



LACHIT BORPHUKAN: LEADER IN NEWS

Introduction to Lachit Diwas

- Celebrated annually on November 24th to honor the birth anniversary of Lachit Borphukan, a legendary Assamese folk hero.
- Lachit Borphukan is revered for his military leadership during the 1671 Battle of Saraighat, where he led the Ahom forces to a decisive victory.
- Represents Assamese self-identity, symbolizing valor, intelligence, and courage.

Lachit Borphukan: A Brief Background

- Lachit Borphukan was the son of Momai Tamuli Barbarua, a respected warrior-statesman.
- Born on November 24, 1622, during a tumultuous period in Assam's history.
- He was appointed as one of the five Borphukans (administrators and military leaders) of the Ahom kingdom by King Charadhwaj Singha.
- Entrusted with administrative, judicial, and military responsibilities in the kingdom.

The Ahom-Mughal Conflicts (1615-1682)

- Between 1615 and 1682, the Mughal Empire, under Jahangir and Aurangzeb, sought to annex the Ahom kingdom.
- In 1662, Mughal forces led by Mir Jumla occupied parts of Ahom territory.
- From 1667 to 1682, the Ahoms, under leaders like Chakradhwaj Singha, launched counter-offensives to reclaim their lands.

Key Battles Led by Lachit Borphukan

- **Battle of Alaboi (1669)**
 - Occurred on August 5, 1669, in the Alaboi Hills near North Guwahati.
 - Mughals preferred traditional open-field battles, while Lachit used guerrilla tactics, leveraging the local terrain for strategic advantage.
 - Despite Lachit's initial successes in guerrilla warfare, the Mughals regained momentum with a large-scale counterattack, causing heavy losses to the Ahoms.
 - Approximately 10,000 Ahom soldiers were lost in the battle.
- **Battle of Saraighat (1671)**
 - Lachit Borphukan's most renowned military engagement.
 - Unlike Alaboi, Lachit lured the Mughal forces into a naval battle on the Brahmaputra River, an area where he excelled.



- Utilized a combination of frontal assaults and surprise pincer attacks, feigning a retreat to trap the Mughal fleet.
- His tactical brilliance led to a decisive Ahom victory, effectively thwarting Mughal ambitions in Assam.

Legacy of Lachit Borphukan

- Passed away in 1672, a year after the victory at Saraighat, from a prolonged illness.
- His leadership during the Battle of Saraighat, despite being severely ill, cemented his status as a legendary figure.
- Lachit's strategic acumen places him alongside other great Indian military leaders, such as Shivaji.
- To honor his legacy, the Lachit Borphukan gold medal was instituted in 1999, awarded to the best cadet at the National Defence Academy (NDA).



Significance of the Ahom Dynasty

- The Ahom kingdom ruled Assam and parts of the North-East from 1228 to 1826 AD, one of India's longest-reigning dynasties.
- At its height, the Ahom kingdom stretched from present-day Bangladesh to deep into Burma (Myanmar).
- The dynasty was known for its efficient administration and warrior culture, leaving a lasting cultural legacy in Assam.

Foundation and Evolution of the Ahom Kingdom

- Founded by Chao Lung Siu-Ka-Pha in the 13th century, establishing a prosperous, multi-ethnic kingdom in the fertile Brahmaputra Valley.
- Initially, the Ahoms had their distinct language and religious practices, which evolved over centuries, incorporating elements of Hinduism and the Assamese language.



Charaideo: The Historic Capital

- The first permanent capital of the Ahom kingdom, established by Chao Lung Siu-Ka-Pha.
- Holds historical importance and symbolic significance in Assamese culture.
- The name "Charaideo" derives from three Tai Ahom words:
 - **Che:** City or town
 - **Rai:** Shine or dazzle
 - **Doi:** Hill or mountain
- Hence, Charaideo means “a shining town situated on a hilltop.”

Key Takeaways

- **Strategic Military Leadership:** Lachit Borphukan’s use of guerrilla tactics and naval strategies showcases his exceptional military leadership during a crucial period in Assam's history.
- **Defender of Assamese Identity:** Lachit's defense against Mughal invasions solidified the unique cultural and political identity of Assam, free from Mughal dominance.
- **Ahom Kingdom’s Resilience:** The Ahom kingdom's enduring rule from the 13th to the 19th century exemplifies the strength and adaptability of its governance and military.
- **Enduring Cultural Legacy:** The influence of the Ahom dynasty persists in Assam's cultural consciousness, symbolized by Lachit Diwas and the historical importance of sites like Charaideo.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/upsc-current-affairs/upsc-essentials/knowledge-nugget-of-the-day-lachit-borphukan-lachit-diwas-upsc-9687258/>