

Language Politics in West Bengal

Why in news?

\n\n

Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) renewed its demand for a separate Gorkhaland state.

\n\n

What is the reason?

\n\n

\n

- GJM is a political party which campaigns for the creation of a separate state Gorkhaland within India, out of districts in the north of West Bengal.

\n

- The recent protests started with the suspicion that Bengali would be made mandatory in the hills.

\n

- Later it spiralled into a broad-based 'indefinite' agitation with the GJM targeting symbols of the state and ordering closure of all government offices.

\n

- In May, Chief Minister of West Bengal had announced that all students would have to study Bengali from Class I.

\n

- She later clarified that it would not be compulsory in the hill district of Darjeeling.

\n

\n\n

What should have been done?

\n\n

\n

- Language has been a fraught issue in the Darjeeling hills for more than a century.

\n

- So the chief minister should have made the announcement without consulting the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), the semi-

autonomous body that runs the affairs of the hill town.

\n

- Though later it was clarified that her government has no intention of making Bengali compulsory in schools in Darjeeling, the damage was done.

\n

\n\n

Why Bengali should be learnt?

\n\n

\n

- Identity politics aside, there is something utilitarian about learning a language.

\n

- Learning the language, formally, will only help expand the economic avenues of Nepali-speaking people in the Darjeeling hills in West Bengal.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n\n

\n

