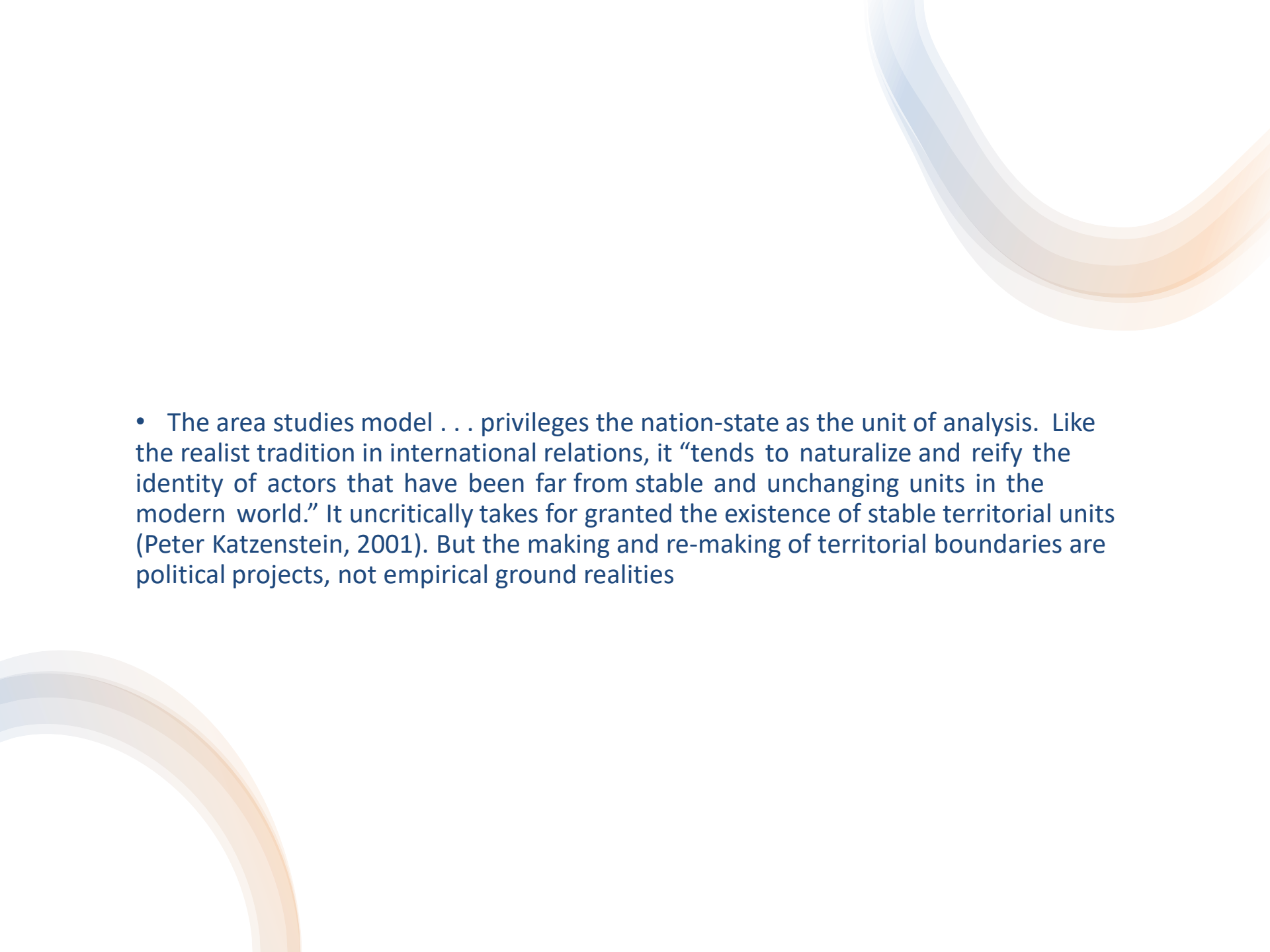
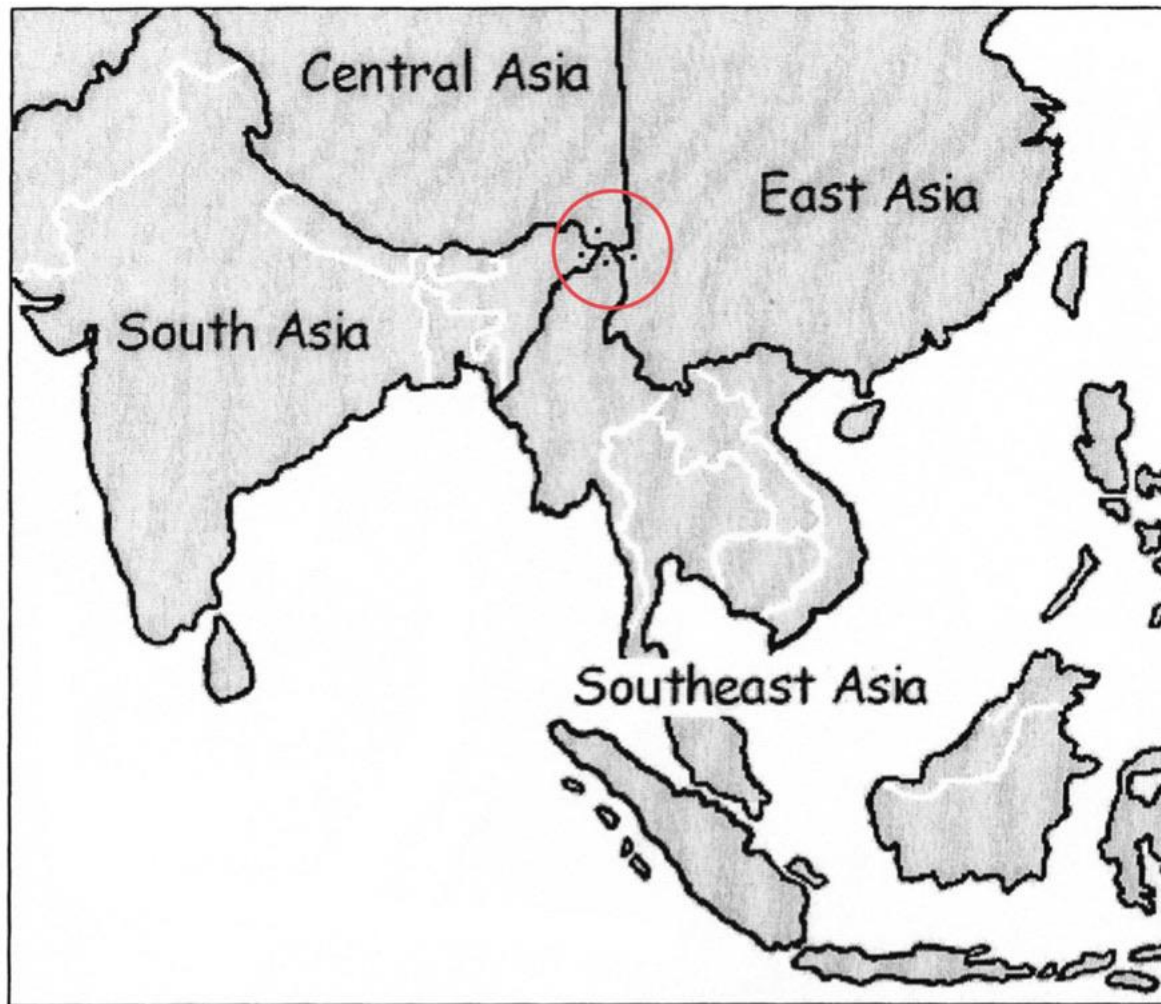


- 14<sup>th</sup> SAES, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Presentation by Sanjib Baruah, Asian University for Women, Chittagong.
- Parallel Sessions Group C, November 5th

- 
- The area studies model . . . privileges the nation-state as the unit of analysis. Like the realist tradition in international relations, it “tends to naturalize and reify the identity of actors that have been far from stable and unchanging units in the modern world.” It uncritically takes for granted the existence of stable territorial units (Peter Katzenstein, 2001). But the making and re-making of territorial boundaries are political projects, not empirical ground realities



Source, Willem van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia," 2002.

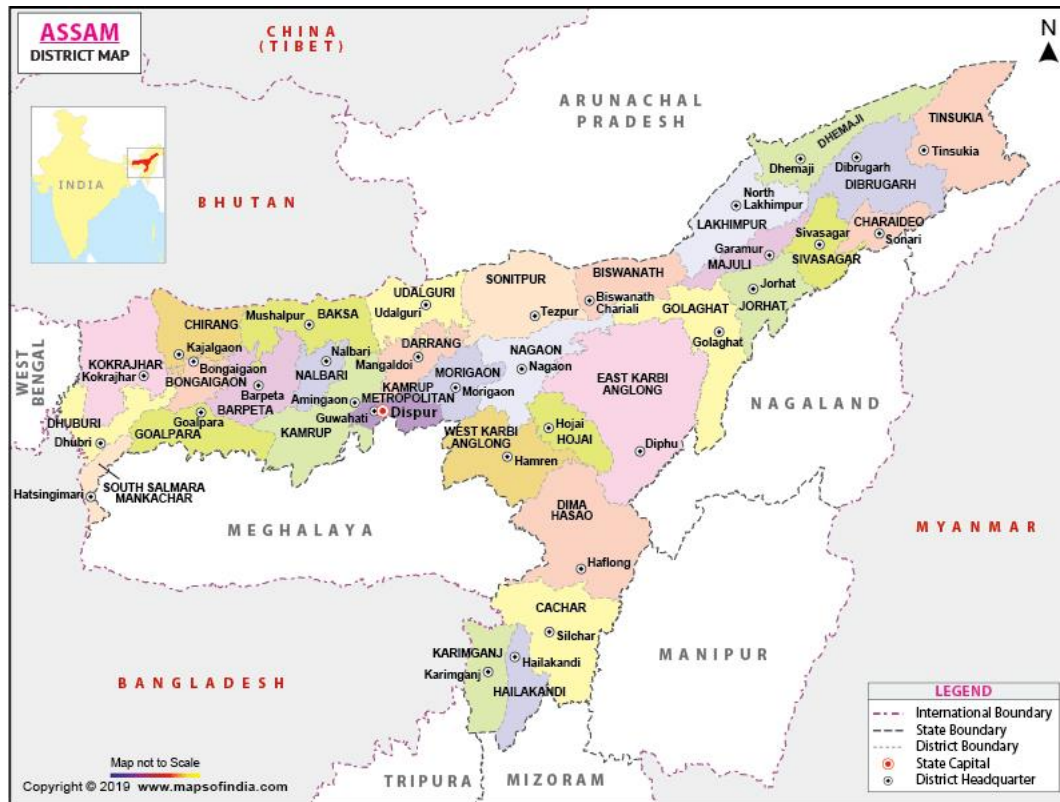
# Bangladesh and Assam





Source: Sanjib Baruah, *In the Name of the Nation: India and its Northeast* (Stanford University Press, 2020).

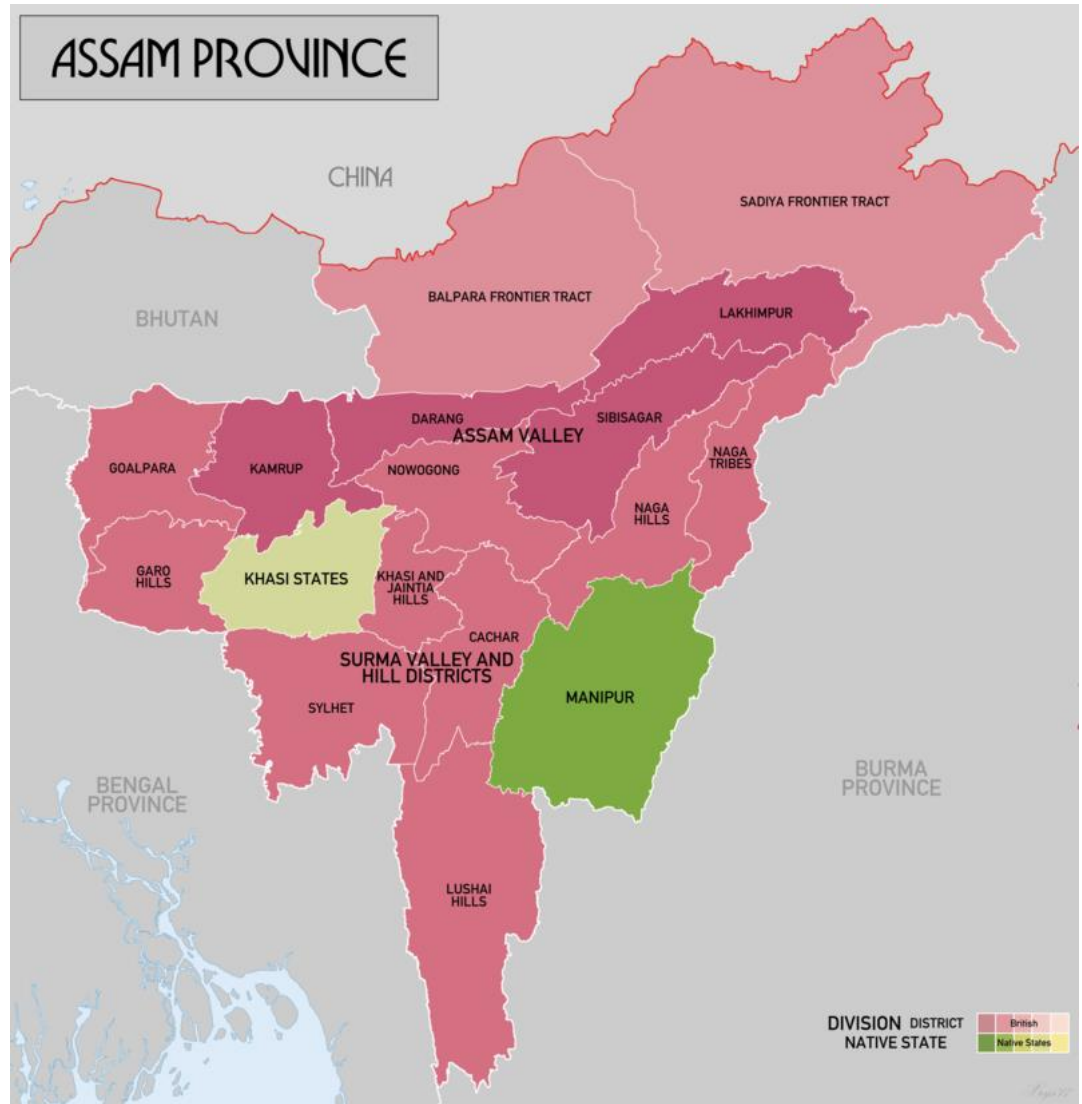
# Assam (today)



# Assam in the 1950s




British  
Colonial  
Assam  
(includes  
Sylhet)



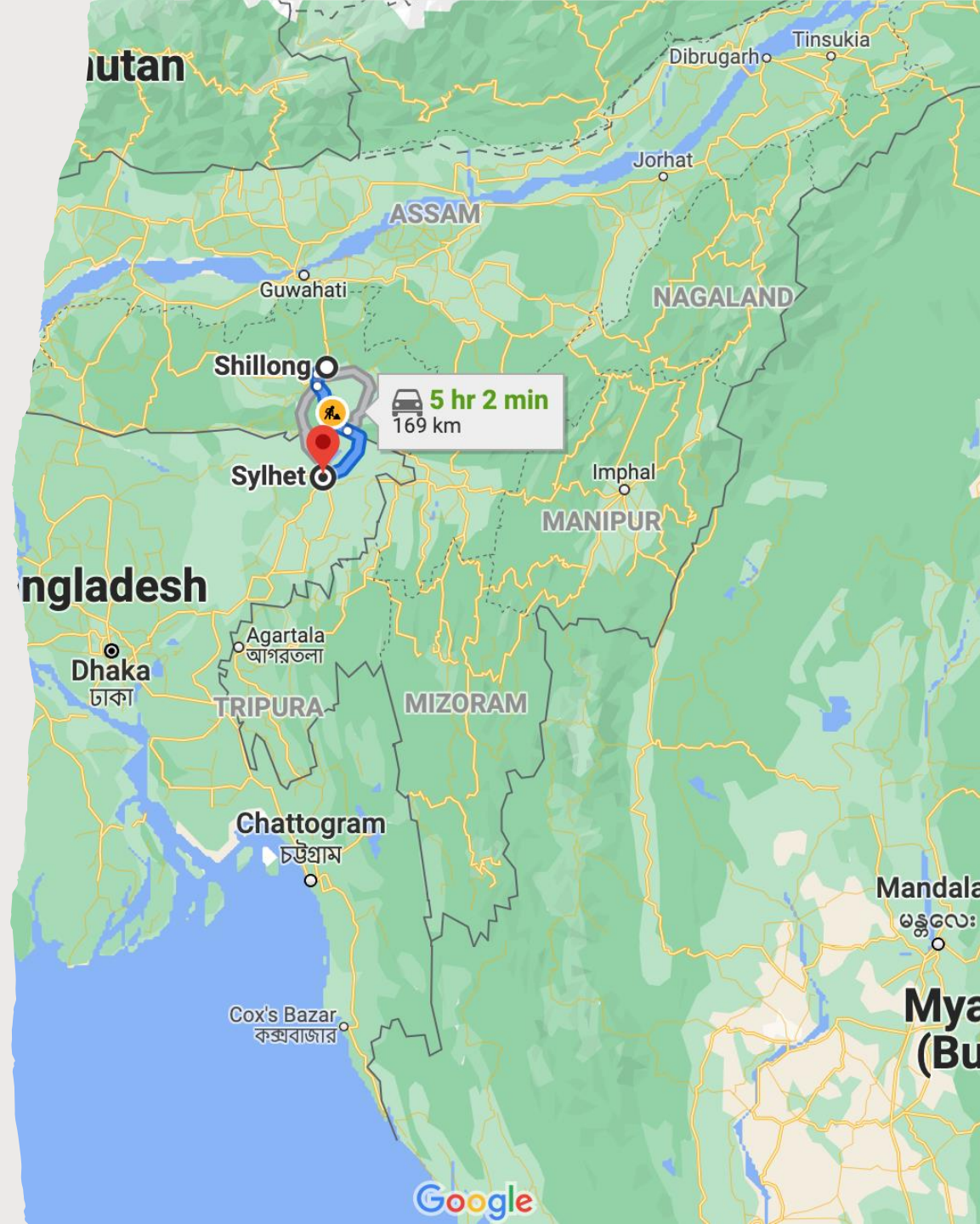


- 
- The history of border-making in this region – both internal and external borders -- and the history of tea are connected.

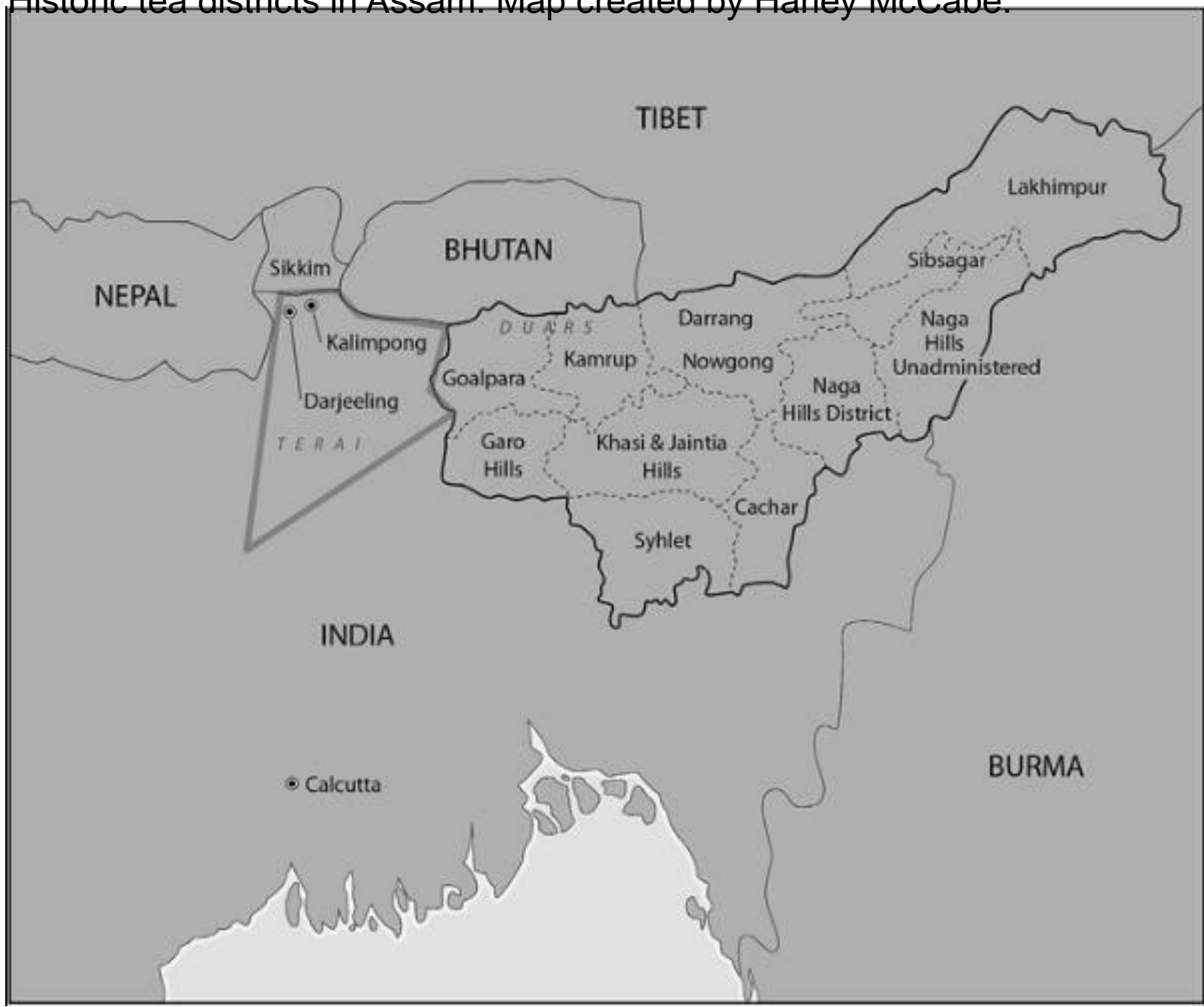
- 
- “British Assam always included the Brahmaputra and Barak river valleys as well as the Surma-Kushiara River basin of Sylhet. After 1860, the tea industry spread across hills around these rivers and created an effective planter interest in the administrative unity of Sylhet and Assam.”

- David Ludden, Guwahati, 2003

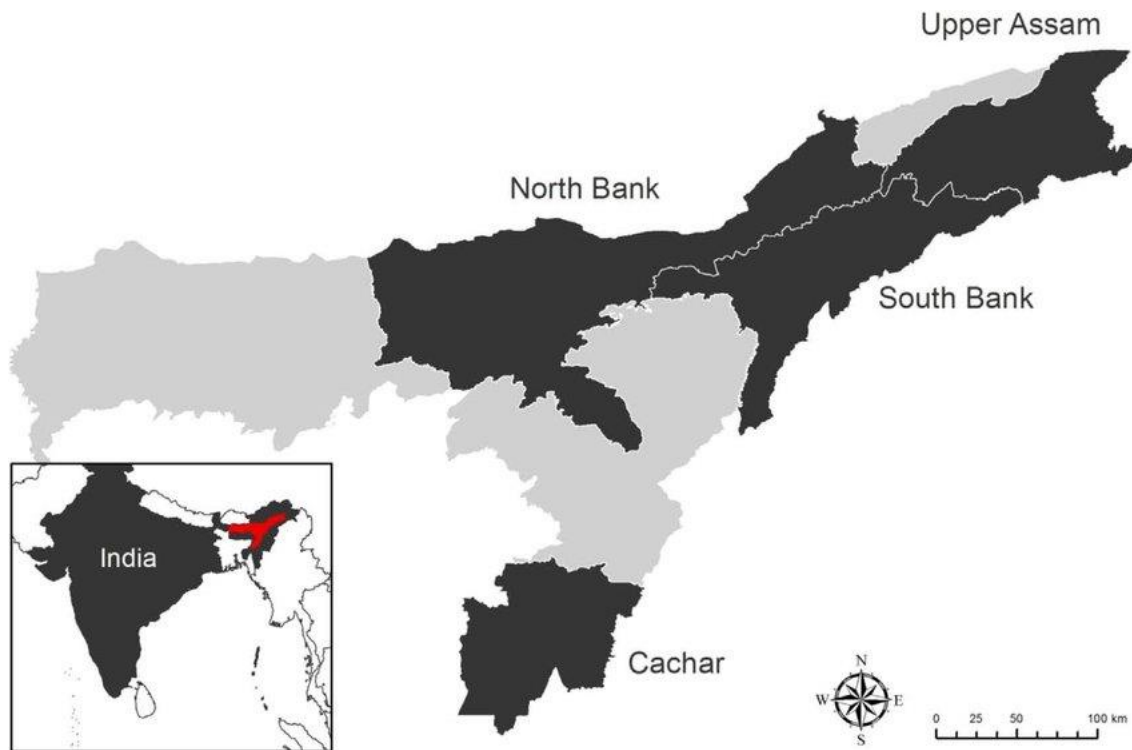
Shillong was the capital of the British colonial province of Assam, which included Sylhet.

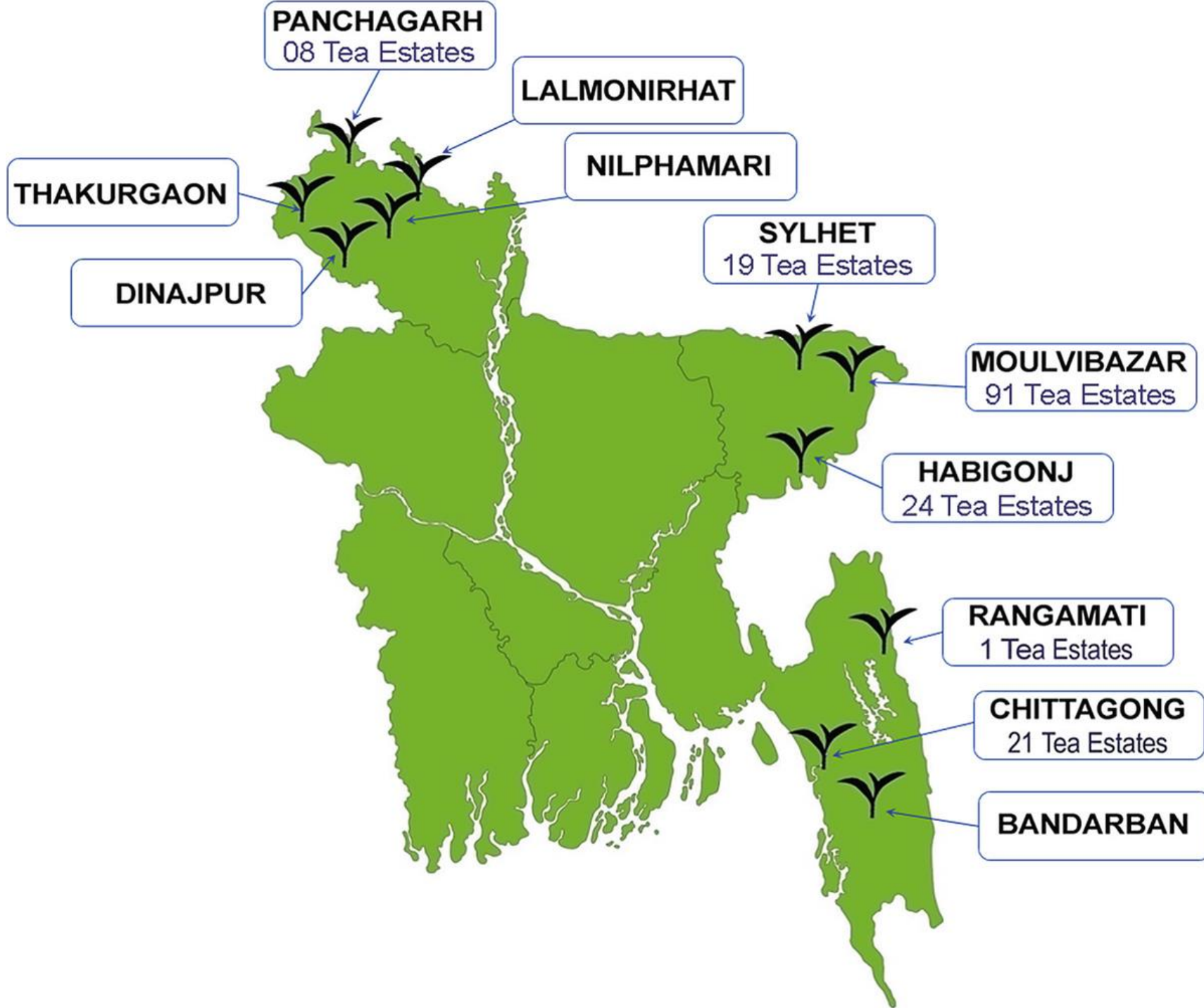


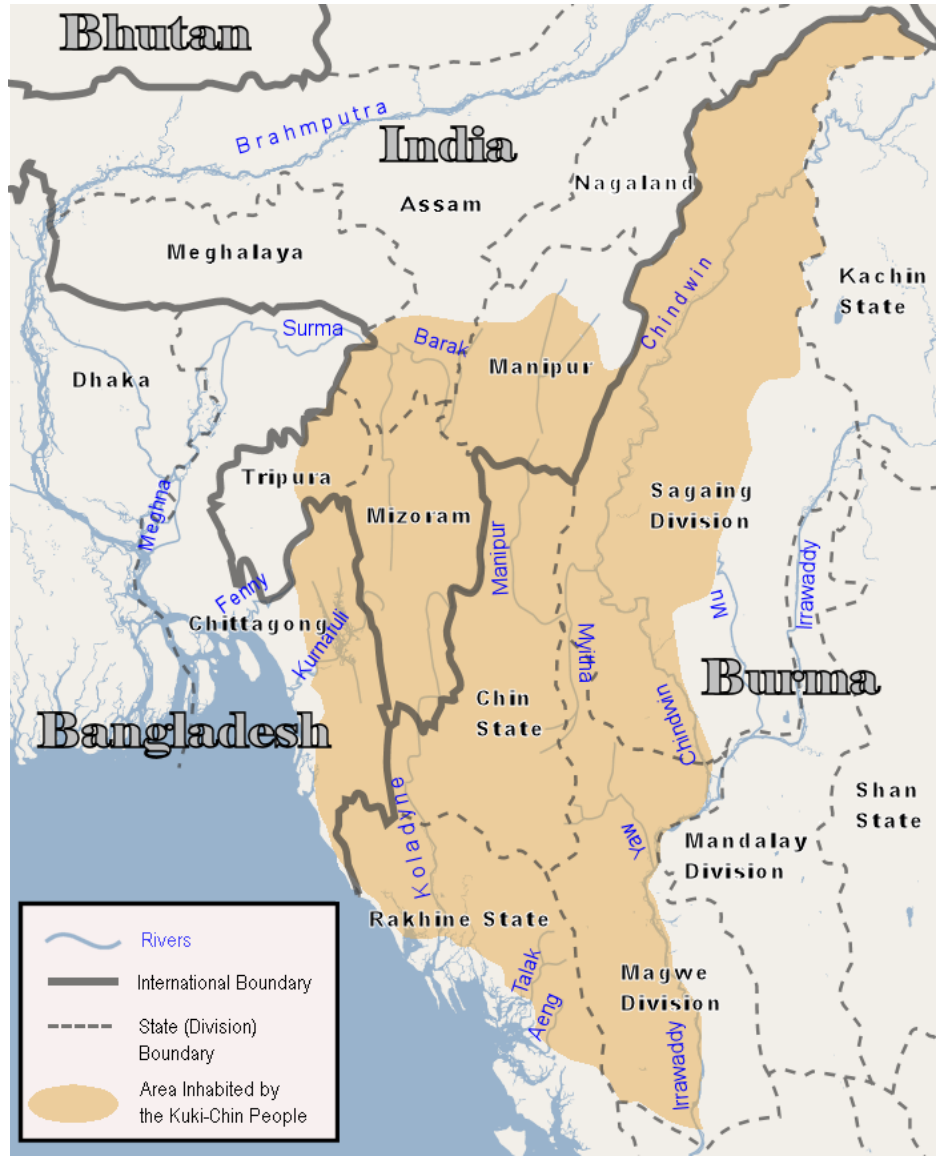
Historic tea districts in Assam. Map created by Harley McCabe.



# Tea growing regions of Assam





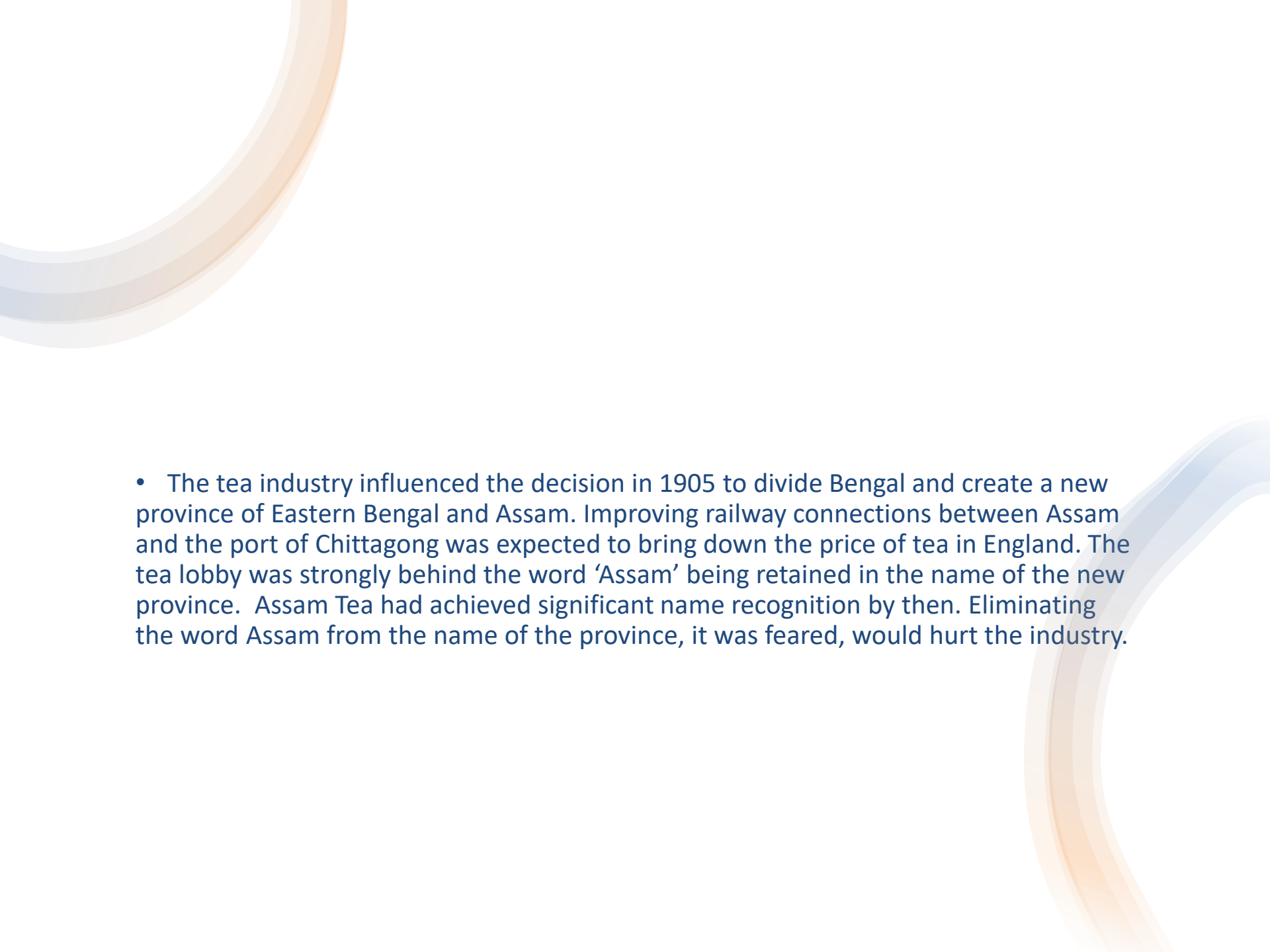


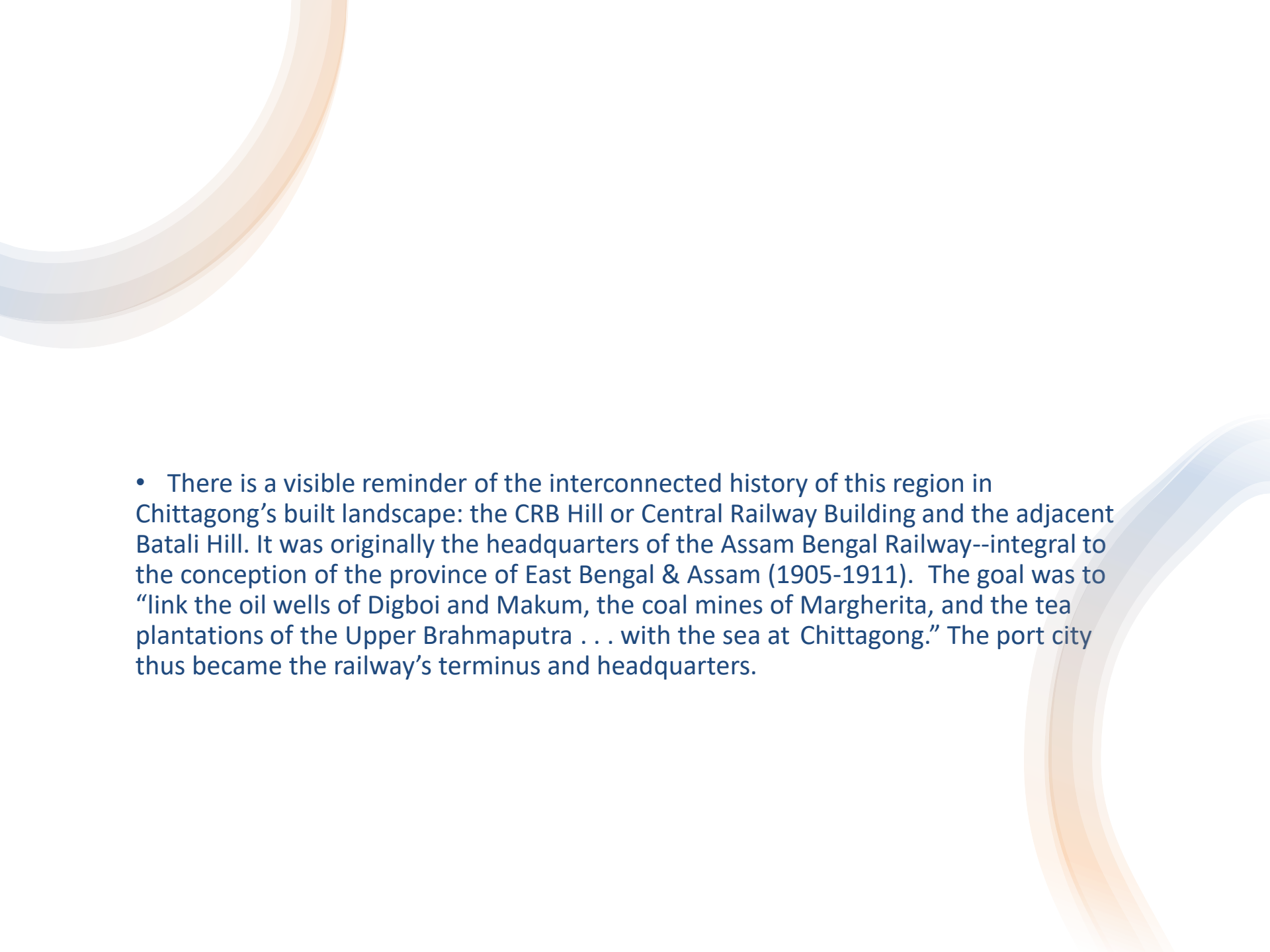


# Eastern Bengal and Assam (1905-1912)



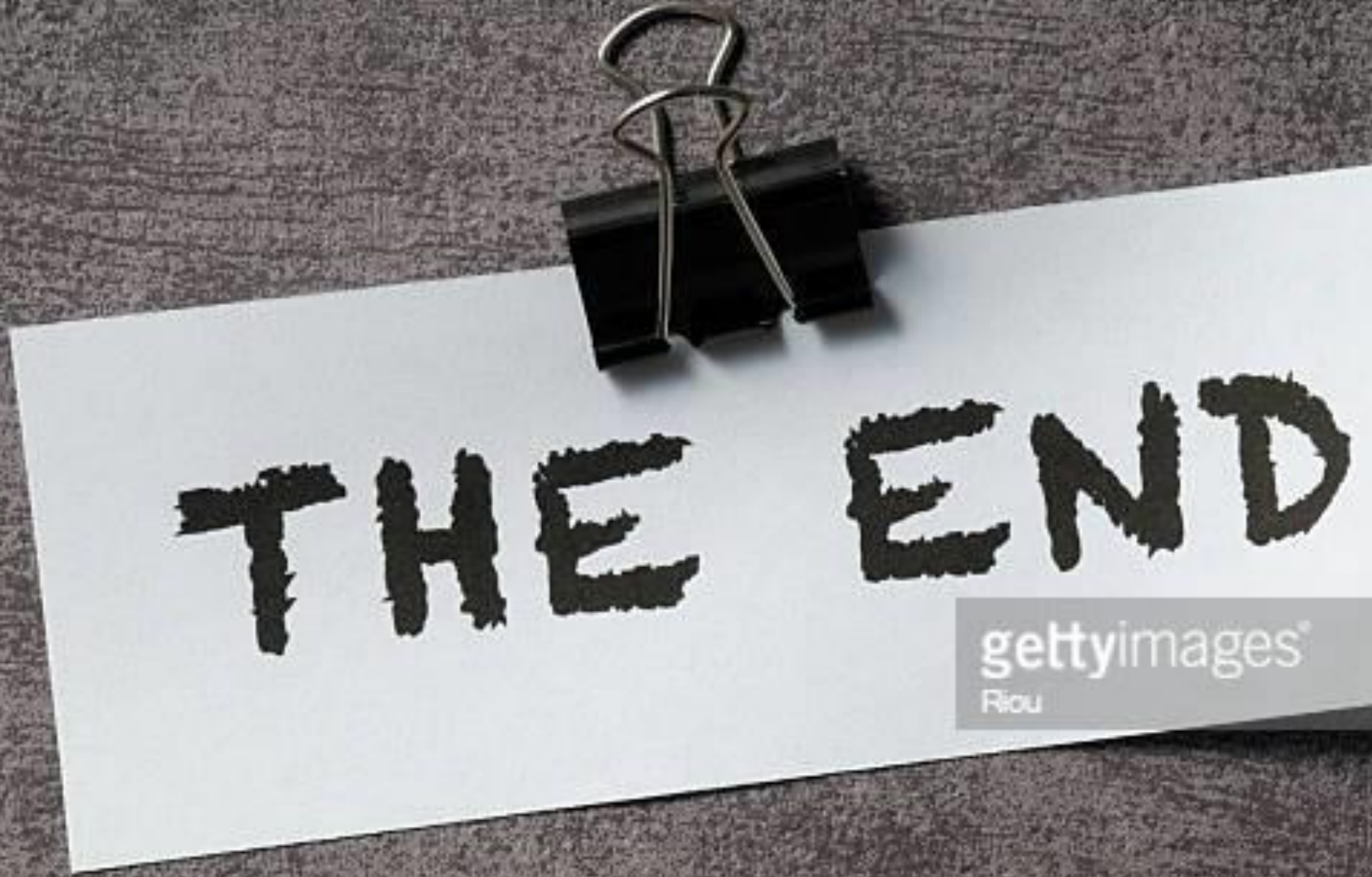


- 
- The tea industry influenced the decision in 1905 to divide Bengal and create a new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Improving railway connections between Assam and the port of Chittagong was expected to bring down the price of tea in England. The tea lobby was strongly behind the word 'Assam' being retained in the name of the new province. Assam Tea had achieved significant name recognition by then. Eliminating the word Assam from the name of the province, it was feared, would hurt the industry.

- 
- There is a visible reminder of the interconnected history of this region in Chittagong's built landscape: the CRB Hill or Central Railway Building and the adjacent Batali Hill. It was originally the headquarters of the Assam Bengal Railway--integral to the conception of the province of East Bengal & Assam (1905-1911). The goal was to "link the oil wells of Digboi and Makum, the coal mines of Margherita, and the tea plantations of the Upper Brahmaputra . . . with the sea at Chittagong." The port city thus became the railway's terminus and headquarters.



Central Railway Building  
Chittagong



**THE END**

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