

# Fadnavis sworn in as CM after Ajit Pawar ditches uncle

7-11-24/11/19

Early morning ceremony at Raj Bhavan; BJP invokes people's mandate, blames Shiv Sena; NCP removes Ajit Pawar as legislature party chief



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In a dramatic twist to political events in Maharashtra, the BJP's Devendra Fadnavis was sworn in by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari as the next Chief Minister early on Saturday morning, along with Ajit Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) as his deputy.

Mr. Koshyari administered the oath of office to the two leaders at a closely guarded ceremony at the Raj Bhavan at 8.00 a.m., setting off political ripples across parties in

the State. Stung by the abrupt reversal in fortunes in less than 24 hours after Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray was declared the CM-designate of the Congress-NCP-Sena formation, the Sena approached the Supreme Court to quash the "arbitrary and malafide actions/decisions" of Mr. Koshyari in swearing in Mr. Fadnavis.

**'Personal decision'**  
NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who has been spearheading efforts at forming a coalition government with the Con-

gress and Sena, distanced himself from his nephew Ajit Pawar's dramatic volte-face, saying the decision to support Mr. Fadnavis was a personal choice and not that of the party.

Later in the day, a meeting of 49 NCP MLAs removed Mr. Ajit Pawar as legislature party chief, saying his move was not in line with the party's policies.

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## Fadnavis sworn in as Chief Minister

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Speaking to reporters on the lawns of the Raj Bhavan after being sworn in, Mr. Fadnavis said, "The people of this State had given a clear mandate to the BJP-Shiv Sena combine but this mandate was rejected by our ally resulting in the imposition of President's Rule. A progressive State like ours did not deserve this situation and instead ended up starting at a khichdi government of Sena-NCP-Congress. I want to thank Ajit Pawar for taking the decision to join us in the effort to provide a stable government to Maharashtra."

The Raj Bhavan ceremony was attended by select leaders of the BJP, families

of Mr. Fadnavis and Mr. Pawar, along with as many as 15 MLAs of the NCP backing the latter. The Chief Minister revealed without giving a timeline that the party had staked claim overnight to form a government, following which President's Rule was lifted at 5 a.m.

"I have joined the government to provide a stable government in the State where lakhs of farmers are suffering from unseasonal rains," Mr. Pawar said after taking oath as the Deputy Chief Minister (DCM) for a second time. He was earlier DCM in the Congress-NCP government between November 2010 and September 2012.

Changing equations: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, left, and his deputy Ajit Pawar, right, after Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari administered the oath of office to them in an early-morning ceremony in Mumbai on Saturday. \*AP