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THE ASSEMBLY RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BRANCH

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PAPER CLIPPINGS

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TO: Other State Matters

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : N

RI: The Hindustan ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 31/08/2019

West Bengal passes Bill against lynching

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31/8/19

It has provision for the death sentence

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The West Bengal Assembly on Friday passed a Bill to prevent and punish mob assaults and lynching.

The West Bengal (Prevention of Lynching) Bill, 2019 was passed with Left and Congress legislators joining the Treasury benches in supporting it.

The legislation, which has provision for the death sentence, says "nodal officers" will be appointed to "monitor and coordinate prevention of lynching" in the State.

It proposes a jail term from three years to life for those involved in assaulting and injuring a person.

The Bill, while defining terms such as "lynching" and "mob", says the West Bengal Lynching Compensation Scheme may be framed under this Act.

The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill referred to a Supreme Court judgment dated July 17, 2018 in the case of *Tehseen S. Poonawalla vs Union of India*, and said the legislation was an attempt to "nip the evil in the bud and to prevent spreading of hatred or incidents of mob lynching."

Describing lynching as "social malice", Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee appealed to the Centre and other State governments to bring similar legislation.