

Mayawati celebrates her 52nd birthday

Dressed in a glittering salwar kameez in a shade of her favourite pink, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati Tuesday began her 52nd birthday celebrations by cutting a huge cake here - and eating it too.

Her close aide Satish Mishra was one of the first to offer a piece of cake to the chief minister, bedecked in pearl jewellery. Other Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leaders and senior officials queued up to offer more cake, making sure TV cameras recorded every move.

The cake weighed exactly 52 kg, in keeping with the significance of the day, when Mayawati inaugurates her ambitious Ganga Expressway from Ballia in eastern Uttar Pradesh to Noida in the western edge.

The day also promises to be of some significance for the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) with the BSP chief declaring that she would review her party's support to the central government.

The state capital has been virtually painted in the BSP blue and the skyline is plastered with hundreds of hoardings showering greetings on the chief minister.

Security has been tightened right from the traffic roundabout leading to her official residence on Kalidas Marg. There are as many as 16 hoardings along with a gigantic wooden gate draped in blue with pieces of mirror work.

Mayawati had alleged last week that she was not being given adequate security cover. That was the reason she had threatened to review her support to the ruling UPA at the centre after Jan 15.

Full page advertisements in national dailies list Mayawati's many plans for the day - besides the expressway, she will launch a programme for the rehabilitation and resettlement of those displaced by the highway project, a new health insurance scheme promising free treatment to below-poverty-line families and a Rs.16 billion action plan for nine drought hit districts.

There are other schemes that are to be launched too - plus the release of a book on her 'struggles in life' and the BSP movement.

The birthday girl is scheduled to address two press conferences in the day - one in the state capital and one in the national capital New Delhi.

(© IANS / India eNews)