

## △ Significance of the 3rd Battle of Panipatha:-

The Third Battle of Panipat took place on 14 January 1761 at Panipat, about 97 km (60 miles) north of Delhi, between the Maratha Empire and the invading Afghan army of the King of Afghans, Ahmad Shah Abdali, supported by three Indian allies – the Rohilla Najib-ud-daulah, Afghans of the Doab region, and Shuja-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Awadh. The Maratha army was led by Sadashivrao Bhau who was third in authority after the Chhatrapati (Maratha King) and the Peshwa (Maratha Prime Minister). The main Maratha army was stationed in Deccan with the Peshwa. Militarily, the battle pitted the artillery and cavalry of the Marathas against the heavy cavalry and mounted artillery (zamburak and jezail) of the Afghans and Rohillas led by Abdali and Najib-ud-Daulah, both ethnic Afghans. The battle is considered one of the largest and most eventful fought in the 18th century, and it has perhaps the largest number of fatalities in a single day reported in a classic formation battle between two armies.

The specific site of the battle itself is disputed by historians, but most consider it to have occurred somewhere near modern-day Kaalaa Aamb and Sanauli Road. The battle lasted for several days and involved over 125,000 troops. Protracted skirmishes occurred, with losses and gains on both sides. The forces led by Ahmad Shah Durrani came out victorious after destroying several Maratha flanks. The extent of the losses on both sides is heavily disputed by historians, but it is believed that between 60,000–70,000 were killed in fighting, while the numbers of injured and prisoners taken vary considerably. According to the single best eyewitness chronicle—the bakhar by Shuja-ud-Daulah's Diwan Kashi Raj—about 40,000 Maratha prisoners were slaughtered in cold blood the day after the battle. Grant Duff includes an interview of a survivor of these massacres in his History of the Marathas and generally corroborates this number. Shejwalkar, whose monograph Panipat 1761 is often regarded as the single best secondary source on the battle, says that "not less than 100,000 Marathas (soldiers and non-combatants) perished during and after the battle."

The result of the battle was the temporary halting of further Maratha advances in the north and destabilisation of their territories for roughly ten years. This period is marked by the rule of Peshwa Madhavrao, who is credited with the revival of Maratha domination following the defeat at Panipat. In 1771, ten years after Panipat, Mahadji Shinde led a large Maratha army into northern India in a punitive expedition which re-established Maratha domination in that area and punished refractory powers that had either sided with the Afghans, such as the Rohillas, or had shaken off Maratha domination after Panipat. But their success was short lived as the centralised government of the Peshwas was crippled by Madhavrao's untimely death at the age of 28, and infighting ensued among Maratha chiefs soon after, and they ultimately met their final blow at the hands of the British in 1818.