

LACHIT BORPHUKAN

Lachit Borphukan was born on 24 November 1622 to Momai Tamuli Borbarua and Kunti Moran. His father was the commander-in-chief of the Ahom army. The Ahom kingdom was located in the Brahmaputra valley of eastern India. It was first established in 1228. He was the youngest son and the first Borbarua of upper-Assam and Commander-in-Chief of the Ahom army under King Pratap Singha. He was born in Charaideo to a Ahom family. He was chosen as Borphukan by Chakradhwaj Singha .

After being defeated by Lachit and his forces, the Mughals army and sailed up the Brahmaputra River from Dhaka towards Assam advancing to Guwahati. The Mughal Army under Ram Singh consisted of 30,000 infantry, 15,000 archers, 18,000 Turkish cavalry, 5,000 gunners and over 1000 cannons besides a large flotilla of boats. Ram Singh, the Mughal commander in chief failed to make any advance against the Assamese army during the first phase of the war. An arrow carrying a letter by Ram Singh implying that Lachit have been paid rupees one lakh and he should evacuate Guwahati was fired into the Ahom camp, which eventually reached the Ahom king, Chakradhwaj Singha. Although the king started to doubt Lachit's sincerity and patriotism, his prime minister Atan Buragohain convince the King this was just a trick against Lachit.

During the last stage of the Battle of Saraighat, when the Mughals attacked by the river in Saraighat, the Assamese soldiers began to lose their will to fight. Some elements retreated. Though Lachit was seriously ill he boarded a boat and with seven boats advanced against the Mughal fleet. He said "If you (the soldiers) want to flee, flee. The king has given

me a task here and I will do it well. Let the Mughals take me away. You report to the king that his general fought well following his orders". His soldiers rallied and a desperate battle ensued on the river Brahmaputra. Lachit Borphukan was victorious. The Mughals forced to retreat from Guwahati. The Mughal Commander-in-Chief acknowledged his defeat by the Ahom soldiers and the Ahom Commander-in-chief Lachit Borphukan, writing he wrote, "Glory to the king! Glory to the counsellors! Glory to the commanders! Glory to the country! One single individual leads all the forces! Even I Ram Singh, being personally on the spot, have not been able to find any loophole and an opportunity!"

Lachit Borphukan died in 25 April 1672 (aged 49) Jorhat, Assam, India His remains lie in rest at the Lachit Maidam constructed in the same year by King Udayaditya Singha at Hollongapara 16 km from Jorhat.

On 24 November each year, Lachit Divas is celebrated statewide in Assam to commemorate the heroism of Lachit Borphukan and the victory of the Assamese army at the Battle of Saraighat. Lachit Divas is celebrated to promote the ideals of Lachit Borphukan – the legendary general of Assam's history. The best cadet from the National Defence Academy is awarded the Lachit Borphukan gold medal. It was first instituted in 1999 following an announcement by General VP Malik saying the medal would inspire defence personnel to emulate Borphukan's heroism and sacrifices.

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