



# THE ECHO OF INDIA

## Even 14 months after SC verdict, 'unwilling' Singur farmers continue to get compensation from state

### Govt cites farmers' interest as reason behind the gesture

**SABYASACHI BANDOPADHYAY**  
KOLKATA, OCT 31 /- Fourteen months after the Supreme Court had quashed the land acquisition at Singur for a small car plant for Tata Motors and ordered the state government to return the 997 acres of land to all the farmers who parted with their land for the car manufacturing unit, the state government, citing interest of the farmers, continues to pay Rs 8.47 crore annually to all those 'unwilling' farmers, even though all of them had got their land back one year back, thanks to the apex court judgement.

It was on June 5, 2012 that the state government took a decision to give Rs 1000 to 3613 farmers of Singur who were asked to accept the price of their land taken away from them by the erstwhile state government for the Nano plant of the Tatas. In the same month on June 26 the state government revised the decision and chief minister Mamata Banerjee announced at a media conference that the 'unwilling' farmers, as the peasants who refused to accept the cheques were called, would receive Rs 2000 each every month, apart from receiving Rs 6000 per head at the cost of Rs 24 kilo. She also announced that the 'unwilling' farmers would stop receiving the money after they got their land back.

According to sources in the state government, money for payment to the 3613 farmers who got their land back along with those who accepted the price for their land, has been cleared for the period till December this year. Apart from the money they will receive the rice too from the state government. The Echo of India has learnt. After the Supreme Court verdict on Au-

gust 30, 2016 that asked the state government to return all the 997 acres of land belonging to Singur farmers, the state government started working on it on a footnoting and returned almost the entire land to all farmers—both willing (those who received cheques) and unwilling, in about three months time. And the state government cites interest of the farmers and their sacrifice and sustained struggle against forcible land acquisition as reason behind the gesture. "It is under the instruction of our chief minister Mamata Banerjee that the compensation to the farmers is still being given...and it will be continued...we have their interest in our mind, think of their struggle for 10 years, the immense sacrifice they made and in comparison the money is too small," Tapan Dasgupta, minister for agricultural marketing, told Echo of India.

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### Tributes paid to Indira Gandhi on 33rd death anniversary

NEW DELHI, OCT 31 /- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his predecessor Manmohan Singh and former president Pranab Mukherjee paid tributes to Indira Gandhi on her 33rd death anniversary. "Tributes to former PM Mrs Indira Gandhi on her death anniversary," Modi said in a tweet. Mukherjee, Singh and Congress vice-president



Former President Pranab Mukherjee paying tribute to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her 33rd death anniversary. Doyat Shakti Shah, in New Delhi on Tuesday

Rahul Gandhi were the first ones to pay floral tributes to the late prime minister at Shakti Sthal, where she was cremated. Later, Dr Singh and Rahul also attended a prayer meeting at the Indira Gandhi Memorial at 1 Akbar Road here. Many former union ministers, senior Congress leaders and MPs were also present at both the places. Mukherjee also tweeted, "Remembering PM Smt Indira Gandhi today. A strong leader and a visionary who served the nation till her last breath." Rahul put out a tweet remembering the words of his grandmother along with a picture saying, "Forgiveness is a virtue of the brave: Indira Gandhi." Congress president Sonia Gandhi could not attend the programmes as she is indisposed. She has just returned home after being admitted to a hospital. Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister, was assassinated this day in 1984 by two of her security guards.

### AT A GLANCE

**CM greets peoplen National Unity Day**  
KOLKATA: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today remembered Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary amid controversy over the West Bengal government asking state institutes of higher education to ignore Centre's directive of organising events to remember the Iron Man. Mamata greeted people on the National Unity Day. "Remembering the great Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary. Greetings to all my brothers and sisters on the National Unity Day," the chief minister wrote on her Twitter handle.

### Mamata in Mumbai to woo investors

KOLKATA: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has left for Mumbai today on a three-day visit with a view to wooing investors to the state. While she will meet various chambers of commerce and spell out the incentives that her government is ready to provide to investors, she is also likely to meet industrialists like Mukesh Ambani. 12)



President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and others pose for a photograph after paying tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the occasion of his birth anniversary at Sardar Patel Chowk in New Delhi on Tuesday—PIB

### Ayodhya issue: Shia Waqf Board chief meets Sri Sri; supports temple at the site

LUCKNOW, OCT 31 /- Amid reports of mediation talks by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on the Ayodhya issue, Uttar Pradesh Shia Central Waqf Board chairman Waseem Rizvi met the Art of Living founder in Bengaluru today and apprised him of the Board's stand that a Ram temple should be built at the site. "I met Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and apprised him of the (Shia) Board's stand that a Ram temple should be constructed at the Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya. I have met all seers and mahants contesting the case for the construction of a temple in court. All of them are ready for talks," Rizvi told news agency PTI over phone. The Shia Waqf Board is drafting the terms and conditions of a mutual agreement, he said. "The Shia Central Waqf Board does not want any mosque to be constructed at Ram's birth place. Instead it should be constructed elsewhere in a Muslim populated area," he said. According to him, the existing mosques in Ayodhya were sufficient for the Muslims residing there. There is no need for a new mosque. The Shia Waqf Board chief claimed that those demanding the construction of a mosque at Ram's birthplace, or near it, only wanted to lure the dispute. "The demolished mosque belonged to the Shia Waqf and the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has no right to decide on it. Only the Shia board has the right to decide," Rizvi claimed. 1

have conveyed my intentions to Ravi Shankar, he said, adding that the initiative would strengthen Hindu-Muslim brotherhood. In a bid to resolve Ayodhya issue, the spiritual guru had reportedly met Nirmohi Akhara leaders and Muslim law board members recently. Though the AIMPLB is not a party in the case, being the apex Islamic body on religious and personal matters, it wields considerable influence. Rizvi, however, declined to divulge as to what Ravi Shankar told him. The Art of Living Foundation had said last week that Ravi Shankar was in touch with several imams and swamis, including Acharya Ram Das of the Nirmohi Akhara, to help find an out-of-court settlement to the Ram Temple dispute. However, earlier, AIMPLB member and Convener of Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) Zafaryab Jilani had denied that any of their authorised representatives met the Art of Living founder for an out-of-court settlement. "The Ayodhya dispute cannot be settled through arbitration. We will never withdraw our claim to the land in Ayodhya where once the Babri mosque stood and was demolished on December 6, 1992. If Ravi Shankar wants to mediate on this issue, he should send a formal proposal to the AIMPLB," Jilani had said. If some individual members of the board did meet Ravi Shankar, it doesn't represent what AIMPLB stands by, he added. Jilani said the position of the board was clear that a solution was possible only through adjudication.

### CBI files chargesheet in Vyapam scam case, gives clean chit to MP CM

BHOPAL, OCT 31 /- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) today filed chargesheet in Vyapam scam case and gave virtual clean chit to Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Chouhan. The agency has said that there is no mention of 'CM' in hard disc seized, news agency PTI reported. The scam is related to manipulation in the selection process for government colleges and jobs conducted by the Madhya Pradesh professional examination board or Madhya Pradesh Vyvaskrik Pariksha Mandal (Vyapam). It involved the impersonation of candidates, rampant copying, blank answer sheets and fake marks. The CBI is investigating the Vyapam scam on the directions of the Supreme Court. In April this year, the MP chief minister had deposed before a court in connection with a defamation suit filed by the state government on his behalf against a Congress leader for "maligning" him and his wife in relation to the multi-crore Vyapam scam. The suit was filed against state Congress chief spokesman KK Mishra for purportedly dragging the names of Chouhan and his wife Sadhna Singh in the examination and recruitment scam.

### Attempts made in past to run down contribution of Sardar Patel: Modi

#### BJP rewriting history by adopting leaders: Cong

NEW DELHI, OCT 31 /- In a veiled attack on the Congress ahead of Gujarat polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said some parties and governments in the past have tried to run down and erase the contributions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in unifying the country immediately after Independence. Flinging off a run to commemorate the 129th birth anniversary of Patel, Modi said due to the statesmanship and political acumen of the country's first home minister, India is united today despite the colonisers' wish that it was disintegrated into smaller states after Independence. "There have been attempts to run down Patel, to ensure that the contribution of Patel is forgotten. But Sardar is Sardar, whether any government or any party recognises his contribution or not but the nation and the youth will not forget him," he said without naming any government or party. "The youth of India respects him and his contribution towards the building of our nation," the Prime Minister noted. Modi's comment bears significance as it came ahead of the Assembly elections in Gujarat, the state Patel belonged to. Paying rich tribute to Patel, the prime minister said he had not only saved the country from the difficulties being faced immediately after Independence, but succeeded in uniting the whole nation. "The British government wished that India was disintegrated into smaller states. But Patel used all means (Sam, dam, band, bhed, rajneeti, kutneet) and succeeded in uniting all princely states into a single nation within a very small span of time," he said. Modi said generation after generation of Indians will continue to remember Patel, particularly the youth, who will carry forward his legacy. The "Run for Unity", which began from the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, saw the participation of a large number of people, including sports personalities like Sardar Singh, Deepa Kar, Makar, Suresh Raina and Karan Malhotra. The 1.5 km run here came to an end near the India Gate C-Hexagon-Shah Jahan Road radial. Earlier, President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, the Prime Minister and Union home minister Rajnath Singh paid floral tributes to Patel on Parliament Street where his statues are installed. The Prime Minister said everyone in the country is proud of Patel's contribution to India before it attained freedom and during the early years after the nation became independent. "We salute Sardar Patel on his Jayanti. His momentous service and monumental contribution to India can never be forgotten," he said. Stressing that the diversity is India's strength, Modi said there are many languages, religion, culture, customs, lifestyles and food habits. "But these are our strength and these are our bright future. India is proud of our diversity," he said. The Prime Minister said first President of India Rajendra Prasad had said that India has become a united nation only due to administrative acumen and strong leadership of Patel but the country was not giving him due respect. Hitting back at the saffron party, the Congress leader today said the BJP was "adopting" leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as its own participation in the freedom struggle was absent and accused the party of rewriting history. Asked about the BJP chargesheet that Patel was not given Bharat Ratna till a non-Congress government came to power, Congress spokesperson Tom Vadakkann said, "This business of trying to adopt Congress leaders is a clear indication and admission by the BJP that their participation in the freedom struggle was not only missing but is totally out of context. "They are now trying to adopt Congress leaders and trying to give Indians a false certificate as if an award is given or not given that is history. "We are into ground reality." "What did Sardar Patel Ji do and who did he do, these are the issues that belong to the public domain. Sardar Patel Ji is a Congressman, will remain in the hearts of people, awards do not matter for him," he said. The Congress leader also asserted that the party did not want certificates from anybody to celebrate their leaders.

BJP rewriting history by adopting leaders: Cong

### Narada tapes

#### TMC MP Sougata Roy faces ED interrogation

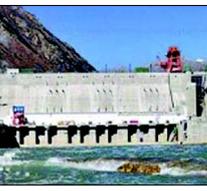
KOLKATA, OCT 31 /- Trinamool Congress MP Sougata Roy today appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning on his alleged involvement in the Narada tapes corruption scandal. Roy, who was summoned by the agency, went to the ED office in Salt Lake, a senior official said. The Lok Sabha member from Dum Dum

posed as the businessman and conducted the sting operation. Besides Roy, the other prominent leaders facing allegations of involvement include Kolkata Municipal Corporation Mayor Sovan Chatterjee, urban development minister Firdah Hakim and rural development minister Subrata Mukherjee. They have already been interrogated by the agency. The Narada sting tapes were released to different news organisations before the 2016 Assembly elections in West Bengal.

### China denies reports on tunnel to divert Brahmaputra water

NEW DELHI, Oct 31 /- China has denied reports that it is working on a 1,000-km tunnel aimed at diverting the River Brahmaputra. It categorically denied the report, which appeared in a Hong Kong-based newspaper, and claimed that it remains committed to riparian cooperation. "This is untrue. This is a false report. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson

Hua Chunying told a media briefing when asked about the report. China will continue to attach great importance to cross-border river cooperation," she added. Beijing's swift denial comes after Indian news media picked up on the report published by the South China Morning Post, a popular English daily based in Hong Kong. The denial came quickly, perhaps pointing to the



File photo

fact that the report threatened to affect relations not just with India, but also with Bangladesh. The Brahmaputra is critical to Bangladesh's economy and environment. The huge river merges with the Bay of Bengal on the plains of Bangladesh to form the Padma. This mega river and its distributaries go on to create one of the largest deltas and biodiversity hotspots in

the world—the Sundarbans. Bangladesh and India are also part of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Forum, a connectivity corridor project that would give China access to the Bay of Bengal and tie in nicely to its One Belt One Road (OBOR) project. India too has in recent times cried foul of China's handling of riparian issues with the Brahmaputra.