



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Lord Jagannath Temple, in Puri on Wednesday.

Didi visits Jagannath Temple, calls for unity of regional parties

PURI, APRIL 19 /- / West Bengal's chief minister Mamata Banerjee today visited the famous Jagannath Temple in Puri and performed arati, where she was surrounded by a team of servants. Mamata entered the shrine a day after one of the servants of the temple had objected to her visit over her support for consumption of beef. However, today the West Bengal chief minister was offered a guided tour of the temple compound by the priests of the temple. However, emphasis was waiting for her in the form of 'go back' slogan by local BJP workers. Earlier today, Mamata Banerjee said all regional parties must work together for better federalism even as she accused the BJP of indulging in 'divisive' politics to defame Hindutva. "Our effort will be to ensure that all regional parties work together for better federalism in the country. They should be strong," Mamata, also the president of the All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC) told reporters at Puri. Mamata, who is on a three-day visit to Odisha since last night, came down heavily on the BJP and accused it of indulging in divisive politics. "The BJP wanted to divide the nation in the name of religion, region and caste. They pit Hindus against Muslims, Christians against Hindus, Odias against Bengalis, Biharis against Bengalis, and so on... This is not Hindutva," she alleged. Claiming that she was a real Hindu who believes in taking everyone together, Mamata said the BJP's attitude towards others was not acceptable. "According to them (BJP) the Odisha government is bad, the Bengal government is bad, the Bihar government is bad and all non-BJP state governments are bad. How are you good if you go on dubbing others not Hindus," she alleged. Mamata claimed that Hindutva was not something practised by the BJP and dubbed the BJP members as "black spot" on Hindutva. She alleged that they divide people instead of taking everyone together. "In a Hindu not the one who defames religion. While the Hindu beliefs talk about the ideology of moving forward and taking everyone along, the soft party is acting against the ideology and defaming Hindutva," she added. The TMC supreme today decided to field party candidates in the 2018 Odisha urban local bodies elections. TMC state president Arya Kumar Gyanendra said this after Banerjee met the party's state leaders in Puri. "We have been instructed to create a field for the next urban polls and strongly oppose BJP everywhere in the state," Gyanendra told newsmen after the meeting.

GJM candidates begin filing nominations for municipality election

EOI CORRESPONDENT
DARJEELING, APRIL 19 /- / Candidates of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha have started filing their nomination papers beginning today, setting the ball rolling for the expected heated election to the four civic bodies of the hills on May 14. GJM president Bimal Gurung had a word of caution for the new candidates and advised them to work for the people's welfare. Even as he admitted that the previous board (led by the GJM) had failed to deliver, Gurung put the blame for the shortcomings on the state government. "Our previous board did not work properly, partially due to non-cooperation (timely release of funds) from the state government. Also, some of the councillors chose to remain aloof from the people. But this time, you (new councillors) must be humble and approach the people are satisfied," the GJM president said, while announcing the names of the candidates from Kalimpong, Kurseong and Darjeeling. Nine GJM candidates from Kalimpong filed their nomination papers today in the returning officer's office. In Darjeeling, Kiran Tamang, an independent candidate from ward 1, also filed his papers. The last date for filing nominations is April 24. Although a local body election, Gurung said the party's issue would remain the separate state demand and asked the candidates, comprising mostly new faces, to make the people aware about it. "Our stand is for uplifting our 'community' and 'madda' (statehood demand). (Candidates) must not forget it. Go to the people with this issue," he said. The GJM chief announced the names of 11 candidates from Darjeeling. Names of 19 candidates each from Kalimpong and Kurseong were also made public today. Gurung said the remaining names would be announced, including those from Mirik, tomorrow. Eighty-four wards of the four hills municipalities will go to the polls. The JAP is not more a force to reckon with in Kalimpong and we will win 17-18 seats there, enough for us to form the board," the GJM chief said. Meanwhile, the TMC also announced some of its candidates' names from Kalimpong today.

Dire warning to overloaded trucks

PRASHANTACHARYA
SILIGURI, APRIL 19 /- / Truck owners and drivers associations from Siliguri and Sikkim have come down heavily on trucks overloaded. Speaking today at the Siliguri Journalists' Club, Ningma Sherpa, president of Sikkim Truck Drivers' Association, said the situation has resulted in other trucks from West Bengal and Sikkim going empty due to some trucks carrying more than the government sanctioned limit. Several truck owners' and drivers' associations said the situation is severe as it has resulted in other trucks, utility vehicles, tippers, trucks and pick-up vans going empty. The associations from Siliguri and Sikkim have threatened to seize goods if vehicles are found overloaded. Sherpa said that in the case of overloaded trucks plying on the Siliguri - Sikkim and Darjeeling Kalimpong routes thereby causing loss of business to other trucks, such vehicles would be seized under both Siliguri and Sikkim truck associations from April 10 onwards. Sikkim Truck Owners' Organisation, Sikkim Truck Drivers' Organisation, Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Trucks Owners' Organisation, Himalayan National Highway Trucks Owners' Organisation, Siliguri NH10 Trucks Owners' Organisation and various other truck owners and drivers' associations have come together to form the Siliguri Teesta Sikkim NH10 Joint Action Committee.

Narada scam

BJP's political vendetta; will fight it out politically, legally, says Mamata

■ Accused leaders decide to cooperate with CBI, not to move court

TANMAY CHAKRABORTY
KOLKATA, APRIL 19 /- / Amid jitters of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probing Narada sting is gearing up to tighten the screws on the tainted leaders of the Trinamool Congress who purportedly were shown as taking bribes in the sting footage by Narada CEO Mathew Samuel, the party supremo Mamata Banerjee in her bid to keep her party's morale high reiterated that the charges against her party's leaders were the handwork of the BJP - which is engaged in political vendetta against the TMC to make a dent in the state. They will be dealt with politically and legally. "The charges against the leaders of the party are politically motivated and we will fight it out politically and legally," Mamata said in response to queries from newsmen in Bhubaneswar. Countering the Opposition charge of her party leaders' alleged complicity in the Saradha and Narada scam, chief minister said, "The cases have its roots since 80s when the Left was in power. We came to power only in 2011. So how does it possible that the Trinamool Congress was the only party involved in the scam?" she wondered. Meanwhile, earlier in the city today the accused 12 leaders, against whom the CBI had lodged an FIR, held a meeting chaired by party MP and All India Trinamool vice-president Mukul Roy today to discuss the steps to be taken to defend themselves in the event of CBI grill them. According to the sources close to the party several leaders who are feeling the heat from the alleged payoff were of the opinion to go slow and adopt the wait and watch policy instead of moving the court to challenge the CBI FIRs. With the party chief having advised the party leaders to stay united the party brass decided to walk tightrope on approaching the court to challenge the FIRs. They would instead cooperate with the Central agency when asked to appear before it.

Baby dies, parents allege negligence by Apollo Gleneagles

■ Angry relatives vandalise hospital, management forms panel to probe case

GRIEF STRIKEN PARENTS OF BABY KUHELI CHAKRABORTY LEAVING THE HOSPITAL COMPOUND (R) KUHELII — ARJITTI GANGULY
KOLKATA, APRIL 19 /- / With the family of a baby, who died today, alleging medical negligence, Apollo Gleneagles West Bengal health department has sought the treatment report from it. "We have asked for a preliminary report regarding the treatment of the baby from the hospital authorities. They have been asked to submit the report by tomorrow," director of health services, Biswanjan Satpathy told news agency today. Baby Kuheli Chakraborty, who was transferred to Apollo Gleneagles Hospital on Saturday last, died this morning and her family members alleged that medical negligence on the part of the hospital was responsible for it. Relations of the family vandalised the hospital which resulted in damage to glass doors. "Our baby was brought here for colonoscopy... She was not ill. But the doctors have murdered her. We want justice," Shalu Chakraborty, mother of the deceased baby, said. The baby's family lodged a complaint at the Phoolbani police station against three doctors and the hospital authorities alleging medical negligence, a senior officer at Kolkata Police said. "As per the complaint of the family members a case has been initiated against the doctor (causing death by negligence)," he said. The newly set-up West Bengal Clinical Establishments Regulation Commission (WBCECR) will take up the matter if the baby's family lodge a complaint with it. "If the family members of the baby lodge a complaint to the Commission it will take up the matter," he said. Describing the death of the baby as "extremely unfortunate", Apollo Gleneagles Hospital today said that a committee will probe into the incident. (PTI)

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Grief-stricken parents of baby Kuheli Chakraborty leaving the hospital compound (R) Kuheli — Arjitti Ganguly



Advani, Bharti, Joshi to face trial in Babri demolition case

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19 /- / Senior BJP leaders L K Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti will face trial in the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition case as the Supreme Court today allowed the CBI plea and restored criminal conspiracy charges against them. The apex court also clubbed the trial in the matter pending against the leaders and 'karsevaks' and said the proceedings should be completed in two years. "We have allowed the CBI appeal against the Allahabad High Court judgment with certain directions," a bench comprising Justices P C Ghose and R P Nariman said. The Supreme Court, however, noted that Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh enjoys Constitutional immunity and can be tried only after he ceases to hold the office. Kalyan Singh was the chief minister of UP in 1992. The court also gave significant directions including that separate trials being conducted in trial courts at Raebareilly and Lucknow will be clubbed and conducted in the capital, Uttar Pradesh only. It also said that the trial judge of Lucknow "shall not be transferred" till conclusion and delivery of judgment in the sensational case. The apex court further said that no party shall be granted adjournment without these reasons for it and conduct day-to-day trial which should be concluded within two years. It also directed probe agency CBI to ensure that prosecution witnesses appear on each and every date for recording of evidence in the case and the trial court should start the proceedings within four weeks from today. It, however, clarified that there would be no de novo (fresh) trial in the matter. Unfazed by the apex court order that she be tried for "conspiracy" in the case, Union minister Bharti today said she is ready to sacrifice her life for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Sonu responds to fatwa by shaving off his head after tweet row

MUMBAI, APRIL 19 /- / Shave off his head, said cleric, enraged by Sonu Nigam's tweet on loud sermons. So the Bollywood playback singer did just that at a press conference he had himself tonsured by a celebrity hairstylist. The singer had called the press to talk about his tweets on Monday which led to an online furore and a fatwa being issued against him by the Ahle Sunnat-based cleric, Syed Sha Aftab Ali Al Qadiri. Before hairstylist Aalim Hakim got into the act, Nigam stressed that his tweets were against the use of loudspeakers in morning sermons and not aimed at any particular religion. "Only spoke against the use of loudspeakers. Everybody has a right to his opinion. I have the right to have an opinion and it should not be misconstrued. Loudspeakers are not a necessity; they are not a part of any religion," Nigam said. His intention, Sonu pointed out, was not to hurt anybody's sentiments. "I have done anything wrong, please forgive me. My intention was just to talk on a social topic and not a religious topic," he added. The singer said it was wrong to focus on one particular tweet when he described the broadcasting of sermons on loudspeakers as 'gundagardi' (hooliganism). "People took one tweet of mine where I mentioned 'gundagardi' and ignored other tweets where I also talked about temples and gurdwaras," he said. Nigam said if anyone thought him - a person who considered the singer, Mohammed Rafi, as his father, and whose guru was Sateen Gulam Mustafa Khan - as anti-Muslim, then "it is not my problem, but theirs." People these days, he said, were either right-wingers or left-wingers, so a "secular" person like him was in a minority. (PTI)

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