

Railways will set up Bankim research centre, if state cannot: Mamata

The Railways will set up a research centre named after novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay if the West Bengal government failed to start work on the project in three months, Railways Minister Mamata Banerjee said Sunday.

At a programme here in North 24-Parganas district, Banerjee said the Railways had handed over the land to the state government in 2007 for the research centre dedicated to Chatterjee, who composed India's national song 'Vande Mataram'.

'So far, the state government has not done anything on the land. If they do it, that's fine. I am keeping a close watch. If nothing is done in the next three months, the Railways will set up the project,' Banerjee said after laying the foundation of a new railway bridge.

She said the bridge, entailing an expenditure of Rs. 207 crore, was necessary as the old bridge could collapse any day.

The minister said the papers for the proposed Rs.900 crore Railway Coach Factory at Kanchrapara (in the same district), announced in her budget, has been sent to the Planning Commission for its approval. 'This project will be completed in one and a half years and usher in lot of new employment opportunities'.

Banerjee also instructed railway general managers to finish work within three months on upgrading selected stations to 'Adarsh (model) stations' as per her budget proposals.

'Wherever money has been sanctioned, go ahead and finish the jobs. I want all the ideal stations in three months,' she said.

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