

## Hills simmer; Gorkhaland protest reaches Delhi

### Centre's intervention sought over army removal



Members of Peoples Movement for Gorkhaland during their Tri-Colour peace march from Rajghat of Jantar Mantar to demand for separate Gorkhaland, in New Delhi on Sunday.

**NEW DELHI, July 9 /-** With a 110-metre long national flag, Gorkhaland supporters today marched in the national capital to reinforce their demand for a separate state and the immediate imposition of President's Rule in West Bengal. Protesters belonging to the Gorkha Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti (GSSS) here demanded the Centre's intervention in removing paramilitary forces with immediate effect.

The West Bengal government is treating common people like terrorists and killing them. The central government should remove paramilitary forces and terminate the services of the Director General of Police," GSSS president Kiran B K said. The protesters marched from Rajghat to Jantar Mantar carrying the flag, depicting 110 years of their struggle for separate state.

The march culminated at Jantar Mantar where they joined their co-supporters who had been protesting for three weeks now. "Just like Bengalis have their identity, we are fighting for ours. We are getting killed for seeking the rights we deserved. The Centre should look into the issue," said Stuti Thami of Darjeeling.

Gorkhaland supporters torched a police outpost, the toy train railway station and clashed with the police at two places. Meanwhile, in Darjeeling the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) today plans to take out rallies



Members of Peoples Movement for Gorkhaland shout slogans during their peace march from Rajghat to Jantar Mantar in demand for separate Gorkhaland, in New Delhi on Sunday.

Janmukti Morcha (GJM) today planned to take out rallies against the alleged killing of its supporters in police firing in Darjeeling as well as the indefinite shutdown in support of their demand for a separate Gorkhaland entered the 26th day amid a strict vigil by the Army and the police.

The Army was re-deployed yesterday after fresh violence erupted in the Darjeeling hills where

The GJM claimed that while two pro-Gorkhaland supporters had died on the spot during the police firing, two others succumbed to injuries in hospital.

The separatist group identified the four victims as Tashi Bhutia, Suraj Sundas, Asha Kumar and Sameer Subba. M S Rai, chairman of the Rai Development Board, resigned last night in protest against the alleged killings.

The GJM also rejected Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's offer of talks yesterday. The police are on high alert after fresh violence and arson erupted in Darjeeling hills yesterday. The Army was redeployed yesterday after the violence in Darjeeling hills where Gorkhaland supporters torched a police outpost, a toy train station and clashed with the police at two places in protest against the alleged killings.

Police pickets in front of the government and GTA offices and various entry exit points of the hills while Rapid Action Force (RAF) and a sizable number of women police personnel were also deployed. Except medicine shops, all other shops and hotels are closed in Darjeeling. (PTI)

### 4 cops injured in fresh flare-up

**DARJEELING, July 9 /-** The violence erupted again in Darjeeling today on the 26th day of pro-Gorkhaland stir, with agitators setting aflame a police camp, injuring four police personnel and attacking a BDO office at Pokribong. The GJM activists also took out a rally at Chowkbarza with the bodies of Suraj Sundas and Sameer Subba who were allegedly killed in police firing. The GNM also took out a procession at Sonada with the body of Tashi Bhutia who too was allegedly killed in police firing. The protesters

also attacked the Sonada police station and torched a part of it in what was second such attack in two days. The Sonada police station was attacked yesterday too, by protesters.

A police booth was also set ablaze in Darjeeling by the protesters. In the afternoon today a huge mob attacked a BDO office and a police camp at Pokribong and set it on fire as several police personnel were also beaten up. Meanwhile, the all-party meeting of the hill parties, which was scheduled to take place on July 18, has been ad-

vanced to July 11. The GJM has claimed that four persons were killed during police firing after clashes broke out between pro-Gorkhaland supporters and police in various parts of the hills yesterday.

The police, however, denied the reports of firing and said it did not fire a 'single shot.' M S Rai, chairman of the Rai Development Board, resigned last night in protest against the alleged killings. The GJM also rejected Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's offer of talks yesterday.

### PM speaks to Assam CM; takes stock of flood situation

**NEW DELHI, July 9 /-** Concerned over the grim flood condition in Assam, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today spoke to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and took stock of the prevailing situation in the state besides assuring him of all central help. During the telephonic conversation, the prime minister enquired about measures taken by the Assam government to provide succour to the marooned people, damage caused by flood waters and status of relief and rescue operations. The chief minister informed the prime minister of the state government's effective and expeditious measures to reach out to the affected people. "The prime minister is very concerned about the flood situation in Assam. He said the central government is taking the flood situation in the state very seriously and assured all support for mitigating the problem."

Sonowal told PTI over phone from Guwahati. The chief minister said he has informed the prime minister that ministers and MLAs were directed to rush to the affected areas to take stock of the flood situation and step up relief and rescue operations ensuring proper arrangement for flood-affected people. Sonowal said relief camps have been opened for marooned people and relief materials have been distributed. The chief minister informed the prime minister that ex-gratia relief of Rs five lakh to the next of kin of those killed in the current spate of floods have been disbursed within 48 hours. Sonowal also conveyed to the prime minister about the state government's decision to procure dredger for excavation of Brahmaputra river bed apart from preparing plan for anti-erosion measures adopting latest technology.

### Chamling mulls to move SC over resolution on Gorkhaland

**GANGTOK, July 9 /-** Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling today demanded urgent intervention of the Centre for early settlement of the Gorkhaland issue to safeguard the interest of Sikkim. He said in case the issue was not addressed on priority basis, the Sikkim government might approach the apex court of India. "I seek urgent intervention of Government of India and all the authorities concerned for early settlement of the situation to safeguard the interest of Sikkim from these hazards and constraints on priority," Chamling said through a press statement issued by the Information and Public Relations department of the state. "In case of not addressing this issue on priority, the state government may have to approach the apex court of India in the larger interest of Sikkimese people for justice," the statement said. Stating that the interstate ramifications of the Gorkhaland agitation and treating it "merely as a West Bengal issue" was not adequate, the chief minister noted that the present situation in Darjeeling Hills has had a direct impact on life of the



people of Sikkim and that this issue must be looked into with utmost seriousness. "Sikkim's geographical location having international boundaries with three countries - China in the North, Bhutan in the East and Nepal in the West, and the potential threat to the national security is a matter of supreme importance," the statement said. "The only access to the rest of the country is through the state of West Bengal. Sikkim is sandwiched due to the agitation and prevailing law and order situation. As far as the national security is concerned, Government of India is appropriately handling the matter. We fully support Government of India's effort, which is addressing the national security in the best interest of our country," the statement said.

The Sikkim Chief Minister also said that the law and order being a matter of the government of West Bengal, the loss and misery suffered by Sikkim could have been avoided. "The Gorkhaland agitation-related anguish of Sikkim is as old as the agitation itself. Sikkim bound vehicles have been targeted by fringe groups in Siliguri," he said. "Trucks carrying essential goods, com-

modities and petroleum products are being ransacked right in the presence of the West Bengal Police, and it has been learnt that in some cases, the West Bengal police itself is overseeing the situation," it said. The statement also said that people in need of immediate advanced medical care were affected. In addition, the economic development of Sikkim has also been affected. The CM's statement also said that due to the unrest in the neighbouring state of Bengal, "Sikkim has already borne the loss of over Rs 60,000 crore." "In the agitation related violence on NH10, Sikkim's only road link with the rest of the nation, over 5,000 vehicles have been vandalised and around 1,300 people (drivers and passengers) killed in the last 22 years of Gorkhaland agitation," it said. Fresh violence today erupted in Darjeeling hills prompting the West Bengal government to call the Army back on the streets as Gorkhaland supporters torched a police outpost, a toy train station and clashed with the police. The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), spearheading the agitation for a separate state carved out of West Bengal, claimed that two youths were killed in police firing and rejected West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's offer of talks. (PTI)

### Compilation of Pranab's convocation addresses soon: Javadekar

**NEW DELHI, July 9 /-** Convocation addresses delivered by President Pranab Mukherjee will be compiled and published by the HRD ministry in a 'guru dakshina' to him, Union minister Prakash Javadekar said today. Felicitating Mukherjee, who was a teacher before plunging into politics in 1969, on the occasion of 'Guru Purima', Javadekar said his life was an "exemplary" record of calibre, capacity and conduct. He said Mukherjee represented all the teachers in the country. "By felicitating Mukherjee, we are honouring all the teachers of this country," the human resource development minister said. At the inaugura-



President Pranab Mukherjee, during the launch of SWAYAM, SWAYAM Prabha DTH Channels, National Academic Depository and inauguration of the National Convention on digital initiatives at Vigyan Bhawan

tion of three digital initiatives in the education sector - Swayam, Swayam Prabha and National Academic Depository today, Javadekar presented a small bag to Mukherjee containing a slate and a memento. "Since I called him a teacher, there will be 'guru dakshina' (homage to a guru) as well. We will publish compilation of his convocation addresses to various universities so that students can enlighten themselves from his valuable observations," he said. Swayam aims at taking the best teaching-learning resources to all.

Under Swayam Prabha, the government plans to telecast high-quality educational programmes through

### Indiaslams Pakistan for glorifying Burhan Wani

**NEW DELHI, July 9 /-** Indiatoday hit out at Pakistan for glorifying militant commander Burhan Wani, saying Islamabad's terror support and sponsorship need to be condemned by 'one and all'.

In a strongly worded tweet, external affairs ministry spokesman Gopal Baglay said, "First@ForeignOfficePK readfrmbannedLeT'script. Now Pak COAS (Pakistan army chief) glorifies Burhan Wani. Pak's terror support and sponsorship need to be condemned by one and all." Baglay's comments came a day after Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday paid tributes to Wani, saying his death "infused a new spirit in the struggle for freedom" in the Kashmir Valley. (PTI)

### Normalcy limping back to riot-hit Baduria

**KOLKATA, July 9 /-** Life returned to normal in riot-hit Baduria town and adjacent areas of North 24 Parganas district today after communal violence broke out over a Facebook post early this week. "Everything is normal now in Baduria, Swarnapagar, Deganga and Basirhat. There has been no problem anywhere in the district for the last 36 hours or more. People are trying to resume normal life and we are keeping everything under watch," a senior police officer said.

Though Internet services remained suspended in and around the area, locals came out to the streets to resume normal life as shops, market places opened on a sunny Sunday. Large number of state police and central paramilitary forces were posted in the area to keep close watch on "every proceedings", the senior police said. There was no report of any untoward incident from Baduria and nearby areas in Basirhat sub-division of North 24 Parganas district.

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