

Mamata calls off dharna, cites 'favourable court order'

SC bars arrest but asks city police chief to cooperate with CBI, Centre tells state to act against him for 'indiscipline'

KOLKATA, FEB 5 /- West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today called off her dharna against the CBI attempting to question the city police chief in ponzi scam cases. Calling off her sit-in on his third day, Mamata said she was doing so after consulting leaders of major Opposition parties and following "a favourable court order". She had been sitting on the dharna since Sunday night at the Metro channel in Esplanade area, the spot where she had held a 26-day fast against the acquisition of farm land for the Tata Motors small car unit at Singur in 2006.

Opposition leaders like Chandrababu Naidu of TDP, Tejashwi Yadav of RJD and Kanimozhi of DMK had visited her at the dharna spot. The Supreme Court had earlier in the day directed Kolkata police commissioner Rajeev Kumar to appear before the CBI and "faithfully" cooperate into the investigation of cases arising out of the Saradha chit fund scam, while it making it clear that he will not be arrested. To avoid all "unnecessary controversy", the apex court also directed the commissioner of Kolkata police to appear before the investigating agency at a neutral place in Shillong, on such dates as may be fixed by the probe agency. While observing that there is "no reason why he (Kumar) will not make himself available for the investigation," a bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said, "We make it clear that no coercive steps including arrest shall be taken against the Commissioner of Police". The apex court, which on Monday had taken strong note of allegations of tampering with evidence in the Saradha scam by saying that "if the Supreme Court special investigation team (SIT) of the West Bengal police, of which Kumar was the functional head, was not handing over the complete documents to the CBI and some of those given by the SIT were doctored, Venugopal and Mehta also alleged that SIT has not given the complete call data details and there was serious omission or

commission willfully done by the SIT. "What was given to us were doctored copy of call records," the attorney general said, mentioning "the chit fund scam concerning the Rose Valley case was a case of cheating, involving Rs 15,000 crore. Venugopal and Mehta said 25 CBI officials who reached Kolkata Police Chief's residence on Sunday

and violation of services rules. In a communication to the West Bengal chief secretary, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that as per the information received by it, Kumar sat on a dharna along with some police officers with West Bengal chief minister at the Metro Channel in Kolkata, which is prima facie in contravention of the extant provisions of AIS (Conduct

ministry cited the extant provisions of the Rules 3(1), 5(1) and 7 of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968, which were reportedly flouted by Kumar. In its clause by clause, communication, the ministry said every member of the service shall at all times maintain absolute integrity and devotion to duty and shall do nothing which is unbecoming of a member of the service, no member of the service shall be a member of, or be otherwise associated with, any political party or any organisation which takes part in politics, nor shall he take part in, or subscribe in aid of, or assist in any other manner, any political movement or political party. The ministry also said no member of the service shall, in any radio broadcast or communication over any public media or in any document published

under any name or pseudonymously or in his own name or in the name of any other person or in any communication to the press or in any public utterance, make any statement of fact or opinion which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the central government or a state government which is capable of embarrassing the relations between the central government and any state government. (PTI)

for questioning him were banded into a bus and taken to the police station, and even joint director of CBI Vikas Shrivastav's house was under seige of the West Bengal police and his family kept themselves locked while the police personnel were banging their doors. However, the Centre today asked the state government to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar for "indiscipline".

Rules, 1968/AIS (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1968. "In view of the above, the West Bengal government has been requested by MHA to initiate action against the officer and intimate the action taken in this regard," it said. The home ministry, which is the cadre controlling authority of the Indian Police Service officers, cited Kumar's "indisciplined behaviour" and violation of service rules for initiating the proceedings. The home

police commissioner, Prasad added. The Kolkata Police Commissioner will appear before the CBI in Shillong as the environment is not conducive in West Bengal, Prasad said. Describing the order as a "slap on the face" of the Mamata Banerjee-led government, top functionaries in the Union government said: "On a careful consideration of the court's order, it is quite apparent that the court has taken a dim view of the Kolkata police commissioner and the entire top bureaucracy of the Mamata government." Emphasising that the conduct of the Mamata government's senior officers is on watch, the functionaries citing the order said, the apex court has asked the Kolkata police chief, "to faithfully cooperate with the investigating agency at all times." (PTI)



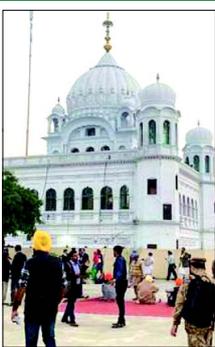
Mamata, flanked by Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu and her party leaders, announcing the end of dharna at the mancha at Esplanade... Photo: Shyamal Maitra

One confrontational incident reported with Sentinelese tribe in 10 years: Govt

NEW DELHI, FEB 5 /- In the past 10 years, only one confrontational incident has occurred with the Sentinelese in the Andaman and Nicobar islands, where a total population of 50 of the community live, Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday. In response to a question, Minister of State for Home Affairs Hansraj Gangaram Ahir also said that during past 10 years, 19 confrontational incidents have been reported with Jarawas in the region. The Jarawa tribe has a population of 514 as per latest census. "The Sentinelese are still in isolation practicing primordial hunting and gathering way of life. The government respects their way of lifestyle, therefore, has adopted an 'eyes-on and hands-off' practice to protect and safeguard the Sentinelese tribe," he said. "The entire North Sentinel Island along with 5 km coastal sea from high water mark is notified as tribal reserve, the minister said. "Apart from the land territory the coastal sea up to fixed extent of 1 km to 5 km abutting the tribal territory has also been notified as tribal reserve so that marine resources like fish, turtles etc are available exclusively for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)," he said. The minister said buffer zone notified in 2013, around the Jarawa Tribal Reserve (5km landward side and 1km seaward side), prohibits all commercial / tourism activity in the Buffer Zone. Joint patrolling by representatives of Police, Forest and Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) is carried out around Jarawa area to prevent contact of poachers and unscrupulous non-tribal elements with Jarawa tribe, he said. (PTI)

India to send draft pact to Pak for Kartarpur corridor

NEW DELHI, FEB 5 /- India will send a draft to Pakistan for finalisation of an agreement for opening of the Kartarpur Sahib corridor, which will facilitate easy passage to Sikh pilgrims to the historic Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, officials said. This was decided at a high-level meeting, convened to discuss how to fast-track the implementation of the Kartarpur corridor project. The meeting was chaired by Union home secretary Rajiv Gauba and attended by Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria, Punjab chief secretary Karan Avtar Singh and others. Kartarpur is located in Shakargarh in Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab. Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, had spent more than 16 years of his life there. The Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara is located on the banks of the Ravi river, about three-four km from the border in Pakistan. "India will send within a month the draft of the agreement to be signed with Pakistan for the Kartarpur corridor. We hope the modalities will be completed soon," Punjab chief secretary Karan Avtar Singh told newsmen after the four-hour-long meeting. India has already communicated to Pakistan the coordinates of Zero Point for the opening of the Kartarpur corridor, a



home ministry official said. The meeting discussed land acquisition for the highway and for the Integrated Check Post (ICP). At the meeting, it was informed that the preliminary notification for land acquisition for highway has already been issued and the notification to acquire land for ICP will be issued on

Wednesday. The Punjab government has assured that the land will be made available for both the projects by mid-March, the official said. Meanwhile, the possession of the land to commence preliminary work will be finalised within the next few days. The Punjab chief secretary said the process of land acquisition is on the second stage. On November 26 last year, Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stone of the Dera Baba Nanak - Kartarpur Sahib Corridor (up to the International Border) at an event at Mann village of Gurdaspur district of Punjab. On November 28, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan laid the foundation stone for the 4km corridor which is expected to be completed by 2019. The much-awaited corridor will connect Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur - the final resting place of Sikh faith's founder Guru Nanak Dev - with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Gurdaspur district and facilitate visa-free movement of Indian Sikh pilgrims, who will have to just obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib, which was established in 1522 by Guru Nanak Dev. (PTI)

Rajnath on Assam NRC

NEW DELHI, FEB 5 /- Union home minister Rajnath Singh today asserted that the Union government is committed to complete the NRC process in Assam within the stipulated time and will ensure that no foreigner is included or any Indian citizen excluded. He also said the home ministry wants that the National Register of Citizens, a list of Assam's residents, is completed with fairness and for this the state government has been provided with all necessary assistance, including funds. "Our government is committed to complete the NRC within the stipulated time so that no foreigner is included in it and no Indian is left out," Singh told PTI here.

Speed up probe into Nobel theft case in the same manner you adopt when orders come from PM: Mamata to CBI

KOLKATA, FEB 5 /- West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday alleged that the BJP is "blackmailing" people by using central agencies like the CBI against them and then getting them into the party fold. Mamata said she has "great respect" for the CBI and urged it to speed up its probe into theft of the Nobel medal of Rabindranath Tagore with the same alacrity with which, she alleged, the agency executes the orders of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP national president Amit Shah. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supreme, was speaking before ending her three-day dharna (sit-in protest) at the Metro cinema in the city's Esplanade area against the CBI's attempt to question Kolkata Police chief Rajeev Kumar in connection with the chit fund scams. She said once the people who are being blackmailed by the BJP join the saffron party, the cases lodged against them by the central agencies are dismissed. "Once you join the BJP then there will be no cases. There will be no CBI, no ED, no IT (Income Tax Department) against you," she said. Mamata, who came to power in West Bengal riding the crest of the anti-farmland acquisition wave at Singur and Nandigram, alleged that political vendetta is working behind the CBI going slow on its investigations into the Tapasi Malik's death at Singur and into the Nandigram killings.

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