

Publication: The Telegraph

Category: Political

Page No: 6 Date: 12/01/2018

Trend: Neutral Press Release: NONE

Marandi poser on chief secy

VIJAYDEO JHA

Ranchi: JVM chief Babulal Marandi has questioned chief minister Raghubar Das's avowed commitment to fight corruption, citing the continuance in office of controversial chief secretary Rajbala Verma who is yet to reply to a show-cause notice regarding her alleged role in failing to unravel the fodder scam in Chaibasa in 1990-91.

"Raghubar Das and his party claim that they are committed to fight corruption. But, the chief minister is retaining Verma as chief secretary. Who is the CM fooling? A junior officer was asked to issue a show-cause notice to her. Instead, the chief minister could have removed her," the former chief minister told The Telegraph on Thursday, hours before he visited the JVM party office at Dibdih where sup-

porters celebrated his 60th birthday.

Marandi said Verma should have followed in the footsteps of additional chief secretary (finance) Sukhdev Singh, who offered to step down from his post soon after a CBI court called for his prosecution.

"Sukhdev Singh has set a moral precedent by wishing to step down. But, the state chief secretary is clinging to her post. She has not even replied to notices issued to her over decades," Marandi said, airing views similar to what state Congress chief Ajoy Kumar told this paper on Wednesday.

The JVM chief said the chief minister should explain why his government was soft on Verma.

"In fodder scam cases, the state government is shielding Verma," he said.

Asked if as Jharkhand's



BIRTHDAY BOY: JVM chief Babulal Marandi celebrates his birthday with party members at Dibdih in Ranchi on Thursday.

Picture by Prashant Mitra

first chief minister he came across show-cause notices issued to Verma, Marandi said that he wasn't so sure.

"Powerful bureaucrats often hush up matters related to them. I don't remember whether any show-cause notice was issued or not. But now it has been exposed that that she was served with show-cause notices on more than a dozen occasions," he said.

Marandi also criticised the development policy of the Raghubar Das-led government saying the poor, tribals, farmers and socio-economically marginalised people had been kept out of the discourse. The government, he alleged, was also trying to polarise OBCs.

"The Global Investors Summit was the display of a corporate model of development which is now backfiring. The government is facing protests whenever and wherever it is trying to acquire land for industrial houses," he said.

"Tribals protested CNT and SPT amendments. The BJP is aware that tribals aren't going to vote for the party. So, the BJP is mobilising OBCs saying the government wanted to free their land from tenancy regulations. In fact, the government has a vicious social agenda," he alleged.

Marandi said airports and roads were no indicators of development.

"I visited Deoghar airport recently and was shocked to see that as many as 105 Dalit families, whose land was acquired, have become homeless," he said, adding that his party would continue to oppose the proposed Adani Group power project in Godda.

"The JVM is not deterred by repressive steps (taken by the government) to quell this popular agitation," he said.