



State sets up commission to rein in private schools

EOI CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, MAY 31 /- / The West Bengal government is going to set up a self-regulatory commission to control affairs of education in the private sector. This was announced today by chief minister Mamata Banerjee at an interactive session with representatives of major private schools of the city that was called to review the overall system of education and the hills that are plaguing it. The commission, to be set up through an executive order, will have members, among others, principal secretary in charge of secondary education Dushyant Naraiya, representatives from DGP West Bengal Police and CP of Kolkata Police, representatives from schools

like La Martiniere, Modern High School, St Xavier's, Heritage School, DPS, Sri Sikshyatan, Loreto, South Point High School, St Lawrence High School, educationist Santu Mukherjee, one representative from Darjeeling and the Arch Bishop and Bishop from Kolkata. All District Programme Officers in the department of education will be special invitees of the commission. The commission, which will meet four times a year, will look into all aspects pertaining to running of schools that include fee structures, income and expenditure, donations for admissions, grievance redressal, to name a few. The commission will have a website that will have all details about whatever complaints they are getting. The chief minister who had been flooded with complaints of exorbitant fees, donation charges etc in fact put the schools in the dock accusing them of actually fleecing parents by the schools. "Schools are playing ducks and drakes with donations that they seek for admissions. It has become a racket. There are touts and middlemen who run these admission rackets. It should be stopped immediately... Why should session fees and monthly fees be different? Why should stationery and books be bought from schools only. And thing is while some schools are taking exorbitant fees, many of them do not have good rooms," the chief minister actually

named the schools and while accusing them of charging exorbitant money for admission and monthly fees, she said they must do something to rationalise the fee structure. Mamata also criticised one school for compelling students to listen to speeches of political leaders on TV. "You should stop it. I am getting complaints from students and teachers," the chief minister told the representative from the school. Mamata also said that from next year children studying from class 1 to class X will have to learn Bengali as a compulsory subject. "If you live in West Bengal you will have to learn Bengali," she said. In fact the state government is going to bring about a legislation to make Bengali compulsory in the school level from next year.



Representatives of private schools click selfie with chief minister Mamata Banerjee at the end of the meeting —Shyamala Maitra

GTA Sabha meets to discuss compulsory language issue

EOI CORRESPONDENT
DARJEELING, MAY 31 /- / The GTA Sabha today held a meeting to discuss and deliberate on the state government's decision to make Bengali a compulsory language in schools including in the hills. The Sabha condemned the decision saying it was an imposition which would not be accepted. Leoban Yolmo, the Sabha chairman said, "We discussed the state government's decision to forcefully make Bengali language in schools of the hills. We do not have any problem with the Bengali language. Anyone wanting to learn it is fine. But we are against imposition. We will never accept it". The Sabha chairman said the GTA used Nepali and English to write official note-sheets and today it also discussed the prospect of making Nepali signboards mandatory in all trading shops in the hills. "We discussed making signboards in Nepali language mandatory on shops of the town. We also nullified the idea of levying fines on defaulters," Yolmo said. Reacting to the Darjeeling district administration's announcement today that the state government had no plans to impose Bengali language in the hills, GTA sabhasad and Gorkha Jannukti Morcha general secretary Roshan Giri said contradictory statements were being given. "The DM is saying that we (GJM) are spreading rumors. But, today chief minister Mamata Banerjee in a meeting with heads of educational institutes in Kolkata said Bengali would be made compulsory. We do not listen to the DM or the CM as their statements are contradictory," he said. On the question of the police department warning of actions against the party's rally from June 4 to 8, the GJM general secretary said, "It is our duty to seek permission for the rally and their (police and district administration) to grant it. Whatever the case, we will go ahead with our pre-announced program".

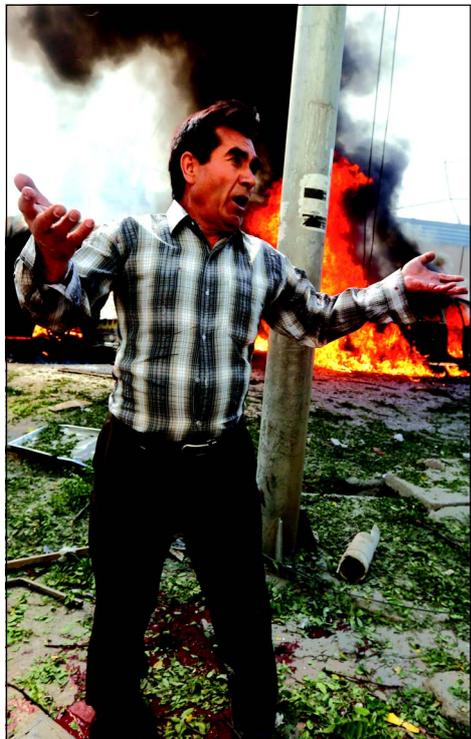
District administration says no state govt plans to impose Bengali language in hill schools

EOI CORRESPONDENT
DARJEELING, MAY 31 /- / In the wake of the Gorkha Jannukti Morcha, an announcement of holding series of programs coinciding with the Bengal chief minister's visit yesterday against the alleged imposition of making Bengali a compulsory language all over the state the district administration today made an announcement that there was no intention of imposing any kind of language on people living in the hill area with them also giving veiled threats that strict action will be taken against anyone trying to disturb the peace here in the hills. The Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee is visiting Mirik on the June 4th while holding a cabinet meeting at Darjeeling on June 8th with her other programs yet not known while during the same period the has called closure of educational institutions in the hills on the 1st and 2nd June while holding rallies all over the hills from the 4th till 8th June. A press conference was held today the Darjeeling district magistrate Joyoshi Dasgupta said, "On behalf

of the state government I would like to clarify that there is no intention to impose any kind of language on any people in the hill area and no inclination or plan to replace Nepali with any language as there was no notification or circular out in this regards. Whatever we are hearing are baseless rumors." However, when asked about the 3 language policy announcement made by the Bengal chief minister in which the Bengali language is being made compulsory Dasgupta said, "We have to wait for the notification and circular and until we have that and see what are the points we cannot say what the exact crux is. But we want to make it clear that this has been clarified by the state government that no language is going to be imposed and nobody forced to take up a language." The Darjeeling SP Amit Javalgi speaking on the same lines said, "The state government has made it clear that wherever any language is the 1st language or Nepali in this case than any other language would be the 2nd one. In Darjeeling a certain political party is spreading false information to people

that this is being done intentionally to harm the interest of the people and the prospect of one language. We have heard that a political party has called a closure of educational institutions for two days but we want to point out that in the past it was these institutions that were affected the most by such bands with the number of school enrollment also going down. It is the intention of the administration that there is peace in the hills and the education and tourism for which the hills are known is not affected." Javalgi was also repeatedly seen speaking about the notification of the state government regarding teachers and students not being used in political rallies which was also an observation put forward by the High Court. "The police which however did not speak clearly on either if permissions were given to the Morcha for holding rallies or the actions that would be taken for closure of schools was however seen giving veiled threats that action would be taken, there is always a space for democratic protests with us allowing everyone to conduct rallies to

every political party but one should keep in mind the prevailing situation and the intention of the people doing the rally and if it coincides with any other event. One should also see that it is being done democratically or if they are spreading rumors. There are few people that are trying to disrupt peace here which we will not allow," said Javalgi who when asked about the programs coinciding with the CMs visit further added that giving permissions also depended on some things like if it would affect the security of a Z plus category person as they had to make necessary arrangements and for that extent some restrictions would be there. On the other hand when asked regarding the closure of schools Javalgi said, "We have to go through the rules and Supreme Court guidelines regarding schools being closed. Moreover, there is the point of some leaders also being out in bail and we have to see what their prospective would be if they created trouble and all this will be taken into consideration and action be taken in the appropriate form."



Kabul truck bomb blast leaves 80 dead, hundreds injured

Modi condemns bombing, underlines need for defeating forces supporting terror
KABUL / NEW DELHI, MAY 31 /- / At least 80 people were killed and hundreds wounded today when a massive truck bomb ripped through Afghanistan's diplomatic quarter, bringing carnage to the streets of the Afghan capital and shattering windows hundreds of metres away. Bodies littered the scene and a towering plume of smoke rose from the area, which houses foreign embassies, after the blast in the morning rush hour blew out the windows of several missions and residences. Witnesses described dozens of cars choking the roads as wounded survivors and panicked schoolgirls sought safety. Men and women struggled to get through security checkpoints to search for loved ones. It was not immediately clear what the target was. But the attack underlines spiralling insecurity in Afghanistan, where a military beset by soaring casualties and desertions is struggling to beat back the insurgents. Over a third of the country is outside government control. Hours after the explosion ambulances were still at the scene as rescue workers were digging bodies from the rubble. "Unfortunately the toll has reached 80 martyrs (killed) and over 300 wounded, including many women and children," said health ministry spokesman Waheed Majrooh, adding the figures would continue to climb as more bodies are pulled from the debris. The interior ministry, which put the number of wounded at 320, said a suicide bomber had detonated an explosives-packed vehicle in Zaranj Square around 8:30 am. "More than 50 vehicles were either destroyed or damaged," it said in a statement. The ministry called on Kabul residents to donate blood, saying hospitals were in "dire need". Prime Minister Narendra Modi today strongly condemned the bomb blast in Kabul and underlined the need for defeating forces supporting terrorism. Modi, who is in Spain on a visit, said India stands with Afghanistan in fighting all forms of terrorism. "We strongly condemn the terrorist blast in Kabul. Our thoughts are with the families of the deceased & prayers with the injured," he tweeted. In another tweet, Modi said: "Forces supporting terrorism need to be defeated." The Prime Minister's message came after a powerful truck bomb killed at least nine people and wounded scores of others in the Afghanistan capital's diplomatic quarter today morning.

INDO-NEPAL MEET 2017 Ten India, Nepal personalities to be felicitated

PRASHANT ACHARYA
SILIGURI, MAY 31 /- / Ten eminent personalities and organizations working along Indo-Nepal border villages from India and Nepal will be felicitated during the Indo-Nepal Friendship Meet 2017 slated to be held at Nepania Busty, Naxalbari on 4th June. Raj Basu, convener of Help Tourism the organizing committee informed that during the event five personalities from India and five from Nepal will be felicitated on the inaugural day before the dignitaries from both the countries. From India social worker Diwakari Chhetri president of Chenga Nari Seva Samiti, Home-stay owner Bhupal Gola, social worker and teacher Gopal Bomzon, senior journalist Nishit Chakraborty and snake catcher M Das. Similarly from Nepal Parivar (an Theater, East Horizon English school, Salakpur Home-stay Udaya Singh, Neelkantha Tiwari and Deh Art Gallery. These ten personalities will be felicitated in the presence of Consul General of India and Nepal for Kolkata Ek Narayan Aryal, Scientist from ICIMOD Dr Nakul Chhetri, CCI chairman Rajiv Lochan, Laxmi Kaushal Limbu, SSB officials from Raniganga and Naxalbari BOP, State forest officials and others. Basu said, "This year's theme is 'Cross-Border Tourism Ecosystem through Conservation, Cultures and Creative Initiatives' from government of India and Nepal including several NGOs, Business organizations, Journalists, Tea Traders, Travel Art Forum, Science Club and Tourists. Make horers from both the countries will participate in the event."

Bose died in 1945: Govt

NEW DELHI, MAY 31 /- / Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose died in an air crash in 1945, the Union government today said, putting to an end a controversy that refuses to be buried about the freedom fighter having survived the accident. The ministry of home affairs said in a reply to an RTI application from a Kolkata resident that the Government had come to this conclusion after considering the reports of various committees that probed the death of Bose, who, many believed, had not perished in the crash. After considering the reports of the Shah Nawaz Committee, the Justice GB Khosla Commission and the Justice Mukherjee Commission of Enquiry, the government concluded that he had died in the crash, the ministry said in its reply. It also sought to dispel reports that Bose, who was born in 1897, lived in disguise as Gummami Baba, which was the belief of a large section of Bose's legion of admirers. "The Mukherjee Commission had come to the conclusion that Gummami Baba/Bhagwanji was not Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose," it said, adding that information regarding Gummami Baba and Bhagwanji was available in the Mukherjee Commission report on pages 114-122, and on the website, mba.nic.in.

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