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## 3 West Bengal MLAs, 50 councillors join BJP

Kailash Vijaywargiya says more are likely to switch loyalties

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

T.H.  
29/5/19

The BJP's 'Mission Bengal' gathered pace on Tuesday, with three MLAs joining the party at its headquarters in New Delhi, along with 50 municipal councillors from Kanchrapara, Haliashahar and Naihati.

Of the three legislators, Shubhrangshu Roy of the Trinamool is former Union Minister Mukul Roy's son. The other two are Tusharkanti Bhattacharya and Debendra Nath Roy.

Mr. Roy crossed over from the CPI(M) and Mr. Bhattacharya from Trinamool. The latter, elected on Congress ticket from Bishnupur, had crossed over to Trinamool two years ago, but did not resign his seat after doing so.

### Boost in local bodies

With over 50 councillors joining the BJP, the party now has a majority in at least three municipal councils.

Speaking at the event, BJP general secretary in charge of West Bengal Kailash Vijaywargiya said more crossovers were on the anvil.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had declared at an election rally in the State that 40 disgruntled Trinamool MLAs were in touch with the BJP and could shift loyalties.



**Blow to Mamata:** Two Trinamool MLAs, one from CPI(M), and 50 councillors joined the BJP. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

## Mamata to attend swearing-in

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

In 2014, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee did not attend Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony, but on Thursday she will.

Ms. Banerjee told journalists here on Tuesday

that she would try to attend the ceremony as a "constitutional duty and courtesy".

The Chief Minister, who is one of the most vocal critics of Mr. Modi, said she spoke to a couple of other Chief Ministers and decided to attend the swearing-in.

Mr. Vijaywargiya announced that the crossovers would happen "in seven phases".

Sources in the party said the BJP was in touch with MLAs in those Assembly segments where the BJP had posted a lead in the recent Lok Sabha election. "The BJP led in 128 Assembly seg-

ments out of a total of 295 [294 for which elections take place, with one nominated seat set aside for the Anglo Indian community], and we are in touch with many of them," said a senior leader.

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## Three West Bengal MLAs join BJP

T.H.  
29/5/17

Mr. Mukul Roy, once considered a confidant of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee before falling out with her and joining the BJP in 2017, mocked her claims that she had wanted to resign following her party's less than expected showing in the general elections, terming it a "drama".

Trinamool's tally fell to 22 seats from 34, while that of the BJP went up to 18 from two in the Lok Sabha polls.

"She will stick to her chair at all costs till people decide to remove her," Mr. Roy said, claiming that in the Assembly polls due in 2021, her party would struggle to get the status of the opposition party.

Trinamool had won 211 of

the 294 Assembly seats in 2016. The BJP had won only three, but has since emerged as the principal challenger. A party needs to win at least 10% of the seats to be officially recognised as the main opposition party.

"People are fleeing Trinamool to join the BJP. Many more will join in the coming weeks," Mr. Roy said. "We want her (Ms. Banerjee's) government to continue till 2021, but if it falls due to her doings, then we cannot help it," he said.

Mr. Roy also rejected Trinamool's claim that the BJP was practising horse-trading. Many MLAs of other parties, including Congress, had joined Trinamool due to "horse-trading", he said.