

CPI-M halts industrialisation for three months in Bengal

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya's industrialisation juggernaut has been halted - by none other than Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) patriarch Jyoti Basu who announced Friday that the process of industrialisation would remain suspended for three months in the state.

'For three months there would be no industrialisation process. Various arms of the party would go out to people and explain to them what we want to do. We have to convince people that we are not following industrialisation at the cost of agriculture,' said Jyoti Basu, emerging out of the party's state committee meeting at Alimuddin Street.

'We will explain our position to the people for three months. It should have been done earlier in fact,' asserted the veteran left leader who led the state for 23 years.

The announcement came a day after the chief minister hinted that he would not set up the special economic zone (SEZ), including a chemical hub, in violence-torn Nandigram but maybe in Haldia in the same East Midnapore district.

Bhattacharya made the announcement hours after the union government cleared the \$500 million FDI (foreign direct investment) proposal by the Salim group of Indonesia to invest in West Bengal.

Basu's declaration is being seen as a setback for the state's reformist chief minister, who is desperate to put the state on the fast track of industrialisation despite drawing flak from all quarters over the unrest over the Tata Motors car project in Singur and the flare-up at Nandigram.

While Singur in Hooghly district remained on the boil over the car project and agitation by displaced farmers, in a damage-control exercise Bhattacharya on Feb 11 distributed 'pattas' (land ownership) to landless farmers in and around Nandigram area and assured that not a single inch of land would be acquired by force.

Earlier, in January, Bhattacharya asked the East Midnapore district magistrate to tear up the land acquisition notification in Nandigram that led to violent protests and announced a peaceful political process to convince people.

(© IANS / India eNews)