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Scindia walks out of Congress...
 out of Congress,
 heads for BJP

SACAR KULKARNI
 NEW DELHI, DHNS
 11/3/20



Jyotiraditya Scindia

Kamal Nath puts up brave front, BJP MLAs rush to Delhi

RAKESH DIXIT
 BHOPAL, DHNS

Marking a big shift, a sulking Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday quit the Congress and appeared set to cross over to the BJP looking forward to a "fresh start" after a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, pushing the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh on the brink of collapse.

Capping swift political developments overnight, Scindia virtually caught Congress leaders unawares on the festive occasion of Holi with his meeting with Modi.

Home Minister Amit Shah personally escorted Scindia for a meeting with Modi, which was seen as a clear

signal on the importance the BJP attached to the erstwhile Gwalior royal. Ironically, only a fortnight ago, Scindia had attended the meeting of the Congress Working Committee that had sought Shah's resignation for his handling of the Delhi riots.

Contrary to speculation, Scindia was expected to formally join the BJP over the next couple of days in Bhopal along with his supporters.

An angry Congress hit back with party President Sonia Gandhi expelling Scindia for anti-party activities.

Scindia, Page 8

Amid a strong buzz about the imminent fall of the Kamal Nath government following revolt by Jyotiraditya Scindia and resignation of 19 MLAs, the BJP on Tuesday night flew its MLAs to New Delhi for consultation with top leadership on a prospective chief minister.

BJP legislature party left the decision to the high command. Party MLAs raised slogans hailing three-time CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan. However, he said that Gopal Bargaava continued to be the leader of Opposition and the meeting was held to discuss Rajya Sabha poll.

Kamal Nath, Page 5

Scindia walks out of Congress...

SCINDIA, FROM PAGE 1
 The stage for shift in Scindia's loyalties was set on Saturday when at least 20 Madhya Pradesh legislators owing allegiance to him were airlifted to a resort in Bengaluru as their leader made the final moves to bid farewell to the grand old party.

Scindia's meeting with Modi came on the 75th birth anniversary of late Madhavrao Scindia, Jyotiraditya's father.

"Having been a primary member of the Congress party for the last 18 years, it is now time for me to move on," the 49-year-old former union minister said in a letter addressed to Congress president Sonia Gandhi soon after he met Modi.

"While my aim and purpose remain the same as it has always been from the very beginning, to serve the people of my state and my country, I believe I am unable to do this anymore within this party. To reflect and realise the aspirations of my people and my workers, I believe it is best that I now look ahead at a fresh start," Scindia said.

Scindia's shift to the BJP marks a full circle for the erstwhile Gwalior royal family, whose matriarch — Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia — was among the founders of the BJP. Madhavrao too made his Lok Sabha debut as a Bhartiya Jana Sangh candidate, only to join the Congress later.

A four-term Lok Sabha member and a two-term union minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia was pushed to the margins in the Madhya Pradesh Congress after his shock defeat in the general elections from his Guna constituency last year.

His frequent reminders to the Congress leadership of appointing him as the president of the Madhya Pradesh unit and a nomination to the Rajya Sabha fell on deaf ears.

"It is a homecoming. The manner in which he has been welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah shows their respect towards Rajmata Yashodhara Raje said.

19 Madhya Pradesh MLAs... Scindia meets... Cong leaders try to reach out to Scindia... Scindia meets... Cong leaders try to reach out to Scindia... Scindia meets... Cong leaders try to reach out to Scindia...