

## Amar Singh mounts attack on Chidambaram, Deora

The Samajwadi Party, which is expected to extend outside support to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government, Saturday stepped up its attack on Finance Minister P. Chidambaram and Petroleum Minister Murli Deora.

Although Samajwadi Party general secretary Amar Singh denied reports that his party had demanded their removal as pre-condition to back the Congress-led government, he said he had complained against them in 'black and white' to the prime minister and asked him to advise Deora to ban petroleum product exports.

'I am not asking for my pound of flesh. We are against anti-people policies. Deora's behaviour is disgusting. He should come clean on whether he is a corporate honcho or a minister,' Amar Singh told a crowded press conference at his residence here.

Regarding Chidambaram, Singh said: 'Under his stewardship, price rise and inflation have happened.'

A report published last week said the Samajwadi Party wanted both ministers to be dropped in order to reduce the 'anti-incumbency factor' over rising food prices in the event the Samajwadi Party backed the government.

Praising the prime minister, Amar Singh said: 'He gave a patient hearing (to the complaints). He is a just and honest person with clean image.'

But he insisted that the party was not 'blackmailing' the ruling Congress, which is desperate to get the support of the Samajwadi Party's 39 MPs when the Left parties withdraw their backing.

Amar Singh, a Rajya Sabha MP, refused to make any public commitment. 'Neither has the Congress asked for support nor have we offered our support. We will decide when the confidence motion is moved in parliament,'

Amar Singh also claimed that his party was not pressing for cabinet berths but would prefer to extend its support from outside.

'We will not take cabinet berths even if they are offered on a platter,' he said.

( © IANS / India eNews)