

# Mukul parts ways with TMC

■ Fires salvo at Mamata for treating party leaders as servants, does not make his future actions clear ■ Partha calls former leader 'a traitor', terms his charges 'baseless'

EOICORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, OCT 11 /--/ The spat between suspended Trinamool Congress leader Mukul Roy and his party reached a crescendo today when Roy, who quit as MP from Rajya Sabha today fired fierce salvo against TMC saying party chief Mamata Banerjee was running the party like a dictator and all leaders were like just servants.

Roy also alleged that in 2003 on the instructions of TMC chief Mamata Banerjee he got in touch with RSS and VHP leaders like Ashok Singhal and even arranged a meeting between Mamata and Singhal. The Trinamool Congress hit back with full gusto with party secretary general and state minister for education Partha Chatterjee, while referring to Roy as 'Kanchrapara Kanchra' (garbage from Kanchpara, Roy's home town) saying that what Roy was saying was all bogus and that his quitting the party was a good riddance. Today Roy met Rajya Sabha chairman Venkaiah Naidu and tendered his resignation as member from the upper house of Parliament.

The rebel leader, who till a year ago was the No 2 in the party did not spell out whether he was joining BJP or would carry on as a politician as the head of another political party. "I will be now on leave and will announce my next course of action after Diwali," Roy said while addressing a media conference. "Trinamool Congress is run by a dictator and all other leaders

are like servants. Such parties make wrong decisions some times. And another evil plaguing the party is that it is also affected by a dynastic rule," Roy alleged.

"I feel in a party everybody is a comrade and not a servant. And this kind of behaviour is common in every one-man political outfit. One-man politics is bad for every political party in the country," the 63-year-old leader told reporters, adding he was leaving the TMC, the party he formed with others, with a heavy heart and much pain. It was clear Mukul's target was Mamata's nephew and party MP Abhishek Banerjee who, according to political circles was the heir apparent of the chief minister and a threat to Roy, the No 2 in the party. Chatterjee, who addressed a media conference at Trinamool Congress Bhavan to reply to Roy's allegations, had to face several questions on dynastic rule and in fact battled for it. "Dynastic politics is prevalent in India and USA, there is nothing wrong with it. Why his son is an MLA of TMC.," Chatterjee said. Regarding Roy's statement that the party was being run by a dictator called Mamata Banerjee Chatterjee said they were all workers of TMC and Mamata Banerjee was their sole leader. "Roy became a union minister all thanks to Mamata Banerjee and she is our only leader. Roy was like a zaminder in the party. We believe that in every regional party there is one face who represents the party and in TMC it is Mamata Banerjee who represents the

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Mukul Roy showing his resignation letter as Rajya Sabha MP at the press conference

face of the party," Chatterjee said. Chatterjee also said that Roy was trying to get into BJP just to save his skin from the CBI. "The day CBI went after him he thought that he had to switch to BJP to save himself. We have not seen such a traitor before," Chatterjee said. Roy, who was suspended for six years for "anti-party activities" by TMC following his announcement on September 25 that he would resign after Durga Puja, also said that he had never considered the BJP a "communal party".

Roy who claimed that he had his loyalists at all the 77,000 booths of the state also asked why TMC was not merging itself with the Congress. "In 2006 TMC had an alliance with the Congress. Even now they are with Congress. TMC was born to fight Congress. But if TMC cannot do with Congress why does it not merge with that party," Roy asked.

Cracks had begun to surface in the relationship between Roy and TMC supremo Banerjee with the rise of her

nephew Abhishek Banerjee as the next generation leader of the party. The fissures widened in 2015 when Roy's name came up in the Saradha chit scam and he was removed as general secretary. However today Roy gave a clean chit to Mamata saying he believed Mamata had no idea about the scams. "It is not possible for a leader to know everything that others are doing in the party," Roy said. The party suspended Roy last month accusing him of hobnobbing with the

BJP. Roy criticised the TMC's stand of opposing the BJP saying that Banerjee's party was part of the NDA earlier. He admitted that he was "close" to leaders of the RSS and the BJP. Referring to Banerjee's tenure as a minister in Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, Roy said that the TMC cannot use the word "communal" against the BJP to suit its political requirements. "When the TMC was an ally of NDA Vajpayee was moderate but Advani was hardliner. Modi is good but Amit Shah is communal. These double standards can't carry on," Roy said. Roy was removed as the TMC vice president after the party decided to revamp its structure.

He was also stripped of the charge of Tripura where the TMC was steadily making inroads till its members switched over to the BJP earlier this year. Roy was known for his organisational capability, loyalty to Banerjee and backroom manoeuvring skills until he fell out with her. He held the rail portfolio and was the minister of state for shipping at the Centre. The state BJP said that if Roy joined any other political party, that party would benefit as he was a very senior political leader. Dilip Ghosh, state BJP president said "We support Roy's statement that Mamata went into an alliance with BJP as well as Congress in previous years to strengthen her party and Roy himself being a part of the party, knew all the details. Till now Roy has not not divulged what his next move was and we will wait," Ghosh said.

## AT A GLANCE

**2 Air Force commandos, 2 LeT militants killed in encounter**

SRINAGAR, OCT 11 /--/ Two Garud Commandos of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and two Lashkar-e-Taiba militants were killed in an encounter in Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir today. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Hajin area of Bandipora district in the early hours today following information about presence of militants in the area, an Army official said. The militants opened fire on the security forces, triggering a gun battle, he added. Two IAF Garud personnel, who were part of the operation for training and experience purpose, were injured in the exchange of fire with the militants, the official said.

**Aarushi murder case verdict likely today**

ALLAHABAD: The Allahabad High Court is expected to deliver its verdict on Thursday on an appeal filed by Rajesh and Nupur Talwar challenging a CBI court order convicting them for the murder of their daughter Aarushi and domestic help Hemraj in 2008. The couple were awarded life sentence by a special CBI court in Ghaziabad on November 26, 2013, a day after their conviction. Nupur and Rajesh Talwar are at present serving their sentence in Ghaziabad's Dasna jail.

**SC criminalises sex with wife below 18**

NEW DELHI: Sexual intercourse with a girl below 18 years of age, even by the husband, would now amount to rape, the Supreme Court held today in a historic verdict which criminalised sex with a wife who is not a minor. The top court also made clear that it had not "dealt with the larger issue of marital rape (sexual intercourse with wife without her consent) of adult women" as it was not raised before it.

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## Mamata blames Centre for unrest in Darjeeling



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee addressing a public rally at Jhargram—EOI Photo

JHARGRAM, OCT 11 /--/ West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today held the Centre responsible for the Darjeeling unrest and said the state government would not tolerate any rumour-mongering that might endanger peace.

Speaking at an administrative meeting held here this afternoon, she requested the people in the hills and the former Maoist stronghold of Jangalmahal not to pay heed to any form of instigation or rumours. "There was peace in the (Darjeeling) hills. Due to Delhi's instigation, the peace was disturbed for a few days but peace has returned to the hills again," Mamata alleged. "I will request everybody not to pay heed to any form of rumours. You people have to protect the peace of Jangalmahal, I'm with you as your friend," she added. In an apparent reference to the BJP, the chief minister accused the saffron party of creating differences in the country. "In India, a new political party with saffron flags has evolved. It is trying to create differences among people. It is fomenting trouble from one village to another...also trying to create division among the Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Christians,"

Mamata alleged. Referring to amendments in laws made by the Jharkhand government for tribal lands, she alleged the "saffron party" was also trying to create differences among the tribals by taking away their land. "It (saffron party) is creating differences among tribals. And in their regime, tribals are the most troubled. Their lands are being taken away. This has recently happened in Jharkhand," she alleged. The chief minister described West Bengal as a land where people of all religions were living happily and referred to an incident in Gujarat where a Dalit man was allegedly beaten to death by a group of men belonging to the upper caste Patel community for attending a garba event. "A Dalit was lynched when he went to witness a Dandiya dance in Gujarat. These incidents happen in Rajasthan, in Madhya Pradesh and also in some parts of Bihar," she alleged. "But in West Bengal, we keep Dalits close to our heart, we protect tribals, we protect the minorities...This is the culture of West Bengal," Mamata said. She said in West Bengal people work as per their will, follow the religion they prefer and there was no discrimination or misunderstanding among them.

## PM deplores destruction of villages due to venom of casteism

NEW DELHI, OCT 11 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi today deplored "destruction" of villages due to "venom of casteism" and said efforts should be made to help them rise above it so that they become inclusive and cohesive entities. Modi also said there is a need to create development schemes for rural India that are "outcome oriented". "Our villages are still poisoned with the venom of casteism...the poison of casteism destroys the village and crushes its dreams. "We need to make efforts so that the villages rise above casteism and become inclusive and cohesive. Everyone should resolve to work for the village. The government is taking steps to take forward villages," he said. The Prime Minister was addressing a gathering here to mark the birth centenary of reformist Nanaji Deshmukh and 115th birth anniversary of socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan. Barring for an outcome oriented approach to rural development, the Prime Minister said the country has sufficient resources to deliver benefits to the last man in queue. He said the desired results can be achieved through good governance. Explaining the impact of good governance, he said poorer states have fewer jobs under the government's flagship rural employment scheme—MNREGA—as compared to states which are better off. Modi said states where governance is good are able to launch more projects, creating greater employment opportunities. For sustainable development of rural India, he said, schemes that are developed after taking into account the needs of people should be implemented using latest technology.

## Metros react to prohibition on crackers

NEW DELHI, OCT 11 /--/ The Supreme Court's order stopping the sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR has set off a clamor by activists and residents alike in other metros for a similar ban, or at least greater restrictions. Even in Sivakasi, the centre of the Rs 5,000 crore fireworks industry that will be hit the hardest by the order, traders have grudgingly accepted the reality and are now deliberating on the way forward - perhaps by manufacturing "green crackers," or environmentally less harmful fireworks.

"As far as the fireworks industry is concerned, this verdict (of Supreme Court) could lead to a positive thinking, on why we do not manufacture green crackers. The pressure will be there to explore such avenues," A P Selvaraj, managing partner of Kaliswari Fireworks told news

agency PTI. Selvaraj admitted that production of green crackers emitting less or no smoke would be a challenging task, but said the industry was willing to explore alternatives. "Chemicals are available to make smoke-free crackers," he said, seeking help from the Centre. On the other hand, Mumbai-based activists welcomed the ban, with some activists suggesting a calibrated approach towards Diwali celebrations in the metropolis that has a diverse population. They advised a complete ban on the "private use" of firecrackers, but a restricted use by experts for certain celebrations should be allowed. Reportedly, every year Maharashtra Pollution Control Board carries out a test of firecrackers at an open ground in the presence of environment activists and record the sound. Ask West Bengal if a similar

ban would be welcome? The state pollution control board says it does not have the legal sanction to ban cracker sales in Kolkata. "We are not empowered by the court to do so unless any such step is backed by a court ruling and a subsequent legislation," Kalyan Rudra, chairman of West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB), said. According to activists in the state, a lack in the "vigilance by the explosives department, police and WBPCB" is to blame. Environmentalist Somendranath Ghosh noted that there were 200 illegal firework units operating in the state. "There is already an appropriate act in Bengal to ensure a quieter Diwali as stipulated by Calcutta High Court. We think the state authorities should implement in letter and spirit the order of high court," Ghosh said.



Mayor Sovan Chattopadhyay and state food minister Jyotipriyo Mullick at a meeting on distribution of digital ration cards under Khadya Sathi scheme at KMC

## State govt designates 'green zone' for World Cup matches

KOLKATA, OCT 11 /--/ The West Bengal government has designated a 10-km pollution free "green zone" area here around the Salt Lake stadium hosting ten matches of the FIFA U-17 World Cup. The area include the space around the airport, Jessore Road, VIP Road, Parama Island and a part of the EM bypass, a state government official said today.

"There will be several players, officials and delegates visiting the city from across the world. We need to keep it in mind that the countries they are coming from are less polluted than ours. For that purpose we have designated the area as green zone," he told news agency PTI. As per new rules, the streets in these places, mainly around



the stadium, will be watered twice daily to keep the area dust free. "We have also directed to postpone all construction works in the area until the World Cup is over. We have directed some small factories in the area to keep the smoke emitted by them under control," he said adding that burning anything in open space would not be allowed

too. Incidentally, vehicular movement has been strictly regulated by the Bidhannagar City police, especially the area surrounding the venue, to keep it pollution free.

"Parking will not be allowed in the green zone. People will have to park at designated parking areas. They have to drive following proper route. Rash drivers and driv-

ers/owners of polluting vehicles will be prosecuted," a police official of the Bidhannagar City said. "Thorough cleaning of garbage on the roads in the area will be done twice daily. We'll not allow people to dispose garbage in this zone and strict action will be taken against those littering streets," the government official said. (PTI)