# Twitter Thread by Siddharth's Echelon

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**So today is 260th anniversary of Third Battle of Panipat and this is a thread to commemorate it.**
**-Starting**
**It all started with the death of Aurangzeb & end of Mughal-Maratha war of 27 years. After this, Marathas started showing their power in central India.**
**-Then came the**
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golden phase of Marathas under Peshwa Bajirao who spent more life in war camps than in his palace. Undefeated for 40 battles, he expanded Maratha boundaries crazily & whole India feared Maratha forces. His military formation was unparalleled & Marathas invested heavily
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in Artillery under him. Then after his death, his passion to expand the empire was kept alive by his sons, nephews and other Maratha Generals. The empire was now a confederation of equally powerful Maratha chiefs like Holkar, Shinde & others. They all came under banner of
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Maratha Chhatrapati & even expanded empire on their own in the name of Maratha king.
-Sons & Nephews of Bajirao- Elder son Balaji Bajirao became Peshwa and younger son Raghunathrao won Lahore, Delhi, Attock & most of Punjab in favour of Marathas. Muslim son of Bajirao
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kept in check several kingdoms from his stronghold in UP. You all have seen all these characters as kids in Bajirao Mastani. Nephew of Bajirao, Sadashivrao Bhau was a proven military strategist himself who imposed Maratha supremacy on Deccan kingdoms. Empire looked
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powerful, invincible and well structured. Till 1758, Marathas have defeated or allied with every ruler in India. Enemies were subjugated to pay them ransom tax. This heavy taxation on enemies was going to bite Marathas soon.
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Starting of war-
Durrani Empire under Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan was booming & he had conducted several raids on India to plunder the wealth. Traditional Afghan way to accumulate resources & wealth. What changed in 1758 was that now after Maratha victory in Punjab,
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Durrani Empire was directly sharing borders with Marathas. Durranis feared that Marathas might soon target Afghanistan too. This anxiousness of Ahmed Shah was felt by enemies of Marathas in subcontinent & they invited him to attack India to take Delhi or beyond. Ahmed Shah was
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ready and entered India by the 1759. War was still 2 years away from this event. In these two years, Marathas and Durranis looked for allies in India. Whereas Durranis' call was answered by almost big muslim rulers in India, even by some Hindu and Sikh lords too, Marathas
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struggled to gather allies due to various reasons.
Reasons- 1. Center of Marathas at Pune was 1000 km away from Delhi. All northern kingdoms feared that Afghans are closer than Marathas so they are an immediate threat.
2. Tax imposed by Marathas on kingdoms made them unhappy
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& they thought it is their chance to shrug off Maratha dominance over them.
So, Marathas were pretty much alone.

Sadashivrao Bhau who was son of Chimaji Appa (himself the best general in Bajirao's army) made a well thought plan to stop Afghans in north itself.
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This was the biggest mistake of Marathas. Marathas were best in rugged terrain of central India. They did not have much experience of plains & climate of North India, especially the Panipat which was the favourite place to fight for Afghans &

other raiders.
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Unfortunately this ignorance of climate & lack of allies made Marathas fight in Panipat which might not be their initial plan. Other than that, Durranis had numerical superiority over Maratha forces. War took place on 14 Jan 1761 and Marathas lost. It was the most
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bloodied battle in modern Indian history & almost 1-1.5 lac people were killed. Maratha casualty was way higher than Afghans as thousands of prisoners were killed in cold blood. Vishwanathrao, Jankoji Shinde, Dattaji Shinde, Shamsher Bahadur, Raghunathrao Bhau all died in the
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battle. After that Durranis took the control in north of the Sutlej and left south bank for Marathas. Why they did so? Why they didn't take Delhi when they won?
Reasons- Durranis were weak & vulnerable after fighting Marathas. They suffered heavy losses too. On the other
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hand, the main army of Marathas were moving very slowly with Balaji Bajirao towards north to support Sadashivrao Bhau's secondary Maratha army. Had the main Maratha army chose to avenge the death of their leaders, Marathas could have reached till Kabul. Durranis were no
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match in front of that. Ahmed Shah wanted to avoid this confrontation. Also, Ahmed Shah was surprised by the resistance he faced by Marathas. He knew that population of central India was way higher than Afghanistan & they could recruit more soldiers anytime.
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Aftermath- within 10 years Mahadji Shinde assembled a large army & took back all of lost Maratha territories. Ahmed Shah never returned to India. All the backstabbers were punished by Maratha forces. Marathas ruled for many decades unchallenged. Mughal emperor, Nizam,
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All Nawabs & Emirs paid tribute to Marathas. British too paid taxes to them. Sadly, internal struggle caused the fall of Marathas.

Lesson- even if you lose, fight in the way that the victor lives in your fear. Fear that the outcome could be different & he was just lucky to
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win. Also the lesson is that never fight in the area of your enemy. Plan to bring him in your territory. Tribute to all those great Marathas. Largest mobile empire of India, greatest warriors ever born in India. Source of inspiration & legends.
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