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BJP nominee Om Birla set to be LS Speaker

Govt secures support of all parties

Sagar Kulkarni

NEW DELHI, June 19: Senior BJP leader Om Birla is all set to be the Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha after the government secured support for him cutting across party lines.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari signed draft motions proposing the 56-year-old's name. The motion will be moved in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday and is expected to be approved unanimously.

Birla is a second-term member from the Kota-Bundi Parliamentary seat. He has risen through the ranks in the BJP, having been part of the its youth wing since 1987. He was the president of the Rajast-



Om Birla

han unit of the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha and went on to become the national vice-president.

A reluctant entrant to electoral politics, Birla defeated Congress stalwart Shanti Dhariwal from the Kota South Assembly seat in 2003. He made his Lok Sabha debut in 2014 from the Kota-Bundi constituency and was re-elected in the recent general elections.

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Adhir is Cong leader in LS

NEW DELHI, June 19: The Congress on Tuesday named firebrand leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as its leader in the Lok Sabha after party president Rahul Gandhi refused to take up the key post.

Chowdhury, a five-term member from Berhampore in West Bengal, succeeds Mallikarjun Kharge, who lost the Lok Sabha election from Gulbarga. Kodikunnil Suresh, a seven-term Lok Sabha member from Kerala, has been appointed as the chief whip of the party.

"I have been given this responsibility. I am a foot soldier of the party," Chowdhury told reporters.

Names of Manish Tewari and Shashi Tharoor were also being talked about, but the party chose Chowdhury, given his street-fighter approach which will come in handy while dealing with a stronger BJP.



Chowdhury

BJP nominee Om Birla set to be...

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He will succeed Sumitra Mahajan, an eight-term parliamentarian.

"BJD, Shiv Sena, Akali Dal, National People's Party, Mizo National Front, Akali Dal, LJP, YSRCP, JD(U) and Apna Dal leaders have also signed the motion proposing Birla's candidature." Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi told reporters here.

Joshi also reached out to Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad and Kodikunnil Suresh, who also agreed to sign the motion supporting Birla's candidature.

"I have already signed the motion in Birla's favour," said Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha.

The names of former Union ministers Radha Mohan Singh, S S Ahluwalia and Maneka Gandhi were also talked about in political circles, but the BJP opted for Birla.

SHIMLA, June 19: Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM MP from Hyderabad, chanted 'Jai Bheem, Jai Meem, Takbeer Allahu Akbar, Jai Hind' after members from the ruling side shouted 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' on the second day of oath-taking. **PAGE 9**



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