

## Rahul Gandhi Steps Up Attack On CEC Gyanesh Kumar, Demands Resignation Over 'Vote Chori'

**NEW DELHI, SEP 24:** Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday mounted his strongest attack yet on Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, accusing him of acting against the interests of the country and demanding his immediate resignation amid the intensifying controversy over the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Gandhi alleged that the integrity of the electoral process had been compromised and warned that what he called "vote chori" had implications far beyond individual elections. "We are not going to let democracy in India be destroyed and remain silent," he said. Gandhi described Kumar as a "traitor" and accused him of acting against the Indian state and its people. "A person destroying India's vote is desh-drohi. This is an act against the Indian state and the people.

We refuse to sit silent," he said, reiterating his demand that the CEC resign. His remarks came a day after an investigation by The Indian Express reported that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had placed objections on record at least 14 times over 10 months on a range of decisions concerning electoral rolls. The reported objections included changes to Form 6 for new voters, deletion and restoration of names, the handling and centralisation of voter data and decisions that the two Commissioners said had been taken without their knowledge.

The Election Commission has rejected the suggestion that the reported differences represented a breakdown in its functioning. It has maintained that written observations and differing views are a normal part of internal deliberations and said that all decisions taken by the Commission during the past year, including those relating to SIR, were unanimous.

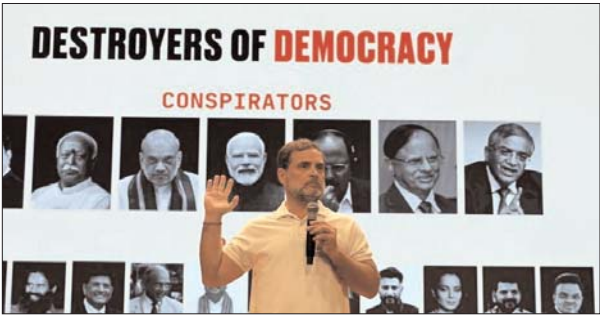
## 'Gyanesh must go': Cong asks PCCs to hold protest marches on Sep 25 seeking CEC's arrest, removal

**NEW DELHI, SEP 24:** The Congress on Thursday directed its state units to organise protest marches to their respective state election commission offices on September 25, demanding Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's immediate arrest, removal from office, and an independent review of all decisions and electoral roll changes made under him.

All District Congress Committees (DCCs) will organise similar massive protest marches to their respective District Collectorates on September 28.

Congress general secretary in-charge organisation KC Venugopal said since day one, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has been exposing the "massive vote chori" exercise being spearheaded by the "BJP-controlled CEC Mr. Gyanesh Kumar".

After the massive revelations on Wednesday, Kumar's "treason" is out in the open and he must be arrested for his



On Thursday, the poll panel also clarified that its September 23 press note defending its functioning had been issued with the approval of the full Commission. Gandhi, however, said the reported objections by the two Election Commissioners had raised fundamental questions about the functioning of the poll panel and reinforced the Congress's longstanding allegations of "vote chori", a charge the party has been making in connection with electoral processes in Maharashtra, Haryana and elsewhere.

"Two ECs have done a wise thing. Gyanesh Kumar should think seriously and turn approver. It will be in the country's interest," Gandhi said, while again calling for the CEC's resignation. The Congress leader also questioned the process through which Kumar was appointed Chief Election Commissioner. Recalling the dissent he had recorded during the selection process, Gandhi said he had argued that the appointment mechanism should be independent and insulated from executive control, but that his objections were "junked".

Gandhi then linked his allegations to a broader question about the BJP's electoral performance and what he described as the apparent disappearance of anti-incumbency in several states. Referring to statements by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and union Home Minister Amit Shah about the BJP remaining in power for decades, he argued that such confidence was unusual in a democracy where governments traditionally face electoral pressure after being in office for extended periods.

"No political leader could

be so confident in a democracy because of a fundamental force called anti-incumbency," Gandhi said, citing the example of former prime minister Indira Gandhi and the political challenges she faced despite her popularity following the 1971 Bangladesh war.

He pointed to electoral changes in Haryana, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh to make his argument. "Haryana swings from one party to another for 50 years, but suddenly anti-incumbency disappears. Maharashtra swings; suddenly that disappears. Uttar Pradesh swings, from the Samajwadi Party to the Bahujan Samaj Party, that also disappears," he said. "We can understand the popularity of a person. We can understand the performance of a government. But we cannot understand how anti-incumbency disappears," Gandhi added. He said these questions had led the Congress to what it calls the "vote chori" explanation, arguing that the vote was not simply a mechanism for selecting a government but the foundation of India's constitutional and institutional order. "Because from the vote, which is supposed to be protected by the Election Commission, our Constitution gets its power. From the Constitution, our laws are made. From our laws emerge our institutions. This is a chain, and this chain defines modern India," Gandhi said. "If the vote has been destroyed, then our Constitution has been destroyed. It no longer has its power, and it no longer functions. If our Constitution has been destroyed, our laws are illegal. And if our laws are illegal, our institutions are meaningless," he asserted.

Gandhi described the alleged progression as "vote chori", followed by "kanoon chori" and ultimately "sanstha chori" - his formulation for what he alleges is the theft of votes, followed by the erosion of the legitimacy of laws and institutions.

He also alleged that Prime Minister Modi and union Home Minister Shah would eventually face investigation over what he described as a conspiracy to manipulate elections. "Modi, Shah will be investigated for conspiracy to steal elections. We won't let democracy be demolished. We will not remain silent," he said.

The Opposition's campaign against the CEC has intensified following the reported internal objections within the Election Commission. Opposition parties have demanded Kumar's removal, a halt to the SIR exercise and an independent investigation into the functioning of the poll panel. Fresh moves seeking Kumar's removal have also been reported in Parliament. The Congress has announced protest marches to state Election Commission offices on Friday and plans further deliberations on the issue, with its Working Committee scheduled to meet on September 29.

The controversy has consequently expanded from a dispute over the mechanics of electoral-roll revision into a larger political confrontation over the independence and credibility of the Election Commission. The Congress has portrayed the objections raised by Sandhu and Joshi as evidence of serious concerns within the poll panel, while the Commission maintains that internal observations are part of normal deliberation and that its final decisions have been unanimous. "No matter what happens, we are not going to let this crime go unanswered," Gandhi said, signalling that the Congress intends to continue its campaign around what it calls "vote chori" and the alleged weakening of safeguards governing India's electoral process. (Agencies)



anti-national acts against our democracy, Venugopal said.

"The Congress will be taking to the streets on this burning issue, and all Pradesh Congress Committees (PCCs) have been instructed to organise massive protest marches to their respective State Election Commission Offices tomorrow, 25th September, firmly demanding his immediate arrest, his re-

moval from office, and a comprehensive, independent review of all decisions and electoral roll changes made under him," Venugopal said.

As the second phase of the protests, all District Congress Committees (DCCs) will organise similar massive protest marches to their respective District Collectorates on September 28th, he said.

"Gyanesh must go, and all his decisions must be reversed. Our protests will relentlessly go on until he is removed, sent to jail and all our demands are met," Venugopal said.

Venugopal's remarks came a day 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.

## Raj seeks CEC Gyanesh Kumar's resignation; says 'masterminds' pulling strings must also be probed

**MUMBAI, SEPT 24:** Amid reports of differences within the EC over SIR, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray on Thursday demanded Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation, and said both the CEC and the 'masterminds' pulling the strings from behind must be investigated.

Slamming the Election Commission, Thackeray said in a post on X that under the current dispensation, "autonomy" is defined as "subservience to the Bharatiya Janata Party".

He alleged that a compromised Election Commission and EVMs are the two weapons wielded by the BJP government, and urged all opposition parties to launch a mass movement to demand that elections be conducted using ballot papers instead of EVMs.

Reacting to a report in The Indian Express that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had repeatedly objected to decisions and orders issued without their knowledge during the SIR,



including changes to Form 6 and centralisation of control over the electoral roll database, he said the objections raised by them are serious.

It is impossible for the CEC Gyanesh Kumar to dismiss them, he said.

"One thing becomes crystal clear: the concept of an autonomous Election Commission is now merely a theoretical notion found in books. Under the current dispensation, 'autonomy' is defined as 'subservience to the Bharatiya Janata Party'.

If that condition is met, the body is considered autonomous, otherwise it is not," Thackeray said in the

post.

It is no alternative now for Gyanesh Kumar but to resign; furthermore, both he and the 'masterminds' pulling the strings from behind the scenes must be investigated. Of course, the question remains as to who would conduct such an inquiry," the MNS chief said.

Since Kumar became CEC in February 2025, assembly elections have been held in Bihar, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and West Bengal.

"Meanwhile, in Maharashtra, elections for municipal corporations and other local self-government bodies also took place. We have

seen the results of all these elections. Regarding the local body elections in Maharashtra, we witnessed, and bore the consequences of, how the State Election Commission constantly looked to Delhi for direction," Thackeray said.

In short, there was indeed 'match-fixing'. All parties, including the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, had alleged and which has now been proven by evidence.

He also lauded Sandhu and Joshi for standing firm and registering their objections. It is certain that many other officials, drawing inspiration from them, will now start speaking up.

"The Chief Election Commissioner ought to resign, certainly; but the government that came to power by leveraging such a spineless Election Commission should also step down..

Only if the Election Commission becomes truly autonomous, as it ought to be, can the ruling dispensation be brought down to earth; otherwise, this battle will be endless," Thackeray said in the post. (Agencies)

## CJP threatens 'Jantar Mantar 2.0' if CEC Gyanesh Kumar does not resign

**NEW DELHI, SEP 24:** The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Thursday demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar for "undermining" voter rights, and warned of a nationwide agitation, including "Jantar Mantar 2.0", if he does not step down within 48 hours.

Speaking at a press conference here, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke alleged that the electoral process had been "rigged" and the right to vote was being taken away from citizens.

"If Gyanesh Kumar does not resign within 48 hours, we will start a nationwide protest, before coming for a protest in Delhi," Dipke said, adding that if the CEC doesn't resign, "Jantar Mantar 2.0 will definitely happen".



He also said opposition parties should not participate in polls if they believe they are being rigged.

"If you know elections are being rigged, you cannot participate. You will have to take a stand," he said.

Dipke alleged that Kumar was the "biggest threat to Indian democracy" and accused the EC of deciding who would be allowed to vote.

Who is Gyanesh to revoke

our right to vote?" he said, calling for criminal proceedings against him.

The remarks came a day 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.

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. (PTI)

## For 'Nasha Mukh' Punjab, state has to be made 'AAP Mukh': Anurag Thakur

**CHANDIGARH, SEP 24:** BJP MP Anurag Thakur on Wednesday slammed the Mann government over the issue of drug menace in Punjab and said the state has to be made "Aam Aadmi Party Mukh" for turning it into "Nasha Mukh" (free of drugs).Government

Thakur also claimed that it was only the BJP which could save the border state from the drug menace.

The former Union minister was addressing a gathering during the BJP's 'Nasha Mukh Punjab Yatra' in Rupnagar.

To keep India's youth safe and to realize the resolve of a developed India, it is essential to make Punjab drug-free, he said.

The BJP has launched four anti-drug yatras from different locations in the state. The 13-day yatras will traverse around 4,000 km across all the 117 As-



sembly constituencies in Punjab. Upon the culmination of the four yatras, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will address a rally in Jalandhar on September 30.

In his address in Rupnagar, Thakur slammed the AAP government for allegedly failing to curb the menace of drugs.

He alleged that drugs were being sold openly in the state.

"There is a home delivery of drugs in Punjab," alleged Thakur.

"The Aam Aadmi Party should explain: Despite repeatedly setting deadlines to eradicate drugs in Punjab, why haven't you been able to eliminate drugs to this day," he asked.

He alleged that AAP first "promoted the alcohol culture" in Delhi, and now they have pushed Punjab into the "quagmire of addiction".

Further targeting the Mann government, Thakur alleged that those raising voice against the sale of drugs in their areas were being threatened.

"Should we save Punjab or not? It is your responsibility. Your each vote will decide," he told the gathering.

The BJP leader said neither the Congress nor AAP could root out the drug problem from Punjab.

## Namo Bharat crosses 4.5 cr passenger journeys, showcased at Berlin transport tech expo

**NEW DELHI, SEP 24 :** The 82-km Nammo Bharat corridor connecting Delhi, Ghaziabad and Meerut has recorded more than 4.5 crore passenger journeys since operations began, with daily ridership recently crossing 1.68 lakh, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) said. Calculate Shipping Costs

The NCRTC is showcasing India's first Regional Rapid Transit System at InnoTrans 2026, a global transport technology exhibition being held in Berlin from Tuesday to Friday, the corporation said in a statement.

The Nammo Bharat corridor con-

nects Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi with Modipuram in Meerut, the NCRTC said, adding that the system had crossed 4.5 crore passenger journeys and recently recorded its highest-ever daily ridership of more than 1.68 lakh commuters.

The entire corridor became operational in February this year and integrates the Meerut Metro, which operates on the same infrastructure, it said.

D Thara, Secretary, Department of Capital Development, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Chairperson, NCRTC, inaugurated the corporation's exhibition stand in the presence of NCRTC Manag-



ing Director Shalabh Goel, it mentioned.

Thara also participated in the Rail Leaders' Summit 2026, where she said regional rail systems could help distribute population and employment beyond major cities by providing affordable connectivity between urban centres and surrounding areas.

She said Nammo Bharat was transporting between one lakh and two lakh passengers daily on the 82-km corridor and could help decongest Delhi by connecting major cities in the National Capital Region.

Goel said Nammo Bharat demon-

strated India's ability to develop regional mobility systems using new technologies. He highlighted the deployment of ETCS Hybrid Level 3 signalling over LTE, described by NCRTC as the first such deployment in the world.

The Nammo Bharat project was conceived to address congestion and pollution while improving regional connectivity and access to employment and economic centres, the NCRTC said.

The corporation has also highlighted its work in multimodal integration, commuter-centric mobility and technological innovation at international platforms.