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Modi government 'anti-farmer', says irate Mamata



TMC Krishak Sannelan at Netaji Indoor Stadium on Monday PIC/MPOST

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday came down heavily upon the Narendra Modi government at the Centre, dubbing it as 'anti-farmer' and accused them of 'snatching farmers' sleep'.

She also announced that if there is a change of guard in the country after the Lok Sabha elections, the united Opposition will take significant steps for the development of farmers.

"In the days to come if the government in Delhi changes, we will unitedly try to address the difficulties of the farmers and take measures to improve their living condition. Agriculture and industry are siblings and they have to co-exist," Banerjee said, addressing the state conference of farmers at Netaji Indoor Stadium over phone from the dharna manch at Metro Channel.

She has been protesting against the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)'s attempt to question the Kolkata Police Commissioner at his residence on Sunday, terming it as an attack on constitutional norms. She criticised the interim Union Budget placed on Friday and alleged that the peasants were being cheated before the general elections.

"12,000 farmers have committed suicide in the last couple of years and they have done nothing to address their sufferings. Thousands of peasant families are in utter distress after demonetisation," she

asserted.

Referring to her 26-day fast in 2006 as the then Opposition leader demanding return of land to farmers in Singur from her present sit-in venue, the Chief Minister said: "I sat on fast at the same place for 26 days in 2006, demanding that land be returned to farmers. The movement set a new precedence as the right of land to farmers got acceptance all over the country."

She further reiterated that after coming to power, her government has made it clear that there should be no forcible acquisition of farmland for the purpose of industrialisation. "Our government has returned land acquired for industry to the farmers in Singur. We have also ensured that no farmland is taken up for commercial purpose," she maintained.

She added that her government has already handed over financial benefits to over 30,000 farmers under the 'Krishak Bandhu' scheme, where farmers are entitled to get Rs 5,000 per acre in two instalments, one during Kharif and another during the Rabi season. She further listed a number of schemes that the state has introduced for the benefit of farmers.

A number of ministers like state Education minister Partha Chatterjee, state Law minister Moloy Ghatak, state Agriculture minister Asish Banerjee, state Irrigation minister Somen Mahapatra and state Technical Education minister Purnendu Basu were present on the dais at Netaji Indoor Stadium.