

Venugopal Seeks CEC's Resignation, Says Newspaper Report Proved Rahul Gandhi Right

PANAJI, SEP 23: Congress general secretary K C Venugopal on Wednesday demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, and said the Indian Express report about objections raised by Kumar's colleagues proved that Rahul Gandhi was speaking the truth.

The Election Commission's handling of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was undermining the electoral process, he said.

Addressing Congress workers during the party's 'Goy Rakhonn Yatra' in Cumbharjua assembly constituency in Goa, Venugopal referred to the The Indian Express report about objections raised by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi over various decisions concerning electoral rolls, including voter registration, deletion of names and access to electoral data.

"We have to protect our democracy. Today, we are



shocked. The Indian Express has come out with the big story which is related to Goa elections too. Two Election Commissioners are coming forward, they wrote letters. Several times they reminded the chief election commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, don't destroy democracy. Don't destroy voters' list. Don't disturb the new voters," the Congress leader said.

A lot of voters were deleted during the SIR in Goa, he claimed.

When 38 Goa residents complained to the state election commission about the

deletion of their names, it recommended reinstating their names, he said, alleging that the Election Commission, however, did not allow it.

"Gyanesh Kumar did not allow it. This is an example of what the BJP is doing through the voters' list," Venugopal said, alleging that this was happening all over the country.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had been stating that the CEC was acting like Prime Minister's Narendra Modi's agent, he said, adding that this allegation was substan-

tiated by the Election Commissioners appointed by the BJP government.

Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and CEC Kumar conspired to "hijack the Indian election system", the Congress leader alleged.

Returning officers or state election commissions do not have access to voters' lists which are controlled by the Election Commission's IT department in Delhi, he said, claiming that the lists can be manipulated at the Central level.

"Gyanesh Kumar should resign immediately to save the democracy of this country," he said.

Talking about the next year's Goa elections, Venugopal said Goa's people were educated and believe in democracy.

"This is the most educated state. They will never allow hypocrisy, dictatorship...", he said, expressing confidence that Congress will reclaim power in the BJP-ruled state. (Agencies)

SIR Row: Oppn Demands CEC's Removal On 'Gyaneshgate', EC Defends Differing Views

NEW DELHI, SEP 23: Expansive red flags raised by two Election Commissioners within the poll panel over the Special Intensive Revision of the voter list triggered a political storm on Wednesday with the Opposition demanding CEC Gyanesh Kumar's removal and the poll panel asserting that differing views are a normal part of deliberation.

Opposition leaders also sought legal action against CEC Kumar and fresh elections in states. The Congress dubbed the row as "Gyaneshgate" and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi alleged that the BJP, the RSS and the Election Commission (EC) have committed an act of treason by organising "vote chori".

Reacting to an Indian Express report that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had repeatedly objected to decisions and orders issued without their knowledge, former Chief Election Commissioners O P Rawat and S Y Quraishi also weighed into the row. Stream History Documentaries

While Rawat said the way changes to the statutory voter registration Form 6 were brought about is "absolutely wrong and illegal", Quraishi questioned whether elections could be held on electoral rolls prepared through a legally flawed revision exercise.

The reactions poured in after the report in the English daily revealed that questions were raised on issues related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls within the three-member EC itself, time and again, by two Election Commissioners.

The national rollout of the SIR has been under the supervision of all three Commissioners. But Sandhu and Joshi have formally objected, on record, at least 14 times over the last 10 months -- four times on a single day -- to decisions taken and orders issued, they say, without their knowledge, the news report said.

Incidentally, Sandhu's name figured among the people with discrepancies in their SIR forms.

The Election Commission asserted that all its official orders, decisions and administrative directions carry full legal sanctions and that differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberation in any institution. Subscribe To News

In a statement following the newspaper report, the EC also said that suggestions given by the Commissioners were for further improving the electoral processes.

The EC said it remains fully committed to executing its constitutional duties with complete integrity, recognising its vital role in advancing Indian democracy.

In a post on X, Gandhi said, "Vote chori is a crime against the Indian people and a direct attack on our Constitution."

"The BJP, RSS and EC who organised it have committed an act of treason. Justice will be served," the Leader of Opposition said.

He also shared a video of his remarks made earlier in which he had warned EC officials that what they were indulging in was treason and they would not be spared.

Opposition parties have been critical of the EC over the SIR, claiming it was

meant to target electors not aligned to the BJP and its allies.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also lashed out at Kumar over the media report.

"On 24 April 2026, 73 opposition Rajya Sabha MPs had submitted a new Notice of Motion to the Secretary General to remove CEC Kumar. The Monsoon Session of Parliament has not yet been prorogued. Will the Hon'ble Rajya Sabha Chairman now decide on that pending Notice?" Kharge said.

The country will demand answers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said.

Those plotting to snatch democracy from the people of India will be given a fitting reply, Kharge asserted.

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said that if CEC Kumar was aware of elections being rigged and allowed it to happen, then it is "treachery to the nation" and "an act of treason".

The Congress MP from Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency said that whosoever is doing it "has to be taken to task".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said CEC Kumar has functioned as a "hatchet man" for Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who, in turn, is the designated executor of the PM's wishes.

"What the CEC has been doing is with the full knowledge, support and, in fact, at the instigation of the PM and HM themselves. #Gyaneshgate has been orchestrated by G2. Of that there can be no doubt," he alleged.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said

governments formed during a period when the Election Commission was not functioning impartially were "unconstitutional", and that the "interference" with the poll panel amounted to "trampling" democracy.

Addressing a press conference in Lucknow, Yadav said the Election Commission was regarded as an impartial institution and was expected to strengthen democracy.

Referring to the news report, he said the development raised questions over "on whose behalf" the Election Commission was functioning.

CPI(M) MP John Brittas said "this is no longer an Election Commission, it is a one-man autocracy" under CEC Kumar.

"Two Election Commissioners have formally objected 14 times in 10 months. They branded the addition of new voters and mass deletion 'unauthorised and illegal'.

"They recorded objections to secret deletions, restorations, and Form 6 changes that harass young first-time voters - all while being kept in the dark," he said.

This is the open subversion of the EC and our democracy too, Brittas said.

"Parliament must immediately start the process for the removal of the CEC. We had in fact submitted a notice for removal on 24th April, 2026 as per the constitutional stipulations - solid grounds and around 70 members signing (50 in the stipulated number)," he said.

The Constitution provides this power for precisely such moments of institutional capture and subversion, he said.

If CEC allowed elections to be rigged its 'treason': Priyanka

MALAPPURAM (KERALAM), SEPT 23: Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday said that if CEC Gyanesh Kumar was aware of elections being rigged and allowed it to happen, then its "treachery to the nation" and "an act of treason".

The Congress MP from Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency said that whosoever is doing it "has to be taken to task".

Priyanka, speaking to reporters at Nilambur here, said that her brother and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi was continuously taking up the issue of the "biases and the injustice that is going on through the Election Commission of India (ECI)". South Asians & Diaspora

She said that he has repeatedly highlighted multiple issues and now it was coming out in the news media as well that Election Commissioners themselves have highlighted some of the issues to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

"So, I think it is an extremely serious issue for our democracy because if there are no elections, where is democracy? If the elections are unfair and are being rigged in any manner and the ECI is assisting in that, and the Election Commissioner is not only aware of it, but also allowing it to happen, then it is a very very serious assault on democracy.

"It is actually treachery with the nation. it is an act of treason and whoever is doing it has to be taken to task," she said.

Vadra was referring to reports of Election Commis-



soners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi flagging multiple issues, including deletion of names, in various states during the voter roll cleanup under SIR.

However, ECI officials have said that the poll body was unanimous in its decisions related to the pan-India Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voters' list.

Vadra, who is in her constituency for a 10-day visit, said that whosoever is engaging in such acts "has to be taken to task" following a proper investigation.

She said that the issue

should not be probed by people who will not conduct a fair investigation.

"But it should be looked into in a manner where we know and the whole nation knows that this is being done in a proper manner. We are the largest democracy in the world. And we have had a robust democracy for years, for decades.

"We cannot afford to go lightly on these issues. We are all working tirelessly to strengthen our democracy. And here is the Election Commission that is doing all it can to weaken it," she said.

The Congress MP said that if that was actually the case, and if what is coming out in the media are the facts, and if what the party has suspected for a very long time -- like "manipulation of voters lists, deletion of lakhs of voters and manipulations that have taken place in Maharashtra and Haryana" -- then it is something "extremely serious".

"Those people who are responsible for it have to be taken to task. They have to be held responsible," she contended. (PTI)

'Vote Chori' Direct Attack On Constitution; BJP, RSS, EC Committed Act Of Treason: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI, SEP 23: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said "vote chori" is a direct attack on the Constitution, and the BJP, the RSS and the Election Commission who organised it have committed an act of treason.

Justice will be served, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

Gandhi's assertions came after The Indian Express revealed that questions were repeatedly raised on issues related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls within the three-member Election Commission (EC) by two of the three election commissioners, Sukhbir



Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi.Stream History Documentaries

The national rollout of the SIR has been under the supervision of all three commissioners. But Sandhu and Joshi have formally objected,

on record, at least 14 times over the last 10 months - four times on a single day - to decisions taken and orders issued, they say, without their knowledge, according to the report in the English daily.

"Vote chori is a crime against the Indian people and a direct attack on our Constitution," Gandhi said. "The BJP, RSS and EC who organised it have committed an act of treason. Justice will be served," he said on X.

Gandhi also shared a video of his remarks made earlier in which he had warned EC officials that what they were indulging in was treason and they would not be spared. (Agencies)

Govts formed amid poll panel lapses unconstitutional: Akhilesh



LUCKNOW, SEP 23: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday alleged that governments formed during a period when the Election Commission was not functioning impartially were "unconstitutional", and said the alleged interference with the poll panel amounted to "trampling" democracy.

Addressing a press conference here, Yadav said the Election Commission was regarded as an impartial institution and was expected to strengthen democracy.

Referring to an Indian Express report about two Election Commissioners recording objections 14 times in 10 months to decisions of the poll panel, he said the development raised questions over "on whose behalf" the Election Commission was functioning.

"This is dangerous for our democracy. This is an attempt to weaken our democracy," he said.

Yadav said the Election Commission was a constitutional body and questioned

who was "playing with" such an institution for the purpose of remaining in government.

"What can you imagine now? Would the Election Commission have been fair? Would it have been impartial?" the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister asked.

He said if decisions of the poll panel were being questioned from within the institution itself, it raised serious questions about the functioning of an institution whose basic expectation was impartiality.

The leader of the third largest party in Lok Sabha said the development also had implications for govern-

ments formed during this period.

"This means that the governments which have been formed during this period are unconstitutional governments," Yadav said, alleging democracy had been "trampled upon".

Yadav also said the latest revelations had to be viewed in the context of concerns he had raised earlier about the functioning of the Election Commission.

He alleged that despite the EC being expected to function independently and impartially, its functioning had raised serious doubts about whether citizens could continue to have confidence in it. (PTI)

Protection from TB preventive treatment could wane after one year in high-burden countries: Study

NEW DELHI, SEP 23: Effects of preventive treatment for tuberculosis could start to wane after just one year of completing the antibiotics course in high-burden settings, while the protection lasts for at least eight and 13 years in medium and low-burden countries, a study has found.

Findings published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine show that tuberculosis preventive treatment (TPT) offered a strong protection during the first 12-24 months across settings with all levels of TB burden.

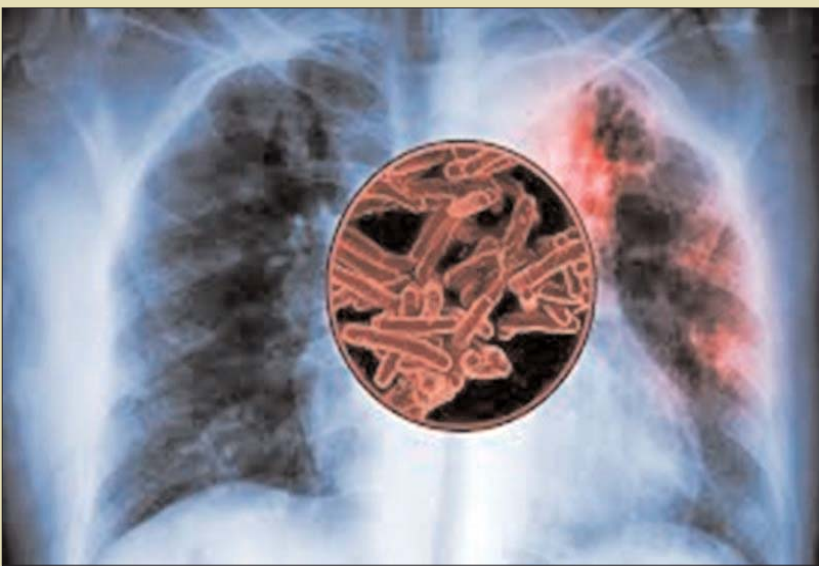
Consisting of antibiotic medicines that can prevent inactive TB infections from developing into active disease, TPT is considered an

important public health tool for protecting individuals and countries from the deadly infectious disease.

Preventive treatment can include medications, such as isoniazid and rifapentine -- typically prescribed for four months -- and is critical for the World Health Organization's goal to end the global TB epidemic by 2035.

TPT has been shown to be highly effective, but how long this protection lasts -- and whether its duration varies by region or community risk level -- remains unclear, researchers at the US' Boston University and the University of California, Berkeley, said.

They estimated TB risk among



people with TB infections in 24 countries and found that TPT offered strong initial protection, but long-term protection varied depending on the burden of TB disease in each area.

Of 4,66,523 participants from 47 studies, we included 84,128 individuals from 44 cohort studies across 24 countries. TPT was highly protective within the first year but declined over the course of follow-up in all settings, with greater effects observed in low-burden and medium-burden settings," the authors wrote.

The results showed that high-burden countries should consider combining TPT with other interventions to achieve the long-term benefits

these medications are capable of providing, they said.

Lead author Lauren Linde, an epidemiology doctoral student at Boston University's school of public health, said, "In this study, our results corroborated something that was already well-established -- TPT is highly effective at preventing TB progression among close contacts and people who have been infected with TB."

"However, our finding that the initial effect of TPT declined so rapidly in very high-burden settings strengthens the case for not placing too much emphasis on TPT in isolation from other interventions that address ongoing community transmission," Linde said. (PTI)