



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Narendra Modi review the guard of honour during a welcome ceremony ahead of the round of German-Indian government consultation at the Chancellery in Berlin—REUTERS

India, Germany vow to take strong measures against terror sponsors

PM seeks 'quantum jump' in economic ties with Berlin

BERLIN, MAY 30 /-/ India and Germany today vowed to take "strong measures" against those who encourage, support and finance terrorism, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on a host of key issues like trade, skill development and climate change.

"Pace of development of our relations is fast, direction positive and destination clear. Germany will always find India as powerful, prepared and capable partner," Modi said at a joint press interaction after holding talks with Merkel. Following the talks, the two sides also signed 12 MOUs/agreements in fields of cyber policy, development initiatives, sustainable urban development, continued development of cluster managers and skill development, digitalisation, railway security and promoting vocational training. The two sides also issued a joint statement after Modi and Merkel held the fourth India-Germany Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC).

"The two leaders underlined their common concern about the threat and global reach of terrorism and extremism while condemning terrorist violence in all its forms and manifestations, the joint statement said. "They agreed on the need to take strong measures against all those who encourage, support and fi-

nance terrorism, provide sanctuary and safe havens that sustain and support terrorist groups and organisations," it said. India and Germany hailed their closer collaboration in countering these challenges through regular meetings of the Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.

They also called for finalisation and adoption of Comprehensive Convention

day sought "outcome-oriented" momentum in Indo-German ties and a "quantum jump" in economic relations," it said. India and Germany hailed their closer collaboration in countering these challenges through regular meetings of the Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.

They also called for finalisation and adoption of Comprehensive Convention

"Both our countries will work together to tackle this problem together and cyber security and intelligence sharing is a very important aspect of this cooperation,"

— Narendra Modi

on International Terrorism, it said.

Making a reference to terrorism, the Prime Minister said it was a big problem that faces future generations and all forces of humanity must come together to fight the menace. "Both our countries will work together to tackle this problem together and cyber security and intelligence sharing is a very important aspect of this cooperation," he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi to-

their talks, the two sides also signed a joint declaration of intent on cyber politics, development initiatives, sustainable urban development, continued development of cluster managers and skill development, cooperation in the field of digitalisation, cooperation in the field of railway security, promoting vocational training and continued cooperation on an Indo-German centre for sustainability.

Bimal Gurung asks education institutions to close for two days in protest

DARJEELING, MAY 30 /-/ Gorkha Janmukti Morcha president Bimal Gurung today said private schools in the hills region would be closed for two days on June 1 and 2, in protest against the alleged forcible imposition of Bengali language as per Bengal government's three language policy to be implemented in all educational institutes of the state.

Terminating the state government's decision to make Bengali language compulsory in schools an infringement and domination on the Nepali language which is included in the eighth schedule of the constitution, the GJM chief said. "We have respect for all languages including Bengali. If it (Bengali) is offered as optional language then we don't have any objection. But we will not accept forcible imposition."

The GJM today organized a "Samiksha Sabha" (evaluation meet) at the Gorkha Ranga Manca Bhawan in Darjeeling which was attended by representatives of GMA primary and secondary schools, ICSE and CBSE, Sishu Siksha Kendra, Madhyamik Siksha Kendra and Christian institutions.

Sahitya Academy winners and social organizations were also present in the meeting.

"This agitation is not about the GJM party but for our 'jati' (community) and 'bhasa' (language). Everyone must come forward and stand united to protest and oppose the domination. I request all the heads of schools be it government aided, Christian, ICSE and CBSE or private, to close their institutions on June 1 and 2 in protest. Now will not back down," said Gurung.

Gurung also announced he would himself participate in daily rallies from Gooch to Darjeeling from June 4 to 8, to be organized by the GJM party which will coincide with chief minister Mamata Banerjee's visit to the hills region. He also appealed to all the political parties including the hill TMC to participate in the protest rally. "You (political parties) are free to come with your party flags. We must send a message that for 'bhasa' we stand united," he said.

The GJM president asked participants to display black flags in the rally and also wear black armband for the four days of agitation.

Jiwan Namdung, a Sahitya Academy awardee and prominent writer representing the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan said the state government's decision to make Bengali compulsory was a conspiracy and an attack on Nepali language which could take an ugly turn in the coming days. "I must be remembered that Bangladesh was formed from Pakistan because of the language issue. The situation will be the same if Bengal goes ahead with its plan. It is good to learn new languages, but forcing it is not right," he said.

Joy Haldar, rector of St. Paul's school representing the ICSE schools said he had yet to receive official communications but asserted that imposition would not anger well. "When options are available, there is enjoyment and challenge which is a good experience. I have beautiful experience of learning several languages in my growing up years which I feel is important. Options will enrich us, but imposition will only create challenges," he said while adding that he would convey to member schools, Gurung's direc-

tive to close educational institutions for two days.

Peter Lingdamu, principal of St. Robert's School representing Catholic educational institutions said he was opposed to the idea of Bengali being made compulsory but was ugly as an option. "We are not against learning Bengali as a language but it should be an option and teachers must be from the hills. We will not accept if it is made compulsory," he said. He also said he would put up member schools, the GJM president's request to close institutions.

On the other hand Bisal Thapa, a professor and secretary of Hill College Professor's Association admitted that a gazette notification had not yet been issued by the state government but it was necessary to take precautionary steps.

"The state government is testing waters to see how much there is protest against its decision. I feel that once the decision becomes official than the protest may not have that impact. We will also submit petition against the state government decision to the West Bengal Governor who will have to give the assent," he said.

Sugarcane juicer Gurucharan scores 452 in HS exams

*RK Mission school bags 1st position in Malda

SOUMYA DE SARKAR

MALDA, MAY 30 /-/ Those who have relished the sugarcane juice prepared by Gurucharan Karmakar had no idea that they would have to join hands today to applaud the prodigy's brilliant performance in higher secondary (HS) examinations. The youngster scored 452 out of 500 (above 90%) in HS examinations as he set yet another instance of emphatic victory of merit over poverty. However, his parents despite being elated by the Gurucharan's success are now worry-stricken as they do not know how they would afford the son's higher studies in a suitable institution.

Gurucharan, a student of Malda Zilla School has obtained 98 in Bengali, 96 in Geography, 94 in Economics, 90 in Philosophy, 87 in Political Science and 80 in English. He now dreams to pursue undergraduate studies with honours in Geography from Presidency College, Kolkata.

Gurucharan's struggle started when his father Nibhas Karmakar 62, owing to his disability had to give up hawking sugarcane juice a couple of years back. Elders of his four other brothers and sisters Gurucharan had to get on the street with the sugarcane crusher to support the giant family. His mother Maya Karmakar could not stop her first son from vending at a tender age as no other option was left.

Inhabitants of Lake Garden area in English Bazaar

gathered at Karmakar's house to congratulate Gurucharan on his brilliant success today. "Since morning to night Gurucharan sells sugarcane juice on streets. However, he never let exhaustion deter him from studies at night. We must also be grateful to those teachers of Malda Zilla School who offered private coaching to Gurucharan taking not a single penny



Struggle to Success: Gurucharan Karmakar preparing sugarcane juice—EOI Photo

from him," Nibhas Karmakar said.

Mobassar Ansar, Headmaster of Zilla School was aloud in appreciating his student. "He has all along been a brilliant student. Despite his struggle for family, Gurucharan refused to neglect his studies for a single day. He could not come to school every day. But whenever he managed to attend school, he used to rush to teachers to complete the pending lessons," the proud Headmaster said.

He added that out of their social responsibilities the teachers had agreed to help Gurucharan financially so that his dream was not shattered.

Apart from Gurucharan Karmakar the other students who have made noteworthy performance in HS examinations from the district are Arindam Mandal of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Vidyamandir,

No need to follow Centre's order banning cattle sale, Mamata tells officials

BARRACKPORE, MAY 30 /-/ West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today told the officials in her administration that there was no need to follow the Centre's notification banning the sale of cattle for slaughter at a market till the state government issued a direction to that effect. Mamata, however, asked the police to take steps to stop cow smuggling in the border district of North 24 Parganas "at any cost". Speaking at an administrative review meeting, she said: "Cow smuggling has to be stopped at any cost. The police should take stern action to put an end to it." Cattle smuggling in North 24 Parganas district bordering Bangladesh is a sensitive issue with the BJP accusing the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government in the state of not doing enough to put an end to the illegal trade. The chief minister asked the police "to deal sternly with communal flare-ups", while accusing the BJP of making efforts to incite communal violence in the state.

"The police should keep

its eyes and ears open. If someone tries to incite communal violence, beat up both the parties. Do not spare anybody, irrespective of the person's political affiliations. The BJP is trying to incite communal violence in the state," she said. Speaking on the ban on sale and purchase of cattle at animal markets for the purpose of slaughter, she asked the district administration to ensure that no one followed the Centre's notification in that regard. "The holy month of Ramadan is on. Everybody has the right to observe religious festivals. Just like Durga Puja, Kali Puja and Christmas, Eid is also observed in our state. "What one person does is his or her choice. No one has the right to dictate it. Do not follow that (Centre's) order; the state has not issued any such order," she said. The administration should ensure that there was "no confusion" regarding the issue, the TMC supremo told the officials at the meeting, adding that till the state government issued an order to that effect, there was no need to follow the Centre's notification.

Waterfall Home-stay in Sikkim near Rumtek attract tourists everyday

PRASHANT ACHARYA

GANGTOK, MAY 30 /-/ The home-stay concept in Sikkim is flourishing after the tourism attraction programme of Incredible India and Sikkim is witnessing a large influx of tourists who opt for home-stays instead of city life.

Waterfall Home-stay, located in Rumtek, East Sikkim, 22 kms from Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, offers abundance of nature. Away from the hustle and bustle of city, it is located in a very quiet and peaceful place. The rooms are simple wooden paneled and carpeted with basic amenities. They have budget double rooms,

four bedded room and dormitory.

Santosh Kumar Bardewa founder owner of the home-stay said that the international tourists including domestic tourists from Kolkata and rest of the country prefer staying here because of the comfort of a homely environment where one is not bounded by social protocols. One can freely mingle with the local people, enjoy home-made food and relax in the cosy comfort of a house away from the hustle and bustle of city life. The desire for such holidays has given rise to a new concept.

According to Bardewa this concept has enabled



tourists to enjoy their stay in these Home Stays and a scope to learn local culture and traditions. One can clearly say that these Home Stays definitely offer a home away from home feel. Bardewa's three sons,

Satish is managing director of Yak and Yeti Travels & Expedition, Bhusan owns Singalita Tours and Travels and Deepak is a computer engineer jointly runs Waterfall Home-stay under the company of Himalchuli

Group of Tourism Industry, Sikkim. The 25 year old Home-stay has already bagged Tourism Excellence Award in 2006 presented by the then minister Pawan Kumar Chatterjee.

Deepak who is now looking after the homestay says, "Here we have ideal place for meditation, yoga practices, reading, writing, bird and butterfly watching, botanical studies, Buddhist studies, Sikkimese traditional studies and many more."

We can arrange for bicycle hire and paragliding, rock climbing, hiking, trekking, mountain expeditions, tourist circuit tours, transportation and guide services.

We have a got a big common lounge with TV, big flower garden and a small playground with Himalayan carp fishpond. We take care of guests personally throughout the stay 24 hrs and they can have kitchen access too. Guests can make their tour plan for entire Sikkim and Darjeeling and all places are accessible from here."

About 30 minutes walk from Waterfall Home-stay is Rumtek Dharmas Chakra Centre. The monastery is home to the monk community, the place where they perform the sacred rituals and practices of the Karma Kagyu lineage.

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