

MATUA community

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In News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched his Lok Sabha campaign from Thakurnagar, West Bengal. There he met with Binapani Devi, popularly known as 'Boro Ma' and matriarch of the Matua community.

About MATUA community

- Matuas, originally from East Pakistan, are weaker section Hindus who migrated to India during the Partition and after the creation of Bangladesh. Many of them have been accorded Indian citizenship but a sizable section of the population has not.
- Matuas are Namasudras, a Scheduled Caste group.
- The Matua Mahasangha, a religious reforms movement and a sect, was formed by Harichand Thakur in East Bengal in the mid-1800s.
- Harichand's grandson P R Thakur established West Bengal's Thakurnagar as headquarters of the sect after 1947.
- Boro Ma belongs to the same family, which still wields influence on the community.

Importance of community

- While no official count is available, community leaders put their population at 3 crore.
- They are a deciding factor in many Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal which assumes a lot of political significance.