

# UDALGURI COLLEGE

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# LACHIT BORPHUKAN



Lachit Borphukan was born on November 24, 1622 A.D. in Charaideo, the first capital of the Ahom kingdom, located in present day Assam, India. He belongs to the family of Sekuti Aka Momai Tamuli and mother Nageshwari Aideo. He spent his childhood mostly with Momai Tamuli Barbareua and grew up acquiring proficiency in humanities, indigenous scriptures of Ahom's and warfare which made him competent enough to be an able leader and brave.

Lachit Borphukan loved his country more than his uncle that he beheaded Momai Tamuli due to his negligence duty on the spot saying "My uncle is not greater than my country". This incident had happened right before the Saraghat battle and this immortalized his name in the history of Assam.

He was known and remembered as a great leader and brave warrior who saved Assam from Mughals several times. His vital role of protecting Assam had been started when he was appointed as Borphukan, the governor of lower assam by Chakradhaj Singha and he was entrust-

sted with the civil and military administration of Ahom kingdom. As an army officer he had also fought against Mir Jumla's forces "at the side of the river Tilao (Lohit) who had attack Ahom kingdom during the reign of Pratap Singha.

Chakradhvaj Singha became the Ahom king after Jayadhvaj Singha and his Ahom name was Supungmung. He renewed the war with Mughals as an ambition to regain the lost territory from Mughal and in default to pay indemnity. Chakradhvaj commanded Lachit Borphukan to prepare Ahom army to set out to wrest Gwahati from the Muhammadans. As directed, in August 1667 A.D., Lachit advanced towards Gwahati and on their way, occupied the Mughal fort's of Banbari on the north bank of Brahmaputra and of Kajali on the south. He constructed a fort on the southern side of the river Barnadi, which was taken by the Mughals. They attacked the fort of Stakheili on November 4, 1667 A.D. Soon afterwards the Mughal forces under the command of Syed Saleh and Syed Firoj were imprisoned and sent to Garhgaon while a large number of common soldiers were ruthlessly slaughtered.

As a result of this success, the Ahom king regained the possession of Kamrup, extended the western boundary of the kingdom up-to the river Manaha and got over the humiliation of having surrendered to Mir Jumla. This news highly delighted king Chakradhvaj Singha. Guwahati was chosen as the headquarters of the Borphukan. Pandu and Saraghat were strongly fortified and prompt arrangement were made for the administration of the conquered territory.

The news of the defeat of the Mughal soldiers had disappointed Aurangzeb in December 1667. As to get revenge he appointed Raja Ram Singh of Amber to command the imperial army who was accompanied by Rashid Khan the former thanadar of Guwahati. The Borphukan was planning to defend while Ram Singh was on his way. Lachit with his soldiers were not fully prepared that he offered peace instead of battle in order to gain time. Ram Singh demanded to restore the areas once settled by the treaty of 1639 and to release the mughal commanders of the last war, in default of which the Borphukan was challenge to have "a fight for an hour". But this was not done well which

resulted Ram Singh to encamped at Hajo. The Ahom force were not yet fully prepared to resist mughals and Lachit was still busy in the construction of a rampart at Saraihat, along which to raise a blockade against the enemy.

On the following day the Mughal army reached near Saraihat, but they had to give up, in the face of this invisible blockade, the idea of crossing the river to the south and decided to advance towards Darang. Although in two battles fought on the way the Ahom suffered initial defeats, soon afterwards they overthrew the mughals in a naval encounter. The Mughals also failed in their attempt to occupy the Assamese fort at Rang-Mahal and had to retreat to Hajo. Ram Singh expelled Rashid Khan from the Mughal camp due to his irresponsible. The next encounter took place at Sualkuchi, where the Assamese defeated the mughals both in land and water.

### Battle of Alaboi.

The Mughals started to concentrate their army near the Alaboi hill in the vicinity of Dalbari. There was a vast plain in front of the Mughal camp and

the level lands touched the Brahmaputra on one side and the Sessa river on the other. Lachit Borphukan wanted to avoid an open encounter with the Rajput cavalry, but, by the king's order, he had to proceed. This time Lachit was failed.

The wars were suspended for a while due to tired of war in both sides. Soon after the battle of Slaboi, Chakradhvaj Singha died in 1669. He was succeeded by his brother, who in his accession assumed the Hindu name Udayaditya Singha and Ahom name Seemyatpha (1669-1673).

### Battle of Saraihat (March 1671),

As negotiation for peace continued, Ram Singh again demand to restore old boundary but there was no positive response that he advanced to Sitamari. The new king Udayaditya Singha also sent an army of 20,000 soldiers under the Atan Bevihagohain from Chamdhara to Saraihat. Due to narrow opening in the ~~rampart~~ rampart at Antharubali sandbank located between Ghatkuli and Bharalumukh. Ram Singh steered his boats towards the breach, but the breach being repaired in the meantime, the Mughals crossed over to Twia on the north bank. The Assamese then moored their

boats at Aswakranta. The Borphukan was very ill at that time and demoralized his soldiers. But the Borphukan who was watching the whole situation from his sick-bed at his archery store, witnessed the advanced of the Mughal fleet from Jaria soon after the battle started, and at this crucial moment, he, in spite of his illness, rushed into the thick of the Mughal fleet. He had with him six war-vessels. This unprecedent attack of the Borphukan restored the courage of the retreating Assamese soldiers who came back and fell upon the enemy. As a result, Mughals suffered immense losses of men and materials and had to retreated with ignominy and disaster.

This battle, known in the history as the battle of Saraihat, brought a decisive victory for the Assamese. The defeat of Mughals in Saraihat battle bring their power to down and they never dare to attack assam again. The Assam on their part consolidated their extension up-to the river Manaha. Hadira opposite to Goalpara now became the frontier outpost of the kingdom of Assam.

Lachit Borphukan didn't long survive. About one year after the battle of

Saraighat, in age 49 age, he breathed his last on April 25, 1672 A.D. His way of fighting in ill condition in the Saraighat battle signed him as the legendary victorious. As to mark Lachit Borphukan's birth anniversary - "Lachit Diwas" is celebrate on November 24 in every year in Assam, India. In addition to this, Lachit Borphukan Gold Medal is award to the best cadet from the National Defence Academy to inspire defence personal to emulate Borphukan's heroism and sacrifices. In Guwahati there is 35-feet-tall statue of Army general Lachit Borphukan in the middle of the Brahmaputra, which was inaugurated by former chief minister Tarun Gogoi in 2016. The statue is also found in Jorhat, Assam, India.

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