



Lachit Borphukan

For Prelims: Lachit Borphukan, Ahom Kingdom.

For Mains: Ahom Kingdom, Medieval Indian History.

Why in News?

Indian President will inaugurate a year-long celebration of the **400th birth anniversary of Lachit Borphukan**.

- Earlier, the Prime Minister **called 17th century Ahom general Lachit Borphukan a symbol of India's "Atmanirbhar military might"**.

Who was Lachit Borphukan?

- Born on 24th November, 1622, Borphukan **was known for his leadership in the Battle of Saraighat, 1671** in which an attempt by Mughal forces to capture Assam was thwarted.
- He was the **inspiration behind strengthening India's naval force and revitalising inland water transport** and creating infrastructure associated with it due to his great naval strategies.
- The **Lachit Borphukan gold medal** is awarded to the best cadet from the National Defence Academy.
 - The medal was instituted in 1999 to inspire defence personnel to emulate Borphukan's heroism and sacrifices.
- He **died on 25th April, 1672**.

What was the Battle of Saraighat?

- The battle of Saraighat was **fought on the banks of the Brahmaputra in Guwahati in 1671**.
- It is considered as one of the greatest naval battles on a river which resulted in the victory of Ahoms over the Mughals.

What was Ahom Kingdom?

- **Founder:**
 - **Chaolung Sukapha was a 13th century ruler who founded the Ahom kingdom** that ruled Assam for six centuries. The Ahoms ruled the land **till the province was annexed to British India in 1826 with the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo**.
- **Political Setup:**
 - Ahoms created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the **bhuiyans (landlords)**.
 - The Ahom state depended upon forced labour. Those forced to work for the state were

called **paiks**.

▪ **Society:**

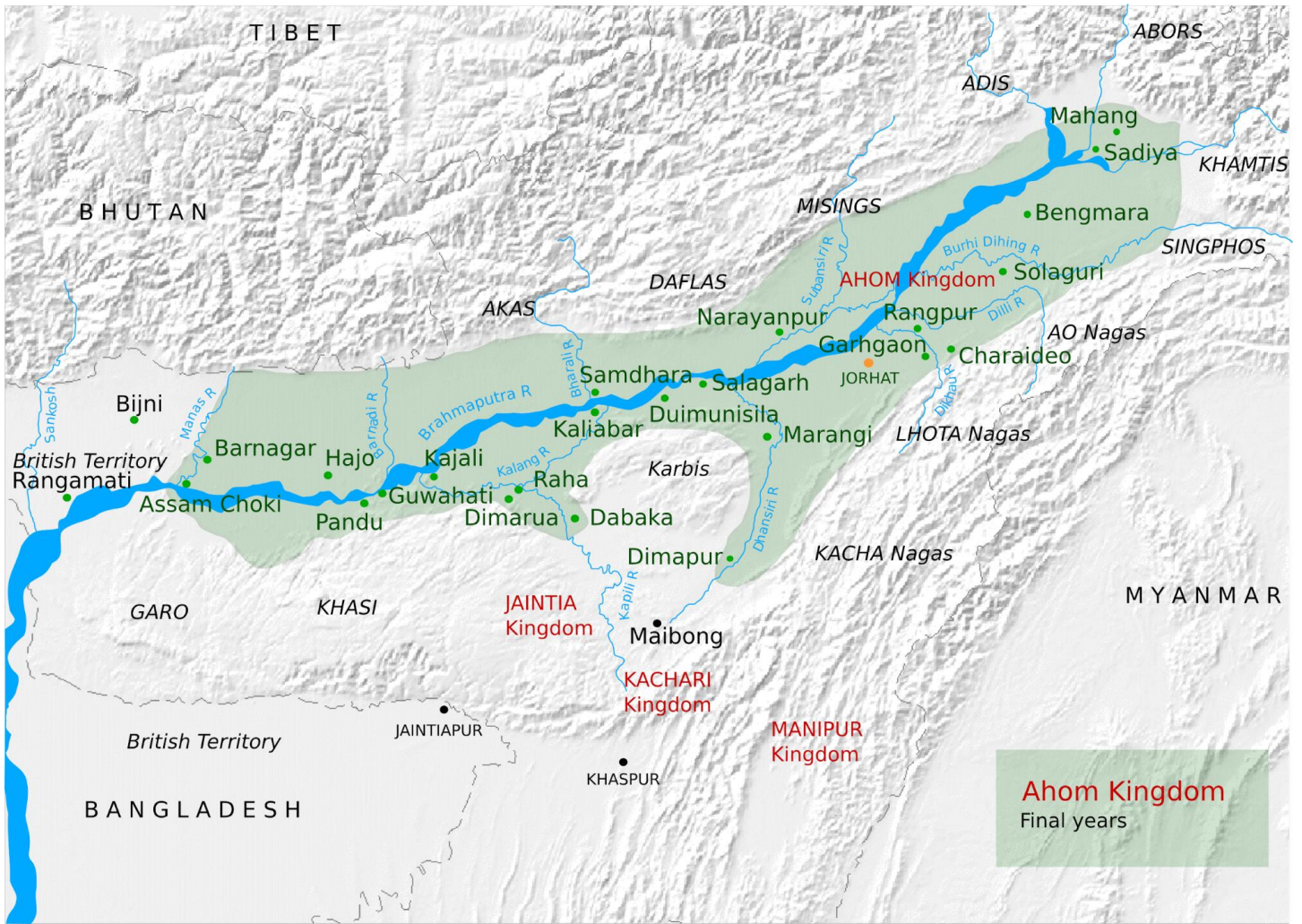
- Ahom society was **divided into clans or khels**. A khel often controlled several villages.
- Ahoms worshipped their own tribal gods, yet they accepted the Hindu religion and the Assamese language.
 - However, the Ahom kings did not completely give up their traditional beliefs after adopting Hinduism.
- Intermarriage with local also **increased assimilation processes of Ahoms** in Assamese culture.

▪ **Art and Culture:**

- Poets and scholars were given land grants and theatre was encouraged.
- Important works of Sanskrit were translated into the local language.
- **Historical works, known as buranjis**, were also written, first in the Ahom language and then in Assamese.

▪ **Military Strategy:**

- The **Ahom king was the supreme commander of the state as well as the Military**. The Ahom king himself led the state forces in the time of wars. The Paiks were the main army of the state.
 - There were **two types of Paiks** i.e. serving and nonserving. The non-serving Paiks constituted a standing militia which could be mobilized at a short notice by the kheldar (an expert military organizer).
- The **full contingent of the Ahom Army** consisted of infantry, navy, artillery, elephantry, cavalry and spies. The main war weapons consisted of bows and arrows, swords, javelins, discus, guns, match-locks and cannons.
- The Ahoms **sent spies to the enemy's camp** to study the strength and the war strategies of the enemies before leading an expedition.
- The Ahom soldiers were **experts in guerilla fighting**. Sometimes they allowed the enemies to enter the country, then cut off their communications and attack them in front and rear.
- **Few important forts:** Chamdhara, Saraighat, Simlagarh, Kaliabar, Kajali and Pandu.
- They **also learnt the technique of constructing boatbridges in the Brahmaputra**.
- Above all, the mutual understanding among the civil and military wings, unity among the nobles always worked as strong weapons of the Ahoms.



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