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Biden weighing exit from poll race

WASHINGTON

The drumbeat of pressure on President Joe Biden to drop out of the presidential race intensified yesterday with a bombshell report in the New York Times that he had conceded to a key ally he might have to abandon his reelection bid if he was unable to turn around public opinion in the coming days.

But time is running out for the beleaguered president to convince anxious Democratic officials, donors and voters that he remains viable in his effort to keep former President Donald Trump from returning to

It appears conditions for the president are growing more dire by the hour. Dozens of Democratic lawmakers are considering signing a letter demanding President Joe Biden withdraw from the race.

Jet lag and debate debacle

Meanwhile Biden blamed travel plans that took him to France and Italy in the weeks ahead of his disastrous debate against Trump for his poor performance on stage, seeking to explain a moment that has upended the 2024 race and imperilled his reelection prospects.

-Bloomberg

Labour set for landslide as UK goes to vote today

POLLSTERS SAY LABOUR WILL GET MORE SEATS THAN ITS 1997 VICTORY TALLY

BY ALEX ABRAHAM Senior Associate Editor

he UK votes today to decide if Labour Party leader Keir Starmer can end 14 years of opposition and secure 10 Downing Street, or if Prime Minister Rishi Sunak can defy the odds for a remarkable comeback.

Surveys not only predict a massive Labour majority in the House of Commons but also that the party will win more than the 418 seats it won when Tony Blair ended 18 years of Conservative rule in 1997.

General elections in the UK are determined by 650 district votes, each securing a seat in the House of Commons. A party needs 326 seats for a majority, though 320 usually suffices.

Pollsters are more concerned about the scale of a Labour victory, with Starmer's party leading the Conservatives by over 20 points throughout the campaign, according to Bloomberg.

Dissatisfaction with Tories

Labour's consistent lead in polls reflects voter dissatisfaction with Conservative management of the cost of living, public services, immigration, and the economy. Sunak has sought to persuade voters that his 20 months in charge have



Keir Starmer speaks with supporters at the Heath Farm, Swerford, UK. Starmer said a Labourled UK wouldn't be isolated on the global stage despite the rise of right-wing parties in Europe.

set the economy on an upward path after the shocks of Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine.

Both Starmer and Sunak kicked off the last day of campaigning, before polls open at 7am today, warning voters of dire economic consequences if the other man wins.

Starmer toured England,

Scotland, and Wales to consolidate support, urging voters to ensure change by casting their ballots. The Tories warned of tax rises and weaker national security if Labour wins, attempting to deter a Labour "su-

permajority.' This election marks the first July vote since 1945, when Labour's Clement Attlee defeated Churchill, leading to significant social changes.

If voted to power, Starmer has promised sustained economic growth, focused on wealth creation. The Labour party has pledged not to raise

taxes "for working people". With inputs from agencies

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How this UAE hairdresser styled Virat Kohli, MS Dhoni

Vishal's salon is a go-to place for cricket A-listers visiting Dubai

code to read

the full story

BY EVANGELINE ELSA Social Media Editor

e was ten years old, when Vishal Salmani first visited his father's hair salon in a neighbourhood called Sagarpur, in the Indian capital of Delhi. He belonged to a family of hairdressers, but he never aimed to become one.

Fast forward nine years, to today, Salmani owns a busy men's salon in Dubai's Oud Metha neighbourhood.

His clientele include the likes of cricket Alisters like Virat Kohli and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, when they visit the UAE.

"I was 20 years old when I came to Dubai. I joined a hair salon. I dreamt of opening my own salon someday," the 30-year-old Indian expatriate, told Gulf News.

"Irfan Pathan was the first [celebrity cricketer] I styled in 2017, followed by Kedar Jadhav. I got these opportunities through a friend who was my client," he added.

With loans and borrowed money, in 2021, Salmani opened a salon, with his friend, Syed Arif.

Tryst with Chennai Super Kings

In 2021, one of his clients mentioned an opportunity – the Chennai Super Kings team needed a hairstylist. "They were in Dubai for the Indian Premier League (IPL). I sent my portfolio. The approval took a couple of days."



■ Vishal with Virat Kohli and MS Dhoni

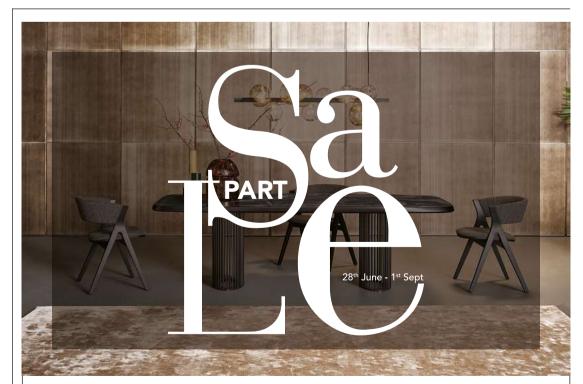
Salmani was hired to style players from the Chennai Super Kings team.

"From Mahendra Singh Dhoni to Dwayne John Bravo, I was the hairstylist for the team for two months. We lived in a bubble along with the players," he said.

The cricket World Cup was also scheduled to take place in Dubai that year.

"The players were staying at the same hotel and I got the contract to style the Indian team as well. MS Dhoni suggested my name to the England team, too."

The walls of Salmani's salon now display hundreds of photos with cricketers and influencers. Many cricketers who regularly visit the UAE, continue to reach out to Salmani during their visit.



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