

CEC Should Be Suspended, FIR Filed To Probe Who In Govt Is Behind His Actions: Sibal

NEW DELHI, SEP 23: Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar should be suspended immediately, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal demanded on Wednesday after a media report stated that the two election commissioners had questioned the poll panel's steps on the SIR 14 times in 10 months.

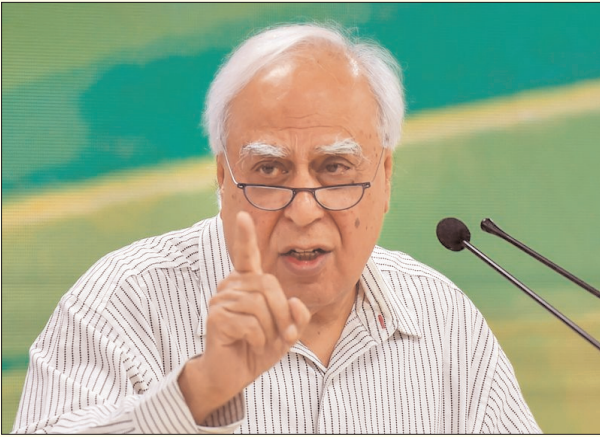
Demanding the filing of an FIR to probe who is behind the CEC's actions, Sibal also said that all the work on finalising the voters list should be stopped and the Supreme Court should think about resorting to the extraordinary power of holding fresh elections.

"If this does not happen, I request all political parties to peacefully start agitating throughout the country," the former Union minister said at a press conference here.

His remarks came after The Indian Express revealed that questions were raised on issues related to the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls within the three-member Election Commission (EC) itself, time and again by two of the three election commissioners, Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi.

The national rollout of the SIR has been under the supervision of all three commissioners. But Sandhu and Joshi 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 that they say were without their knowledge, according to the report.

Sibal told reporters that



Gyanesh Kumar has destroyed the responsibility that has been put on the EC by the Constitution.

Originally there was only one election commissioner, he pointed out. But then through an amendment, three election commissioners were to decide matters in respect of elections under Article 324 of the Constitution; decisions of the Election Commission were to take place by majority.

"And now what has been revealed is that most of the decisions after June 25 2025 were not taken by majority, and that despite the objections of two of the three election commissioners, namely Mr Joshi and Mr Sandhu, the chief election commissioner was doing as he pleased without reference to the other two members, which is against the rules of the Election Commission itself," Sibal said.

Many of those decisions ultimately resulted in manipulating the election process, which can be attributed to the action of the chief election commissioner, he claimed.

"Now three, four things broadly which I must

through you inform the people of this country... Validity of decisions: If the decisions are not taken by the majority of the Election Commission, then it's not a decision of the Commission. So, therefore, all decisions taken by the Commission so far without reference to the majority of the Commission must be declared to be null and void," he demanded.

Sibal also raised the issue of centralisation of ERO (electoral registration officer) Access.

"The ERO, who is the SDM and who holds access to the voters list and decides as to whose name is to be deleted and whose name is to be added, that access is given under the rules to the ERO.

"That power was taken away despite the objection of the two commissioners. That was being centralised and controlled by an officer sitting in Delhi. Under the centralised system, that officer or the Election Commission under the control of Gyanesh Kumar -- not the control of the Commission -- would delete names at their will and add names at their will," Sibal said, citing the

media report. The responsibility of the SDM over the ERO was taken away, which means that the whole system could be manipulated, he said.

"Why it was manipulated is quite clear: because they wanted the BJP to win the election," Sibal alleged.

He added that Form 6 was amended without an amendment of the Representation of the People Act.

"That has to be brought to Parliament through the government; that was not done. In Form 6, the new voter had to tell whether his parents are alive, grandparents are alive, and give details about them. And many people who were given notices whose names were sought to be deleted were required to file Form 6, in which you have to make a statement on affidavit that 'I have never voted before'. In other words, you are forced to tell a lie," Sibal said.

All this was objected to, and Gyanesh Kumar just didn't bother about what the majority of the Election Commissioners would say, he said.

"This man, Gyanesh Kumar, should be suspended forthwith. All the work of finalising the voters list should be stopped. There should be an investigation, an FIR, and whoever in government (behind his actions) is responsible should be prosecuted," the lawyer and MP said.

EC sources maintain that all its decisions, including those concerning the SIR, had been unanimous despite differences and had the approval of all three commissioner

J&K Bank appoints Rajeev Gupta as Additional Director

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 23

Jammu & Kashmir Bank has appointed Chartered Accountant Rajeev Gupta as an Additional Director in the category of Rotational Directors on its Board, effective September 23, 2026.

In a regulatory filing, the bank said its Board of Directors approved the appointment at its meeting held on September 22, subject to the approval of shareholders.

As per the filing, Rajeev Gupta has more than 33 years of professional experi-



ence, specialising in accounting, auditing, finan-

cial reporting, taxation and regulatory compliance.

He is associated with Rajeev Kuldip & Co., Chartered Accountants, Jammu, established in June 1993, and has also served as an Executive Director in other companies. His professional experience spans audits, financial reporting, budgeting and cash-flow analysis, Income Tax and GST matters, besides regulatory compliance. He has also worked with non-profit and other organisations and has been involved in the implementation of the Industrial Policy of Jammu & Kashmir.

Ramdev: Ayurveda Does Not Need Validation from Modern Science

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 23: Yoga guru Swami Ramdev on Wednesday strongly defended Ayurveda, asserting that the ancient Indian system of medicine does not need to seek justification or validation from modern science.

Addressing a press conference at the Constitution Club of India, Ramdev hit out at those who question the scientific basis of Ayurveda and said attempts to undermine the



traditional system were misplaced.

He also criticised the description of Ayurveda as

"pseudoscience", while stressing the importance of research and the traditional principles on which

Ayurveda is based. His remarks came as the country observed the 11th Ayurveda Day, with the Ministry of Ayush highlighting evidence, research, innovation, safety and standardisation in the development of Ayurveda.

Ramdev also defended Patanjali's ghee and medicines against allegations regarding their authenticity and quality, maintaining that the products undergo quality-control and laboratory testing.

Media Association Bhalessa-Kahara Formally Constituted

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 23

A meeting of working journalists, reporters and correspondents representing various media organisations was held under the chairmanship of Ishtyak Malik, during which the Media Association Bhalessa-Kahara was formally constituted.

The meeting focused on strengthening unity, coordination and mutual cooperation among journalists in the Bhalessa-Kahara area. Members discussed the importance of responsible, ethical and professional journalism, with emphasis on accurate and credible reporting and highlighting genuine public issues.

After detailed discussion and mutual consensus, the association constituted its team with Ishtyak Malik (Kashmir Uzma) as Chief Patron, Mohd Saleem (Daily Khalsa Express) as President, Ajay Parihar (JK Talks) as General Secretary, Mohd Akram Malik (JK Early News) as Senior Vice President, Reshma



Choudhary (Daily Jammu Times) as Secretary, Baber Nafees (IANS) as Vice President, Ishtiaq Batt (JK State News) as Vice President, Sanualla Zargar (KNS) as Organising Secretary, Bilal Bhalessi (JK Dastaan) as Publicity Secretary, Arif Malik (Daily Udaan) as Treasurer, Tousif Khanday (Early Times) as Chief Spokesperson, Manzoor Samsyal (Daily Lazawal) as Media Secretary and Waseem Tak (Indian Tribune) as Spokesperson. The executive members

include Fareed Ahmed (Kashmir Dastaan), Mansoor Raaz (Fair Voice News), Ashraf Nizami (PR News India), Jaffer Magray (JK State News) and Sajad Ahmed (JK State News).

Speaking on the occasion, newly elected President Mohd Saleem assured the journalist fraternity that he would stand with fellow journalists and work collectively for their welfare and professional interests.

He said the association would focus on promoting

unity, mutual respect and cooperation among media persons while working for the welfare of society and highlighting genuine public concerns.

The association resolved to uphold journalistic ethics and credibility, strengthen coordination among media professionals, and collectively highlight genuine public issues concerning Bhalessa-Kahara and the wider Chenab Valley through accurate, fair and responsible reporting.

Taiwan is watching closely as Xi, Trump meet and hopes US will keep up its arms sales

TAINAN (TAIWAN), SEPT 23: As China's Xi Jinping arrives in Washington to meet with US President Donald Trump, Taiwan expressed confidence that US arms sales to the island that Beijing claims as its own will continue -- despite China's pressure.

China has pressed Washington to halt the arms sales, most prominently during a summit in May between Trump and Xi in Beijing. After that meeting, the United States paused the sale of a record-breaking USD 14 billion package -- and Trump described arms sales to Taiwan as a "very good negotiating chip" with China.

Still, the US government and Congress have "repeatedly expressed support for Taiwan's self-defence capabilities," Taiwanese Defence Ministry spokesperson Maj. Gen. Chiao Fu-chun told reporters in the southern city of Tainan.



"We will continue to maintain close contact with the US Department of War and continue to push forward the arms procurement deal between Taiwan and the US, ensuring it proceeds as planned," he added.

The US is bound by its own laws to provide Taiwan -- a self-ruled democ-

racy that China sees as its own territory -- with the means to defend itself. While not recognising Taiwan as a country, the US is the island's strongest informal backer and arms provider. Washington approved another USD 11 billion package for Taiwan in December.

Hours before Xi's arrival

for the three-day state visit to the US, Taiwan's military on Wednesday conducted live-fire drills featuring a domestically developed eight-wheeled armoured vehicle, highlighting efforts to strengthen its own arms production.

Called The Cheetah, the vehicle can be fitted with a 105-millimetre (4.1-inch) cannon and can reach a maximum speed of about 100 kph (62 mph) and an operational range of about 500 kilometres (311 miles).

Taiwanese Maj. Gen. Chen Chien-chung said the vehicle can be used on various terrains and is suitable for urban warfare.

Trump has in recent years pressed Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te to dramatically increase Taiwan's defence budget. The budget will exceed 3 per cent of Taiwan's gross domestic product for the first time in 2027, and Lai has pledged to get to 5 per cent by 2030. (AP)

Australian man is accused of being Islamic State group propagandist who shared 10,000 files online

WELLINGTON, SEPT 23: A man in the Australian city of Melbourne is accused of pledging allegiance to the Islamic State group and spreading thousands of pieces of extremist propaganda online over a period of years, the authorities said on Wednesday.

He was the seventh man to be arrested in Victoria since May over allegations of possessing or distributing IS content online. Australia's federal police didn't link the latest arrest to the other six and wouldn't say if they believed the man's case was connected.

The 65-year-old Australian citizen, whose name hasn't been released, was due to appear in a Melbourne court later on Wednesday. He's charged with being a member of a ter-

rorist organisation and with transmitting violent extremist material in an encrypted messaging app the authorities didn't name.

The maximum penalty for the offenses is 10 years in prison.

The authorities said the man had sent 10,000 files containing extremist content between 2015 and 2020, including material relating to executions, torture and IS propaganda. The federal police allege that he also shared information about avoiding detection from law enforcement and instructional guides on planning and conducting mass casualty attacks, a statement Wednesday said.

Acting Assistant Commissioner Paula Hudson told reporters in Canberra that the scale and distribution of the materials by the man "placed

him as a principal distributor of ISIS propaganda within the group."

"The material glorified acts of violence and terrorism, spreading hateful ideology that is designed to radicalise others," Hudson said. An investigation into the man began when border officials examined the man's luggage as he departed Australia for a six-month trip to Egypt in 2020, the authorities said.

He wasn't known to have travelled abroad since 2020 and wasn't linked to any attack or plot, Hudson said. Earlier this month, a 30-year-old Melbourne man was arrested and charged with possessing violent extremist content as he attempted to depart Australia for the Middle East, authorities said.

NEW DELHI, SEP 23:

The opposition on Wednesday cited a media report, which claimed that the two Election Commissioners objected to the Election Commission's steps 14 times in 10 months amid the SIR rollout, and alleged that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has "destroyed" the credibility of the poll panel. Many of them also called for Kumar's removal.

The opposition's reaction came after The Indian Express revealed that questions were raised on issues related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls within the three-member Election Commission (EC) itself, time and again by two of the three Election Commissioners, Sukhbir Singh



Sandhu and Vivek Joshi.

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 is-

sued, they say, without their knowledge, the report in the English daily said. Newspapers

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared the screenshot of the media report on X.

Ramesh said that on behalf of the party, his col-

league Abhishek Singhvi will be speaking in detail to the media on the sensational revelations made in a leading national newspaper on the way "the CEC has destroyed the credibility and integrity of the Election Commission of India".

Congress MP Manish Tewari also reacted to the media report, saying that if the ostensible facts as reported are correct then it seems to suggest that there is an "invisible hand" running the Election Commission.

"If rules were not allegedly followed and decisions were taken that were not unanimous or by majority then all the decisions of @ECISVEEP are per-se arbitrary and capricious if not completely illegal," Tewari said on X.