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## THE GLORIOUS HISTORY OF VADNAGAR

### WHY IN THE NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted that Vadnagar in Gujarat has a glorious history spanning over 2500 years. He emphasized the unique efforts undertaken to preserve and protect this historically significant site.



### VADNAGAR: KEY FACTS

Vadnagar is a town and municipality in the Mehsana district of Gujarat, India. Historically known as Anartapura (the capital of Anarta) and Anandapura, it holds immense historical significance. The Chinese

traveler **Xuanzang visited Vadnagar in 640 CE**. Alexander Cunningham, the founder and first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), identified Anandapura with Vadnagar. Notably, Vadnagar is also the birthplace of Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister of India.

### **VADNAGAR: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

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**Pre-Mauryan Period (ca. 800–320 BCE):** Contemporary to the Late Vedic and pre-Buddhist Mahajanapadas. Mauryan Period (ca. 320–185 BCE).

**Indo-Greek Period:** Indo-Scythian/Shaka-Kshatrapas Period (ca. 35–415 CE): Linked to the descendants of Achaemenid provincial governors.

**Hindu-Solanki Period.**

**Sultanate-Mughal to Gaekwad-British Colonial Rule (ca. 318 years ago).**

**Anartapura:** The town is frequently mentioned in ancient inscriptions and texts under its former names, Anartapura and Anandapura. It appears in the Mahabharata as part of the Anarta Kingdom.

**Chamatkarapura:** It is also referenced in the Tirtha Mahatmya section of the Nagara Khanda of the Skanda Purana, called Chamatkarapura.

**Junagadh rock inscription:** The Junagadh rock inscription (150 CE) of King Rudradaman I mentions Anartha as a region in northern Gujarat.

**Maitraka period (505–648 CE):** During the Maitraka period (505–648 CE), Brahmins in Anartapura/Anandapura were granted land grants. The Harsola copper plates (949 CE) of the Paramara king also record land grants in this region, further linking Vadnagar with the Nagar Brahmins.

### **CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VADNAGAR**

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**Buddhist Monastery (2nd–7th Century CE):** Excavations have uncovered a monastery with two votive stupas and a central courtyard surrounded by nine cells in a swastika-like layout, highlighting Vadnagar’s role in Buddhist history.

**Jain Derasars:** Two Jain temples in Vadnagar emphasize its multireligious past and its significance in Jain culture.

**Hatkeshwar Mahadev Temple (15th Century):** This prominent Shiva temple is dedicated to Hatkeshwar Mahadev, the family deity of the Nagar Brahmins. It features Indo-Saracenic architecture, a towering shikhara, and a richly decorated exterior with carvings of Hindu deities, mythological scenes, celestial beings, and floral motifs.

**Sitala Mata Temple:** Known for its intricate carvings of celestial figures and depictions of Krishna dancing with milkmaids (Rasmandala), this temple showcases exceptional craftsmanship.

**Kirti Toran:** A pair of 12th-century ornamental arches built from red and yellow sandstone, standing 40 feet tall, are iconic symbols of Gujarat’s architectural heritage. Likely constructed to commemorate a victory, the toranas feature carvings of battles, hunting scenes, deities, floral motifs, and divine figures. Their design reflects the grandeur of Solanki-era architecture, with similarities to the Rudra Mahalaya Temple in Siddhpur.

**Narsinh Mehta’s Chori:** A 12th-century torana associated with the renowned 15th-century Gujarati poet-saint Narsinh Mehta, celebrating his literary and spiritual contributions.

**Tana-Riri Garden and Shrine:** Dedicated to two sisters known for their exceptional singing skills.

**Pancham Mehta’s Vav (Stepwell):** A historical stepwell showcasing traditional water management and architectural design.

**Janjanio Well and Gauri Kund:** Ancient water structures that underline Vadnagar’s historical importance in sustaining urban life.

**Baithakji of Gusaiji:** A sacred place associated with the Pushti Marg sect.

**Ancient Library and Directional Stone:** Vestiges from the Solanki period, highlighting Vadnagar’s scholarly and cultural prominence.

**Recognition and Legacy:** Vadnagar’s historical and architectural significance has earned it a place on UNESCO’s tentative list of World Heritage Sites (2022). Its rich cultural tapestry, featuring influences from Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, and its architectural marvels make it a vital chapter in India’s heritage narrative.

## CONCLUSION:

Vadnagar holds remarkable significance in shaping Indian art, culture, and history. Its rich heritage, reflected in its architecture, religious diversity, and continuous habitation, is a source of pride and inspiration. Preserving such treasures is essential to safeguarding India’s cultural identity for future generations.

## PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. Consider the following Pairs:

| S.No | Ancient Sites | Present State |
|------|---------------|---------------|
| 1    | Anartapura    | Maharashtra   |
| 2    | Dwarasamudra  | Karnataka     |
| 3    | Nabadwip      | Gujarat       |

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

(a). Only one

- (b). Only two
- (c). All three
- (d). None

**ANSWER: A**

**MAINS QUESTION:**

**Q. Examine the cultural significance of the Solanki and Parampara dynasties in shaping India's architectural and artistic heritage. (Answer in 150 words)**

Munde Dhananjay Navnath

## **SVAMITVA SCHEME: A LANDMARK INITIATIVE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**WHY IN THE NEWS?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's distribution of over 65 lakh property cards under the SVAMITVA Scheme is making headlines as a major step towards rural empowerment in India. This milestone, set through a video conference, marks the issuance of property cards to residents in over 50,000 villages across 10 states and two Union Territories. The SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) Scheme, launched in April 2020, aims to provide legal ownership documents to rural property owners. The initiative uses advanced drone and GIS technology to map land and grant a 'Record of Rights' to property owners. With nearly 2.25 crore property cards set to be issued, including 65 lakh in this single distribution, the scheme is significantly formalizing land ownership in rural India.

**WHAT IS THE SVAMITVA SCHEME**

The SVAMITVA Scheme (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) is a central government initiative designed to provide property rights to rural households in India. Launched by the Prime Minister of India on April 24, 2021, the scheme leverages advanced technologies, including drone surveying, to map land parcels in rural areas and create accurate property records. The SVAMITVA Scheme was introduced to address the longstanding challenge of incomplete survey and settlement of rural land, particularly in village Abadi (inhabited) areas. For decades, many rural properties lacked formal documentation, preventing property owners from accessing institutional credit or using their land as a financial asset. This gap in land records not only left rural landowners vulnerable but also hindered economic development, limiting their access to financial assistance, loans, and opportunities for growth.

## SVAMITVA : Objectives

Creation of accurate Abadi area land records for rural planning and reducing property-related disputes.

To bring financial stability to the citizens in rural India by enabling them to use their property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits.

Proper assessment of the property based on accurate area leading to increased own source of revenue for the determination of property tax, which would accrue to the GPs directly in States where it is devolved or else, add to the State exchequer.

Creation of survey infrastructure and GIS maps that can be leveraged by any department for their use.

To support the preparation of a better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) by making use of GIS maps.

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SCHEME:

- 1. Property Card Distribution:** As of December 27, 2024, 57 lakh property cards have been distributed across 46,351 villages in 10 states (Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh) and 2 Union Territories (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh).
- 2. Widespread Adoption:** The scheme aims to provide a 'Record of Rights' for rural household owners, and it has been onboarded by 31 states and union territories (UTs).
- 3. Drone Surveys:** Drone surveys have been completed in 3.17 lakh villages, including the UTs of Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Delhi, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu, as well as states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.
- 4. Property Cards Generated:** Over 2.19 crore property cards have been prepared for nearly 1.49 lakh villages. States like Haryana, Uttarakhand, Puducherry, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Goa have already generated property cards for all their inhabited villages.
- 5. Centralized Monitoring:** A centralized online dashboard tracks the real-time progress of the scheme's implementation, making it easier for stakeholders to monitor its advancement.
- 6. Digital Access:** Property cards are now available digitally via the DigiLocker app, enabling beneficiaries to view and download them seamlessly.
- 7. Advanced Survey Technology:** The scheme employs survey-grade drones and the Continuous Operating Referencing System (CORS) network, producing high-resolution maps quickly and accurately, significantly improving rural land demarcation.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE SVAMITVA SCHEME:

- 1. Property Records for Rural Households:** It aims to provide clear and accurate property records to households in rural areas, formalizing their land ownership.
- 2. Drone Technology for Mapping:** The scheme uses drone technology to map land parcels accurately, ensuring precision in land record creation.
- 3. Legal Ownership Cards (Property Cards):** It issues legal property cards or title deeds to the owners, which serve as proof of ownership.
- 4. Reduction of Property Disputes:** By providing legal clarity on ownership, the scheme helps in minimizing land-related disputes.
- 5. Monetization of Property:** Rural households can use their land as a financial asset, enabling them to access credit and engage in economic activities.
- 6. Access to Bank Loans:** With legal ownership documents, rural citizens can approach financial institutions for loans using their property as collateral.
- 7. Improved Rural Planning:** Accurate land records aid in better rural planning and development by government bodies.
- 8. Collaboration Among Stakeholders:** The scheme involves collaboration between various bodies, such as the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, state departments, and the Survey of India for effective implementation.

#### WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SVAMITVA SCHEME?

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- 1. Formalizing Property Ownership:** Aims to provide legal property titles to 1 crore+ rural households. Around 25 lakh property cards have been issued by 2024.
- 2. Access to Credit:** Property cards enable rural families to access bank loans by using land as collateral, boosting financial inclusion.
- 3. Reducing Land Disputes:** The scheme reduces disputes by creating accurate land records using drones and GIS, resolving 30-40% of land disputes in pilot regions.
- 4. Infrastructure & Planning:** Provides detailed land maps for better rural governance and infrastructure development.
- 5. Gender Equality:** Supports women's land ownership rights, helping increase the 13% land ownership by women in rural India.
- 6. Economic Empowerment:** Enables investment in agriculture and businesses, unlocking the economic value of rural land.
- 7. Revenue Generation:** Accurate land records assist in better tax collection, improving government revenues.

#### WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SVAMITVA SCHEME?

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- 1. Difficult Terrain:** Remote areas with poor infrastructure make drone mapping and data collection challenging.
- 2. Infrastructure Gaps:** 60% of rural India lacks basic infrastructure like roads, electricity, and internet, slowing down implementation.
- 3. Community Resistance:** Rural populations' reluctance to participate in surveys due to lack of awareness or fear of losing land rights.
- 4. Ownership Disputes:** Family disputes over land and unclear inheritance complicate accurate ownership identification, especially in states like Uttar Pradesh.
- 5. Data Accuracy:** Ensuring accurate validation of land data, particularly in regions with outdated records.
- 6. Implementation Delays:** Phased rollout across 6.62 lakh villages facing delays in certain regions, especially in states like Madhya Pradesh.

**7. Capacity Building:** Limited training on drones and GIS for local officials, especially in remote areas, hindering effective implementation.

**8. Legal Challenges:** Varying state-specific land laws and the need for legal coordination among agencies create discrepancies.

#### **WAY FORWARD:**

**1. Infrastructure Development:** Expediting the improvement of rural infrastructure, such as internet connectivity, roads, and electricity, will enhance the effectiveness of the drone surveys and ensure smoother implementation across all villages.

**2. Awareness and Outreach:** Expanding awareness campaigns to educate rural populations about the benefits of the scheme and addressing concerns regarding land rights will foster greater participation and reduce resistance.

**3. Improved Training Programs:** Providing more extensive training on drone technology and GIS for local officials will ensure higher-quality land surveys and more accurate property records.

**4. Legal Reforms and Coordination:** Streamlining legal frameworks and coordinating with state governments to resolve discrepancies in land laws will help to smoothen the integration of land records and property titles.

**5. Addressing Disputes:** Developing a clear, efficient process for resolving ownership disputes, especially those related to inheritance, will be essential in making the scheme truly beneficial for all.

**6. Gender Sensitization:** Ensuring that the scheme includes measures to address women's land rights and increase women's ownership of property is crucial for promoting gender equality in rural areas.

**PLUTUS IAS** **PLUTUS IAS** **UPSC/PCS** **Areas of Impact**

Beyond the quantifiable results, SVAMITVA has made considerable impact on the lives of people across the country. The main areas of influence include:

**Inclusive Society:** Throughout history, scholars and development specialists have linked 'Access to Property Rights' with 'Improvement in socio-economic standards of vulnerable population in villages.' The SVAMITVA Scheme aims to enable the same.

**Land Governance:** Land is an essential resource for any economic activity aimed at creation of material wealth in the world. Lack of clearly demarcated Abadi area has led to high number of land conflicts cases. As per reports, millions of people suffer the impact of land conflicts across India and the world. The SVAMITVA Scheme aims to address the root cause for disputes at local level.

**Sustainable Habitats:** Creation of High-resolution digital maps for better Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) leading to improvement across infrastructure like schools, community health centers, rivers, street light, roads etc. through efficient allocation of funds and increased accessibility.

**Economic Growth:** The key outcome is to help people monetize their property as collateral. Furthermore, it gives a boost to India's economic growth through streamlining of property tax in States where it is levied leading to increase in investments and ease of doing business'.

### CONCLUSION:

The SVAMITVA Scheme stands as a landmark initiative in India's rural development efforts. By providing legal recognition of land ownership and leveraging advanced technologies like drones and GIS, it is addressing long-standing issues related to rural land records. Though challenges remain, including infrastructure gaps, legal hurdles, and community resistance, the scheme has the potential to significantly improve the socio-economic conditions of rural India. By formalizing land ownership, reducing disputes, and unlocking financial opportunities, the scheme can pave the way for sustainable rural growth, economic empowerment, and improved governance.

### PRELIMS QUESTION:

**Q. Which of the following technologies are used in the implementation of the SVAMITVA Scheme?**

1. Drones
2. GIS Technology
3. Satellite Mapping
4. GPS Technology

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 1, 2, and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3 only

**Answer: A**

### MAINS QUESTION:

**Q. Discuss the significance of the SVAMITVA Scheme in promoting rural empowerment and economic growth in India. Highlight the key achievements, challenges, and the way forward for the successful implementation of the scheme. (250 words, 15 marks)**

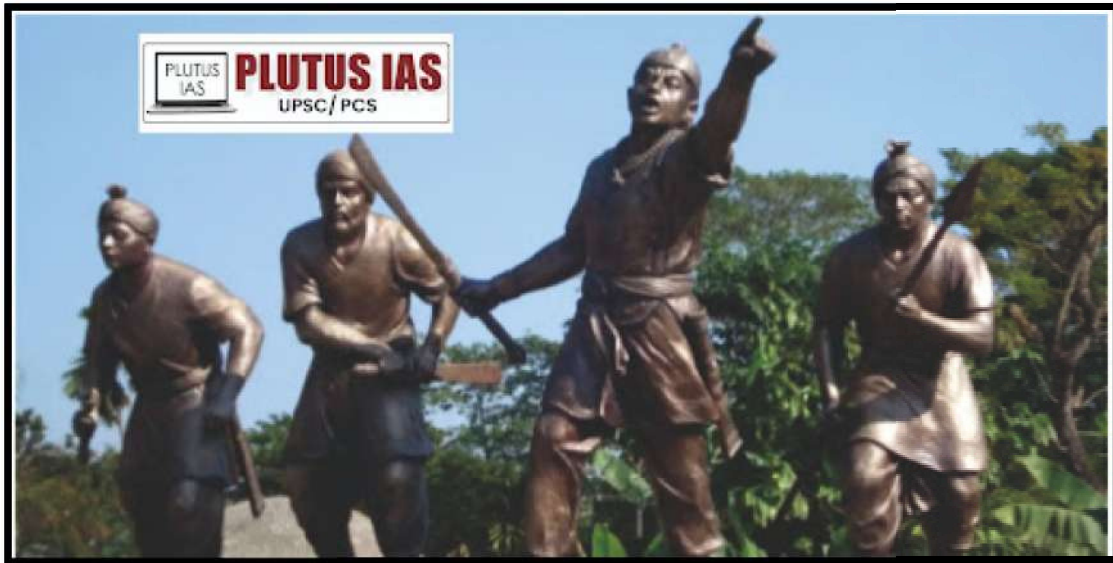
Ritik singh

## LACHIT BORPHUKAN: THE SHIVAJI OF THE NORTHEAST

### WHY IN THE NEWS?

Lachit Borphukan was a legendary army commander of the Ahom kingdom, best known for his leadership during the Battle of Saraighat, where he successfully defended Assam against the Mughal forces. Lachit's actions not only saved Assam but also became a symbol of resilience and self-identity for the Assamese people. His courage and strength have earned him recognition as the 'Shivaji of the Northeast,' solidifying his place as one of India's greatest military heroes.





### THE AHOM KINGDOM:

| Period                               | Key Events  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1228                                 | <b>Establishment:</b> The Ahom Kingdom was founded by Sukaphaa, a Tai prince from Mong Mao (present-day Yunnan Province, China). He established the kingdom in the Brahmaputra Valley, based on wet rice agriculture.   |
| 16th Century<br>(Suhungmung's reign) | <b>Expansion:</b> Under King Suhungmung, the kingdom expanded significantly and became multi-ethnic, incorporating various ethnic groups from the Brahmaputra Valley and beyond.  |
| Late 17th Century                    | <b>Battle of Saraighat (1671):</b> Lachit Borphukan, the Ahom army commander, successfully defended the kingdom against Mughal invasion, preserving Assam's sovereignty and culture.  |
| 18th Century                         | <b>Moamoria Rebellion:</b> A series of uprisings by the Moamoria community weakened the kingdom's control, reducing its strength.   |
| Early 19th Century                   | <b>Burmese Invasions:</b> The Ahom Kingdom faced repeated invasions from Burma, weakening its military and political power.   |
| 1826                                 | <b>British Conquest:</b> After the defeat of the Burmese in the First Anglo-Burmese War and the signing of the <b>Treaty of Yandabo</b> , control of the Ahom Kingdom passed into the hands of the British East India Company, ending the kingdom's independence. |

### LACHIT BORPHUKAN

#### EARLY LIFE

Lachit Borphukan was born on 24 November 1622 at Charaideo in Assam. He was the youngest son of Momai Tamuli Borbarua and Kunti Moran. He was born into a royal family. Momai Tamuli Borbarua was the commander-in-chief of the Ahom army, and he was the first Borbarua (Phu-Ke-Lung) of Upper Assam.

Lachit's early education took place at his residence, where he was educated in subjects like Ahom scripture, Hindu religion, economics, and military strategies.

## CAREER

Lachit Borphukan was appointed as the commander of 'Hanstidhara Tamuli' and held various posts within the Ahom state. His talent and bravery were first recognized when he successfully handled the position of "Ghura Baruah" and later "Shimaluguria Phukan." He was later appointed as the chief officer, Dulakasharia Baruah, responsible for controlling the king's palace. It was during this time that Lachit's skills were recognized by Swargadeo Chakradhwaj Singha, who appointed him as Commander-in-Chief of the Ahom army.

## BATTLE OF SARAIGHAT:

In 1662, the Mughal forces under Emperor Aurangzeb invaded Assam. Lachit Borphukan played a crucial role in the defense of Guwahati from the Mughal forces. Despite being severely ill, he led his troops in a desperate battle against the Mughal fleet. Lachit's leadership, determination, and selfless commitment to his duty inspired his soldiers to rally and fight valiantly. After an intense battle, the Mughals were forced to retreat, and Guwahati was successfully defended. Lachit's soldiers pursued the retreating Mughal forces to the Manas River, ensuring the complete victory of the Ahom forces.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF LACHIT BORPHUKAN:

**Defender of Assam:** Lachit Borphukan is most famously remembered for his leadership during the Battle of Saraighat in 1671, where he successfully repelled the Mughal forces, ensuring the independence of the Ahom kingdom.

**Master of Military Strategy:** Lachit revolutionized the tactics employed by the Ahom army, employing guerrilla warfare to overcome the Mughal forces, despite being outnumbered and technologically inferior.

**Strong Leadership and Patriotism:** Despite being severely ill, Lachit's personal commitment to his duty and the welfare of his soldiers stood as a model of leadership, inspiring his men to continue fighting against overwhelming odds.

**Preserving Assamese Culture:** Through his actions and leadership, Lachit Borphukan ensured the protection of Assamese identity and culture from foreign invasions. His efforts in maintaining the integrity of the Ahom kingdom were instrumental in preserving the region's autonomy.

**Lachit Divas:** His contributions to the state of Assam and its victory are commemorated every year on 24 November as Lachit Divas, a day to honor his legacy and promote his ideals of bravery, leadership, and patriotism.

**Building of Lachit Maidan:** To honor his memory and legacy, Lachit Maidan was constructed in 1672 by the then king, Swargadeo Udayaditya Singha, where his remains lie in rest. This site continues to be a symbol of Lachit Borphukan's sacrifice for the Assamese nation.

## WHY LACHIT BORPHUKAN IS CALLED THE SHIVAJI OF THE NORTHEAST

**Exceptional Leadership:** Like Shivaji Maharaj, Lachit Borphukan displayed outstanding leadership during the Battle of Saraighat, where he effectively commanded the Ahom forces to protect their kingdom from the Mughal invasion.

**Strategic Brilliance:** Lachit, akin to Shivaji, demonstrated great military strategy, using guerrilla tactics to outmaneuver the technologically superior Mughal army and ultimately securing victory despite being outnumbered.

**Patriotism Above All:** Lachit's unwavering commitment to his country and his people was evident when he put national duty above personal relationships, even sacrificing his maternal uncle for the greater good, showcasing the same patriotic spirit seen in Shivaji's leadership.

**Unyielding Courage:** Lachit's courage was comparable to that of Shivaji. Despite severe illness during the Battle of Saraighat, he led his troops from the front, refusing to retreat and inspiring his soldiers to fight for their land.

**Uniting Forces:** Just as Shivaji united the Marathas, Lachit Borphukan managed to bring together various tribal groups under the banner of Ahom, forming a cohesive force to defend Assam from foreign invaders.

**Symbol of Resistance:** Like Shivaji's resistance against the Mughal Empire, Lachit's fight against the Mughal expansion in the Northeast made him a symbol of defiance, preventing the Mughal Empire from extending its reach into Assam and the Northeast.

**Legacy of Valor:** The legacy of Lachit Borphukan, much like Shivaji's, continues to inspire generations. In recognition of his contributions to Assamese pride and independence, he is remembered annually on Lachit Divas, celebrated across Assam.

## CONCLUSION

Lachit Borphukan was a symbol of indomitable courage and strong leadership. His contributions to the defense of Assam and his visionary leadership remain ingrained in Assamese history. The courage and foresight of Lachit Borphukan continue to inspire the people of Assam, and his legacy is celebrated annually on Lachit Divas, honoring his heroism and the victory of the Assamese army at the Battle of Saraighat.

## PRELIMS QUESTION:

**Q. Lachit Borphukan is often referred to as the 'Shivaji of the Northeast' due to his significant role in defending Assam. Which of the following battles is he famous for?**

1. Battle of Plassey
2. Battle of Saraighat
3. Battle of Alaboi
4. Battle of Haldighati

**Select the correct answer from the options given below:**

- A) 1 and 2
- B) 2 and 3
- C) 1 and 4
- D) 3 and 4

**ANSWER: B**

## MAINS QUESTION:

**Discuss the contributions of Lachit Borphukan in shaping the history and defense of Assam. How has his leadership earned him the title of the 'Shivaji of the Northeast'? (Answer in 250 words)**

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