

## Mamata Banerjee slams Suwendu's remarks , accuses BJP of importing 'fake Hinduism'

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** Severely condemning Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari for his remark that Muslim MLAs of the TMC would be thrown out of the West Bengal assembly if the BJP comes to power next year, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday accused the ruling party at the Centre (BJP) of importing "fake Hinduism" to the state.

Expressing her anger over such condemnable remark in the state Assembly pre mises here on Tuesday, the Chief minister charged the saffron party with 'undermining the rights of citizens'.

Addressing the issue in the House, Banerjee said, "Your imported Hindu dharma is not supported by the Vedas or by our seers. How can you deny the rights of Muslims as citizens? This is nothing but a fraud. You are importing fake Hinduism." Incidentally the state Assem-

bly elections in West Bengal is slated for 2026.

She asserted, "I have the right to protect Hindu dharma, but not your version of it. Please don't play the Hindu card." The chief minister also hit back at the BJP for criticising her party's leaders.

Responding to a BJP MLA's comment, she said, "If I cannot comment on the utterances of your leaders, how can you comment on remarks of our leaders outside the House? We have the right to defend our beliefs." Banerjee also took the opportunity to clarify that the TMC has advised some of its members, including Firhad Hakim, Humayun Kabir and Madan Mitra, not to make remarks that may be deemed inappropriate. "This is an internal matter of our party," she asserted.

Speaking about the importance of unity, Banerjee said, "We are a secular, pluralistic nation.

Everyone has the right to practice their religion. The duty of the majority is to protect the minority. We must protect our country's sovereignty and secularism." In her address, Banerjee stressed that the TMC respects all religions and is committed to maintaining peace and harmony.

"I love all religions, and we condemn any political party's attempts to spread hatred against any community," she said, reaffirming her commitment to secularism.

Banerjee accused the BJP of attempting to create disruptions in the assembly.

"The BJP had planned to create a ruckus in the House," she claimed, adding that the BJP members walked out from the House and tore up papers in an act of protest. She called for respect for the legislative process, urging members to listen to each other and uphold the dignity of the House. "This House belongs

to everyone," Banerjee concluded, stressing that democratic values and mutual respect should guide the proceedings. The chief minister also highlighted the state's demographic diversity, mentioning that 23 per cent of the population belongs to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe community, and 33 per cent are Muslims.

A few days earlier also, refuting the opposition allegations of "minority appeasement", Mamata Banerjee launched a scathing attack on the Opposition leader, stating that she would resign if the allegations levelled against her were proved to be true. At that time a privilege motion was moved against Suwendu Adhikari by the ruling Trinamool Congress in the Assembly for allegedly labelling the Mamata Banerjee-led regime a "government of Muslims". The

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## Mamata Banerjee gets nod from the Centre for her forthcoming visit to London

**MI News Service, Kolkata :** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's forthcoming visit to London has got the necessary green signal from the Union government.

CM. Mamata Banerjee is scheduled to leave for London via Dubai on a seven-day trip on March 22 to participate in a number of programmes there. Accordingly, the necessary nod from the Centre reached Nabanna, the state Secretariat, on Wednesday afternoon.

Mamata Banerjee has a packed schedule in London during her week long visit. As she has been invited by the Oxford University for a talk, the Chief minister will address the students and researchers there where she will highlight the unabated development of West Bengal in various fields, including in diverse culture, its history and in tourism, besides a number of social welfare projects like Kanyashree and Rupashree.

During her stay in London Mamata Banerjee will also attend an industry meeting. According to Nabanna sources, the Chief Minister will present the favorable environment for industry in West

Bengal and the government's policies on industry in the meeting. Her aim is to make foreign industrialists and trade representatives interested in investing in West Bengal. Attracting more foreign investment in West Bengal is also the prime focus of the Chief minister's London visit.

She will return to the city on March 29. She will also be accompanied by a large industry delegation from Kolkata.

According to the industry sources, since this year's Bengal Global Business Summit (GBBS) was quite successful, Mamata Banerjee is expected to highlight her achievements to attract huge investment at the London industry conference with an eye for the 2026 assembly elections.

Earlier, in 2023 she visited Spain to bring more Spanish investment in Bengal. She also held an industry conference in Dubai. However, not only investment, she will also use her visit to London to develop a closer cultural and historical ties between West Bengal and Great Britain like before. Many believe that it can get a new momentum through the Chief Minister's visit.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee joins children in a joyful Dandiya dance during the Holi/Dol celebration event, 'Doljatra O Holi-r Milan Utsav,' hosted by KMC at Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium in Kolkata on Wednesday. Pic Prabir Bhattacharya

## Kashmir needs healing touch, not muscular policy, feels Mehbooba Mufti

**MI News Service, Srinagar :** Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti has said the Centre's ban on Awami Action Committee (AAC) and Ittihadul Muslimen (IM) could be an arm-twisting tactic and asserted that the people of Kashmir now need a healing touch rather than a "muscular policy".

Expressing concern that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was being provided Z-Plus cover by the Centre, she said here on Wednesday that he had been an anti-national, he should not have been accorded such security.

The Centre on Tuesday banned the AAC, headed by Kashmir's influential cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and Shia leader Masroor Abbas Ansari-led IM for five years for their alleged anti-national activities, supporting terrorism and fuelling secessionist activities.

"Mirwaiz himself is a victim. His father formed this party, he (Mirwaiz's father) was martyred. Similarly, Masroor Ansari's IM, these are socio-political organisations. So, I fail to understand that on one hand, the Centre, understanding the sensitivity of Mirwaiz's security, provided Z-Plus category security to him, but on the other hand, his party is banned. I fail to understand how long will they continue their muscular policy," the PDP chief told reporters here.

Mehbooba Mufti who is also the former chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir said the move seems to be "an arm-twisting tactic".

"Either the Centre is blackmailing both of them for something, to do this or that, and if they do not do that, then they take action. I do not know. I do not understand that on the one hand you give Z-Plus security to a person, but on the other hand, you ban his party," she said.

Mufti said such things should not happen, and the people of Kashmir now need a healing touch rather than a muscular policy.

"You (Centre) have used the muscular policy a lot, and the people now need a healing touch and a softer

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## Mamata Banerjee takes active part in KMC's grand Holi celebration

**MI News Service, Kolkata:** In a landmark cultural initiative, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) organized an elaborate "Basanta Utsav" at the Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium on Wednesday, commemorating the dual festivals of Dol and Holi. This event was graced by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who led the festivities alongside ministers, elected representatives, and eminent personalities from various walks of life. According to government sources, this initiative aims to highlight Bengal's legacy of communal harmony and cultural unity.

The event featured traditional Holi celebrations, accompanied by a Dandiya performance, reflecting Bengal's growing engagement with diverse cultural expressions. In a moment of inclusive festivity, Mamata Banerjee herself joined the artists in playing Dandiya, and participated in the dance symbolizing the cultural synthesis that the cele-

bration sought to promote.

Since taking office, Mamata Banerjee has championed several grand-scale cultural events in Kolkata, including the Durga Puja Carnival, an extravagant post-Durga Puja carnival like procession on Red Road. This event has now become a major attraction drawing thousands of local and international visitors. Inspired by its success, the government has now introduced Basant Utsav as an official festival for the first time, further expanding Bengal's cultural footprint.

Being organized barely 48 hours ahead of Dol Yatra on March 14 and festival of Holi on March 15, the Wednesday's celebration marked the beginning of Bengal's springtime revelry, spreading a message of peace, harmony, and cultural inclusivity. While the Durga Puja Carnival showcased Bengal's deep-rooted puja traditions, Basant Utsav embraced a broader spectrum of cultural com-

munities, reinforcing the state's commitment to pluralism.

Political analysts feel that such large-scale festivities, conducted under government patronage, could also serve as a strategic outreach initiative ahead of next year's Assembly elections. As West Bengal has a significant non-Bengali voter base, experts believe this event might bolster the ruling party's engagement with diverse linguistic and cultural groups.

The origin of this initiative dates back to March 3, when Mamata Banerjee directed Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim during a meeting at Nabanna, the state secretariat, to organize a Holi celebration. While announcing the programme, Mamata Banerjee stated: "I ask the KMC to organize a celebration for Dolyatra and Holi on March 12 at 5 PM, namely 'Dol Yatra O Holir Milan Utsav'. She also announced that she will attend the celebrations.

## PM Modi conferred with Mauritius' highest civilian award in National Day celebrations

**MI News Service, New Delhi / Port Louis :** Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam has honoured Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the nation's highest civilian award 'The Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean' at the National Day celebrations.

This prestigious accolade marks Modi as the first Indian and only the fifth global recipient of the award, recognising his contributions to strengthening India-Mauritius relations.

Speaking on the occasion PM Modi termed Mauritius as a bridge between India and the Global South, and said that the island nation is part of India's family and not just a partner country. "Mauritius is like 'Mini India'," Modi told the Indian diaspora at the event in Port Louis, which was not only attended by PM Ramgoolam and his wife but his entire cabinet. "This bond is deep and strongly rooted in history, heritage and the human spirit," he said.

On the second day of his two day visit to island nation Mauritius, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met a number of other senior leaders of the country including his former counterpart Pravin Kumar Jugnauth and Leader of the Opposition Georges Pierre Lesjongard to discuss various aspects of the bilateral relationship.

"Had a good meeting with former

Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr Pravin Kumar Jugnauth. @Kumar-Jugnauth," Modi said in a post on X along with the photographs of the meeting on Wednesday.

Soon after, PM Modi also met Lesjongard, an MP and the Leader of the Opposition in Mauritius. "We had a constructive exchange of views on various aspects relating to boosting India-Mauritius friendship," Modi said in another post on X.

Prior to these meetings, Modi had wished the people of Mauritius for their national day. "National Day wishes to the people of Mauritius. Looking forward to today's programmes, including taking part in the celebrations," he said in a post on X.

Modi also met Mauritius President Dharam Gokhool and exchanged views on deepening the special and close bilateral ties.

Earlier on Tuesday in a strategic outreach to the new leadership in Mauritius, Prime Minister Modi met newly-elected Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam as he began a two-day visit to the island nation. The engagement with the new leadership is important in the context of the Indian government's involvement in developing infrastructure in Mauritius under the governments led by Anerood and Pravin Jugnauth.

The decision to develop infrastructure in Agalega islands was taken during the tenure of the Jug-

nauths. Delhi is now making an effort to reach out to the new regime led by Ramgoolam. Mauritius has been ruled by the Ramgoolams and the Jugnauths ever since the country became independent in 1968.

Speaking at an event for the Indian diaspora in Port Louis, which was also attended by Ramgoolam, Modi underlined India's role as a "trusted ally in combating illegal fishing, piracy, and maritime crimes".

"As a reliable friend, India works with Mauritius to protect its national interests and secure the Indian Ocean region," he said.

He said Mauritius is not just a partner country. "For us, Mauritius is family," he said. "This bond is deep and strongly rooted in history, heritage and the human spirit."

And, he described Mauritius as a vital bridge connecting India to the Global South, a relationship reinforced by India's Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision, first announced during his 2015 visit to the island nation. "A decade ago, I shared the SAGAR vision here. Today, Mauritius remains at its heart," Modi said.

Ramgoolam acknowledged the contributions of the Indian diaspora: "Your participation is vital for the economic growth of Mauritius. When you come here, you enrich our

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## Three arrested for impersonating Amit Shah's son, offering Manipur CM post to MLAs

**MI News Service, Imphal :** Three youths who were allegedly impersonating Union Home Minister Amit Shah's son Jay Shah and offering the chief ministerial post to several Manipur MLAs in lieu of money, have been arrested in Imphal and brought here for further investigation, police said on Wednesday.

After the imposition of the President's rule in Manipur, several legislators had received phone calls from the three accused, who allegedly identified themselves as Shah's son Jay Shah and offered them chief ministerial position for a sum of Rs 4 crore, a

senior officer said.

"Three individuals arrested earlier in Uttarakhand were brought to Imphal by the Manipur Police, following an investigation in connection with two FIRs registered at Imphal Police Station," a police statement said.

The accused had made phone calls to several MLAs of Manipur in February, following the resignation of N Biren Singh as the chief minister of this strife-torn Northeastern state, it said. "They impersonated Jay Shah, son of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and had offered

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## New industries in J-K should provide employment to local youth

**MI News Service, Jammu :** All new industries coming up in Jammu and Kashmir must have ample opportunity for local youth to get suitable employment, feels Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary.

Hailing the efforts of the National Conference government for a speedy industrial development in Jammu and Kashmir, he said in accordance with his poll promise, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed to industrial development in J-K but that will not be at the cost of the people.

"Those (investors) who will set up industries in

Jammu and Kashmir will have to provide employment to local youth in the region," Choudhary said while replying to supplementary questions during the Question Hour in the Assembly here on Wednesday.

He said the Omar Abdullah government is committed to ensuring that there would be no injustice to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "It is the commitment of the Omar Abdullah government. The industrial estates, whether in Kashmir, Jammu, Gangyal, or any other place, were set up

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Burrabazar : 9, Jagmohan Mullick Lane, Kolkata - 700 007

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