

TRINAMOOOL NOT TO VOTE IN VICE-PRESIDENT POLLS

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The Trinamool Congress said here on Thursday that the party's MPs would abstain from voting in the Vice-Presidential election on August 6. The decision was taken at a meeting of the MPs at the residence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

"The way the Opposition candidate [Margaret Alva of the Congress] had been decided without proper consultation and deliberation with a party which has 35 MPs in both the Houses, we have decided unanimously to abstain from the voting process," Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee told journalists after the meeting.

He said almost 85% of the MPs urged party chairperson Ms. Banerjee to abstain from participating in the election. The Congress and the Left parties accused the Trinamool leadership of working as an agent of BJP.

What makes the Trinamool's decision more intriguing is that the party is not registering its opposition to National Democratic Alliance candidate Jagdeep Dhankhar, who, as West Bengal Governor, had frequent run-ins with the Trinamool leadership, especially the Chief Minister.

Mr. Abhishek, however, said questions of tacit support for him did not arise.

Asked if the decision will affect Opposition unity, he said that to maintain it, one had to rise above ego and self-interest.

"For Opposition unity, we can do floor coordination in Parliament and also take to the streets... but we have to change our approach," he added.

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