

HIMALAYAN MIRROR

VOL 12 No 09 RNI No: SIKENG/2006/18384

GANGTOK, FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2017

CM urges for withdrawal of bandh, Binay puts forth 17-point demand



Bandh to be withdrawn only after call for tripartite talks: Bimal

HM Correspondent

Siliguri, Sep 12: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday somewhat mellowed down before the Gorkhaland agitators' demand to hold tri-partite meeting to end the ongoing political impasse in Darjeeling hills while reiterating there would be no division of the state.

Banerjee chaired the second bipartite meeting here at Uttar Kanya to discuss the crisis in Darjeeling hills where the indefinite shutdown completed 90 days and

is still counting. She said the state government would decide about holding tri-partite meeting after looking into the legalities.

The decision about demand for tri-partite talk between the parties demanding separate state of Gorkhaland, state government and the centre would be taken in the third bilateral meeting to be held at Nabanna in Kolkata on October 16, it was decided today.

However the crucial meeting attended by five hill parties including Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (Binoy

Tamang faction), Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), Jan Andolan Party (JAP), All India Gorkha League (AIGL) and Trinamool Congress and two GJM MLAs could not take any decision on withdrawing the indefinite bandh.

Addressing a press conference after a 90-minute long meeting, the CM informed that she also wants permanent solution to the hill crisis and would decide on the demand for tri-partite talks after looking into the legalities. "There was provision for tri-partite talk in the

Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) Act. But as the GTA is now run by administrator, we have to look into the legalities before deciding about the same," she briefed media persons.

The GTA formed through tri-partite agreement on July 18 2011 has already been rejected by all hill political parties and they have been demanding creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland as permanent solution for the hills crisis.

Though Binoy Tamang the expelled assistant general secretary and the chief

coordinator of the GJM claimed to have led the GJM team in the meeting, the official faction of GJM led by Bimal Gurung was not invited. Amar Singh Rai the GJM MLA from Darjeeling said that he and Sarita Rai the GJM MLA from Kalimpong attended the meeting as public representatives.

In absence of the Gurung faction of GJM which is the largest political force in Darjeeling hills, no one could dare to withdraw the bandh today. It is unlikely that normally would return in the hills without taking the GJM (Bimal Gurung faction) on board.

Later in the evening, Gurung in a purported audio message said "The state government is trying to sabotage the GJM" and alleged that Tamang and Anit Thapa (another expelled GJM leader) have joined hands with the state government and are moving freely while the police have launched a manhunt against him and other senior GJM leaders.

Gurung appealed hill people to continue the bandh.

"I had not called the indefinite bandh. It was Binoy Tamang who called the indefinite bandh after my home and office was raided by police on June 15," Gurung said pushing the ball in Tamang's court. "I was not in support of the bandh. As the bandh has already been called, it should continue," he said in the audio.

"The bandh will be withdrawn only after the date for tri-partite meeting is fixed," he said in the audio released from undisclosed location. Gurung and many senior GJM leaders are charged under UA (P) A and are in hiding. Meanwhile, the demand put forth by Binoy Tamang faction in the meeting today included immediate tripartite talks on Gorkhaland, high level judiciary inquiry into the deaths caused due to police action and compensation to the family whose kin have died in police firing including those injured.

Besides, demand was also made for withdrawal of all cases-old and new-filed against the leaders, agitators,

Gorkhaland sympathizers and release of those taken in judicial custody during the agitation. Tamang also demanded high level enquiry into the recent bomb blasts in the hills. Raising issues pertaining to tea garden and cinchona plantation workers, the GJM Tamang faction has demanded payment of their salaries/wages for last three months and immediate payment of bonus after holding necessary meeting for the same and no break in gratuities.

Handover of land rights (parja-patta) to tea garden and cinchona plantation workers including forest villagers; inclusion of tea garden workers under the Minimum Wages Act and recognition of tea garden workers in the category of 'Skilled Workers'; no political victimization of employees and workers in the hills, review/recall of government/casual employees transferred during the strike period; no break-in-service for government/GTA employees who could not attend duty because of the strike; immedi-

ate release of salaries of government/GTA employees including casual workers before the puja holidays. Besides, demands were also made to allow schools remain open during winter to make up for the syllabus especially for students of standard 10 and 12. For this, winter allowances should be paid to the teachers.

In addition hill students should be allowed admission in colleges and universities which could not be done due to the shutdown and registration dates for class 10 and 12 students should also be extended.

"Commercial/private vehicle owners should be given tax/penalty waiver as they could not do the requisite paper works due to the shutdown; no penalty for delayed VAT payments/GST registration for traders, hoteliers and business community and lastly, allow all local TV news channels, electronic channels, ABN news channel and digital media to function freely and without coercion" the demands included.

Tamang murder trial through video conferencing not possible

Kolkata, Sep 12 (PTI): The trial of 47 accused in the Madan Tamang murder case of 2010 is not possible through video conferencing owing to infrastructural problems, the chief sessions judge here was informed today.

The Darjeeling district judge in a communication to City Sessions Court Chief Judge K K Kumai said that at present there was no Internet facility in Darjeeling.

The facility has been suspended by the West Bengal government since June 18 in a bid to curb communication among trouble makers in the hills, where an indefinite bandh called by Gorkha Janmukti Morcha president Bimal Gurung is in force for three months.

The communication also informed that irregular electricity supply was another hindrance to holding any such trial through video conferencing from the hills.

These apart, there is no

court room in the Darjeeling district court large enough to hold the trial of 47 accused persons together, said the communication that was submitted before the court of judge in-charge Sanjoy Mukherjee in the absence of chief judge Kumai.

The Supreme Court had on August 16 ordered that the proceedings should be conducted through video conferencing from Darjeeling.

The apex court had asked the chief sessions judge's court here to hold the trial mainly through video conferencing for which appropriate facility should be set up at Kolkata and Darjeeling.

It had, however, clarified that if the trial court was of the opinion that physical presence of a particular accused and/or a witness was necessary before the chief sessions judge's court, the judge can pass specific order in this regard.

The chief judge of city

sessions court judge had on August 17 discharged GJM supreme Bimal Gurung in the Madan Tamang murder case and directed that charges be framed against 47 other accused persons.

Among the 47 accused are Gurung's wife Asha and several other leaders of GJM.

All India Gorkha League leader Madan Tamang was attacked with sharp weapons when he was overseeing preparations for a public meeting at Clubside in the heart of Darjeeling town on May 21, 2010, and was declared brought dead at the sadar hospital there.

The Supreme Court had on October 8, 2013, directed transfer of hearing in the case from Darjeeling sadar court to the city sessions court here on a petition by Tamang's widow Bharati.

She had claimed that witnesses could be impacted if the trial was held in Darjeeling. (Courtesy- Business Times)

Suspicious object creates bomb scare



HM Correspondent

Kurseong, Sep 12: Two suspicious packets, one near the railway track in front of the Bata shoe store and another found lying amid the garbage near Kurseong traffic police booth created panic during early morning hours as po-

lice barricaded the sites and averted pedestrians move nearby.

The police while conducting its night patrol had first noticed the two suspicious objects at around 2am and informed the CID bomb squad team after duly barricading the two sites. Finally, the CID bomb squad team

from Siliguri arrived at the sites at around 10.30 am and took the objects in their possession.

After proper investigation, the first packet had nothing but a bundle of wrapped useless newspapers while the second object was an emergency light kept in a big bazaar bag.

Pakyong Green Field Airport to be operational by November informs MoS Jayant Sinha

New Delhi, Sep 12: Minister of Tourism Sikkim, Ugen Gyatso Bhutia, MP Sikkim, P.D. Rai, Lok Sabha and Secretary of Tourism Sikkim, C. Zangpo called on the Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha to discuss the progress of the Pakyong Green Field Airport. The MoS informed that the airport will be operational by November, 2017.

The MoS suggested that agreements with airlines should be entered into, on a priority basis. At present, 42-seater turboprop aircrafts will operate from the airport. The Airport Authority of India has designed and executed the Green Field Airport which will be commissioned after the Director General of Civil Aviation grants permission.

● Contd. on Page 8

CCS to decide whether to allow Karmapa to visit Sikkim

New Delhi, Sep 12: The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will take a call on whether to allow Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje to visit Sikkim as demanded by the people of the state, a home ministry official said.

The Home Ministry has prepared a note on the Karmapa's visit to Sikkim and sent it for approval to the CCS, the highest decision making body of the country's security matters, the official said on condition of anonymity.

However, the Karmapa will not be allowed to enter the Rumtek monastery located in East Sikkim, even though he may be allowed to visit the state, the official said.

The central government had banned entry of all the three claimants to the title of Karmapa to the Rumtek monastery in East Sikkim in 1994.

The Sikkimese Buddhists who follow the Khagyu sect recognise the 31-year-old

Ogyen Trinley Dorje as the real heir and successor of the 16th Karmapa who passed away in 1981.

The Sikkim government has written several times and passed resolutions requesting the Centre to allow Ogyen Trinley Dorje to make his claim as the 17th Karmapa. The Centre has, however, not given any decision on it yet.

Ogyen Trinley Dorje, head of the Karma Khagyu (Black Hat) tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, was born in Tibet and had escaped to India through Nepal at the age of 14. He reached the Tibetan exile quarters at McLeod Ganj on January 5, 2000.

He presently lives in Dharamsala and is also recognised by the Dalai Lama.

A delegation of monks of various monasteries of Sikkim had met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in May and urged him to grant early permission for Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje's visit to the state.

CM Chamling attends OWA farewell dinner



Legau (Germany), Sep 11: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling joined the Farewell Dinner organized here at Legau,

Germany on the invitation of the OWA organizers. The farewell function witnessed serious interaction among

the OWA winners and members of the organizing committee.

While addressing the

States Sikkim model can be replicated in other parts of the world

gathering, the Chief Minister said that the 3-day festival has been very fruitful to celebrate successes in organic movements across the world and that it was a great privilege to be in the company of world organic leaders and to learn about the immense work that is being done to further organic agriculture in different parts of the world.

The Chief Minister further stated that Sikkim is a small Himalayan state in India but able to set an example of a new model of development in India by embracing organic agriculture and

expressed his happiness to share Sikkim's humble story and proposed that Sikkim serves as an example that can be studied and its model replicated in other parts of the world.

Referring to other speakers, the Chief Minister submitted that he was energized by the stories of success and commitment heard in the past few days - stories from Ethiopia, Palestine, Azerbaijan and Zimbabwe, to our very own Indian city of Pune - and that he would take back inspiration from this dedicated community of people

working hard to overcome challenges of climate change, environmental degradation and food security.

The Chief Minister also expressed his gratefulness to the organizers, to IFOAM and Rapunzel, and to the Jury Members for the honor and recognition given to Sikkim. While impressing upon the audience the Chief Minister further said,

"The journey for each one of us has not been easy. What we have done is work against the odds laid out by the demands of a consumer-

● Contd. on Page 8