

Mamata-Modi link in Nano relocation: CPI-M leader

Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee was hand-in-glove with Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi to ensure that Tata's Nano project shifted to the western state, a senior Communist Party of India (CPI-M) leader alleged here Sunday.

'Modi and Banerjee were in talks for the past two months to facilitate the Nano factory's relocation from West Bengal's Singur to Gujarat's Sanand. Everything was pre-planned and based on discussions between the two,' CPI-M Gujarat state secretary Arun Mehta told reporters here.

He alleged that Modi's open letter to Banerjee published in a vernacular daily was the opening of a process to get her back into the fold of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Mehta, a party central committee member, said the CPI-M was not opposing the industrialisation drive in Gujarat though it was in opposition in the state.

'People in Gujarat are happy that the Nano factory has been shifted to their state. But it won't bring a sea-change in the state's industrial scenario, as it already had a large number of industries,' said Mehta during a recess of the party's central committee meeting that began Sunday.

He also claimed that the compensation package offered by the West Bengal government last month to those who lost their land to the Singur project was the best in the country.

Tata Motors Oct 3 announced it was pulling out its Nano project from the troubled Singur region and blamed the principal opposition Trinamool Congress for the 'regretful' decision.

The auto major's decision came 32 days after it decided to suspend operations in the Singur factory fearing for safety of its employees who were manhandled and threatened by Trinamool Congress-led protesters, demanding the return of 400 acres out of the total 997.11 acres taken for the project.

Since its inception in May 2006, the project to roll out the Rs.100,000 (\$2,250) car encountered resistance from the Trinamool Congress-led farmers, protesting the 'illegal' acquisition of farmland.

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