

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.