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Uncertainty looms large over Uttarkanya meeting minus Bimal faction

Binay-Anit likely to get upper hand

HM Correspondent

Darjeeling, Sep 11: The second bilateral meeting aimed at restoring normalcy in Darjeeling hills to be held here at Uttarkanya on Tuesday afternoon has already come under the shadow of uncertainty as the main political party is likely to be kept out of the ambit of decision making.

Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) the principle party led by Bimal Gurung is in all likelihood not to attend the meeting to be chaired by the chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Till late Monday evening Bimal's faction had not received any invitation to attend the meeting despite the fact that the party had sent a letter to the state government expressing its willingness to attend the same.

Unconfirmed reports say only the three MLAs from the hills got a verbal invitation for the meeting, but the MLAs are also unlikely to attend the same as two of them are in Kolkata and were facing problems to get air tickets.

Amar Singh Rai the Darjeeling MLA said "We cancelled Monday's air tickets after we did not get the invitation till Sunday 8 pm." Rai and Rohit Sharma the Kurseong MLAs are in Kolkata while Sarita Rai the Kalimpong MLA is in Kal-

impong. When contacted, Amar said, "Although we are keen to attend the meeting, we are facing difficulty to get the air ticket for Tuesday. The meeting here at Uttarkanya would start at 3 pm on Tuesday."

Tomorrow's crucial meeting between Mamata Banerjee and Gorkhaland agitators will be held under the shadow of two questions-when will the shutdown end and with the decibel level of a demand for tripartite meeting rising among all hill parties, what exactly can the bipartite meetings yield.

General opinion in the hills is that permanent peace and normalcy would return to the hill only if tri partite meeting between the Gorkhaland agitators, state government and the centre is held. The official GJM led by Gurung has been reiterating the same. Even expelled GJM leaders Binoy Tamang and Anit Thapa have publicly said that the bipartite meeting has to pave the way for a tripartite meeting, failing which, they would resort to hunger strike.

Tuesday's meeting would be the follow up meeting held at Nabanna, Kolkata on August 29. Hill leaders who represented in the last meeting have been invited. However the official faction of the GJM led by Bimal Gurung which is the biggest party has not been invited. Though dialogue to break

the impasse has been started, question is raised whether the Tuesday's meeting would put an end to the ongoing indefinite strike entering its 90th day on Tuesday.

Thapa, Harka Bhadr Chettri the Jan Andolan Party president and Mahindra Chettri the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) general secretary- all attending Tuesday's meeting - have already said tri-partite talks between the centre, state government and the Gorkhaland agitators would only pave the way for normalcy in the hills. Unless the issue of Gorkhaland which is the long pending aspiration of hill people is discussed, permanent peace and normalcy would not return, they feel.

Though no one is saying it officially, hill leaders belonging to different parties said unless the official faction of GJM led by Gurung is taken on board it would be a difficult task to bring permanent peace in the hills.

Dilip Ghosh the BJP West Bengal state president said the solution to the hill problem is not possible keeping Bimal Gurung out of the board.

The state government seems to be thinking otherwise as attempts are being made to politically corner Gurung the hardliner leader and his faction. Gurung still enjoys massive support base as hill people

think him as the real crusader for Gorkhaland.

The earlier attempt of Tamang and Thapa after the August 29 meeting to withdraw the bandh failed as the GJM expelled them from the party. Since then both Tamang and Thapa have mellowed down their stand on the ongoing bandh.

Political observers opined that Tamang and Thapa could play another Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) to further corner Gurung.

Gurung has been alleging Tamang and Thapa of conspiring against him and the issue of Gorkhaland by joining hands with the state government. Sensing people's mood, Tamang and Thapa have already announced that they would sit for fast unto death if tri-partite meeting is not called after Tuesday's bilateral meeting. The two leaders are believed to have already developed cozy relation with the state government while Gurung who is charged under UA (P) A Act is in hiding. Many of Gurung's supporters and the GJM leaders who have sided with him are wanted in many cases and have gone hiding.

Many believed that Tamang and Thapa's announcement to go for fast unto death demanding tri-partite talks to discuss the demand for separate state

JAP, GNLF & Binay faction to attend Uttarkanya meet

HM Correspondent

Kalimpong, Sep 11: Jan Andolan Party (JAP) supremo Dr. Harka Bahadur Chettri, Anmol Prasad, Amar Lama, Pratibha Kumari, R.C.Giri and others will be representing the party in the Tuesday meeting at Uttarkanya in Siliguri, the JAP supremo today informed. According to Dr. Chettri, the Tuesday meeting between the state government and hill parties which will be chaired by Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will discuss issues that were brought up and discussed in the Aug 29 meeting at Nabanna in Kolkata.

This is the second round of meeting aimed at finding ways in restoring normalcy and peace in the North Bengal hills where the indefinite shutdown will enter its 90th day on Tuesday. The hill party delegates had raised the issue of Gorkhaland during the meeting at Nabanna in which the CM had expressed her helplessness stating that the separate statehood issue falls under the central subject, not the state.

Besides, the meeting had discussed on the need to lift the ongoing indefinite shutdown and restoration of normalcy in the hills. Cracks in the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) developed soon after

Binay Tamang and Anit Thapa who were among the morcha delegates to Nabanna declared postponement of the shutdown from Sep 1 to Sep 12.

GJM supremo immediately cried conspiracy alleging Tamang and Anit of conspiring against him and joining hands with the state government to derail the ongoing agitation for Gorkhaland. This was quickly followed with expulsion of Tamang and Thapa from the primary membership of the party. However, the Tamang faction has been calling their expulsion from the party as having been carried out 'illegally' contending that only three-four of the 93 core com-

mittee members of the GJM had attended the meeting at Namchi during which the decision of expulsion was announced.

Tamang and Thapa continue to stake claim in the GJM and will be attending the Uttarkanya meeting along with their aides Tshering Dahal, L.M.Lama, Karun Pradhan and R.B.Bhujel. Meanwhile, the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) delegation will be led by the party supremo Mann Ghising. The GNLF delegates to be led by Ghising include Niraj Zimba, Mahendra Chettri the party's general secretary and others, the GS informed.

of Gorkhaland is a smart move to further corner Gurung and Roshan Giri the GJM general secretary. They said the state government would prefer to bank on them as it did earlier on the GNLF. She might agree for tri-partite talks and give credit for the same to Tamang and Thapa.

The August 29 meeting

was convened by the state government only after Mann Ghising the GNLF president wrote to the chief minister requesting for the same to restore normalcy in the restive hills. Though Gurung had also claimed to have sent the letter to the chief minister also requesting for a meeting, she denied receiving such letter while acknowledging that

only Tamang had sent her a letter.

Jyoti Kumar Rai the assistant general secretary of GJM said "The state government did not respond to the letter I sent on September 8 to the chief minister requesting her to call the official GJM for the talk on Tuesday". The three GJM MLAs on Saturday dropped a letter at the chief

minister's Kalighat office in Kolkata requesting her to call them for the meeting. Senior Trinamool Congress leaders said the chief minister could give a thought on Tamang and Thapa's demand for tri-partite meeting thus giving them upper hands in hill politics. If that happens Gurung would get cornered further.

Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology conferred with Platinum Smart Governance Award

New Delhi, Sep 11: The on-line knowledge repository <http://indiaskillpedia.com>, also accessible using <http://indiatechpedia.com>, developed by the Skill Mission team and Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology was selected for the Skoch Order of Merit Award 2017. The team from Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology was conferred with the Platinum Smart Governance Award 2017 on Saturday at the 49th Skoch Summit held at Constitution Club of India, Rafi Marg in New Delhi.

600 Delegates from 25 States, 12 central ministries, 150 districts, 100 cities and several enterprises, banks, academia, consultants and media participated in the event.

The objectives sought to be achieved included sharing and facilitating skill aspirants, entrepreneurs, startups harness knowledge and innovation through collaboration; building individual and organizational competencies and capacities and facilitating the ushering in of technological and industrial

competitiveness of the Indian Industries.

Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region is encouraging the efforts taken by the Sikkim Skill Mission Team and Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology. Efforts are being pursued to collaborate with authors, domain experts, industries, training partners to identify, source, develop and upload contents in the portal to benefit the ambitious talent pool of young persons in the State and the nation at large, expressed SSM members.

SBI, Canara Bank & IOB reopens in Kalimpong, link failure hinders work



Nisha Chettri

Kalimpong, Sep 11: The Kalimpong branch of Indian Overseas Bank, State Bank of India and Canara Bank reopened Monday amid presence of security personnel heavily deployed outside the bank premises. The development comes just a day after the Kalimpong District Magistrate had convened a meeting with the business community, heads of educational and banking institutions and assured them of adequate security to reopen their establishments. However, with the blanket ban on internet connectivity no transactions could take place in the banks. The ban on internet in the hills has been clamped since almost three months. Although people wouldn't mind rushing to banks to draw liquid cash but reopening banks in absence of internet connectivity makes no sense, said a local. Similarly, a banker requesting anonymity said,

"Link (internet) is the most important thing that a bank needs and without it the entire panel is useless. Moreover the security which the administration has provided is only in the outer area of the banks. Here we need security for all the staffs" he added.

Schools in the other hand are still carrying on with their coaching class-

es only for students appearing for board exams and is yet to reopen full fledgedly. The educational institutions are waiting for a positive outcome in the all party meeting with the state government at Uttarkanya on Tuesday.

"The administration has assured us of providing adequate security but we will

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GNLF forms Kalimpong district central committee

HM Correspondent

Darjeeling, Sep 11: Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) today formed its Kalimpong district central committee. The decision was taken after Kalimpong was declared a separate district and the central committee was formed today with Maurice Kalikotay as its president, informed GNLF general secretary Mahendra

Chettri. In a telephonic conversation Chettri said that the party's formation of Kalimpong district central committee was aimed at augmenting its organizational strength. The new district central committee will have four branch committees under it. Accordingly appointment of chief conveners and other relevant posts will be done soon, he added.

Tourism dept to observe World Tourism Day on Sep 27

Gangtok, Sep 11: The Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation will be observing World Tourism Day 2017 on September 27 in accordance with the underlying message of the United Nations General Assembly.

The World Tourism Day 2017 will be celebrated with the theme, "Sustainable Tourism - A Tool for Development".

Sustainable Tourism will encompass three dimensions of sustainable development viz. economic, social and environment to bolster environment protection, champion diverse cultural heritage and strengthen peace in the world.

In line with the vision of the Chief Minister of Sikkim of making the people of Sikkim self sufficient and self reliant, the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation

will be conducting two days sensitization programme for tourist guides/tour operators and taxi drivers on September 15 and 16 respectively at Paryatan Bhawan, Tadong as part of the World Tourism Day Celebration 2017.

The event will have key speakers from various Departments.

Certificates of participation shall be distributed by the Department to the participants.

The Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation had requested all concerned to be part of the sensitization programme and take benefit of the opportunity.

For further details please contact: Joint Director (I&P) @ 9832065617, Deputy Secretary (Adm) @ 7076733489, Under Secretary (I&P) @ 7407903538 and Tourist Officer (I&P) @ 9733171499.

Newly elected SUSA executive committee members take oath

Gangtok, Sep 11: Prof. T.B. Subba, Vice Chancellor and Patron of Sikkim University Students' Association (SUSA) administered oath to the newly elected members of the executive committee of SUSA here today.

The newly elected executive committee consists of President Lalit Pokhrel Sharma, Vice - President Nisha Rai and General Secretary Sonam Wangdi Dorjee Bhutia.

Election to various posts of the executive committee was held on September 8.

Polling was held at Cauveri Hall, 5th Mile,

Gangtok and the counting of votes was held on the same day.

Prof. Nawal K. Paswan, Chief Election Officer made necessary arrangements for smooth conduct of polling and counting of votes.

Tashi Tshering Bhutia, Joint Director, Chief Election Officer, Govt. of Sikkim was the External Observer and Dr. Sandhya Thapa, Associate Professor was the Internal Observer for the election. The Vice Chancellor congratulated all the newly elected executive committee members after administering the oath.



HM Correspondent

Darjeeling, Sep 11: The usual pro-Gorkhaland rallies that used to be taken out from the Darjeeling Railway station area have come to a grinding halt since last two days. All that is visible here

is police and paramilitary personnel manning almost every nook and cranny. The ongoing indefinite shutdown in the North Bengal hills and Terai-Dooars region in demand of a separate Gorkhaland state will enter its 90th day on Tuesday. The

shutdown has been total in Darjeeling and Kalimpong while the SBI Kurseong branch was reopened Saturday amid tight presence of security forces while in Mirik, NBSTC busses have started to ply.

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