



Assam's Moidams to be Considered for World Heritage List

[Source: UNESCO](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the '**Moidams**' of **Ahom dynasty** have been proposed for inclusion in the **World Heritage Sites** list during the 46th session of the **World Heritage Committee**.

- India will host this session for the first time in July 2024 in New Delhi.
- Currently, UNESCO's World Heritage list includes 1,199 properties from 168 countries.



What were Moidams?

- The Moidams represent the late medieval (13th-19th century CE) **mound burial tradition** of the **Tai Ahom Dynasty** of Assam.
- These were primarily constructed using earth, bricks, and stone. The outer structure typically consisted of a mound of earth, often surrounded by a brick or stone wall.
- They are the resting place of royal families in **Assam's Charaideo district**.
- It enshrines the mortal remains of the members of the Ahom royalty, who used to be buried with their paraphernalia.
 - After the 18th century, the Ahom rulers adopted the Hindu cremation method and began entombing the cremated bones and ashes in a Maidam at Charaideo.
- These burial systems of the Ahom dynasty are comparable to the **royal tombs of ancient China** and the [Pyramids of the Egyptian Pharaohs](#).

What are the Key Facts About Ahom Kingdom?

▪ **About:**

- The Ahom kingdom was established in **1228** in [Assam's Brahmaputra valley](#) and maintained its sovereignty for 600 years.
- It was founded by the 13th-century ruler **Chaolung Sukapha in 1253**.
- **Charaideo was their initial capital**, located over 400 km east of Guwahati.
- The Ahom dynasty ruled for approximately 600 years until Assam was annexed by the British in **1826** through the [Treaty of Yandaboo](#).

▪ **Political Setup:**

- Ahoms created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the **bhuiyans (landlords)**.
- The state depended upon [forced labour](#), known as **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](#).

▪ **Military Strategy:**

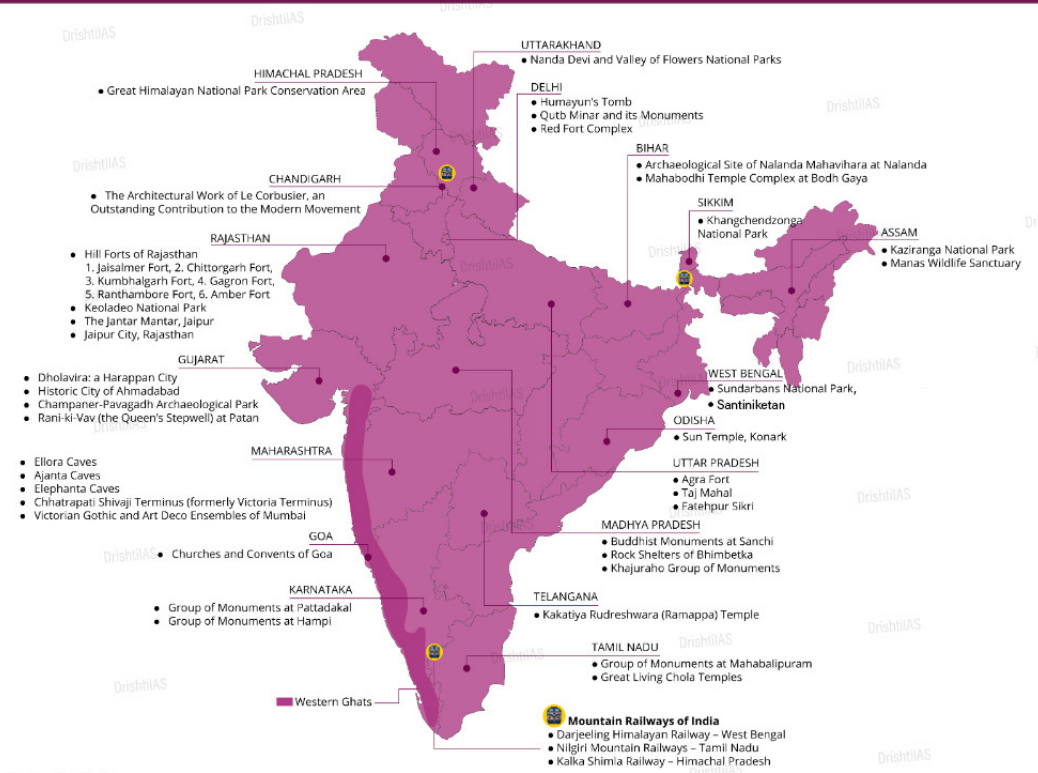
- The full contingent of the Ahom Army consisted of **infantry, navy, artillery, elephantry, cavalry and spies**.
 - The main war weapons consisted of **bows and arrows, swords, javelins, discus, guns, match-locks and cannons**.
- The Ahom soldiers were experts in [guerilla fighting](#). They also learnt the technique of constructing boat bridges in the Brahmaputra.
- The Ahom navy, led by [Lachit Borphukan](#), defeated the **Mughal forces** commanded by **Ram Singh I** during the reign of **Aurangzeb** at the **Battle of Saraighat in 1671**.
 - 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.



What are UNESCO's World Heritage Sites?

- A **World Heritage Site** is a place that is listed by [UNESCO](#) for its special cultural or physical significance.
- The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by the international '**World Heritage Programme**', administered by the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee**.
- This is embodied in an international treaty called the **Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, adopted by UNESCO in **1972**.
- **India has 42 World Heritage Sites (34 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed site)**. The latest additions are [Santiniketan \(2023\)](#) and the [Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas \(2023\)](#).

UNESCO World Heritage Sites



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Which one of the following National Parks has a climate that varies from tropical to subtropical, temperate and arctic? (2015)

- (a) Khangchendzonga National Park
- (b) Nandadevi National Park
- (c) Neora Valley National Park
- (d) Namdapha National Park

Ans: (d)

Mains:

Q. What was the difference between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in their approach towards education and nationalism? (2023)

