

PRIVILEGE MOTION AGAINST SUVENDU

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Suvendu Adhikari file photo. A. Roy Chowdhury

The West Bengal Assembly on Thursday accepted a privilege motion against Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari on charges that he threatened four MLAs in the Assembly. Speaker Biman Banerjee said it has been forwarded to the privilege committee of the House.

Mr. Banerjee told journalists that the developments on Wednesday, when the alleged incident occurred, have been recorded in the Assembly and *prima facie* there is a case.

On Wednesday, four MLAs who recently switched sides from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the Trinamool Congress alleged that Mr. Adhikari had threatened them with income tax raids. Describing the development as “unfortunate”, the Speaker said he is not aware of such an incident in the Assembly where during the session an MLA has threatened another. The Speaker said that he has directed privilege committee to complete proceedings in the ongoing session. Mr. Banerjee also added that the MLAs fear for their life and have sought protection from him. Later in the day the seats of these MLAs, who were sitting in the Opposition benches, were changed.

Among the MLAs who made the allegations were Krishna Kalyani from Raiganj constituency, Tanmoy Ghosh from Bishnupur seat, Soumen Roy from Kaliaganj seat and Biswajit Das from Bagda constituency, all of whom had won on a BJP ticket in May 2021 but later defected to the Trinamool. On Wednesday, the MLAs raised protests when Mr. Adhikari was speaking on the subject of the Budget.

Questioning loyalty

Reacting to developments, BJP MLA Manoj Tigga said that the allegations were completely baseless and asked which party the MLAs are affiliated to.

“Instead of the privilege motion against Suvendu Adhikari, the Speaker must decide about the affiliation of these MLAs,” Mr. Tigga said.

Earlier a petition by BJP legislators seeking to disqualify Mukul Roy, who too had left BJP to join the Trinamool, was dismissed by the Speaker on grounds of insufficient evidence.

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