

Left can withdraw support before PM's return: Bardhan

The Communist Party of India (CPI) Saturday warned the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government that the Left parties could withdraw their support to it even before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh returns from the G8 summit in Japan July 7-9.

CPI general secretary A.B. Bardhan said President Pratibha Patil should ask the UPA government to seek a trust vote on the floor of the Lok Sabha once the four Left parties formally withdraw their support to it.

Charging the Congress that leads the government with precipitating a crisis by rejecting the Left's July 7 deadline to spell out its strategy on the India-US nuclear deal, Bardhan told reporters here: 'If somebody wants to precipitate a crisis, we might have to withdraw support from the government even before the prime minister returns from Japan.'

He was replying to a query on Congress spokesman Abhishek Singhvi's rejection of the ultimatum.

The veteran communist leader said the Left parties would meet either on July 8 or July 9 to decide on the next step if the Congress-led government ignored their deadline.

The CPI leader reacted strongly when asked to comment on Singhvi's description of the deadline as 'discourteous'.

'We did not want to pull the rug. Who is teaching us courtesy? We don't want lessons in courtesy from the Congress,' he thundered.

Bardhan said the UPA and the Left had come to an agreement in their last meeting that before going to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the government would show the text of its draft agreement to the Left parties.

'But they did not care to do so.'

Asked to comment on senior Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) leader L.K. Advani's demand that the Manmohan Singh government should seek a confidence vote following the Left's threat to withdraw support, Bardhan said: 'Once we formally withdraw support, the president should ask the government to seek a trust vote.'

The CPI leader replied in negative when asked if the Left would be isolated if it withdrew support on the nuclear deal issue rather than the price rise problem. 'So far as the Left is concerned, isolation means isolation from the people. There is no such isolation.'

He alleged that the UPA government's 'failure' to contain the price rise and the ongoing political uncertainty had raised the BJP's hopes of returning to power.

However, he exuded confidence that the 'secular forces' would succeed in keeping the 'communal forces' away from power.

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