

## Mamata defers 48-hour shutdown plan, warns Tata

Fasting Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, who had called a 48-hour shutdown from Dec 21 over the handing over of land for a Tata Motors factory in Singur, Wednesday deferred the general strike keeping in mind the Christmas festival.

However, Banerjee warned the industrial house against setting up the project in the disputed land.

'We are not against the people. Keeping in mind Christmas on Dec 25 we have decided to defer the bandh (shutdown) for now. It does not mean we are backing out from our stand,' Banerjee announced from her hunger strike platform at Esplande in downtown Kolkata.

'Bengal Christian community requested us and we decided to honour their request,' she said.

'I have written to Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya to ensure that farmers are not given any low-lying land in lieu of the fertile farmland of Singur. Give such land to the Tatas instead, but don't force the farmers to shift from their fertile fields,' Banerjee, whose hunger strike entered the 17th day Wednesday, said.

Trinamool Congress chief Wednesday sent a letter to the chief minister informing him that she would withdraw her fast only after the he returned the land acquired forcibly from the farmers.

Comparing the Tatas with the East India Company, Banerjee said: 'I warn Tatas against building their plant at Singur. You cannot do that so long as we are alive. We will not allow that.'

She said the youth wing of Trinamool Congress will bring out a bare-torso procession Thursday.

On Tuesday, Banerjee had given a 24-hour deadline to Bhattacharya to stop acquisition of farmland or face political unrest.

While the chief minister urged the Trinamool Congress to withdraw its 48-hour general strike saying he was ready for a CBI probe into the death of Tapasi Malik, whose charred body was found inside the fenced off land acquired for Tata Motors in Singur, Banerjee said she would reconsider her decision only after the lands 'forcibly' acquired were returned to farmers.

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