

## MUKUL ANNOUNCES DIVORCE FROM TMC



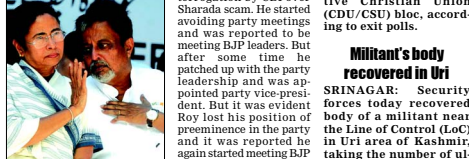
Mukul Roy leaving Nizam Palace after his press conference — Arjit Ganguly

### Mukul Roy: The leader with his feet firmly on ground

SABYASACHI BANDOPADHYAY

KOLKATA, SEPT 25 /—/ In May 2012 this reporter was travelling to Berhampur to cover an assignment by Laligola Passenger which was bustling with a home-bound crowd and it was difficult to manage to have even an elbow room. At the prospect of spending a sleepless night sitting erect I had called then minister for railways Mukul Roy who told me to hand over my mobile phone to the TTI and then asked him to arrange for an accommodation for me. Who on earth had heard of a minister for railways talking to a mere TTI for some official job to be done. But Roy, 63, the mighty second-in-command in the Trinamool Congress (TMC) who was suspended from the party today, was always like that, hands-on, down-to-earth, whose feet were always firmly on the ground. "He knew even a block level leader of the party. He could feel the pulse of the organisation. If Mamata was the spirit and the inspiration Mukul did the masonry work," said one leader.

In 1987, Roy, a non-descript leader of the Youth Congress, threw in his fate, along with leaders like Shovon Deb Chattopadhyay with Mamata Banerjee who revolted against the Congress, calling it the 'B team of CPI(M)' and set up the Trinamool Congress. He became the general secretary of the party and went into the task of building party units brick-by-brick at various districts. He was a non-executive director of the United Bank between 2002 and 2006 when he was sent to Rajya Sabha for the first time and again for the second time in 2012. A member of various parliamentary committees the leader, a graduate from Calcutta University and an MA from Madurai University was made the minister of state for shipping in 2011, and later Minister for Railways from March 20, 2012 to September 2012 after Dinesh Trivedy of the TMC was removed from the post. During his tenure he created a controversy by defying the instructions of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who told him to go to Assam to visit a railway accident site. The No.2 in the party he handled party affairs and was the most trusted lieutenant of the party chief. He fell out with Mamata following his interrogation by CBI over Sharada scam. He started avoiding party meetings and was reported to be meeting BJP leaders. But after some time he patched up with the party leadership and was appointed party vice-president. But it was evident Roy lost his position of prominence in the party and it was reported he again started meeting BJP leaders. He also met President Ramnath Kovind in Delhi. Bang came the fall. What went wrong? One theory was that he could not bond with the grooming of Mamata's nephew and party MP Abhishek Banerjee as the heir to Mamata. Another theory is that he sang like a canary before the central agencies about the role of some TMC leaders vis-a-vis the Sharada and Narada scams. What is his future? Though he seemed to be keen on joining the BJP the fact is there are several leaders in the local unit of the BJP who are against him joining the party. Another theory is that he floats another party—he has already the option of reviving the Nationalist Trinamool Congress he helped set up in 2015—and join the NDA. As he already said today, things will be clear next month.



Mukul Roy in happier days — File photo

the party decided to restructure its committee. He was earlier removed as the party's in-charge of Tripura, where the TMC was steadily making inroads till its members switched over to the BJP earlier this year. A senior TMC leader said that, "Roy was a very senior leader in the party and now a section of leaders are fearing that Roy's absence from the party may create more intra party feud inside the TMC which may damage the party's face."

A section of Trinamool Congress leaders claimed "The Trinamool Congress will have to face a trying time to retain all its leaders and MLAs as there are high chances that Roy might poach a few leaders. Even Roy has the potential to break the bonding of a party if he wishes to damage the party. Regarding Roy's joining the party BJP state unit president Dilip Ghosh said: "We have not yet received any proposal and we will consider it if we get a proposal." Congress leader Abdul Mannan said: "Roy has resigned from the party to save his own back as we have heard that he spoke against the party to Central agencies and thus he wanted to step down from the party, before the party asked him to step down from the party."

### Party suspends him for 6 years

**EOI CORRESPONDENT**

KOLKATA, SEPT 25 /—/ Rajya Sabha MP and former railway minister Mukul Roy was today suspended from the party for six years for "anti-party activities". TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee said.

"He (Roy) has been trying to weaken the party for quite some time. The party's disciplinary committee has discussed the issue and recommended punishment for him to TMC supreme Mamata Banerjee," he said. Shortly after Roy announced that he would tender his resignation from the party's working committee today, Chatterjee told reporters that the Rajya Sabha member had been suspended from the party for six years for "anti-party activities". Roy also told newsmen that he would resign from the Upper House of Parliament and give up the party after Durga Puja. "If he (Roy) wants to leave, why isn't he leaving now? What is stopping him?" Chatterjee asked. Earlier in the day the former railway minister said he would quit the party's working committee today and resign as Rajya Sabha MP as well as from the party's primary membership after Durga Puja. "I was one of the signatories when the party was founded. I am announcing with a heavy heart that I will resign from the party's working committee today. And after the Durga Puja festival, I will resign from the Rajya Sabha and also from the primary membership of the party," Roy said at a press conference. Roy, whose relationship with the leadership has been strained of late, said he would give an explanation on why he was leaving the party and why he was "forced to do so" after Durga Puja. The TMC, had last week censured Roy for allegedly hobnobbing with BJP leaders and said it was keeping a close watch on him.

Asked whether he would join the BJP in days to come, Roy said, "Whatever I have to say, I will say it after Durga Puja. But I would like to mention that people of Bengal don't like political controversies during Durga Puja. Once the second-in-command in the TMC after chief minister Mamata Banerjee, Roy was absent from an event to unveil the Durga Puja edition of the TMC mouthpiece, Jago Bangla, on September 19. Mamata and the entire TMC top brass, including Roy, was present at the event. Roy was recently removed as the TMC vice president after

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### Morcha leaders produced at Siliguri court

PRASHANT ACHARYA

SILIGURI, SEPT 25 /—/ Three arrested Morcha leaders who were arrested from Gurgaon were today presented at Siliguri court amid tight security on Monday, all three remained for eight days to police custody. Morcha leaders P T Oia, Tilak Chandra Roka and D K Pradhan were brought from Gurgaon on transit train and produced at Siliguri court.

D K Pradhan said, "We were not arrested, we surrendered before police and the similar case was charged against Binay Tamang was he was not arrested." While Tilak Chandra Roka was seen very furious when media asked his reactions, he asked the media persons to quit from the area saying, "We are accused now and you need to take permission to come here." Morcha leader's lawyer from Darjeeling Dipankar Dey said, "The same case was slapped against Binay Tamang but the state government made him chairman of GTA. He is roaming freely with police protection. Though police charged case against these leaders but there is no concrete material in seizure list. We have prayed for bail of the three leaders but court denied our bail plea."

The other lawyer Paurth Choudhary said, "The arrested leaders were engaged in political activities, Morcha is not a banned political party, in the same case thousands of other people were also present near Bhanu Bhawan, Darjeeling on the same day. But nothing is clear who were engaged in damaging the properties neither there is about seizure of any arms in seizure list."

### Power for all by Dec 2018, says minister

NEW DELHI, SEPT 25 /—/ Union power minister K Singh today said India will achieve the target of power for all by December next year, while all villages will be electrified by the end of this year, much ahead of the schedule. The Centre had set the deadline for electrifying all villages by May 1, 2018. Similarly, it was aiming to provide 24x7 power to all by March, 2019. "Prime Minister has said December 2018 is the target. We will do it. This is a tight target but we will do. Every household will get electricity by December 2018," Singh said at the launch of 'Saubhagya' scheme for providing power to all households. "One more important target we have got, that is 24x7 power, reliable and quality power. We will take a proposal to the Prime Minister," he said. The power minister also talked about the pre-paid model to be adopted for electricity to all households as per government plans. He stressed on the need for developing skills for the power sector and said that "there is need for skill development for grid and feeder maintenance". He called upon the industry to invest in the power sector saying that in the coming year, the demand for electricity is going to increase in view of high growth economy.

### 'My battle against corruption is uncompromising'

NEW DELHI, SEPT 25 /—/ Under opposition's attack over demonetisation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said today power was a means of empowerment for them when they were in government, asserting that his battle against graft was "uncompromising" and no one will be spared. Addressing the BJP's national executive and its lawmakers from across the country, Modi asked them to take the party beyond elections and make it an instrument of mass participation to improve quality of people's lives. The Prime Minister's comments at the closed-door meeting, attended by 13 chief ministers, six deputy chief ministers, over 60 union ministers besides party's MPs and MLAs among others, were shared with the media by senior party leader Arun Jaitley. "When Opposi-



tion was in government, power was a means of enjoyment for it. Now they do not know how to behave as opposition," Modi told the meeting, according to Jaitley. The Prime Minister also underlined his resolve to fight corruption, saying his "battle against it is uncompromising. No one will be spared. I have no relatives." Taking a dig at opposition parties, Modi said their use of harsh language cannot be a substitute for substantive government. Opposition parties have been attacking Modi's government over the demonetisation and cited the recent RBI figures to corner it. The BJP, he said, has become central to people's hopes and ambitions as he asked party's leaders to become a link between people's problems and government.

### Merkel clinches 4th term as Chancellor

BERLIN: Chancellor Angela Merkel clinched a fourth term in Germany's election today, but her victory was clouded by the entry into parliament of the hard right AfD, the best showing for a nationalist force since World War II. Merkel, who after 12 years in power held a double-digit lead for most of the campaign, scored around 33 per cent of the vote with her conservative Christian Union (CDU/CSU) bloc, according to exit polls.

### Militant's body recovered in Uri

SRINAGAR: Security forces today recovered body of a militant near the Line of Control (LoC) in Uri area of Kashmir, taking the number of ultras killed in the operation there to four. Security forces on Monday morning resumed the anti-militancy operation, which was launched on Sunday, following information about presence of more militants in the area. "We have recovered body of another militant, which takes the number of militants killed in the operation to four," an Army official said.



Kohli urges high-flying India to be 'ruthless' — See Page-12



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurating Durga puja of Mandiratala in Hoorah — Shyamal Maitra

**29 Years**

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> Cleaning Supervisor	05	31,344	22-37
> Male Security Guard (B)	30	27,851	24-37
> Cleaner Male	100	13,930	22-37
> Cleaner Female	100	13,930	22-37

Final Interview on 26-09-2017, documentation and form fillup date till 23-09-2017

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