

Communists warn UPA of early withdrawal of support

Days before deciding on withdrawing support to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government, top Communist leaders Saturday turned to one of their core constituencies - West Bengal - meeting their comrades and addressing them on the India-US nuclear deal.

The state, ruled by the Left Front for the last 31 years, saw hectic activity as Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary Prakash Karat and his Communist Party of India (CPI) counterpart A.B. Bardhan spewed venom on the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government for the nuclear deal.

Karat said the Left was awaiting a response from External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on its July 7 deadline to the government to clarify whether it was going to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the deal.

Soon after his arrival here, Karat held a long session with the senior leaders of the state unit at the party headquarters, before driving off for a 40-minute meeting with nonagenarian Marxist and former chief minister Jyoti Basu.

Karat briefed the party patriarch about the political developments and the scenario in [New Delhi](#) after Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav's decision to support the UPA on the nuclear deal.

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and state party secretary Biman Bose were also present.

Bardhan, who also apprised his party leaders about the political situation, warned the UPA regime that the Left could pull the rug from under the government even before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh returned from the G8 summit in Japan if the ruling coalition ignored the July 7 deadline.

The CPI general secretary also felt President Pratibha Patil should ask the UPA government to seek a trust vote on the floor of the Lok Sabha once the Left formally withdraws support.

Charging the Congress, which leads the UPA, with precipitating a crisis by rejecting the deadline, Bardhan told reporters: 'If somebody wants to precipitate a crisis, we might have to withdraw support from the government even before the Prime Minister returns from Japan.'

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 the July 7 deadline.

Bardhan said the UPA and the Left had come to an agreement in their last meeting that before going to the IAEA, the government would show the text of its draft agreement to the Left parties. 'But they did not care to do so.'

Speaking at the birth centenary of legendary CPI leader Hiren Mukherjee, Karat described the nuclear deal as 'detrimental to the country's interest and energy security', and asserted that the implementation of the treaty would adversely hit the country's foreign policy and development.

'We have to ensure that India's independent foreign policy is protected and defended,' he said.

Thirty-five of the 59 Lok Sabha members of the four Left parties have been elected from West Bengal.

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