

EYE SECRETS

Spy in every blink

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CWC Demands Modi Exit, CEC Resignation

New Delhi, Sept 29

The Congress on Tuesday demanded the immediate removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, the suspension of the special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral roll, the restoration of over 13 crore names struck off and the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "match-fixing" elections. Separately, the Left parties protested outside the Election Commission headquarters in the national capital to press for the CEC's resignation.

During the two-and-a-half-hour Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, the party discussed the alleged "match-fixing between the Election Commission and the Prime Minister-Union Home Minister duo".

"This brazen 'vote chori' has been organised by the CEC on behalf of the Prime Minister and the Union home minister. Nothing short of their resignation will ensure the safety of our constitution and hard-earned democracy," the CWC resolution said.

According to the CWC resolution, the BJP and its handpicked officials must understand that this "brazen theft" of the people's franchise will not go unanswered. The Congress would resist it in Parliament, in the courts and on the streets, until the guilty were punished, every citizen's vote was secure and the ECI was restored as an independent constitutional authority.

"For the Indian National Congress, the struggle to restore universal adult franchise in India is no less than the freedom struggle itself," the resolution said.

The CWC said the Congress, under the guidance of Kharge and the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, had taken the issue to various platforms, including through the Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar, the nationwide vote chori campaign, representations to the EC, the EAGLE group's engagement with the poll panel, legal challenges to the SIR, I.N.D.I.A. bloc protests in Parliament and a march to the ECI office.

"The concerns, initially raised by Mr Gandhi, have now become a wider demand for accountability, transparency and restoration of the sanctity of India's electoral system," the CWC said.

In his remarks, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said the party's main

demand is that CEC Kumar has no moral right to continue for a single day. "He (the CEC) will understand in the coming days what level of resistance we will build up for his resignation," he said.

"Gyanesh Kumar is only a tool. When dictators lose the confidence of the people, they seek extraordinary tools to stay in power. His actions on SIR cannot be without the concurrence of his masters — the PM and the HM," Venugopal said, adding, "There is a moral responsibility for the PM on this issue. We are demanding resignation from the PM on moral grounds," he said.

Addressing the media after the CWC meeting, Congress communications in-charge Jairam Ramesh, along with Venugopal, said Gandhi spoke for 20-25 minutes and the main point he made was that the revelations related to the EC are being made because of the Congress.

"Gandhi himself has been raising these issues related to polls in Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and some did not believe him, but now he has been proven right," Mr Ramesh said.

Earlier, in his opening address at the CWC meeting, Kharge put forward Congress' five demands, including making public the complete data regarding every major change made to the electoral rolls and providing political parties with the electoral rolls and relevant data in a simple format and in a timely manner.

The Congress president also demanded an independent and time-bound inquiry wherever evidence of serious discrepancies emerge.

"Those voters whose names have been removed must be fully informed and given an opportunity to appeal, and there must be such transparency in the critical data and decisions related to the election process so that no party has grounds to claim that information is being withheld," the Congress chief said.

Chiding the Congress leaders for not believing that the party will return to power soon, Gandhi recalled a CEC selection committee meeting with the Prime Minister and the Union home minister and said that when he raised objections, Modi said he was only acting as previous Prime Ministers, like Indira Gandhi, would have acted. Gandhi said he reminded the Prime Minister that she lost the subsequent election.

Hyderabad, Sept 29

: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday urged Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil to prevail upon the Maharashtra government to grant the necessary clearances for construction of the Tummidihatti barrage and expedite environmental approvals for several Telangana irrigation projects.

Revanth Reddy and Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy met Patil in Delhi and discussed issues concerning Telangana's projects in the Krishna and Godavari basins. The Chief Minister said Telangana had already furnished the information sought by Maharashtra for the Tummidihatti barrage and requested the Centre to facilitate an early agreement between the two states for construction of the barrage with the full reservoir level at 152 metres.

Revanth Reddy said construction of the project at the proposed height would enable water to be taken to the Yellampalli reservoir through gravity, reducing the requirement for power for lifting and



consequently lowering the cost of water transportation.

The Chief Minister also sought immediate environmental clearances for the Palamuru-Rangareddy and Dindi lift irrigation scheme, Sitaramasagar multipurpose project (SSMP) and Gouravelli reservoir. Referring to the Centre's decision to issue guidelines for environmental clearances following a recent Supreme Court judgment, he urged the Union minister to expedite approvals for the projects. Delays in obtaining clearances were increasing the cost of construction, he pointed out.

Revanth Reddy also

sought expeditious clearance of pending approvals from the Central Water Commission (CWC) for the Sammakkasagar project. He said Telangana had submitted the detailed project report (DPR) to the CWC and sought clearances relating to irrigation planning and inter-state issues. The Chief Minister said the state government was holding discussions with the Chhattisgarh government to obtain a no-objection certificate for the project.

The Chief Minister urged Patil to expedite installation of telemetry devices being taken up under the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) to

monitor utilisation of Krishna water. He said Telangana had already deposited ₹4.15 crore required for installation of telemetry devices under the first phase. He requested that the first phase be completed at the earliest and equipment under the second and third phases also be installed expeditiously.

Minister G. Vivek Venkataswamy, MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna, MLA Gaddam Vinod, state government adviser (Irrigation) Adityanath Das and Chief Minister's secretary Manicka Raj were among those present at the meeting.

SC to hear next week PIL seeking to restrain Gyanesh from functioning as CEC

New Delhi, Sept 29

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week a PIL seeking to restrain Gyanesh Kumar from functioning as the Chief Election Commissioner.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant agreed to take up the PIL filed by Rakesh Kumar Singh after senior advocate Vikas Singh mentioned it for urgent listing.

"The Election Commission is a multi-member body and under the statutory framework, its business is required to be transacted unanimously as far as possible, with differences being decided by majority," Vikas said, requesting an early hearing.

If the commission had not taken a unanimous decision, it was a serious issue, he told the Bench, which also included Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice V Mohana. He said there was serious doubt regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and in view of objections allegedly recorded by the other two Election Commissioners, it was not clear if it was, in fact, a decision of the commission. The CJ said it would be listed for next week. Citing reports that about 14 decisions were taken in the name of the Election Commission between October 2025 and August 2026 despite objections recorded by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, the PIL has sought to restrain Kumar from functioning as the Chief Election Commissioner.

The petitioner has urged the top court to declare that decisions vested in the Election Commission could not be taken unilaterally by the CEC. He wanted the court to issue a direction to Gyanesh to show under what authority he had acted and continued to act as though he was individually entitled to exercise the collective decision-making power vested by Article 324 of the Constitution in the Election Commission.

The PIL demanded the CEC's suspension pending adjudication, production of the poll panel's original records and constitution of an independent judicial inquiry commission or SIT headed by a retired Supreme Court judge. Vikas cited Section 18 of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commis-



sioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023. According to Section 18 (1), "The Election Commission may, by unanimous decision, regulate the procedure for transaction of its business and also allocation of its business amongst the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners." Section 18 (2) states that "All business of the Election Commission shall, as far as possible, be transacted unanimously, and if the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners differ in opinion on any matter, such matter shall be decided according to the opinion of the majority". The PIL has sought a direction that no further substantive alteration be made to Form-6, and that no otherwise eligible citizen shall be denied or prevented from seeking inclusion in the electoral roll solely for failure to furnish information contained in the disputed field, pending adjudication of the legality thereof by the top court. It also sought a direction to ensure the integrity of the electoral roll data, Form-6, ERONet/ECINet and the records forming the subject matter of the present proceedings, pending final adjudication. "Direct the respondents to maintain the existing electoral roll data, records and digital systems in their original and unaltered form and to ensure that no deletion, exclusion, restoration, modification or other irreversible action affecting electoral roll data is undertaken solely pursuant to the special intensive revision, pending further orders of this court," the PIL submitted.



Congress Announces MLC Candidates for Two Graduates' Seats in Telangana

Hyderabad, Sept 29

The Congress has named Sama Rammohan Reddy and Ramreddy Sarvotham Reddy as its candidates for the Graduates' MLC constituencies in Telangana late on Tuesday. Elections are due in early 2027. Rammohan Reddy will contest the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar seat, while Sarvotham Reddy has been fielded from the Warangal-Nalgonda-Khammam seat.

The terms of the MLCs from the two constituencies end in March 2027. The Election Commission has begun the

process for revision of electoral rolls ahead of the elections from Monday.

November 1, 2026, has been fixed as the qualifying date for enrolment of graduates as electors. The enrolment process began with the publication of a public notice on September 28. The notice will be repub-

lished in newspapers on October 15 and 25, while applications in Form-18 can be submitted up to November 6.

The Congress had been holding discussions on prospective candidates for the two seats before finalising the names. The announcement comes as political parties begin

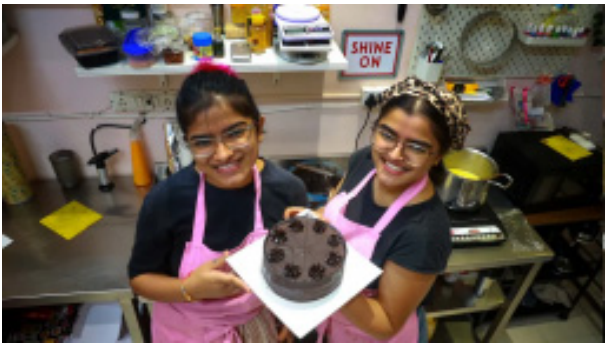
preparations for the elections and the voter-enrolment exercise gathers pace. The two constituencies cover several districts and have a substantial graduate electorate. The polls are expected to bring employment, education and other issues concerning graduates into focus as parties begin their campaigns.

3 Workers Killed As Crane Collapses At Construction Site

Tirupati, Sept 29 Three workers were killed, and two others were injured on Tuesday, when a crane collapsed at a construction site on DBR Road near Sri Convention in the district.

A massive crane lost its balance and toppled into an excavation pit while moving soil for a private hotel construction project.

In Kharghar, twin sisters are building a dessert destination — one Basque cheesecake at a time



Tucked into a residential pocket of Kharghar’s Sector 8, a modest bakehouse has, in less than a year, become a destination for dessert lovers from across Navi Mumbai. At Khari Biscuit, the draw is a compact menu of indulgent bakes, from tiramisu and Basque cheesecake to tres leches and goeey Nutella and brown-butter cookies.The bakehouse, run by 25-year-old twins Shraddha and Shweta Sunil Paithankar, began as a pre-order operation in November last year. But customers soon started walking in asking for a pastry or dessert to eat on the spot. The sisters initially had little to offer them. That changed when they decided to turn the small space into a neighbourhood bakehouse earlier this year, adding a few foldable chairs, decorative lights and a board listing the day’s specials outside.

Today, production begins well before the shop opens at 1 pm. From one cake every couple of days in its early months, Khari Biscuit now prepares at least six large confectionery items a day, besides smaller desserts, cookies and pastries. By evening, some of its most popular items can already be nearing the end of their batches.Among them is the Basque cheesecake, for which the bakery prepares nearly six large cheesecakes every day. Yet by around 6 pm, stocks are often running low. The texture is deliberate. Unlike a conventional cheesecake, the Basque version is baked at a high temperature and intentionally left slightly underdone in the centre, then allowed to set for at least four hours after baking. “We underbake it and then give it at least four hours to set,” said Shraddha, who heads the baking operations.

Basque and Tiramisu The basque cheesecake and Tiramisu at Khari Biscuit, a bakehouse in Kharghar. (Express photo by Narendra Vaskar)Getting that balance of a caramelised exterior and dense, custardy centre took nearly two months of experimentation. Temperatures, measurements, and ingredients were repeatedly altered as the sisters tried to recreate the richness they associated with cheesecakes at The Cheesecake Factory in the US.The tres leches, meanwhile, was the dessert that put the bakehouse on the map. A Latin American sponge cake soaked in three kinds of milk, it found a ready audience in Navi Mumbai, where it was not easily available. An Instagram reel featuring the dessert brought a surge of attention. Customers began travelling from other parts of the city to try it. “For this (tres leches), I had to travel to Bandra twice a month but not anymore,” said one visitor

Maharashtra declares drought in 265 tehsils, covers nearly three fourths of state

Maharashtra on Saturday declared drought in 265 of the state’s 358 tehsils, covering nearly three fourths of the state, after prolonged rainfall deficits and dry spells affected crops across large parts of Maharashtra.The declaration triggers an immediate assessment of crop losses and a series of relief measures for farmers, including waiver of land revenue, restructuring of crop loans and a stay on recovery of agriculture related loans. Financial assistance for crop damage, however, will be announced separately after the assessment is completed.The decision came two days after Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, following a tour of rain deficit areas, said the government would soon issue the drought notification.

According to the Government Resolution, the Agriculture Commissioner’s report found drought like conditions in 265 talukas from June onwards due to rainfall deficit and other factors. Trigger 1, defined as a continuous dry spell of at least 21 days without significant rainfall during the monsoon, has been found applicable in these areas.

What does the declaration mean?

IIT Bombay suicide: Students hold candle march, demand external probe

A week after IIT Bombay student Sahil Wakode died by suicide, students continuing their sit-in protest at the institute held a candlelight march on campus on Friday night to remember the second-year BTech student and others from the institute who have died by suicide in the past.Sahil, 20, died by suicide on September 18 after he was allegedly found with a mobile phone during a mid-semester examination.

During the peaceful march, protesting students carried a large poster listing 10 demands, including revisions to their earlier charter. They also reiterated their demands for an independent probe and sought wider reforms in student welfare and disciplinary mechanisms.The protesting students have now sought the dissolution of the 10-member investigation committee constituted by the IIT Bombay Board of Governors, flagging alleged concerns over its independence, and demanded that it be replaced with an external panel with no current IIT Bombay employees or students.They have also reiterated their demand for the immediate suspension of Professor Suryanarayana Doolla, who caught the alleged exam malpractice, from all responsibilities until the criminal investigation is concluded and sought the resignation of IIT Bombay Director Professor Shireesh Kedare.

Reforms in student welfare centre soughtThe students have also demanded that Sahil’s parents be provided safety while visiting the campus and sought reforms in the Student Welfare Centre, including periodic audits and a medically qualified Dean of Students’ Welfare. Their demands for changes to the Disciplinary Action Committee include greater transparency in proceedings, a system to track cases and a graded, reformative disciplinary framework.

from Nerul.

Tiramisu, however, proved a more complicated proposition. The challenge was not only the technique but finding ingredients that delivered the right flavour and texture — conventional cocoa powder and coffee left it gritty and muted. The search took the sisters across stores in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, until Shraddha recalled a coffee she had tasted in Bengaluru, made with beans from Pollibetta in Coorg. They now source their coffee from the region, while other ingredients, including cacao products and Maldon sea salt flakes, come from different parts of India.The menu was developed alongside the search for a location, with the sisters testing recipes and refining portions over nearly two months. The emphasis was on desserts they would themselves seek out — rich, carefully textured, and made with ingredients that could stand on their own.

The making of Khari BiscuitWhile the knack for baking was always there, their curiosity peaked around the Covid-19 lockdown, when the twins began making cakes, cupcakes and pastries at home under their mother’s supervision. For Shraddha, the hobby became a professional pursuit after a six-month internship at JW Marriott in Juhu, where she spent her final month in the pastry department. She later worked in professional kitchens in Tennessee for two years before returning to India for a six-month bakery course at Lavonne Academy of Baking Science and Pastry Arts in Bengaluru.Kharghar was eventually chosen as the location. Originally from Nashik, the sisters had spent much of the previous eight years there and saw the neighbourhood as offering a balance between accessibility and a quieter residential setting. “We found this neighbourhood to be the right amount of calm and chaos, amid Mumbai’s hectic schedule,” said Shweta, who handles the business side of the bakery, including social media, sourcing, inventory and marketing.khari biscuit Khari Biscuit began as a pre-order-only operation before the sisters turned the space into a neighbourhood bakehouse, adding foldable chairs, decorative lights and a specials board outside. (Express photo by Narendra Vaskar)The name, meanwhile, was decided much earlier. Khari Biscuit is a play on the popular Marathi film of the same name, as well as a nickname their elder brother used for the twins.For customers, though, it is the food that has become the calling card. The bakehouse operates from 1 pm to 11.30 pm, but the work doesn’t end with the last customer — from midnight until around 3 am, the sisters prepare desserts and pastries for the following day, a schedule that also allows certain items to rest and set before service.What began as a cloud-kitchen-style operation has thus evolved into a small neighbourhood destination, one where people come looking for a slice of cheesecake, a spoonful of tres leches or a cup of tiramisu, and often stay longer than they intended.For now, the sisters’ priority remains maintaining the quality of the Kharghar outlet even as they consider expanding the business later. At Khari Biscuit, the formula stays relatively simple: make fewer things well, source the right ingredients, and let the desserts bring people back.



District Collectors have been directed to immediately begin crop loss assessment through panchnamas. Officials have to document crop conditions, including photographs with GPS coordinates, and submit reports to the government through the Agriculture Commissioner.The assessment will form the basis for determining crop damage assistance. The government has said financial assistance to affected farmers will be announced through a separate GR after the prescribed procedures are completed.



The students further sought reconstitution of the SC/ ST Cell in accordance with UGC norms, release of its reports from the past three years and action over alleged caste-based attacks on Wakode and his family. Other demands include allowing batchmates to remain on the same hostel floor, a three-day buffer before and after mid-semester examinations, no multiple examinations on the same day, improved working conditions for campus workers and an assurance that no action will be taken against protesting students.Sahil’s parents, Ravindra and Sonali, have alleged that he faced caste-based discrimination and pressure on campus. Based on Ravindra’s complaint, the Powai police on September 19 registered a case that names Doolla. While the case has now been transferred to the Crime Branch, the parents have sought that it be transferred to the CBI.IIT Bombay has constituted a 10-member committee to examine the circumstances surrounding Sahil’s death, and it is expected to submit its report within seven days.Meanwhile, Sahil’s parents, who began a hunger strike at Mumbai’s Azad Maidan on Thursday demanding arrests in the case, ended it later that night.

Karnataka man acquitted in 2015 murder case hacked to death in public



Karnataka Hubbali man murderedPolice teams have been formed to trace the attackers and CCTV footage from the area is being examined to establish their movements. (Photos: Special arrangement)A man acquitted in a 2015 murder case was hacked to death in public in Karnataka’s Hubbali on Friday afternoon, with the police suspecting the killing was linked to an old enmity.

Onion prices soar as wholesale market sees sharp drop in arrivals

Onion prices in Pune have climbed over the past few weeks, with traders blaming a steep fall in the supply arriving at the city’s wholesale market. According to Yogesh Yadav, an onion trader at the Gultekdi APMC market, Pune typically needs around 125 trucks of onions a day, each carrying about 10,000 kg, to meet demand. Currently, only about 50 trucks are arriving daily, a shortfall that has pushed prices upward across the city.

Wholesale rates for good quality onions are now ranging between Rs 35 and Rs 40 per kg, while lower-grade, older stock is selling for Rs 30-35 per kg. The impact is even more visible at the retail level, where prices swing widely across Pune, from Rs 45 per kg to over Rs 65 per kg depending on the locality and quality.

Traders trace the roots of the current squeeze back to April, when unseasonal rains damaged onion crops and hit output. Adding to the pressure is an expected delay in the arrival of the kharif crop, along with continuing exports, both of which are keeping supplies tight. Yadav said, “If the conditions remain the same, onion prices are likely to remain elevated, in the range of Rs 45-50 per kg,until Diwali. Though this could change depending on how the government steps in.”One such intervention has already been made. On Friday, the first ‘Kanda Express’ — a dedicated rail rake carrying roughly 453.65 tonnes of onions from Nashik — reached Delhi, part of a government push to boost supplies in the capital and neighbouring cities and cool down prices there.

The move, however, has had a ripple effect back when the wholesale onion prices at Nashik’s Lasalgaon APMC, the country’s largest onion market, fell by about 10 per cent, dropping from Rs 4,250 per quintal on Thursday to Rs 3,800 per quintal.The Centre’s move has not gone down well with onion growers, who say the timing could not have been worse. Jaideep Bhadane, Nashik district president of the Maharashtra State Onion Growers Association, pointed out a recurring pattern: authori-

According to the police, the victim, Dadapeer Udayakar, was riding a two-wheeler near Siddeshwara Park in Banashankari Layout in Vidyanagar around 1 pm when two unidentified men allegedly intercepted him and attacked him with sharp weapons. The assailants fled the spot after the attack.According to preliminary information, Udayakar was an accused in the 2015 murder of a person named Maruti. He was acquitted in the case in 2017, the police said. However, the police are yet to ascertain whether the killing was connected to the earlier case or any existing enmity.Senior police officials, including Hubbali City Police Commissioner N Shashikumar, visited the spot and reviewed the circumstances. Police teams have been formed to trace the attackers and CCTV footage from the area is being examined to establish their movements.“We are trying to zero down on the accused and will register a case,” Shashikumar told the media on Friday. A senior police official said the accused are yet to be traced and further investigation is underway.



ties step in quickly to shield consumers when prices rise, but rarely act with the same urgency to support farmers when prices crash, and losses mount.Bhadane recalled that growers went through a particularly difficult stretch between March and July, when wholesale prices routinely fell below the cost of production, estimated at around Rs 2,000 per quintal.He said, “Farmers’ associations had asked for compensation of Rs 1,500 per quintal for those forced to sell below viable rates, but the demand went unanswered.” Now, he said, just as growers were finally beginning to see better returns, the release of buffer stock onions has triggered another price fall, undercutting the recovery.The price rise is also being felt in Pune’s restaurants. Ganesh Shetty, president of the Pune Restaurant and Hoteliers’ Association (PRAHA), said, “The hotel industry was already under pressure from the hike in LPG prices and rising costs of other essentials, and that expensive onions are now adding to the squeeze on profits.”He explained, “In most Indian kitchens, chopped or pureed onions form the foundation of the majority of gravies and curries, accounting for close to 80 per cent of a typical curry’s preparation. If onion prices remain high for another two to three months, hoteliers may be left with little choice but to raise menu prices.”

How Prashant Kishor’s viral photo of meet with Bihar officials sparked political waves

A day after a photograph showing Jan Suraj founder and Bankipur MLA Prashant Kishor with Bihar’s top administrative and police officials triggered questions over the nature of the meeting, the Chief Secretary’s office on Friday issued a clarification saying Kishor had met the chief secretary separately in the visitors’ room while another meeting involving several senior officers was already underway.The clarification came a day after Kishor met Chief Secretary Pratyaya Amrit, following which photographs showed him in the presence of senior officials, including the Director General of Police, the Additional Director General of Police (Traffic) and the Patna Commissioner, sparking a debate on senior officials’ presence in connection with a first-time MLA’s constituency issues.

In a press release Friday, the chief secretary’s office said Kishor had sought an appointment through a letter dated August 20 and was given time on August 27. “On 27.08.2026, another meeting was being conducted in the chamber of the Chief Secretary, in which several officers were present,” it said.According to the release, the chief secretary subsequently met Kishor in the “visitor’s room”, where “certain officers were already present”. It also said that meetings with elected representatives have traditionally been held in the visitors’ room.

Meanwhile, the official account differs in emphasis from the impression created by the photograph and Kishor’s own description of the meeting. The photo led many social media users to comment on the unusual sight of the entire top brass of the Bihar government attending to a first-time MLA’s constituency issues.Kishor, who took oath as the Bankipur MLA on August 17, had



said after the meeting that it was partly a follow-up to his August 18 meeting with DGP Vinay Kumar, where he had raised issues concerning traffic, dry intoxication and alleged illegal collections from roadside vendors.Kishor had said that the Thursday meeting with the CS was regarding non-police issues and related to civic and welfare issues.The August 27 meeting was the second high-level interaction involving Kishor within days of his assuming office. His August 18 meeting with the DGP had focused on finding a permanent, technology-based solution to Patna’s traffic problems, tackling dry intoxication and preventing alleged illegal collections from street vendors.However, many see the clarification from the CS office as a political chain reaction after the attention surrounding the photograph. Kishor won the July 30 Bankipur bypoll with 64,151 votes, beating BJP’s Neeraj Kumar Sinha and ending the BJP’s three-decade hold over the assembly constituency.Bankipur had been represented by Nitin Nabin, who vacated the seat after his elevation to the Rajya Sabha following his appointment as BJP national president in January.

TN school headmistress booked for abetment after Dalit girl’s suicide

Madurai (Tamil Nadu): A government school teacher in Usilampatti in this district has been booked for abetment after a Dalit girl seeking admission in the institution died by suicide due to alleged humiliation at the hands of the accused.The HM also allegedly made a casteist slur at the deceased. The 16-year-old girl’s relatives have been protesting demanding action against the Government Model Secondary School headmistress who allegedly rebuked and made casteist slur against the girl for asking her mother not to stand with folded hands in front of her.

The Madurai police who initially filed a suicide case after the teen ended her life over the alleged humiliation by the school HM on August 25, altered the case to abetment, naming the teacher, police said on Saturday.On August 24, the girl, accompanied by her mother, went to the Government Model Secondary School in Usilampatti seeking admission following hes decision to discontinue studies at her current school, in order to pursue nursing.

During the interview, the girl noticing her mother standing in a submissive manner with her hands folded, gestured to her asking to change her posture, and straightened the hands. At this the HM was said to have got irked, and accusing the student of being arrogant, made a casteist remark.She asked why “people like you” cannot keep their hands folded, and ordered them to leave. The following day, the girl died by hanging at her home, police said.“The case of suicide (unnatural death) registered on August 25, was subsequently altered on August 28, invoking relevant sections under BNS to include charges of abetment of suicide and naming the HM in the FIR,” a senior official said.

In her complaint, the deceased girl’s mother claimed that her daughter was deeply distressed after the HM admonished her and resorted to the extreme measure on August 25 after spending the night without food and in gloom.

EYE SECRETS
Editorial

Five-day banking:
Reform or disruption?

The banking sector acts as the financial backbone of a nation. The impending three-day bank strike proposed for September 28–30 poses a million-dollar question: after years of consultations and a formal agreement, how long should a workplace reform remain pending? Plausibly, the proposed strike may cause temporary inconvenience to customers. However, the strike also raises a larger question—one that goes beyond three days of industrial action.

The banking industry's negotiations over the years had the demand for five-day banking as its main component—the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) has made it one of its principal demands. It is evident that the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) conceded to the proposal under the 12th Bipartite Settlement/9th Joint Note, signed on March 8, 2024. The proposal envisaged compensating for Saturdays by extending working hours from Monday to Friday by 40 minutes. It was subsequently recommended to the Union government. Nonetheless, the implementation remains stalled and warrants a closer look. The public debate mostly treats the five-day banking proposal as a straightforward demand for an additional holiday. However, this is an incomplete picture. The negotiations between stakeholders involve re-distributing working time during the week. The question, therefore, is not simply whether bank employees should work fewer hours, but whether the outdated distribution of those hours still makes sense, considering that banking today is very different from the banking of yesterday, with many digital methods available 24x7.

Indubitably, the branch remains imperative, but it is no longer the entire banking system. In this milieu, technological transformation makes it legitimate to ask whether the old-style six-day branch schedule should remain unchanged.

No doubt, the customer is an important stakeholder in any banking environment. Hence, the argument for five-day banking cannot be made without addressing the customer, for a bank is not simply another office. For a section of people who are less comfortable with digital technology, branch services remain crucial. Any change in working arrangements must therefore ensure that customer service does not suffer. That does not inevitably make five-day banking impossible. The contemporary banking ecosystem, with its assorted digital channels, could separate branch operations from the round-the-clock functioning of the financial system. Additionally, critical back-office and vital banking functions can be maintained without any disruption. The question is not simply whether bank employees should work fewer hours, but whether the distribution of those hours still makes sense, given how banking has changed, with digital services now available 24x7. Given the above, the indecision surrounding the five-day banking demand is the strongest point of concern for bankers. If an agreement has been reached through the industry's established collective negotiating process and the proposal has subsequently been recommended to the government, employees are entitled to ask a simple question: What is holding up the decision? After the March 2024 agreement, more than two years have elapsed without implementation.

Bengal CM Suvendu
Adhikari announces
measures for farmers,
including power subsidy

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari Friday announced a series of measures for farmers, including a special financial package for potato growers, assured procurement of paddy, and annual electricity subsidies of up to Rs 30,000 for more than four lakh farmers. Speaking at a public meeting in East Burdwan, Adhikari said the special package for potato farmers would be announced before the next cultivation season begins in December. He said the government would ensure procurement of all the paddy that farmers offer for sale, without specifying the procurement mechanism or the financial allocation for the measures he announced. Adhikari alleged that policies of the previous Trinamool Congress government had disrupted potato exports and caused difficulties for farmers and traders. "In the past, potato exports were obstructed, and traders were subjected to oppression." The announcements formed part of a wider speech in which Adhikari also targeted the previous government over alleged corruption in sand mining, the 100-day rural employment scheme, and housing.

He alleged that illegal sand extraction had diverted revenue through smuggling and said all sand ghats would be auctioned to bring greater transparency. "Previously, money generated from smuggling sand extracted from illegal quarries used to be sent to Camac Street. Now, transparency will be ensured by auctioning off all sand quarries, so that the revenue can be used to build roads, schools, and hospitals." On rural employment, Adhikari alleged that funds under the older Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Jal Jeevan Mission had been misappropriated. He said the government planned to guarantee 125 days of work and create one lakh jobs, paying Rs 34,500 per job. Leader of the Mamata Banerjee faction and MLA Kunal Ghosh called the allegations "completely baseless". "I don't know why the chief minister says such things. Because, previously, whenever the BJP alleged such things, those became either 'Bhalo Trinamool' or joined BJP," Ghosh added. Referring to the cancellation of around 26,000 appointments, he said the recruitment process would be made more transparent. "A transparent recruitment process will be ensured by introducing the rule of taking the carbon copy home and reducing the marks for the oral examination."

500 guests, 100 cops: Jailed Haryana gangster
marries Cambodian partner in 12 hours



Dressed in an embroidered cream sherwani and a crimson turban, Mainpal alias Dhila, 45, sat beside his Cambodian bride, Meta Chan, 36. She wore a traditional red bridal lehenga. Between them lay envelopes stuffed with currency notes. And directly behind the groom's chair stood an armed security personnel in an olive-green tactical ballistic vest, an automatic weapon slung across his chest. Dhila, a convicted gangster, married his partner on Thursday under armed watch.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court had granted him 12 hours of custody parole to solemnise his marriage, allowing him to leave Jhajjar jail from 8 am to 8 pm. He was taken to a farmhouse on the Jhajjar-Gurugram road, about 1.5 km from the jail, under armed escort. There, he exchanged garlands with Meta Chan in accordance with Hindu traditions in front of family members and nearly 500 guests, while around 100 police personnel kept watch. A wedding under armed watch. The security operation began before Dhila reached the venue. According to Jhajjar police sources, extensive security arrangements were made across the transit corridor and the wedding venue to prevent any untoward incident. Around 100 police personnel were mobilised for the security detail. Armed escort teams from specialised crime units accompanied the gangster along the transit route, while personnel from Sadar Jhajjar police station, including armed and women police personnel, secured the farmhouse and its entrance, police sources said. Gangster Dhila wedding Jhajjar police sources noted that Meta Chan arrived in India earlier this month, with three of their children, for the wedding ceremony. (Express photo) Police sources added that

guest identities and contact details were recorded at the entrance, and media access inside the venue was restricted on security grounds.

The elaborate security was in line with the High Court's order granting Dhila a tightly controlled window outside jail. Dhila, who is serving a life sentence, had approached the High Court seeking one-day custody parole to solemnise his marriage. Passing the order on September 21, Justice Jasjit Singh Bedi declined to grant standard parole in view of the criminal cases against him but permitted a strictly monitored 12-hour custody window. "Looking at the allegations levelled against the petitioner, I do not deem it appropriate to grant parole to the petitioner," Justice Bedi observed in the order. "However, considering the fact that the petitioner is scheduled to solemnise his marriage on 24.09.2026, the Jail Superintendent concerned is directed to send the petitioner/Mainpal @ Dhila S/o Bhagwan Singh in custody to the venue of the marriage ceremony from 8 am to 8 pm on 24.09.2026. The expenses incurred for the aforesaid purpose shall be borne by the petitioner," the high court directed.

How he met his wife Dhila was awarded a life term in April 2013 in connection with a 2007 case registered in Bahadurgarh. In July 2018, he was granted six weeks of regular parole from Hisar Central Jail but jumped parole and fled the country using forged identity documents, according to Jhajjar police records. He settled in Siem Reap, Cambodia, where he operated hospitality and restaurant businesses. It was during his stay there that he met Meta Chan; the couple lived together for several years and had children. Dhila's run ended after Haryana Police and central agencies moved Interpol, leading to a Red Notice in November 2024.

He was apprehended by Cambodian authorities in July 2025 and extradited to India in September 2025 by a Haryana Special Task Force (STF) team, remaining behind bars since. Jhajjar police sources noted that Meta Chan arrived in India earlier this month, with three of their children, for the wedding ceremony. Following the completion of the rituals and a daytime gathering with guests on Thursday, Dhila was taken back into custody by the armed escort and lodged in Jhajjar jail by 8 pm, fulfilling the High Court's timeline.

How Bengaluru police solved
a murder mystery in 1 week

Bengaluru death According to the police, Sagar Chandra Ravath (right) allegedly stuffed his wife's (left) body into the mattress, tied it with a rope, and disposed of it on a rainy night as if he was disposing of a mattress. (Express photo/Special Arrangement) The Bengaluru police have arrested the husband of a 28-year-old woman after a clothing tag helped identify her decomposed body found at a vacant site in Aghraha Layout early this month, officials said on Friday. A group of cleaning workers stumbled upon the mattress-wrapped decomposed body while clearing the vegetation in the plot on September 2.

On visiting the scene, the police said that though the body was in an advanced state of decomposition, making the identification difficult, a tag on the clothes played a vital role in the investigation. The investigators traced the purchase of the clothes to a mall and obtained details that helped establish the identity of the body, the police said. They identified it as the body of a woman — Anusuya Behra, a native of Odisha. "Using the tag on her clothes, we tracked the shop from where she made the purchase and got her contact information, which helped us trace her husband, Sagar Chandra Ravath, 32, also a native of Odisha," a senior police officer of the special investigation team said.

The police, who arrested the accused on September 9, said the murder had taken place around a month earlier. According to the police, the man allegedly stuffed her body into the mattress, tied it with a rope, and disposed of it on a rainy night as if he was disposing of a mattress. The couple had been living in Bengaluru and working at different hotels, and Ravath was employed as a kitchen supervisor, the officer said. According to the police, the



couple frequently fought over financial matters, and on August 11, Behra allegedly went to the hotel where Ravath worked and confronted him over his salary. The argument continued, and Ravath allegedly strangled her at their rented home in MS Nagar, the police said. During questioning, he allegedly confessed to the murder and disposal of the body, police said. Ravath told the police that he allegedly stored the body at their house for three days before dumping it at the overgrown vacant site, 500 metres away from their home. "He monitored the location for four to five days to check if the body was discovered while continuing to work as a kitchen supervisor," said an officer. After the crime, he allegedly switched off the woman's phone and told her family that she had eloped with someone and could not be traced. The police had zeroed in on Ravath after learning about the couple's frequent disputes. They have booked Ravath on charges of murder and causing the disappearance of evidence. Further investigation is underway.

Husband dies, insurer rejects claim over
'diabetes'. Woman now wins Rs 58 lakh

Sapna, 34, worked as a chartered accountant. Her husband, Deepesh, ran a mobile shop in Haryana's Bahadurgarh. They had two daughters, their own flat in the city, and a housing loan they were steadily repaying. Then, in October 2024, Deepesh suffered a cardiac arrest. Within days, after being taken to three hospitals, he died. Sapna was left with two daughters to support and a housing loan that still had to be paid. "Everything was going fine... then it all fell apart," she said. The insurance policy she and Deepesh had taken with the loan was supposed to cover the outstanding liability if he died. Instead, when Sapna filed a death claim, the insurer rejected it. The rejection set off a chain of financial troubles that continued for months. Sapna struggled to keep up with the EMIs while paying for her daughters' school, rent, food and other household expenses. She eventually sold the family home and moved with her daughters into a small rented apartment in Bahadurgarh. It was only after that that she decided to challenge the insurer before the consumer commission — and won. On September 9, the South Delhi District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission ruled in her favour, directing PNB MetLife to pay her over Rs 58 lakh. Sapna and Deepesh had taken a Rs 52 lakh housing loan from PNB Housing Finance's Green Park branch in 2023, for a repayment period of 180 months. They mortgaged their home against the loan. As part of the package, they also bought two loan-cover insurance policies, paying a combined premium of Rs 2.6 lakh. The premium was added to the loan, taking the total amount borrowed to Rs 54.6 lakh. One of the policies was the PNB MetLife Complete Loan Protection Plan, for which they paid a Rs 2 lakh premium. The second was a TATA AIG Group EMI Protect policy, for which they paid Rs 60,000. Sapna was the nominee under both policies. When Deepesh died on October 28, 2024, Sapna filed a death claim under the PNB MetLife policy. In March 2025, the firm rejected it. As part of its assessment of the death claim, PNB MetLife relied on an investigator's report. Such an

investigation can involve gathering information about the policyholder's medical history and circumstances surrounding the death. In this case, the investigator relied, among other things, on oral accounts from neighbours and a HbA1c test. The insurer used these to allege that Deepesh had diabetes that had not been disclosed when the policy was taken. "They only told me that the claim was rejected because of diabetes," Sapna said. After rejecting the claim, the company refunded the Rs 2 lakh premium paid for one policy to Sapna on March 13, 2025. It became so difficult for me... life is tough for a single woman," she said. "Things had reached a point where the bank was about to take physical possession of our home. We weren't able to pay the EMIs for months. We survived on our savings, and even affording basic meals was a struggle." Rent, ration, school fees and electricity bills began piling up. "It was very difficult to manage. My husband's friends helped out a little bit. My relatives also pitched in," she said. She also struggled with her daughters' school fees. "The school waived off the fees for some time after I requested them. I had to teach tuition at home in the meanwhile to make some money." Sapna said she also began selling things that the family could do without. "I don't know how to drive so I sold one car. We also sold two beds, we sold everything that wasn't essential for us. It was a very difficult time." By September 2025, she was forced to make the hardest decision — she sold the house she and Deepesh had purchased. It was around this time that Sapna decided to challenge the rejection before the consumer commission, with the help of advocate Paras Jain. "Someone suggested we try our luck," she said. Before the commission, Sapna argued on three main grounds: -That Deepesh had died of cardiac arrest and that there was no direct link between his death and the alleged non-disclosure of elevated blood sugar levels. -She also pointed out that PNB MetLife had not conducted any medical tests or examination of Deepesh before issuing the policy. -

Andhra student falls to
death in Rajkot university,
2nd case in a week



A 20-year-old engineering student allegedly died by suicide by jumping from the sixth floor of a building on the campus of Marwadi University in Rajkot on Friday morning. The incident comes just six days after a female student of the same university committed suicide by jumping from the hostel building, on September 19.

In the latest incident, Hemanth Gandham, a native of Andhra Pradesh's Vijayawada, allegedly jumped from the sixth floor of the university's main building and he was declared dead on the spot by paramedics a few minutes after the fall. Deputy Registrar Nibish Verghese told The Indian Express that Gandham was a fifth semester student of Computer Engineering with a specialisation in Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The incident took place around 8:10 am on Friday just after a class ended, said Verghese. Several university officials reached the spot and the police and paramedics were informed. The body has been sent for postmortem. Inspector A N Jani of Kuvadwa Road police station said that an Accidental Death (AD) report has been filed. No suicide note has been recovered, he added. Hemmath was distressed about his health, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone-1) Hetal Patel said, adding that no suicide note has been recovered. He had undergone a few surgeries recently and had confided in his hostel roommate that if his health issues persist, he wanted to die, she said. The Kuvadava police have initiated a probe, Patel added. On September 19, Alla Venkatesh Soubharnika (19), a native of Andhra Pradesh's Guntur, allegedly jumped to her death from the 10th floor of the hostel building. She was a third semester student of computer engineering with a specialisation in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science (AIDS). After the second suicide incident at the University in a week, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) staged a protest and several agitating students were detained by the police.

Pune deploys 20
teams to inspect
sweets, prasad quality



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has deployed 20 teams across Pune city to inspect food products ahead of Ganesh Visarjan on Friday, with a special focus on sweets, mawa, khoya and prasad being distributed to devotees during the immersion processions.

The teams have been inspecting sweet shops, sweet manufacturing units and other food outlets since Thursday afternoon and have been collecting samples for testing. The inspection drive continued through the night and will remain in place through Friday and Saturday, officials said. Each of the 20 teams comprises Food Safety Officers and is headed by an Assistant Commissioner. The FDA's Pune division has stepped up inspections during Ganeshotsav to check the quality and safety of food products being sold and distributed during the festival. Officials said the teams are particularly monitoring prasad distributed during the Visarjan processions to prevent complaints related to its quality. Officials said prompt action would be taken if the FDA receives complaints regarding the quality or safety of prasad distributed during the processions.

Submit supporting
documents promptly,
Telangana CEO urges voters

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Electoral Officer C Sudharsan Reddy said about 60 percent out of 92.87 lakh notices related to electors have already been distributed across the State. He asked voters who received the notices to submit required supporting documents as mentioned in them.

Reddy on Friday reviewed the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process for electoral rolls in the Tandur Assembly constituency of Vikarabad district. He examined the voter registration process being handled by BLOs, including the distribution of notices and collection of supporting documents. The Telangana CEO said the inspection was conducted to understand the issues being faced at the field level in connection with the SIR notices already issued, assess how BLOs were carrying out their duties, and find out whether voters were facing any difficulties. He instructed BLOs to ensure that voter registration is carried out properly without causing any inconvenience to voters.

Efforts for Member of Parliament Position:



Earlier, I applied for the Member of Parliament (MP) position for the Secunderabad constituency. While the opportunity did not materialize due to strategic political considerations and party dynamics, this process reaffirmed my commitment to the Congress Party and its vision. The leadership, recognizing my dedication and contributions, assured me of significant opportunities in the future. This experience has strengthened my resolve to continue serving the party and contributing to its success at every level.

My age and energy position me as a long-term asset to the party. I aim to inspire more young individuals to step into politics, ensuring a vibrant, forward-thinking Congress for future generations. By integrating creativity, resilience, and commitment, I can bridge the gap between traditional political values and modern dynamics.

Vision for Youth in Politics

Youth in politics is not just necessary but vital for shaping the current ecosystem and addressing the dynamic challenges of society. As a young



My Vision as MLC
Empowering Grassroots Leadership
Championing Public Causes
Modernizing Party Communication
As an MLC, I aim to build stronger connections between the party and the people, ensuring that every voice is represented in the



Over 20 years of consistent service to the Congress Party, from grassroots activism to leadership roles.

A strong voice in over 2,500 debates and appearances, with a fearless approach to countering opposition and promoting party values.

As a young, dynamic leader, I represent the future of the party, ensuring sustained relevance and impact.

As a Computer Science Engineer, I've integrated technology and creativity into political strategies, fostering greater connectivity and outreach.

Closing Statement



legislative process. My focus will be on empowering grassroots leaders and fostering inclusive development.

Leveraging my legal and public advocacy expertise, I will address pressing issues like corruption, unemployment, and social justice while actively countering the influence of BRS-BJP collusion.

With a proven track record of building robust media systems, I will further strengthen the Congress's communication strategies to resonate with both urban and rural audiences, especially engaging the youth.

Why My Candidacy Matters

Proven Dedication:

Dynamic Leadership:

Youthful Energy and Vision:

Innovative Approach:

Under the visionary leadership of Sonia Gandhi ji, Mallikarjun Kharge ji, Rahul Gandhi ji, Chief Minister Sri Revanth Reddy, TPCC Chief Sri Mahesh Kumar Goud, Deputy Chief Minister Sri Bhatti Vikramarka, and our esteemed Telangana Senior Congress leaders, I am confident that the Congress Party will continue to thrive.

As an MLC, I will dedicate myself to serving the people of Telangana while reinforcing the party's core values and vision.

I am grateful for this opportunity and would welcome the chance to discuss my qualifications and plans in greater detail.

Sincerely,
Sama Ram Mohan Reddy
Chairman, TPCC Media and Communications Department
Official Spokesperson, Telangana Congress

