

No land acquisition without farmers' consent: Buddhadeb

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee Sunday said the state government will not acquire any farmland without the consent from the farmers.

'We'll not take land without the consent from the farmers. We are totally against the policy of forcibly acquiring farmland. From now on, the land acquisition process would be through mutual discussions at the local level,' Bhattacharjee told a meeting at Phansidewa in Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

He said the state government has learnt a lesson from Nandigram and Singur.

'We don't want such problem to take place in our state. We can't acquire land going against the will of our farmers,' Bhattacharjee said.

But he insisted that no extra land was acquired from farmers for the Tata Motors' small car unit in Singur.

'We have not acquired any extra land from the farmers in Singur. Whatever land has been taken, will be used for the Tata Motors factory and the ancillary units,' Bhattacharjee told the meeting at Phansidewa.

He also made it clear that the government could not give back any land to the farmers acquired for the Tata Motors factory in Singur.

The Tata Motors plans to set up the production unit for the manufacture of the world's cheapest car, Nano, in Singur.

The project has been mired in controversy as farmers' groups, led by the Trinamool Congress, have alleged that the state government 'forcibly acquired' their farmlands.

Bhattacharjee announced that the state government has put Barasat-Raichak Expressway project on hold considering the issue of farmland acquisition.

'We have decided not to allow the project as it requires a lot of agricultural land. We've taken a stand to go slow in that regard,' he said.

Indonesia's Salim Group gave a proposal to the West Bengal government evincing interest in building a 100-km expressway between Barasat in North 24-Parganas and Raichak in South 24-Parganas district. The group also offered to construct a 2-km bridge from Raichak to Kukrahati.

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