

UNIT 68 – UPSC - The Battle of Buxar

India's History : Modern India : Battle of Buxar: The British defeat Mir Kasim - 1764

Battle of Buxar



The company sent in relief troops from Fort St. George of the Madras headquarters. The troops led by Robert Clive and Admiral Watson retook Calcutta on 2nd January, 1757. The treaty of Alinagar was signed between the Nawab and the Company.

However Clive's military ambitions were on the ascendancy. His troops captured the French settlement of Chandernagore. He tempted Siraj's uncle Mir Jafar to ally with him in exchange for the Nawab's position. On 23rd June, 1757, the Company troops marched against Siraj. Betrayed by his own men Siraj was defeated in the Battle of Plassey, which is said to have lasted only a few hours. He was soon assassinated in his capital Murshidabad. From being traders, the Company turned kingmakers in Bengal and Mir Jafar was installed as the new Nawab. Clive got his pound of flesh from the Nawab in terms of 234,000 pounds and was awarded an annual salary of 30,000 pounds per year. This made him one of the richest Britons in the world. The company also secures rights over a large area south of Calcutta. Construction of a new Fort William was started and was completed in 16 years in 1773. These events led to the rise of Calcutta and the decline of Murshidabad.

It is said that the origins of Calcutta's most famous public festival - the Durga Puja can be traced to the victory of the British in Plassey. Raja Naba Kissen Deb, a financial backer of the Company, threw a party in honor of Robert Clive during the occasion of Durga Puja.



In 1760, Mir Jafar was succeeded by his son-in-law Mir Kasim. He handed over the districts of Chittagong, Midnapore and Burdwan to the Company. Robert Clive returned to England in the same year. Mir Kasim (reign:1760 to 1763), made an attempt to recover Bengal from the hands of British. In 1764, he enlisted the help of Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II and Nawab Shuja Ud Daulah of Oudh. But their troops were defeated in the Battle of Buxar by the company troops led by Major Hector Munro.

The armies of Mir Kasim and his allies Emperor Shah Alam II and Shuja-ud-daula, Nawab of Avadh, out-matched the British in number. To Mir Kasim's force of 40,000 Robert Clive's army commanded by Major Hector Munro had about 18,000 men. Early on, East India Company forces had to retreat across the river. But they were allowed to get away; the forces retreat across the river. But they were allowed to get away; the forces regrouped and through a naval force attacked through the river route. Mir Jafar also had trained Afghan cavalry and modern cannon manned by European mercenaries and led a charge on the Company's forces. However, the Company relied on its strength of sequenced shooting-its musketeers put up volley of gunfire. This coordinated gun shooting became very much a trademark of the British way of war over the next few decades. The sheer power of gunfire ensured that attacking cavalry scattered. The establishment of British paramountcy along with the diwani(revenue administration) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was the major significance of The battle of Buxar.