

A write up on the 400th Birth Anniversary of Assam most celebrated warrior & leader " LachitBorphukan."

Introduction :-

Lachit Borphukan was a general of the Ahom Kingdom who was successful in resisting the imperial expansion of the Mughal Empire in North East India during the late 1600s. The great warrior of Ahom Kingdom period in Assam, Lachit Borphukan was born in 24th November 1622 at Charaideo in Assam. He was the son of Momai Tamuli Borbarua & Kunti Moran and was the commander in-chief of Ahom army during the reign of Pratap Singha. The Ahom Kingdom was located in the Brahmaputra valley of North Eastern India which was first established in 1228. The Ahom Kingdom was a late medieval kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley in Assam. This kingdom is well known for the maintenance of its sovereignty for nearly 600 years and successfully resisting Mughal expansion in northeast India. This kingdom was established by Chow-lung Su-ka-phas, Tai Prince from Mong Mao. It began as a mong in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra based on wet-rice agriculture. The kingdom expanded suddenly under Suhungmung in the 16th century and became multi-ethnic in character, thus, casting a profound effect on the political and social life of the entire Brahmaputra valley. The kingdom became weaker with the rise of the Moamoria rebellion, and subsequently fell to repeated Burmese invasions of Assam. The Kingdom was repeatedly assailed upon by Turks and Afghans of the Delhi Sultanate and later the Mughal Empire. The Mughal- Ahom conflict first began in 1615 and continued afterwards. In between Lachit Borphukan grew up and completing his education in humanities and military strategies. Initially Lachit was given the responsibility of serving as Soladharabarua, i.e. the private secretary of Ahom King. Other offices held by Lachit Borphukan before his appointment as Borphukan included superintendent of the stable of royal Horses, Commander of Strategic simulgarh Fort and superintendent of the Royal household guards (DolakaxariaBarua) for king Chakradhaj Singha. He is known for his leadership in the 1671 Battle of Saraighat thwarted a drawn-out attempt by Mughal forces under the command of Ramsing and take over kingdom. The soldiers of Ahom Army were mainly Piak community. King Chakradhaj Singha selected Lachit Borphukan to lead forces of the kingdom of Ahom to liberate Gauhati from Mughal occupation. At that time Ahom Army were divided into two parts namely north part – AtanBuragohain and Southern part – Lachit Borphukan. Lachit raised the army and recovered Gauhati from Mughal by successfully defeating the latter during the battle of Saraighat. It was a naval battle fought in 1671 between the Mughal Empire lead by the Kachwaha king Raja Ramsingh and the Ahom kingdom led by LachitBorphukan on the Brahmaputra river at Saraighat. In this battle Mughals were defeated by the weaker Ahom army with the brilliant use of the terrain cleaver diplomatic negotiation guerrilla tactics military inelegance and by exploiting sole weakness of the Mughal navy. Knowing fully well that Ahom forces would be defeated if their commander was removed, Ram Singh resorted to subterfuge.

An arrow carrying a letter by Ram Sing was fired into the Ahom Camp, it later reached ChakradhwajSingha. The letter stated that Lachit had been paid 1 lakh rupees to evacuate Guwahati. Furious that his commander was allegedly in negotiations with the enemy, the king started doubting his sincerity, but his Prime Minister AtanBuragohain convinced him that this was a trick by the Mughals to make Chakradhwaj Singh dismiss the commander who successfully fought the Mughals so far. Bottomline, despite several tricks played by the Mughals, LachitBorphukan emerged victorious. The Mughals were forced to retreat from Guwahati. The Mughals were pursued to the Manasriver, the Ahom kingdom's western boundary. The Borphukan instructed his men not to attack the retreating army.

History shall remain incomplete without the mention of Lachit Borphukan strategy by using Guwahati as battle field due to its hilly terrain. Once Lachit Borphukan fell ill. On the other hand, he was informed by the Ahom Kingdom intelligence that Mughal Army were on their way to Saraighat in order to capture Guwahati. Thus, Lachit Borphukan ordered his uncle (Mumayak) to construct one high barrier/ Garh (embankment) on the bank of Brahmaputra to resist the incoming of the Mughal forces. That night, Lachit Borphukan came to the site to monitor the progress of the work. He was astonished to find out that most of the workers had fallen asleep, keeping the construction work half done. On quarry, Mama told Lachit that due to continuous work, workers were tired & taken rest. On hearing this, Lachit Borphukan at once open his Sword (Hengdang) and detached the neck of His Mama from shoulder saying that "*Deshot koi Mumoi Dangar Nohoi*". Looking at this terrible situation every worker started resuming their pending work with do or die position and completed the Garh within that night. Thus, Lachit Borphukan had set an example of patriotism towards one's motherland.

LachitBorphukan died in 1672. His remains lie in rest at the Lachit Maidaan constructed in the same year by King Udayaditya Singha at Hoolungapara 16km from Jorhat.

Conclusion :-

On the eve of 400th Birth Anniversary of the Real & Holistic Hero of Assam, Lachit Borphukan, we shall always remember the brave leader who sacrificed for his motherland & set an instant example of a true leader which could have been found in the History.

LEGACY OF LACHIT BORPHUKAN

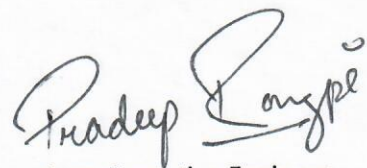
1. On February 25, president Ram Nath Kovind kick started the 400th birth anniversary celebrations of the 17th century ahom general Lachit Borphukan and laid the foundation for a war memorial and a 150-foot bronze statue of the commander in Assam. Along with the statue, the memorial will also feature a 100-ft-long 'Hengdeng' (Ahom sword).

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2. 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.
3. Lachit Divas is celebrated to promote the ideals of Lachit Borphukan – the legendary general of Assam's history.
4. The best cadet from the National Defense 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 Barphukan's heroism and sacrifices.

Joi Aai Asom :

Jai Hind.



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