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Uddhav wins trust with 169 ayes

BJP MLAs walk out of Assembly citing procedural irregularities in swearing-in

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, led by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, sailed through the floor test in the Maharashtra Assembly on Saturday.

While the Opposition BJP walked out during the voting citing procedural irregularities, 169 MLAs of the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress, along with smaller parties and Independents voted in favour of the government in the 288-member House. Four MLAs abstained.

Mr. Thackeray, who is not a member of either the Legislative Assembly or the Council, did not vote.

As per SC orders

Referring to the Supreme Court order which had asked that the floor test be conducted via open voting and also broadcast live, pro tem speaker Dilip Walse-Patil directed the House to ensure



Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray arriving at Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai on Saturday. • VIVEK BENDRE

open voting process.

Former Chief Minister and Congress leader Ashok Chavan moved the motion of confidence and it was seconded by NCP MLAs Nawab

Malik, Jayant Patil and the Sena's Sunil Prabhu.

The 105 BJP MLAs staged a walkout before the head count, with former Chief Minister and legislature party

leader Devendra Fadnavis citing the "unlawful manner" in which the Ministers were sworn in and the House session convened. Mr. Fadnavis said, "The last session adjourned *sine die* with the national anthem. So the new session has to start again with the national anthem which is not done."

Mr. Walse-Patil replied that the current session was part of the last session and the Governor's decision to call the session was in accordance with parliamentary laws.

Mr. Fadnavis also claimed that the change in pro tem Speaker from the BJP's Kalidas Kolambakar to Mr. Walse-Patil was not as per the procedure and that the swearing-in of Mr. Thackeray and his Cabinet did not follow procedure with the Ministers taking oath in the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Phule.

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Mr. Walse-Patil said the matter did not come under the jurisdiction of the Assembly.

"The swearing-in ceremony took place at outside. It is the duty of Governor to look into. So I am not authority to talk about that," he said.

After this, Mr. Thackeray introduced his cabinet colleagues to the House amid sloganeering from the BJP MLAs, who later walked out of the Assembly.

The break-up of numbers included 56 from the Sena, 53 from the NCP as Mr. Walse-Patil was in the chair, and 44 from the Congress. Among the others who supported the government were three MLAs from the Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA), two each from Prahar and

Samajwadi Party (SP), one each from the Swabhimani Paksha and Peasants and Workers Party (PWP).

The independents who supported the government were Rajendra Patil-Yadavkar, Shankarrao Gadakh, Manjula Gavit, Ashish Jaiswal, Narendra Bhondewar, Kishor Jogewar, Sanjay Shinde. Of the four MLAs who abstained, two were from the AIMIM and one each from Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Thanking the MLAs of the three parties and the people, Mr. Thackeray said his government would work to bring about a State envisioned by the great kings, saints and social workers.