

'Tourists should not visit Darjeeling this summer'

Tourists should not visit Darjeeling - the popular hill station of West Bengal - this summer due to unrest, the state's Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Minister Ashok Bhattacharya said here Wednesday.

'We are anticipating political unrest revolving around the fast-till-death resolution of Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) supporters starting Thursday in demand of organising political meetings and rallies at Siliguri town in Darjeeling district. Tourists are requested not to visit Darjeeling this summer, or else they will have to face problems like scarcity of water, black outs and frequent road blockades,' Bhattacharya told IANS.

'The GJM supporters led by Bimal Gurung have asked the hill people to stop paying all taxes, electricity and telephone bills. So there is every possibility that the communication between the hills and the plains in the district will suffer,' he added.

The morcha supporters want complete statehood for Darjeeling instead of a Sixth Schedule status that has granted greater autonomy for the region since 2005.

Gurung was expelled from Subash Ghisingh's Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) for 'anti-party' activities.

The central government in 2005 announced the Sixth Schedule status to the GNLF-led Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), which ensures greater autonomy to the governing body.

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