

Battle of Panipat (1526)

Written by Bhavesh Zaveri

The **first battle of Panipat** took place in [Northern](#) India, and marked the beginning of the [Mughal Empire](#)

. This was one of the earliest battles involving [gunpowder](#) firearms and [field artillery](#)

In 1526, the forces of Zahir Ud-din Muhammad [Babur](#) , the [Timurid](#) ruler of [Kabul](#) , defeated the much larger army of [Ibrahim Lodi](#)

, [Sultan of Delhi](#)

The battle was fought on 21 April near the small village of [Panipat](#) , in the present day Indian state of [Haryana](#) , an area that has been the site of a number of decisive battles for the control of Northern India since the twelfth century.

It is estimated that Babur's forces numbered about 8,000 men and he had between 20 to 24 pieces of field artillery. Lodi had around 130,000 men, though that number included camp followers, while the fighting force was around 100,000 to 110,000 men in total, along with at least 300 [war elephants](#) . Hindu Kings - Rajputs were neutral but few Tomar Rajputs of Gwalior fought for Ibrahim Lodi.

Advantage of Guns

It is generally held that Babur's guns proved decisive in battle, firstly because Ibrahim Lodi lacked any field artillery, but also because the sound of the cannon frightened Lodi's elephants, causing them to trample Lodi's own men. However a reading of the contemporary sources show that more than the gun, it was the tactics which helped in winning the day. The new war tactics introduced by Babur were the *tulughma* and the *araba*. *Tulughma* meant dividing the whole army into various units, viz. the Left, the Right and the Centre. The Left and Right divisions were further sub-divided into Forward and Rear divisions. Through this a small army could be used to surround the enemy from all the sides. the Centre Forward division was

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then provided with carts (*araba*

)which were placed in rows facing the enemy and tied to each other with animal hide ropes. Behind them were placed canons protected and supported by mantelets which could be used to easily manouvre the canons. These two tactics made Babur's artillery lethal. The guns and canons could be fired without any fear of being hit as they were shielded by the bullock carts which were held in place due to the hide ropes holding them together. the nozzle of the heavy canons could also be easily changed as they could be manouvred by the mantelets which were provided with wheels.

Ibrahim Lodi died on the field of battle, abandoned by his feudatories and generals (many of whom were [mercenaries](#)). Most of them changed their allegiance to the new master of Delhi.

The battle marked the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. The word *Mughal* means *Mongol* and alludes to the [Turkic](#) and [Mongol](#) origins of Babur and his officers, though the majority of his troops were of [Pathan](#), Indian and mixed [Central Asian](#) descent.