

## Avoiding Big B? CM visits Marathi lit meet a day early

Sarang Dastane | TNN

Pune: He was expected on Sunday to share the dais with Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan at the 83rd Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan. But Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan showed up unexpectedly at the literary meeting in Pune on Saturday, apparently to avoid the embarrassment of rubbing shoulders with Big B again and angering his party.

Asked whether he would attend the valedictory session, Chavan said, "There are still 24 hours to go. I cannot take the decision now. Let us see what happens tomorrow."

The CM has been under attack from Congress rank and file for his public appearance at the inauguration of the Bandra-Worli sea link in Mumbai this week with Bachchan, who was recently announced as Gujarat's brand ambassador and photographed with Narendra Modi.

But Chavan denied he had deliberately rescheduled his Pune visit. "I was on my way to Baramati. I thought I could meet and spend some time with the writers and literature lovers. Hence, I visited the Sammelan today. I can still attend the meeting on Sunday as a common man." Asked if he had received orders from the high command to stay away from Bachchan, Chavan said, "I have not received any instructions in this regard."

Organisers of the Sahitya Sammelan insisted that the CM was still scheduled to come for the main session. Satish Desai, president of the Sammelan's welcome committee, said, "We have invited the CM as a chief guest for the valedictory function. So far we have not received any communication that the CM will not attend it."



Chavan at a book stall during his visit to the Marathi literary meeting in Pune on Saturday

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