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Borbora in a hopeless minority

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SHILLONG, July 23.

A pall of gloom descended on Assam Chief Minister Golap Chandra Borbora's camp at Gauhati today as the second batch of four dissidents, including former Labour Minister Jagan Nath Sinha, defied the party high command and withdrew their support to the Ministry, reducing it to a hopeless minority.

The four dissidents addressed a formal communication to the Governor of the North-Eastern States, Mr. L. P. Singh, intimating their decision to withdraw support to the Chief Minister.

An identical letter was sent to Speaker J. N. Hazarika.

The Borbora Ministry's strength in the 126-member Assembly has plummeted to 38.

Even if Mr. Borbora can manage to enlist the continued support of the Plains Tribal Council of Assam, the CPM group and three Independents, which cannot be taken for granted in the changed context of all-India politics, he is still short of seven legislators for his survival.

The dissidents expressed the hope that they would be able to form an alternative Janata Government in the next few days.

The dissidents, who have been in touch with the leaders of the Congress and other Opposition parties in the State, have been assured of support by former Chief Minister and Opposition leader Sarat Chandra Sinha.

The supporters of Mr. Borbora, in the meantime, were exploring the possibility of a coalition with the CPM and other Leftist groups.