

Left-Karunanidhi talks fail to end n-deal impasse

The impasse over the India-US civil nuclear deal that has been plaguing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government did not end Sunday even after a meeting of communist leaders Prakash Karat and D. Raja with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, who warned a snap poll would only benefit 'communal forces'.

'We have explained in detail why we cannot agree to the nuclear deal. But discussions in this matter will take place again,' Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary Prakash Karat told reporters after the meeting with Karunanidhi.

The almost 90-minute meeting was attended by central minister T.R. Baalu and Karunanidhi's MP daughter Kanimozhi, both of the DMK.

Karat along with Raja clarified there was no change in the Left's stance opposing the nuclear agreement.

'We explained to Karunanidhi that the Left has been consistently opposing the deal. If the government goes ahead with the deal, we do not have any options,' Communist Party of India (CPI) national secretary Raja told IANS.

The Left leaders admitted that the impasse could lead to early elections that would not be good news for the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and its allies.

'The chief minister told us that fissures developing within the Left-UPA should not be allowed to end in helping communal forces,' Karat said, in an apparent reference to the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

'We will be in touch with each other to explore the possibilities of an amicable solution,' he said.

However, Karat was not ready to make any commitment over the future of the government. Asked if the Congress-led UPA would complete its term, Karat said: 'I cannot say that'.

Karunanidhi, whose DMK is a major ally of the Congress in the ruling alliance, has declared that he would try to resolve the present crisis overshadowing the government.

'We have a duty to resolve the differences between the Congress and Left parties on the issue in the interest of the nation... to find an amicable solution.'

Meanwhile, the Left leaders continued their aggressive stance against the government Sunday.

'After all, the UPA government should realise that it is not going to be deal between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W. Bush but between India and the US,' CPI general secretary A.B. Bardhan told reporters in Bhubaneswar.

He, however, added: 'The priority at this moment is to fight the rising inflation and not the nuclear deal. There should not be early elections as nobody favours it except the divisive forces.'

The CPI and CPI-M along with the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and Forward Bloc are adamant that the Manmohan Singh government should not go ahead with the nuclear deal. They have rejected the government's plea to give it the green signal for finalising the India-specific safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - a crucial step to take the deal ahead.

The CPI-M has warned it would review its ties with the government if the latter approached the IAEA. The four Left parties provide crucial parliamentary backing to the Congress-led government.

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