

## 1. Tata's Compensation Claim against West Bengal

### Introduction

Tata Motors Ltd has recently won a significant arbitration case against the West Bengal government. The dispute revolves around the compensation for capital investment losses in the Singur manufacturing plant where Tata had intended to build the iconic Nano car. This legal battle stems from a series of events that unfolded over the years, involving political conflicts, court interventions, and the eventual relocation of the plant. Here is a simplified breakdown of the story:

### The Singur and Nano Project

In 2006, the Left Front government in West Bengal allotted nearly 1,000 acres of land in Singur to Tata Motors for the manufacturing of the Nano car, a project that was anticipated to bring about industrialization and employment to the region. However, the acquisition of the land faced resistance from local groups and political parties.

### Mamata Banerjee's Opposition

Mamata Banerjee, then in the opposition, led a movement against the land acquisition and the industrial project, which gained widespread support. Her sustained agitation ultimately led to the withdrawal of the Nano project from West Bengal in 2008.



### **Tata's Relocation Decision**

Due to the ongoing tension and deadlock, Tata Motors decided to move Nano production out of West Bengal and relocated the plant to Sanand, Gujarat, in October 2008.

### **Legal Battles and Political Shifts**

Mamata Banerjee's subsequent rise to power in 2011 marked a turning point. Her government passed the Singur Land Rehabilitation and Development Bill, 2011, which led to further legal battles between Tata Motors and the West Bengal government. The matter eventually reached the Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of returning the land to its original owners.

### **The Arbitration Decision**

Following the Supreme Court's ruling, Tata Motors pursued arbitration proceedings with the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation Ltd (WBIDC). The recent arbitration tribunal's decision has favored Tata Motors, awarding them a substantial sum of Rs. 765.78 crore along with interest. Additionally, the company has been granted Rs. 1 crore towards the cost of the proceedings.

The arbitration award has brought the long-standing dispute between Tata Motors and the West Bengal government to a significant conclusion, marking a crucial milestone in the history of the Singur Nano project.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Indian Express

## **2. The Maratha Quota Controversy: Legal Battles and Ongoing Developments**

### **Introduction**

The issue of Maratha reservation has been a contentious matter in Maharashtra, sparking protests and legal battles. Here's an overview of the key developments and the state government's recent actions.

### **The 2019 Bombay High Court Ruling**

In 2019, the Bombay High Court upheld the constitutional validity of Maratha reservation, initially proposed at 16% for education and government jobs. However, the court reduced the quota to 12% for education and 13% for government jobs, aligning with the recommendations of the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission.

### **Basis for the Ruling**

The High Court relied on extensive findings from the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission, indicating social, economic, and educational backwardness among the Maratha community.

### **Supreme Court's Intervention**

In May 2021, the Supreme Court's Constitution bench struck down the Maratha quota, citing a breach of the 50% reservation ceiling established in the 1992 Indra Sawhney (Mandal) judgment. The court argued that there were no extraordinary circumstances to exceed this limit and deemed Marathas as a "dominant forward class."

In November 2022, after the SC upheld the 10 per cent quota for Economically Weaker Sections, the Maharashtra government said that until the issue of Maratha reservation was resolved, economically weaker members of the community could benefit from the EWS quota.

In April this year, after the SC turned down its review plea, the state government said it would file a curative petition and form a new panel for a detailed survey of the 'backwardness' of the community.

### **Post-Supreme Court Ruling**

In the state, following the 2001 State Reservation Act, the total reservation is 52 per cent. This included quotas for Scheduled Caste (13%), Scheduled Tribes (7%), Other Backward Classes (19%), Special Backward Class (2%), Vimukta Jati (3%), Nomadic Tribe B (2.5%), Nomadic Tribe C-Dhangar (3.5%) and Nomadic Tribe D-Vanjari (2%).

With the addition of the 12-13 per cent Maratha quota, the total reservation in the state had gone up to 64-65 per cent. The 10 % EWS quota is also effective in the state.

### **Ongoing Reservation Demands**

Apart from the Marathas, other communities like Dhangar, Lingayats, and Muslims have also raised demands for reservation, adding complexity to the reservation landscape in Maharashtra.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Indian Express

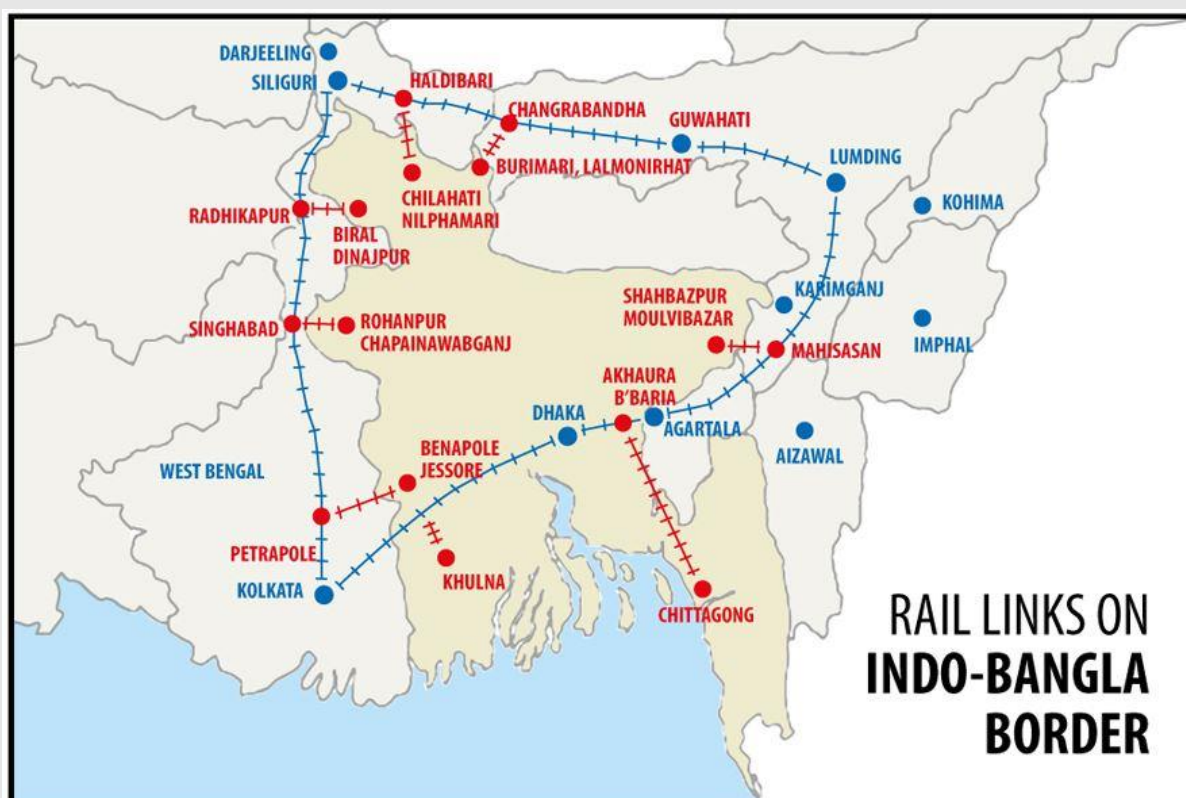
## **3. Inauguration of Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link: A Historic Reconnectivity**

### **The Reopening of Rail Connectivity**

After a gap of nearly seventy-five years, Bangladesh and northeast India have re-established rail connectivity through Tripura. This groundbreaking event signifies a significant step towards connecting Tripura to Kolkata through Bangladesh.

## Transforming Travel and Trade

The current railway route to Agartala requires trains to traverse a longer path via Guwahati and Jalpaiguri stations. The new rail link is poised to dramatically reduce both travel time and distance, benefiting not only Tripura but also southern Assam and Mizoram, creating more efficient trade routes. The enhanced connectivity is expected to foster increased India-Bangladesh trade, encompassing agriculture products, tea, sugar, construction materials, iron and steel, consumer goods, and promoting stronger people-to-people ties.



## Project Details and Grant Support

The Akhaura-Agartala Cross-Border Rail Link spans a total of 12.24 kilometers, with a 6.78-kilometer dual gauge line in Bangladesh and 5.46 kilometers in Tripura. It's worth noting that Akhaura junction, located in Bangladesh's Brahmanbaria district, has historical significance due to its commercial and cultural ties with India's northeastern region dating back to the colonial era. One of the primary drivers for the original construction of the junction in the late 19th century was the demand from Assam's tea industry, which sought a connection to the Chittagong port.

## Historical Significance and Revival

The revival of the Akhaura-Agartala rail link project gained momentum in 2010, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Sheikh Hasina signing an agreement to rebuild

this critical connection during Hasina's visit to New Delhi. This initiative marks an important milestone in regional connectivity and trade facilitation.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: The Hindu and The Indian Express