



THE ECHO OF INDIA

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 a 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 Singh and even arranged a meeting between Mamata and Singh. The Trinamool Congress hit back with full gusto with party secretary general and state minister for education Partha Chatterjee, while referring to Roy as 'Kanchhaparar Kanchra' (garbage from Kanchpara, Roy's hometown) 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 a 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. Any 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 the 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 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 ITMTC 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 accused 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.

ATA GLANCE

2 Air Force commandos, 2 Let militants killed in encounter

SRINAGAR, OCT 11 /- / Two Garuda 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 the 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 Garuda 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 presently 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 if her 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 major. 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. (Details on Page 7)

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 that the Centre 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 Dandia 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.

WB CID notice to Ritabrata Banerjee

KOLKATA, OCT 11 /- / West Bengal police today served a notice on expelled CPI(M) leader Ritabrata Banerjee following a complaint by a woman that he had established physical relationship with her by promising marriage. The notice asked Ritabrata Banerjee to turn up before CID officers on Friday. Additional Director General of Police, CID, West Bengal, Rajesh Kumar told PTI. The woman, who is a resident of Balurghat, has lodged a complaint at Balurghat police station in south Dinajpur district alleging that Ritabrata Banerjee had established physical relationship with her by promising marriage.

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State gov designates 'green zone' for World Cup matches

KOLKATA, OCT 11 /- / The West Bengal government has designated a 10-km radius "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 Eastern Express, 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 nothing in open space would not be allowed

PM deplors 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 "inclusive and cohesive." "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.

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