

Rahul Urges Youth To Protest, Says Govt Only Responds Under Pressure

NEW DELHI, SEP 29: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday called for an overhaul of a system that "blames the victim and shields the criminal", urging the youth to protest against women's harassment and rape as the government only responds under pressure.

"Stop punishing women for the crimes committed against them. Across our country, women are afraid to walk the streets, afraid of being harassed, afraid of being raped. And the government's answer: stay at home. This is patriarchy at work: a system that blames the victim and shields the criminal. It is time to smash it," he said in a post on X.

Noting that the solution is not to lock women inside, he said, "It is to make our streets safe, to confront the mindset of men who mistreat women, and to punish those who attack them, swiftly and without exception." "Thousands of students and young people are on the streets demanding safety for women. I urge even more young women,



especially Gen Z across India, to come out in stronger numbers. This government is deaf to your pain and will only listen when it's under pressure," the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha said. "Peaceful protest is your democratic right, and I stand with you wholeheartedly," he said.

Gandhi also posted a video along with his post that said, "Stop harassing women!"

In the video, he said a woman has nothing to do with an attack on her, and a woman has nothing to do with rape. The perpetrator is the criminal; please punish the criminal and leave women alone, he asserted.

Gandhi claimed that women are scared to walk the streets of our country. Citing the rape of a 16-year-old girl near a park in South Delhi, he said a woman goes for a walk in a park near LSR

(Lady Shri Ram College), and she is raped.

"What is the reaction? The reaction is to stop women from going to parks at night. This is completely insane. Get this out of your mind that women are to be punished, penalised, because someone is attacking them and raping them," he said.

Every day, he said, one opens the newspapers and looks at social media to see that a girl has been raped in Bihar, another in UP, another in Punjab.

"What is the reaction? The reaction is punishment, hampering their lifestyle, completely the wrong reaction. "Stop harassing women; leave them alone. Start punishing the people who are doing the crime. Start changing the mentality of the people who do the crime. Start changing the mentality of the men who mistreat women. And any woman or man who is protesting these crimes, I stand with you; I support you. This is absolutely unacceptable," the Congress leader said in his post. (PTI)

Development Should Aim For Welfare Of Every Person, Minimise Disparity: Bhagwat

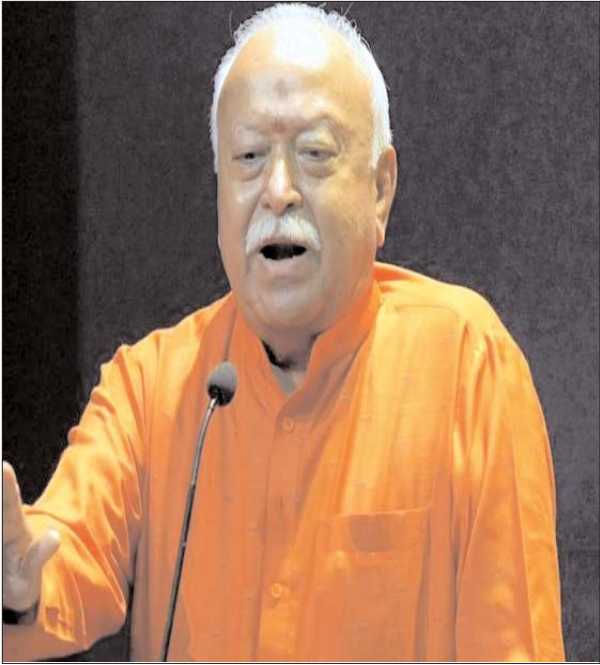
YAVATMAL (MAHARASHTRA), SEP 29: Development should seek to achieve the welfare of every person with the "last person" in society at its centre, and the gap between the highest and lowest levels of development should be as small as possible, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Tuesday.

Speaking at an event organised to mark the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Jayanti here, Bhagwat also said the concept of 'Antyodaya' meant ensuring that the last person in society was as happy as possible.

"The last person in society should be as happy as possible for the country to be happy. This is what is called 'Antyodaya'," he said.

Development can not mean that everyone reaches the same level, but the disparity should be minimised, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief said.

"Some may say that in such a large society, everyone cannot remain at the same level of development. That is fine. But the gap between the lowest and highest levels of development should be as small as possible," he said.



phy of late Jana Sangh leader Deendayal Upadhyaya, Bhagwat said Upadhyaya did not accept the definition of development as "the maximum good of the maximum people".

He also referred to Mahatma Gandhi's principle of keeping the person at the lowest rung of society in mind while taking decisions.

"Whenever you do anything in life, think about the person standing at the very end of society. Ask yourself

whether what I am doing will have a positive effect on that person's life. If it will, then do it. If it will not, there is no need to do it," he said.

Bhagwat further said that development should ensure that basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter are met, along with access to education and healthcare. He also spoke of the ability of people to live with dignity and offer hospitality to others.

Development should not

come at the cost of nature and both development and the environment should be protected, he stated.

Speaking about agriculture, Bhagwat stressed the need to improve farmers' welfare while maintaining the health of the land and advocated mixed and organic farming, animal husbandry and greater self-reliance in seeds, manure and pesticides.

The aim, he said, should be to ensure that farmers are not trapped in debt and become more self-reliant.

"Society has to take forward development; it is not only the government's responsibility," he said.

Bhagwat also recalled the simple lifestyle of Upadhyaya and his commitment to public service, saying his philosophy was rooted in the idea that development should encompass not only human beings but also animals, birds and nature.

The late Jana Sangh leader's philosophy of integral humanism was not a new concept but was derived from the way of life followed by earlier generations and could be implemented through practical action, the RSS chief said. (Agencies)

Nabin chairs meeting of newly appointed in-charges of BJP state units

NEW DELHI, SEPT 29: BJP national president Nitin Nabin chaired the first meeting of the newly appointed party in-charges and co-in-charges of the states and Union Territories at the party headquarters here on Tuesday.

According to party sources, all the leaders who were recently appointed in-charges and co-in-charges of the party units in 28 states and eight UTs attended the meeting, which was co-presided over by BJP national general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh.

Those who attended the meeting included BJP vice-presidents Ram Madhav, Bajiyant Jay Panda, Rekha Verma and Bharati Pravin



Pawar. BJP national general secretaries Smriti Irani, Vinod Tawde, Harish Dwivedi, Satish Poonia, Biplob Kumar Deb and BJP Rajya Sabha MP Tarun Chug were among others who attended the meeting.

BJP MPs from Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj and Kamal-

jeet Sherawat, were also present.

On September 23, Nabin appointed BJP in-charges and co-in-charges for all 28 states and eight UTs, assigning Haryana and Chhattisgarh to Smriti Irani. Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand were assigned to party vice-presi-

dent Ram Madhav.

Vinod Tawde was made the in-charge for Uttar Pradesh, with Jagdish Patel, Medha Kulkarni, Pardeep Varma and Anand Ojha as co-in-charges.

Bajiyant Jay Panda was appointed as the BJP in-charge for Maharashtra, while Amit Malviya, Sadanand Shet Tanawade and party MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat were made co-in-charges. Harish Dwivedi was appointed as in-charge of the party units in Bihar and Karnataka.

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj and Arvind Menon were appointed co-in-charges for Uttarakhand. Tarun Chugh was made the in-charge for Gujarat. (PTI)

Former IAS Officer Divya Mittal Announces Entry Into Politics, Says Will Begin Journey From UP

LUCKNOW, SEP 29: Former IAS officer Divya Mittal on Tuesday announced her entry into politics independently, saying she would begin her political journey from Uttar Pradesh and strive to become the voice of people whose grievances often fail to reach government offices.

In a video statement on X, Mittal, who resigned from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) after a 13-year career on August 30, said she wanted to create a platform that would be concerned about the country's future.

"I want to be the voice of those people whose voices cannot reach any office and, even if they do, are not heard," she said and added that she wanted to "seek an account of the country's 80 years since Independence".



An alumni of IIT Delhi and IIM Bangalore and a former Wall Street trader, Mittal cited several experiences from her administrative career to explain her decision, including the case of a woman in a hilly village who, despite lacking water at home, sought a school beyond Class 5 for children in her village.

She said the school was approved but had not started construction even after three years, questioning whether the delay was due to lack of funds, rules or approval, or simply lack of intent.

Recalling another case from her tenure as special secretary in the Revenue Department, Mittal said a landless man, who had received a government land allotment,

did not get possession of the land despite having the necessary documents.

She alleged that an incorrect report in the matter was subsequently withdrawn after intervention, but said efforts to secure possession later encountered an instruction that it had been stopped "from above".

Mittal said she wanted to raise questions about such cases, as well as infrastructure gaps, road conditions, deaths allegedly linked to poor infrastructure, examination-related concerns and the future of young people amid the growth of artificial intelligence.

She said politics should focus on "intent, justice, concern and thought" rather than merely changing individual political leaders.

"The objective is not only to change one politician; politics has to change," she said.

Mittal also said she would not enter politics under the banner of any existing political party. Instead, she said, she would build a platform with citizens who supported her and would not be deterred by money, muscle power or caste and religious calculations.

"I'm not afraid. I will keep asking questions," she said, adding that she wanted to

create a platform that would be concerned about the country's future.

On her decision to begin the political journey in Uttar Pradesh, Mittal described the state as her "karmabhoomi" and said people there had supported her during her administrative career.

"I came here as an officer, but the people here made me their daughter," she said, adding that the state's people and soil had taught her about her purpose.

Mittal said she believed change was possible in the country and argued that Uttar Pradesh had historically played an important role in India's journey.

Her announcement comes months ahead of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, with Mittal saying her political initiative would be shaped jointly with citizens.

Mittal was the special secretary in the Revenue Department in Lucknow when she tendered her resignation. She had earlier notably worked as the district magistrate in Deoria, Mirzapur and Sant Kabir Nagar.

During her tenure as Mirzapur district magistrate, she had gained widespread attention after tap water was brought for the first time to Lahuriadah, a remote hill village in Halia block, 75 years after Independence.

Locals remember her tenure in Deoria for her efforts in implementing government schemes at the grassroots level and for her decisive administrative actions. (PTI)

SC Agrees To Hear Next Week Plea Seeking Suspension Of CEC Gyanesh Kumar

NEW DELHI, SEP 29: The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week a PIL seeking suspension of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and challenging the manner in which the poll panel led by him took decisions allegedly without the approval of two Election Commissioners.

The matter was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, who mentioned the matter, told the bench that as per the statutory scheme, decisions of the multi-member Election Commission have to be unanimous or by majority.

"The way the Election Commission is functioning, there is serious doubt over whether the decisions are unanimous," he submitted.

"We will list this next week", the CJI said.

The PIL, filed by Patna resident Rakesh Kumar Singh, has urged the top court to determine whether CEC Kumar has been individually exercising powers that legally belong to the Election Commission as a whole, and, if so, to declare those

actions unauthorised and take appropriate legal action.

Direct that respondent No.3 (CEC) shall not exercise the functions of Chief

Election Commissioner of India pending final hearing of the present petition; direct that during such period, the business of the Commission be transacted by the unanimous decision of respondent Nos. 4 (Sukhbir Singh Sandhu) and 5 (Vivek Joshi); and direct that any appointment to the resulting vacancy be made upon the recommendation of a Committee, including the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India," the plea stated.

"Respondent No. 3 ought to be suspended from functioning as Chief Election Commissioner of India, pending final hearing of the present petition, so as to restore the multi-member character of the Election Commission," the plea said.

The plea comes in the backdrop of a report in the Indian Express which claimed that Election Commissioners Sandhu and Joshi had objected on record at least 14 times over the past 10 months to decisions and orders on Special Inten-

sive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls that they said were issued without their knowledge or recommendation

Under fire over the red flags raised by two of its commissioners over the SIR process, the EC has asserted that differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberations in any institution and all its orders carry full legal sanction and follow established statutory procedures.

The petition has made the Union Law Ministry, the poll panel, CEC Kumar, Sandhu Joshi and Maneesh Garg, a senior official of the poll panel, as parties.

"This petition concerns not the fortunes of any individual constitutional functionary, but the constitutional identity of the Election Commission of India itself. Article 324(1) of the Constitution does not vest the superintendence, direction and control of elections in an individual Chief Election Commissioner. It vests those powers in 'a Commission'," the plea said.

Referring to constitutional schemes, the plea said they "deliberately separated membership of the Commission from the chair-

manship of the Commission, and separated the chairmanship of the Commission from the Commission's power".

According to the petition, Sandhu and Joshi recorded at least 14 objections between October 2025 and August 2026 concerning various actions attributed to the Election Commission.

The objections relate to communications allegedly issued in the name of the Commission without its approval, the absence of agendas and minutes of meetings, changes to statutory Form-6, access and control over the ERONet/ECINet electoral-roll database, changes in IT-related work allocation and appeals filed in the name of the Election Commission before West Bengal Appellate Tribunals, it said.

"Declare that the powers vested under Article 324 of the Constitution are constitutionally required to be exercised by the ECI as a multi-member collegial body..., and that no communication, order, direction, appeal or other act may be issued or represented as an act of the Election Commission save pursuant to a decision of the Com-

mission taken unanimously or, upon disagreement, by majority....," the plea submitted.

The plea relied on written objections recorded by the two ECs and said the underlying allegations should not be treated as conclusively established merely on the basis of media reports.

The plea urged the court to call for the Commission's primary records, including minutes, agendas, approval sheets, file notings, work-allocation orders, IT-access records, server logs and database-change histories.

One of the issues raised concerns the alteration of Form-6, the statutory form used in connection with electoral roll registration.

The petition submitted that Joshi recorded an objection on May 16, 2026, stating that the form could not lawfully be altered to require additional SIR-related disclosures without an amendment to the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

Sandhu is stated to have concurred with the objection on May 19, it added.

The petition also referred to concerns recorded by Joshi regarding the gradual centralisation of the

electoral-roll database and sought an independent audit of database access credentials.

It further refers to objections concerning access by field-level statutory officers to the ECINet system.

"Direct Respondent Nos. 2 and 3 (Election Commission and the CEC) to preserve, without alteration, deletion, destruction, overwriting or archival, all physical and electronic records relevant to the present petition, including minutes, agendas, file notings, approval sheets, correspondence ...," it said.

The plea also referred to filing of appeals in the name of the Election Commission before appellate tribunals in West Bengal.

The petition also referred to alleged objection by Sandhu seeking to know who authorised such appeals and under what authority.

It urged the court to examine the legality of the disputed Form-6 alteration and certain IT work-allocation measures and, subject to the records produced before the court, the authorisation of the West Bengal appeals. (Agencies)