



*JPNN/New Delhi /Jul 09, 2015/The Supreme Court today ordered a CBI probe into the massive admission and recruitment scam in Madhya Pradesh as more skeletons tumbled out of the Vyapam cupboard with the death of yet another witness coming to light. The Supreme Court, while directing CBI to probe all cases of the Vyapam scam and alleged deaths of persons related to it, also issued notices to the Centre and the state on a plea seeking Governor Ramnaresh Yadav's removal*

*for his alleged involvement in the scandal. The court also issued a notice to the Governor. Congress had yesterday claimed 49 people associated with the scam had died so far. The apex court's order transferring all Vyapam-related cases to the CBI came after the state government gave its consent to shifting investigation from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) and the Special Task Force (STF). A bench headed by Chief Justice H L Dattu said all cases will stand transferred to the CBI from Monday and the agency will file its report before it on July 24. Before handing over the probe to the CBI, the apex court took on record the submission of Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi, who on behalf of the MP government, said the state has no objection to transferring the investigation in Vyapam and deaths of people allegedly related to it for a free and fair probe. "The Attorney General (AG) on instruction states that MP govt has no objection whatsoever for transferring the investigation of criminal cases relating to Vyapam scam to the CBI and the cases related to deaths of those allegedly connected with the scam for free and fair probe." "We appreciate the stand of the AG. In view of the above we transfer investigation of all criminal cases relating to Vyapam scam and death of people allegedly related to it, to CBI," the bench, also comprising Justices Arun Mishra and Amitava Roy, said. The apex court was hearing a batch of petitions including one filed by senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh seeking CBI probe into all cases arising out of the Vyapam scam.*

*As the Supreme Court ordered an inquiry by the central agency, reports came from Bhopal of a special court being informed about the death of yet another witness in the scam. The Special Task Force of MP police, which hitherto investigated the scam, told the court that Sanjay Singh Yadav, aged around 35, died from illness at a private hospital in Bhopal on February 8. According to his family, he was suffering from Hepatitis-B. The Supreme Court, while issuing notices relating to the Governor that are returnable after four weeks, refrained from making any remarks on him when Kapil Sibal, appearing on behalf of petitioners demanded that Yadav demit office to maintain its dignity. "We are not going to say anything on it," it said. The STF had registered a case against Yadav, a former Congressman appointed to the post by the previous UPA government, for favouring some candidates appearing for tests conducted by MP*

*Professional Examination Board (MPPEB), also known as Vyapam. The high court, however, quashed it citing immunity from prosecution he enjoys while in office. Yadav's son Shailesh, an accused in the case who was alleged to have accepted bribe for rigging Vyapam examination to favour some candidates, was the most high-profile person linked to the scandal to have died in mysterious circumstances. His body was found at his father's lucknow residence in March this year. As soon as Sibal, appearing for Singh, submitted that it is a matter in which who's who of MP is involved, Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi said the state has already moved the high court for a CBI probe and the matter has been deferred to July 20.*

*Rohatgi's submission on MP government's stand evoked a quick response from the bench which said, "The High Court wants to wash off its hand." "On CBI enquiry, instead of doing that, they are now saying that ball is in the Supreme Court," the bench observed. A beleaguered Chouhan, whose credibility has been severely eroded following the scam, hailed the apex court's order, saying, "I welcome it wholeheartedly. There was a burden on my heart." Speaking to journalists in Bhopal, Chouhan said he would request the CBI to begin investigation at the earliest "so the truth comes before the country, the people, and justice is done". He rejected Congress' demand for his resignation. "They ask for it (his resignation) 5-6 times a day. To discredit Shivraj Chouhan, they have discredited the whole state. Probity in public life is my capital," he said. Referring to the probe conducted by the STF and SIT so far, Chouhan said, "It was my test by fire. Had I not wanted, investigation would not have happened. I wanted to set the system right. Not only Chouhan, political parties of all hues welcomed the decision. Congress and AAP, while hailing the decision, also demanded that Chouhan step down to facilitate a fair probe." "The victims have to be given justice. It is very important for the Chief Minister to step down for proper investigation to take place. It would be proper that the Chief Minister resigns as the control of police is with him as of today. If he gets a clean chit, then he can come back," Congress spokesperson Tom Vadakkan said. "We welcome the Supreme Court decision. We wanted the Supreme Court to monitor the case and we hope it monitors it," he said. AAP Spokesperson Ashish Khetan said by transferring the investigation to CBI, Supreme Court has expressed "dissatisfaction" with the probe conducted by state agencies. "Now the Chief Minister is left with no moral authority to continue In his post," he said.*

*Congress general secretary Digvijay Singh, one of the petitioners in the case, welcomed the apex court's order. "With this decision, the faith of the country in judiciary has increased. We are thankful to the Supreme Court," he told reporters in Delhi soon after the verdict. The BJP, however, patted Chouhan on the back for the apex court order. "BJP wanted a CBI probe, BJP approached the court and the court has accepted it. We welcome it," party spokesman Nalin Kohli said. Kohli was quick to remind the Congress that an earlier petition filed by Digvijay Singh for a CBI probe had been rejected by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court order for a CBI probe into the Vyapam scam triggered a fresh round of slugfest with Congress demanding that Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan quit on moral grounds and BJP asking the opposition to stop doing politics over it. While both parties welcomed the apex court's order, the Congress used it to target Chouhan, saying his resignation was required for a fair probe and*

he can come back if he gets a clean chit from the investigation agency. Hitting back, BJP said the court had "appreciated and accepted" the state government's request for a CBI probe and alleged that Congress' attack on Chouhan for his delay in calling for the investigation by the central agency amounted to commenting on the state's High Court as it had been monitoring the probe. Congress General Secretary Digvijay Singh, who has been spearheading his party's campaign for a Supreme Court-monitored CBI probe, said the country's faith in the apex court had increased. Making a similar demand, AAP spokesperson Ashish Khetan said Chouhan should resign. BJP leaders, however, noted that the court had taken note of the Chouhan government's plea. "Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi clearly enunciated before the Supreme Court the state government's stand that it desires a CBI probe. It must be pointed out that the government had already approached the High Court with a similar request. The apex court has accepted it and also appreciated the AG's stand," BJP spokesperson Nalin Kohli told

Under relentless Congress attack for the large number of deaths of people allegedly linked with the scam in the state's professional recruitment examination and the delay in agreeing to a CBI probe, Chouhan defended himself, saying had he wished there would have been no probe but he wanted the system to be set right and made more transparent. Calling the Vyapam scam probe his "trial by fire", Chouhan said he was "grateful" to the Supreme Court for accepting his request and ordering a CBI probe and urged the agency to begin investigation at the earliest to bring out the truth. Attacking Congress, BJP spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain said, "Let the CBI probe take place and Congress should not do politics on it any more. Congress should keep quiet and let the CBI probe take place." The Supreme Court today ordered CBI probe into all Vyapam scam cases and alleged deaths related to it and also issued notice to the Centre, Madhya Pradesh Government and the Governor on a plea seeking his removal over his alleged involvement in the scandal. Singh took a dig at the Centre over the governor's issue, saying that it removed governors against whom there was no FIR, but retained the one against whom there was an FIR. Yadav's name figures as an accused in a case but he enjoys immunity being a governor. The former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister also demanded that students jailed in the case should be made prosecution witnesses to expose the "nexus" between corrupt officials, police and politicians in the scandal. Agency