



# The Telegraph

calcutta, india



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| Saturday, February 18, 2012 |

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## Calcutta Weather

**Temperature**  
 Min: 18.4°C (+0)  
 Max: 30.2°C (+0)

## Relative Humidity:

Max: 96% Min: 48%

Sunrise: 6:7 AM

Sunset: 5:36 PM

## Today

Mainly clear sky. Maximum temperature can be 31°C.



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## Mamata's date with *Nil digante* campus

JHINUK MAZUMDAR



Shri Shikshayatan students put up festoons to welcome the chief minister. (Pradip Sanyal)

Teachers remember her as a disciplined student, fellow students as the girl in the simple white sari who took part in political protests and yet never missed a single exam and chief minister Mamata Banerjee remembers Shri Shikshayatan College, where she studied BEd, as the place where she learnt the song *Nil digante*.

Mamata will be back at her alma mater to attend an alumni meet of the BEd department as a special guest on Saturday. The chief minister will be felicitated by

three former teachers.

"While we were preparing for the alumni meet, the students started discussing why not invite the chief minister since she is a former student too. And before long the students were at it," said Susmita Saha, the head of the BEd department.

Gaining access to the chief minister proved a somewhat arduous task, with repeated trips to Writers' Buildings and Kalighat, but once the organisers managed to get across to Mamata, she readily accepted the invitation.

"The chief minister told us she was not free on February 5, the original date for the programme," said general secretary Shreeparna Banerjee, who went to invite the chief minister along with Suchismita Chakraborty, who passed out four years ago. "She checked her schedule and said she would be free on February 18 and would visit the college that day."

Mamata even shared memories of her college days. "She told us she had learnt the song *Nil digante* in our college and had included it in this year's Republic Day tableau," Suchismita said.

The chief minister, who had enrolled for the 10-month BEd course at Shikshayatan in July 1978, has also recalled her days at the college in her memoirs. "I was studying for BEd at Shri Shikshayatan College. Right through those tumultuous days (post Emergency), I never lost touch with my studies and I would often go for our protests carrying my books along," writes Mamata in *My Unforgettable Memories*.

"Back then, protestors were routinely arrested. I remember sitting in the police lock-up, flipping through the pages of my books, and studying for my exams. I would be released in the evening and would take my exams the following morning. And go back to our protest marches and agitation the day after. That is how I completed my master's degree and followed it up with a B. Ed and an LLB as well. I also took a work education training," the chief minister wrote.

Debjani Nag, one year Mamata's junior in the department and now teacher-in-charge at the college, also remembers Mamata as being politically active from her days at Shikshayatan. "I was a part-time teacher in the English department and was also doing my BEd. I had heard from teachers that this girl called Mamata would skip her class in the evening and attend rallies and meetings, which was unusual in our college, where there is no political activity," she said.

"But the teachers always added that despite that she would write all her examinations. I saw her once when she came to show her lesson plan to a teacher, dressed in a white sari with a narrow border," Nag said.

Retired teacher Bharati Banerjee, too, remembers Mamata as a "disciplined student". "We never knew we had a chief minister in the making," she told **Metro**.

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