

Mamata accuses Centre of letting outsiders to enter country for spreading violence

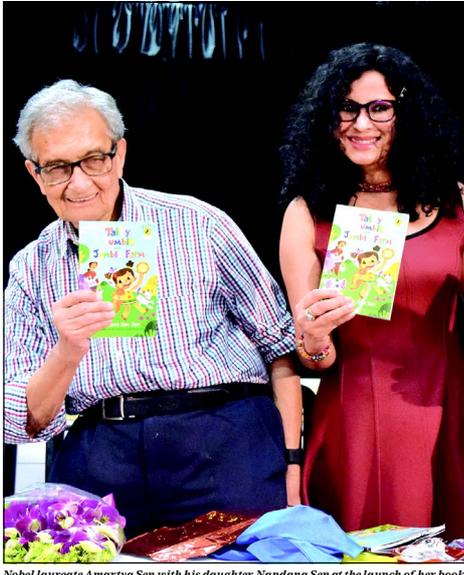
NANDAKUMAR, JULY 10 /-/- Chief minister Mamata Banerjee today accused the Centre of smuggling in foreigners from across the international border to perpetrate violence.

Mamata asserted that the international border was for the Central government to look after, but the Centre instead was 'opening the gates and letting outsiders enter the country to conspire and cause violence.' 'You (Centre) had opened up the border and let them enter the state and now you are asking the state to submit report. It's because we are in the government that we have been able to keep the people calm despite such conspiracy against us,' she claimed.

'Both the central and state governments are elected by the people. Then why is the central government conspiring against a state government? Why are they spreading lies against a state? I want an answer to this,' the chief minister said while speaking at a programme here. Mamata also claimed her state was getting no cooperation from the Centre in any matter.

'I am very saddened to say that there has been non-cooperation from them (Centre). Despite the order, no force has been deployed in Darjeeling,' she added. Reiterating that West Bengal has never supported division among people, the TMC supremo went on to accuse the Centre of doing so. 'We (West Bengal) do not want to create division among people. Delhi does that but not West Bengal. Delhi has to follow West Bengal in how to progress forward with every religion if they want to be in power,' she said.

The chief minister also said a politics of dividing West Bengal was being played out and the BJP was behind it. 'Playing divisive politics in West Bengal will not be an easy task. We have a history of that. There have been people who are coming from outside the state and trying to instigate riots here,' she said hinting at outsiders' hand in Darjeeling hills unrest and Baduria riots. The BJP has been using social networking sites to spread lies using purported photographs in spreading riots in West Bengal, she further said.



Nobel laureate Amartya Sen with his daughter Nandana Sen at the launch of her book at the Laurence Hall of La Martiniere School—Arjit Ganguly

Amartya Sen expresses concern over communal flare up

KOLKATA, JULY 10 /-/- Nobel laureate Amartya Sen today expressed concern over the communal riot in Basirhat and said it has to be seen why it has happened in West Bengal which has a tradition of communal harmony.

'Communal flare up is a matter of concern. It has to be found out whether it has happened due to provocation by some,' Sen said here. He said that West Bengal has a tradition of communal harmony where Hindus and Muslims lived together. 'We have to think why it has happened. We have to think how we can check it.'

CM urges people not to disturb new business initiatives

NANDAKUMAR, JULY 10 /-/- Chief minister Mamata Banerjee today said her government will cooperate with industries and urged local residents to support and not disturb new initiatives.

'A lot is happening here. We will offer full cooperation to industry and also request you to support and not disturb them (industry),' Mamata said while inaugurating a 3x150 MW thermal power plant of India Power Corporation Limited in Haldia. 'We had given 198 acres of land from our land bank and only 14 acres were bought



by the company directly, which has invested Rs 3,500 crore in the project,' she said.

The chief minister's comments hold significance as there has been some dis-

turbances in the recent past by local residents in Bangar area in South 24 Parganas over installation of a Power Grid sub-station. She also emphasised upon peace and brotherhood in the state. IPCL chairman Hemant Kanoria had recently said the company is evaluating three to four power plants in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Karnataka for takeover, preferably pit-head power stations within coal mines, coal-fired or thermal plants located in the coastal region, to reduce operational and coal transportation cost.

China refuses to acknowledge bilateral meeting between Modi and Xi at Hamburg

BEIJING, JULY 10 /-/- China today refused to acknowledge the interaction between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping on the side-lines of the G-20 summit at Hamburg last week, insisting that no "bilateral meeting" took place between the two leaders.

India too has not described the interaction, which included a handshake, as a "bilateral meeting" but said that "a range of issues" were discussed by the two leaders. The Indian side has said that the interaction lasted five minutes. Faced with a barrage of questions by reporters on how China viewed the interaction, foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang would only say repeatedly that no bilateral meeting took place. "According to my information, the two leaders did not hold any bilateral meetings," he said. "On the side-lines of the G20, President Xi also presided over the informal BRICS leaders meeting, Prime Minister Modi and other leaders of the BRICS countries also attended this event," he said.

Asked again if the meeting did not happen at all, he said: "So my answer is that the two heads of state of India and China did not hold any meetings on the side-lines of the G20 summit in

Hamburg." China's insistence on the set-piece wording, and its refusal to waver from it apparently was aimed at reiterating its view made clear before the Hamburg meeting: that the "atmosphere was not right" for a meeting between the two leaders due to the standoff between the two militaries at Doklam area in Sikkim sector, where Indian troops stopped road construction by Chinese soldiers. China has been calling for immediate withdrawal of the Indian troops from the area. He was also asked about a photograph tweeted by the India's ministry of external affairs showing the two leaders in conversation with interpreters, Geng stuck to his stand.

"As I said many times, the two state leaders of India and China did not hold any bilateral meeting... But President

Xi chaired the informal BRICS meeting during which Prime Minister Modi was also present." Asked whether the standoff at Doklam was discussed, Geng said: "on the border



issue, we reaffirmed that the Indian side should withdraw their border personnel to the Indian side. On the boundary standoff issue, Geng said: "We demand the Indian side to withdraw their border personnel on the Indian side of the boundary. This is the precondition for the any meaningful dialogue", he said. *File Pix*

ABAVP to resist GJM if it tries to spread agitation to Terai, Dooras

SILIGURI, JULY 10 /-/- Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad today threatened to resist Gorkha Janmukti Morcha if it wants to spread their agitation for Gorkhaland from Darjeeling hills to Terai or Dooras region. 'GJM's agitation has its effect in the plains and tribal people living in GTA area are facing the heat. We will put up resistance if GJM spreads their agitation to Dooras and Terai,' ABAVP state president Birsu Tirkey said. Terai and Dooras region constitute the plains of Darjeeling district, entire Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar district and upper region of Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. Tribal women living in Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) area are starving because of the indefinite strike by GJM. Tirkey told a press conference here. GJM's agitation is not going in the democratic way, he said adding that neither any one dies nor any government vehicle is burnt in a democratic movement.

'We are not ready to accept Gorkhaland where Dooras and Terai would be a part of. If we are attacked, we will resist,' the ABAVP state president said. Meanwhile, several rallies and protest marches were held in various parts of Darjeeling today as the indefinite strike in the hills demanding a separate state entered its 26th day. There have been no reports of violence since Sunday night. However, vigil has been increased outside all police stations, camps and outposts to prevent attacks by pro-Gorkhaland supporters, officials said.

Police and security forces are patrolling the streets and keeping a watch on entry and exit routes to ward off any trouble. Supporters of various political parties in the region took out processions demanding a separate Gorkhaland state. The Gorkhaland Janmukti Morcha (GJM) will march later in the day from Darjeeling station to Singhmari area via Chowbazar demanding withdrawal of security forces from the hills and restoration of Internet services, party sources said.

Internet services have been suspended since June 18. With food supply severely hit due to the strike, GJM and various NGOs in the hills continued distributing food items among the people. Barring medicine outlets, all shops, schools and colleges are closed.

Sovan skips meeting with ED, given 2 weeks time

Sultan Ahmed submits documents to CBI

KOLKATA, JULY 10 /-/- Trinamool Congress (TMC) minister and Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) mayor Sovan Chatterjee failed to appear before the Enforcement Directorate which had summoned him in connection with the Narada tapes case.

Chatterjee was supposed to come today. But he sent his lawyer and has sought three to four weeks more, an ED official told news agency PTI adding he has been given two weeks time to appear before it. Another two Trinamool Congress leaders, Sultan Ahmed, an MP and Iqbal Ahmed, MLA and deputy mayor of the civic body have also been summoned by ED in the same case. Both of them have been asked to appear within this week.

Brothers Sultan Ahmed and Iqbal Ahmed had been already quizzed by the CBI in this case. Several Trinamool Congress minis-



ters, MLAs, MPs and an IPS officer had been allegedly implicated in the Narada tapes scam where they were purportedly shown accepting money from journalist Mathew Samuels who posed as a businessman.

Meanwhile, Sultan today visited the CBI office here to submit documents as asked by the investigating agency. Ahmed was earlier interrogated by the investigation agency in connection with the Narada case where he was allegedly shown accepting money in a sting operation.

Sardha scam : CBI quizzes Satabdi

NEW DELHI, JULY 10 /-/- Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Satabdi Roy was today quizzed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with the Sardha ponzi scheme case.

Roy, a Bengali actor and a Member of Parliament from Birbhum in West Bengal, was questioned at the CBI office in Kolkata, sources in the central probe agency said. She was a brand ambassador of the Sardha Group and it was suspected that she had taken money from the ponzi scheme company to promote it, they added.

The agency had registered the case on June 4, 2014, in accordance with a Supreme Court order dated May 9, 2014, against then chairman and managing director of Sardha Group, Sudipta Sen, and others under penal provisions pertaining to criminal conspiracy, cheating and other offences.

It was alleged that the accused persons had collected huge sums from investors under various schemes by fraudulently promising high returns, but failed to pay the amount to them.

AT A GLANCE

Former Indian envoy to US Naresh Chandra no more

PANAJI, JULY 10 /-/- Former Indian ambassador to the US Naresh Chandra died at a private hospital near here last night due to multiple organ failure. He was 82.

'He was admitted to the hospital on Friday evening with complaints of fever and with myalgia (muscle pain) since three days followed with multiple episodes of vomiting and loose stools from the afternoon onwards,' Shekhar Salkar, chief of clinical services at Manipal Hospital, Goa told news agency PTI.

Chandra was then shifted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) where he suffered from a cardiac arrest on 10.15 pm on Friday, he said.

'On admission, his blood pressure and oxygenation was low, Salkar said. The doctors were able to revive Chandra from the cardiac arrest but his organs had started failing, he said. 'On July 9 at 10.05 pm, he suffered another cardiac arrest... Despite all the efforts the patient could not be revived and he was declared dead at 10.40 PM,' Salkar said.

On 10th day of GST launch: Abolition of checkpoints a boon but grievances galore

RABINDRA NATH SINHA

KOLKATA, JULY 10 /-/- Even as industry and business continue to grapple with teething troubles following the roll-out of the Goods and Services Tax from the midnight of June 30/July 1, they unhesitatingly concede on the basis of their experience during this short duration that trucks carrying their goods for various destinations are moving faster thanks to the abolition of state border checkpoints.

In just three days since the launch of GST, 22 states, including West Bengal, took effective steps to do away with the system of border checkpoints and the remaining states also Union Territories had initiated steps to follow suit. By now, the

checkpoint abolition exercise is practically complete. The assigned job of the border checkpoints was to check materials and location-based tax compliance which would invariably result in large number of trucks queuing up at any given point of time for clearance and, therefore, ultimately delay delivery of goods. According to industry and business circles, there has already been 25-30 per cent improvement in the movement of trucks - the delivery time has shortened in many cases to three days from over four days and to two days from three days earlier.

This has also meant huge relief for the truck drivers, not to mention the saving in transportation costs. But, at the moment, business and



industry are unable to be generous in praising the indirect tax reform, although Union ministers and the BJP's national level office-bearers who are regularly harping on the virtues of the GST as introduced by the Centre and depicting it as a major success of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There are several reasons. First, sections of business and trade - particularly the textiles trade and small and medium enterprises - are unable to cope with application/implementation procedures and in many cases, they find the rates high. Dif-

ficulties are also arising because of registration issues.

In West Bengal, the rate applicable to cinema tickets has become a major issue, despite the state government's offer to forego the increase in the revenue and thereby maintain the pre-GST rate for tickets priced up to Rs 100. While border checkpoints have been abolished officials of state road transport authorities, obviously not reconciled to their suddenly diminished importance, are trying to harass the distributive trade and even demanding payments on one pretext or the other. Some state governments are exploiting the discretion vested with them in a bid to increase their revenues.

For example, in Maharashtra, in a few days

after the GST launch, the one-time registration levy for new private vehicles was raised by two percentage points.

Tamil Nadu proposed a 30 per cent local tax over and above 28 per cent GST for cinema tickets, priced over Rs 100, which attracted loud protests from the film fraternity. The situation is unfolding and it may be at least a quarter before the authorities are able to remove irritants and soften rates considered exorbitant. The tendency of states to act arbitrarily while exercising their discretionary authority will also have to be discussed and this "unpleasant" task will obviously have to be performed by finance minister Arun Jaitley, say industry circles.