

# 50% Of New Councillors In Assam Independents

By Our Special Representative  
THE CPI(M) has emerged as the third strongest political party in Assam following the panchayat elections, next to Janata and the Congress (I). However, what is most striking about the election results is the emergence of Independents as the most powerful force, according to Mr Achintya Bhattacharya, the CPI(M) State party secretary and a member of the party's central committee.

About 50% of the 725 councillors elected to the subdivisional councils are Independents. Many of them, according to Mr Bhattacharya, are former Congressmen.

M. Bhattacharya said in Calcutta on Monday that Janata, presumably because of its slender majority, was "friendly" with the CPI(M) in the Assembly. But outside, a section of Janata leaders was critical. As in other parts of the country the pro-RSS and Jana Sangha faction within Janata was opposing the ministerial group. The CPI(M) was supporting the Government's democratic measures and opposing the Government on the trade union and kisan fronts.

The CPI(M)'s mass organiza-

tions, he said, were getting stronger. The Kisan sabha had enrolled about 50,000 members while the membership of the party's students' wing and the Centre of Indian Trade Unions has increased to 27,500 and 15,000, respectively.

Although there has been no political understanding between the CPI(M) and the CPI, the parties have begun a joint campaign to preserve peace on the Nagaland-Assam border and organized movements to protect the rights of poor farmers.

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