

## ***The EC gives Bow-And-Arrow Symbol To The Eknath Shinde Faction***

### ***The Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena Group Contest The Commission's Judgement***

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*In the midst of an ongoing dispute between the Eknath Shinde faction and the Uddhav Thackeray faction over the rights, the Election Commission has ruled that the Balasaheb Thackeray-founded party's official name and its bow-and-arrow symbol will be given to the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena. The Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena group would file a case with the Supreme Court contesting the commission's judgement.*

## ***What is the Matter of Shiv Sena Faction?***

*When Eknath Shinde, a cabinet minister in the Sena-NCP-Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government, rebelled against the party hierarchy in June of last year, two Shiv Sena factions were created. Shinde and about 40 Sena MLAs, along with ten additional individuals, hurried on the road to Gujarat first. They took a chartered jet to Assam from there. Uddhav Thackeray, the chief minister, who had only about 15 MLAs on his side, resigned shortly after. After days of intense drama, Eknath Shinde travelled from Assam to Mumbai with the rebel MLAs and took office as the new chief minister of Maharashtra with Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP serving as his deputy. Devendra Fadnavis unexpectedly stated that Eknath Shinde would succeed him as the next chief minister of Maharashtra, replacing the widely expected Devendra Fadnavis to lead the BJP-Shinde Sena coalition. With 164 votes cast in his favour, Eknath Shinde won the key floor vote in the state Legislature on July 4. The two factions have been asserting claims to the Shiv Sena name and the original symbol of the bow and arrow since the insurrection led by Eknath Shinde that brought down the Uddhav Thackeray government. The bow and arrow emblem was suspended while the matter was being handled by the election commission. The Shinde faction was given two swords and a shield for the bypoll, while the Uddhav faction was given a fiery torch.*

## ***What is the "Test of Majority"?***

*The Shinde party, which had 40 MLAs and 13 MPs compared to the 15 MLAs and five MPs on the Thackeray side, won the "test of majority" principle applied by the ECI. The ECI found that among those who supported the party during the most recent elections, the Shinde group comprised much more voters than the Thackeray side. In an indictment of Mr. Thackeray, who unilaterally and selfishly changed the Sena constitution, the ECI chose not to address the "test of party constitution," a second standard applicable in such circumstances. The ECI ruling is a setback for Mr. Thackeray, who is fighting valiantly to keep hold of the party his father started in 1966.*

## **Conclusion Drawn From Shiv Sena Faction Dispute**

*From this, two main inferences may be made. First off, the Sena party is unlikely to reclaim its former influence in Maharashtra politics, even if the organisation breaks vertically between the two groups. Both groups are expected to fall behind the NCP or BJP in the near future. Second, the EC's decision lamented the absence of internal party democracy in rejecting the 2018 Shiv Sena constitution amendment as being undemocratic. Nonetheless, several of the parties in the nation struggle with a lack of internal party democracy. Thus, numerous additional comparable instances across the political spectrum could result from the Shiv Sena factional battle. So, the outcome of Sena vs. Sena could have political repercussions outside of Maharashtra.*

## **The Way Forward of Shiv Sena**

*The Shiv Sena battles are far from finished, despite the EC's decision to recognise the party led by Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde as the true Shiv Sena offers that camp an advantage. The "test of majority" was used by the EC to rule in favour of the Shinde group. Yet the Shinde and Uddhav Thackeray factions will continue to clash over Bal Thackeray's legacy and for control of the Sena shakhas, the foundation of the party's organisational structure. Political analysts predict a difficult fight for Uddhav Thackeray, one that will be waged more on perception than on legality. But, they note that given that both groups are projecting themselves as the true Sena and that the Supreme Court case involving them is still continuing, the EC's judgement will have broad repercussions for both of them.*