



BHARAT AT PLAY

Exploring the History of Indigenous Games and Sports



Chapter 2:

DHOPKHEL





A Game Born in Assam

In the fields of Assam, a fast-paced game has brought people together for generations- **Dhopkhel**.

Closely associated with **Rongali Bihu**, the Assamese New Year festival around the spring season, the game brings communities together through competition, celebration and tradition.



Throw, Catch, and Run



Dhopkhel is played between **two teams of eleven players** and with **one ball**.



At the centre is the **dhop**, a lightweight rubber ball that **players throw, catch, dodge and chase** as they try to **strike opponents** and **reduce the number of active players** on the other team.



The game slightly resembles modern **dodgeball**, but it has its own rules and style, shaped by Assam's sporting culture.



THROW



CATCH



DODGE



CHASE



STRIKE



REDUCE



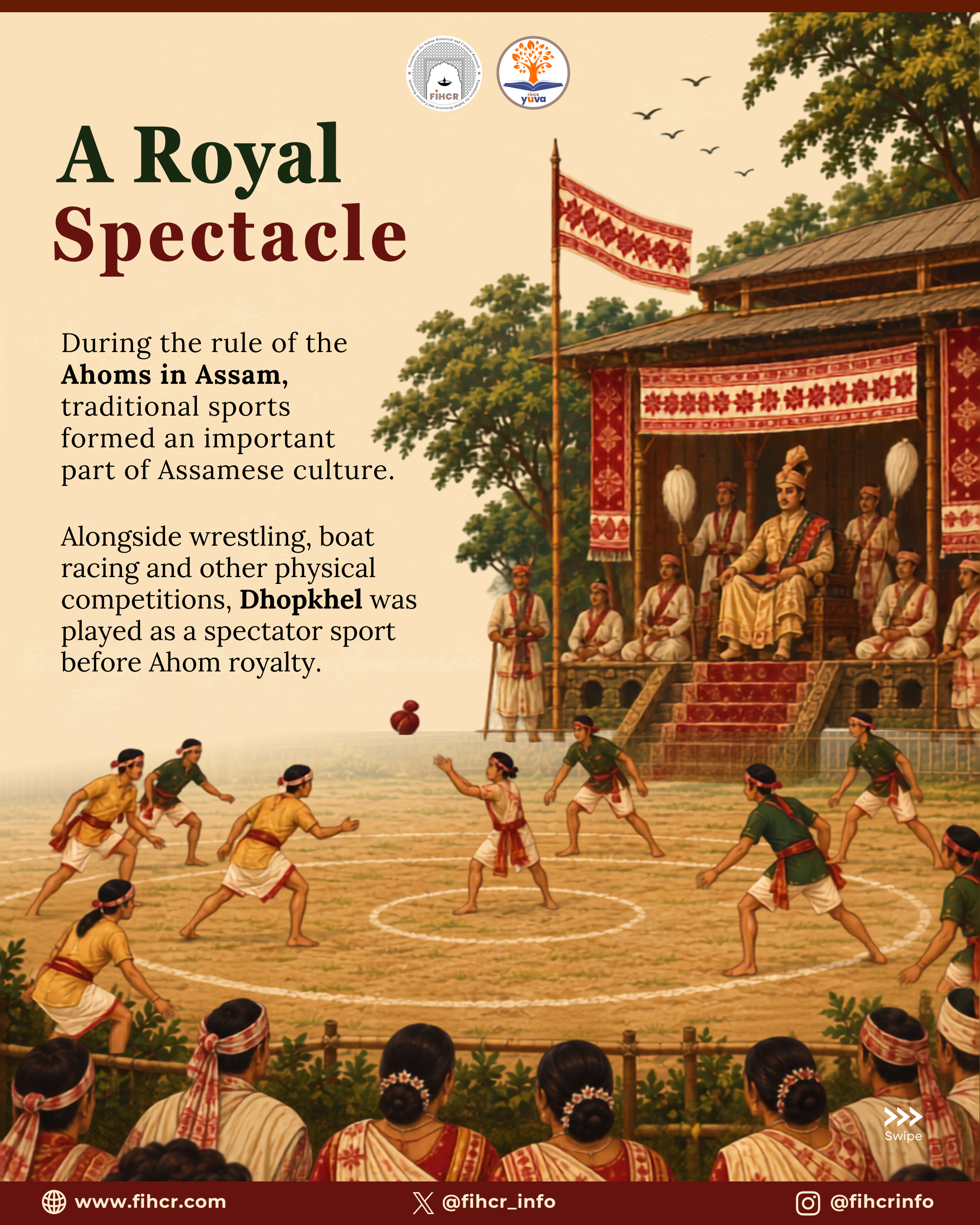
Swipe



A Royal Spectacle

During the rule of the **Ahoms in Assam**, traditional sports formed an important part of Assamese culture.

Alongside wrestling, boat racing and other physical competitions, **Dhopkhel** was played as a spectator sport before Ahom royalty.





A Part of Rongali Bihu

Year after year, the game returns
to the fields during **Rongali Bihu**.

When communities gather to
welcome spring season, and
celebrate the Assamese
New Year, Dhopkhel
becomes part of the
festivities and
traditions.





Keeping the Tradition Alive

Today, efforts such as the **Bharatiya Khel Programme** are helping document and promote traditional Indian games like Dopkhkel.

The legacy of the game lies in the people, the festivals and the traditions that continue to keep the game alive.

