

Lachit Barphukan – National Hero of Assam

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Lachit Barphukan was born on 24th November 1622 who became the General of the Ahom army and is famously known for his role in defeating the mighty Mughals in the battle of Saraighat in 1671. 24th November is therefore celebrated in Assam as “Lachit Divas” to commemorate the heroic feat of Lachit Barphukan and the historic victory of the Ahom army over the mighty Mughal forces when Aurangzeb was the emperor. In honour of Lachit Barphukan, the Best Cadet of National Defence Academy is awarded the Lachit Barphukan Gold Medal every year since 1999. Besides, the Tai-Ahom Yuba Parishad also has instituted the Mahabir Lachit Award which is to honour notable persons.

Lachit was the youngest son of the Momai Tamuli Barbarua, the first of the Barbrau in Upper Assam and the Commander-in-Chief of the Ahom army when Pratap Singha was the king. Lachit was appointed as the Barphukan by King Chakradhwaj Singha. Lachit died soon after the famous Battle of Saraighat due to illness.

The Mughal forces attacked Guwahati under Ram Singh-I leading a formidable force of 30,000 infantry, 15,000 archers, 18,000 Turkish cavalry, 5,000 gunners, and more than one thousand canons besides a huge number of boats. The Mughal army sailed from Dhaka with the ambition to capture the Ahom kingdom but this was met with defeat. According to a legend, Ram Singha tried to mislead the people and the king Chakradhwaj Singha that Lachit was already bribed and was vacating Guwahati soon. The king at first was suspicious but his Prime Minister, Atan Bargohain convinced him that it was only a strategy of the Mughals. Lachit took full command of the Ahom army and dealt a crushing defeat on the invaders, thus saving the Ahom kingdom and registering a historical legacy of defeating the mighty Mughals in the Ahom soil. The Mughals with such a big force underestimated the patriotic resolve and battle strategy of the Ahom forces how to fight in the Brahmaputra river and paid the price. The Ahom forces defeated the Mughals not once but seventeen times! The Ahoms remained unconquered by the Mughal Empire.