

# Ahir Regiment

March 28, 2022

**In news**— Members of the Ahir community have been on an indefinite protest in Gurgaon, demanding the formation of an Ahir regiment in the Indian Army.

## **History of Ahir community & demand for their regiment-**

- **Ahir or Aheer is a community in India, most members of which identify as being of the Indian Yadav community** because they consider the two terms to be synonymous.
- The Ahirs are variously described as a caste, a clan, a community, a race and a tribe. They are found throughout India but are particularly concentrated in the northern area.
- The **Ahirwal region, which includes the southern Haryana districts of Rewari, Mahendragarh, and Gurgaon**, and is associated with **Rao Tula Ram, the Ahir hero of the revolt of 1857**, has traditionally contributed soldiers to the Indian Army in large numbers.
- The community was brought into national limelight after the story of the bravery of the Ahir troops of Haryana in the **Battle of Rezang La in 1962** was widely known.
- Ahirs were initially recruited in sizable numbers in the **19 Hyderabad Regiment**, which was the **predecessor of the Kumaon Regiment**.
- On October 27, **1945**, permission was given to change the **name of the Regiment**, and it became **19 Kumaon**. Following Independence, **it was named the Kumaon Regiment**.
- **The 13th Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment**, which gained fame in Rezang La, was the **first battalion to be raised after Independence in October 1948** with Kumaonis and Ahirs in equal proportions.
- In 1960, after the transfer of Ahirs from 2 Kumaon and 6

Kumaon, 13 Kumaon became the first pure Ahir battalion in the Kumaon Regiment.

- **The Ahirs of 13 Kumaon deployed at Rezang La in Eastern Ladakh**, under the command of Major Shaitan Singh **resisted the Chinese attack on them** until almost the entire company of 120 troops had been wiped out.
- **Members of the community have long argued that the Ahirs deserve a full-fledged Infantry Regiment named after them, not just two battalions in the Kumaon Regiment** and a fixed percentage in other regiments like the Brigade of the Guards or The Parachute Regiment in the Infantry and in Corps like Artillery, Engineers, Signals, and Army Service Corps.



### **Army's response to the demand-**

**The Army has rejected the demand for any new class or caste based regiment.** It has said that while the **older regiments based on castes and regions** like the Dogra Regiment, Sikh Regiment, Rajput Regiment, and Punjab Regiment **will continue, no new demands on the lines of an Ahir Regiment**, Himachal Regiment, Kalinga Regiment, Gujarat Regiment or any tribal regiment **would be entertained.** After Independence, it has been the policy of the Government not to raise any new Regiment for a particular class/community/religion or region.