**

for horsemen to charge at the opponent at the right time. To lengthen the line, ropes built of raw hide were placed over wheeled wooden tripods. Behind the tripods, matchlock-men were placed who could fire and, if required, advance. The flanks were given protection by digging ditches.

In addition to the regular force, small contingents were kept on the left flank and in front for the *tulghuma* (flanking) tactic. Thus, a strong offensive-defensive formation had been prepared by Babur.

Rana Sanga, fighting in a traditional way, attacked the Mughal army's flanks. He was prevented from breaking through by reinforcements dispatched by Babur. The carts and matchlockmen were ordered to advance, pressing on the Rajputs and their allies. The battle which lasted for not more than 10 hours, was bitterly contested and became an exceedingly brutal affair. At a critical moment of battle, the defection of Silhadi and his contingent caused a split in the Rajput forces. Rana Sanga while trying to rebuild his front was wounded and fell unconscious from his horse. The Rajput army thought their leader was dead which resulted in disorder, thus allowing the Mughals to win the day. Despite putting up a gallant fight, Rana Sanga and his allies suffered defeat.

With his numerically huge army as compared to that of Babur, Sanga perceived that he would win the battle against Babur. However, Babur's tactics and the efficient use of artillery and cannons was no match for Rana Sanga. The Rajputs had no answer to the wheeling tactics of the Mughal cavalry. Babur's artillery had won the day for him; it had finally established the Mughal rule over India and eventually sealed the fate of the Rajput revival.

### *7.2.2 The Battle of Chanderi*

Chanderi was under the Muslim rule for a long time before being captured by Rana Sanga during one of his wars with Ibrahim Lodi. It was later given to Medini Rai, who had served Sultan Mahmud Khilji as prime minister. Medini Rai was one of Rana Sanga's most distinguished lieutenants. He assisted Rana Sanga in many campaigns against the Sultans of India. He fought along with Rana Sanga in the battle of Khanwa against Babur. After the battle Medini Rai returned to Chanderi. But Babur decided to make Chanderi his next objective.

Chanderi was a walled town. The citadel was built on a hill above the town, with an outer-fort below the hill. The citadel's water supply was lower down the hill, and was protected by a double line of walls that ran from the citadel down to the outer fort. The town's location made Babur's artillery less effective than normal. Babur's chief of ordnance, was unable to find a position above the height of the walls, and so work began on building a mound for the mortar. The rest of the army was ordered to build ladders and mantlets. Babur's next move was to send Araish Khan to meet with Medini Rao with a peace offer - if Medini Rao would surrender Chanderi then he would be rewarded with Shamsabad. This offer was refused.

The strategic planning and clever use of men and weapons by Babur made it clear to the defenders of Chanderi that the end of the siege was close. At this point they performed the ritual of Jauhar, killing their women before making one final desperate attack on Babur's men. The fall of the town had happened so quickly that Babur himself could not take part in the battle.

After the Battle of Chanderi, no Rajput ruler ever challenged the authority of Babur.

**Note****Intext Questions****7.3**

1. Who were the opposing forces at the Battle of Khanwa?
2. What was the outcome of the Battle of Khanwa?

**What You Have Learnt**

- Babur laid the foundations of what was known as the Mughal empire, by crushing the Lodi Dynasty in the First Battle of Panipat.
- Mughal Empire faced administrative as well as several other security challenges such as the threat from Rajputs.
- Ibrahim Lodi as the Sultan of Delhi had made several failed attempts to subdue the Rajputs of Mewar.
- Babur who attempted to engulf the Rajputana. The Battle of Khanwa was one such successful attempt which breached the stronghold of the Rajputs.
- Subsequently, the fortified town of Chanderi witnessed the final bloodshed which broke the spine of the Rajputs and allowed Babur to finally proceed to establish his empire.

**Terminal Exercises**

1. What military tactics were employed by Babur in the first battle of Panipat?
2. What were the battlefield tactics employed by Babur in the Battle of Chanderi?

**Answers to In Text Questions**

- 7.1**
1. It was one of the earliest battles involving the use of gunpowder firearms and field artillery in India.
  2. Ibrahim Lodi's harsh rule built discontent among many and hence the governor of Punjab Daulat Khan invited Babur to invade India.
- 7.2**
1. Tulghuma is a tactic aimed at dividing the whole army into small units and placing them on the flanks centre where as the Araba meant carts that were

## Module - II

### Military History of Medieval India



**Note**

### Battles of Mughal Army

placed in large numbers in rows facing the enemy and tied to each other with ropes.

2. Establishment of Mughal dynasty

**7.3** 1. Babur and Rana Sangha of Mewar

2. Babur won the battle

