

UNIT 135 – UPSC - Ancient India - Alexander's Invasion

Ancient India History - Alexander's Invasion

India, 336 BC: Alexander has launched an attack on the Indian sub-continent.

[336 BC-323 BC]

The throne of Macedon in south-east Europe has been occupied by Alexander. Having defeated the last of the Persian rulers and conquered the Acharmenian empire, Alexander has vowed to conquer the Indian satraps. His army has crossed the Hindukush mountains and is strengthening its position near Kabul. He has captured the fortresses of Massaga and Aornos. Alexander is from a far off land called Greece. This is reportedly beyond the horizon.

The astonishing fact about this he is just 21 years old! It's known from well-placed sources that he is planning to launch a major attack on the Pauravan king across the Jhelum river. The Pauravan king is planning a massive counter attack.

Alexander defeats the Pauravan King

India, 326 BC: Alexander moves through the dense jungles of Ohind. Then, having crossed the Indus river and secured the help of the Ambhi, king of Taxila, Alexander marches on to the Jhelum. The Pauravan king with an army of 30,000 soldiers, horses and elephants provided fierce resistance but was eventually defeated.

When Alexander asked the Pauravan king to bow, the latter answered, "Act like a King". Impressed by the Pauravan king's efforts he has given him back his kingdom.



Alexander leaves India

Alexander has moved further. He concentrated on capturing the Chenab and Ravi plains upto Beas. This strategy of Alexander is typical of the great Greek rulers. Having conquered several tribes and satraps, Alexander has received many presents including brocades, gems, tigers, etc. He wanted to move further towards the Ganges valley, but has been stopped by his tired troops.

So with a heavy heart, Alexander has retraced his steps to the Jhelum. He has been severally wounded while storming one of the citadels of the powerful tribe of Malavas. Through the desserts of Baluchistan and with terrible sufferings, he has reached Babylon. And in 323 BC , not very long after his return to Babylon, Alexander dies.

"The hold of the great king [Alexander] on the Indian frontier slackened considerably in the fourth century BC. The arduous campaigns of Alexander restored the fallen fabric of imperialism and laid the foundation of a closer contact between India and the Hellenic world. The Macedonian empire in the Indus valley no doubt perished within a short time. But the Macedonian had welded the political atoms into one unit and thus paved the way for the permanent union under the Mauryas."



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