

Rani Durgavati- the queen that died while fighting the Mughals

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The government of Madhya Pradesh launched the Rani Durgavati Gaurav Yatra to mark the death of Rani Durgavati on June 24.



[Ref: News9Live]

About Rani Durgavati:

- She is said to have been born in 1524, in **Mahoba's Chandela dynasty**.
 - The region comes under **present-day Uttar Pradesh**, near the southern border with MP.
- Her father was **Raja Salbahan of Ratha and Mahoba**, and the Chandelas were known for building the famous **Khajuraho temples** in the 11th century.
- She was married to **Dalpat Shah**, the son of the **Gond King Sangram Shah** of the **kingdom of Garha-Katanga**.
 - This kingdom included the **Narmada Valley and parts of northern MP**.
 - **Sangram Shah** is noted as one of the **most powerful kingdoms of the Gond tribe**.
- She was widowed in **1550**, a few years after her marriage.
- **Bir Narayan**, her young son, presided over the throne and she then "ruled the country with **great vigour and courage**."
- Rani Durgavati was a **good marksman, skilled at using guns, bows, and arrows**.
- She was so intent on hunting tigers that "whenever she heard that a tiger had appeared she **did not drink** water until she shot it."

Mughal attack on Garha-Katanga

- Durgavati fought with **Baz Bahadur**, the sultan of the **neighbouring Malwa** who was eventually **defeated by Akbar**.
- **Abul Fazl**, the court historian of Akbar who chronicled these years in Akbarnama, described Durgavati as a combination of "**beauty, grace and manlike courage and bravery**".
 - He further says that the prosperity of the kingdom was such that people paid their taxes in **gold coins and elephants**.

Battle with Asaf Khan

- **Asaf Khan**, Mughal governor of Allahabad, also took an interest in **attacking Garha-Katanga**, attracted by tales of the queen.
 - **Akbar** dispatched Asaf Khan for the attack.
- Asaf Khan went to the region with **10,000 cavalry**.
- The queen entered the battlefield and situated her troops in a place called **Narhi**.
 - Narhi was located in a **thick forest**, reached after **crossing rivers**, and was naturally difficult to breach.
- She suggested attacking the **enemy forces upfront** as they could not remain hidden for long.
- They allowed some Mughal forces to come through the **narrow ravines peculiar** to the region, before surrounding them.
- The **first battle** was therefore **won** by the **Gond queen**.
 - However, soon the Mughals **fortified the area** and overwhelmed the Gonds.
- Durgavati was struck by **two arrows** during the battle and she stabbed herself with her dagger to not surrender to the Mughal forces.
- It took **2 months** for Asaf Khan to consolidate his victory.

Aftermath

- Asaf Khan decided to **keep much of the loot** himself instead of presenting it to Akbar.
- Akbar asked Khan to **let go of his gains** and restored the kingdom to **Chandra Shah**, the younger son of Sangram Shah after he accepted Mughal suzerainty.

Legacy

- The Madan Mahal Fort Jabalpur is well associated with **Rani Durgavati and her son Veer Narayan**.
- In 1983, the Government of Madhya Pradesh renamed the University of Jabalpur Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya in her memory.
- The government of India issued a **postal stamp** commemorating her death, on **24 June 1988**.
- The train between **Jabalpur Junction and JammuTawi** is known as **Durgavati Express** after the name of the Queen.
- **Indian Coast Guard** on 14 July 2018 commissioned **ICGS Rani Durgavati**, the third Inshore Patrol Vessel (IPV) of its kind.