

Rahul Gandhi questions ECI

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Centre, suggesting the CEC to resign and turn "approver" in the alleged "stealing" of votes. This comes a day after a media report claimed differences within the poll panel regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and other issues. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has, however, rejected the report.

Addressing a press conference, Rahul Gandhi questioned the "absence of anti-incumbency" against the BJP. He asserted that the anti-incumbency factor "spares no one". The LoP cited the ex-

ample of former Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi, saying that she too fell prey to "anti-incumbency" within one to two years of leading India to victory in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war. "Despite prevailing anti-incumbency for years, it suddenly disappears from Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh," Rahul Gandhi said, while terming it a "fundamental" question. "This is an attack on the idea on the basic infrastructure on the expression of every single Indian," the Congress leader alleged.

He reiterated his previous allegation that 2014 Lok Sabha elections and several other Assembly polls have been rigged. "My questions were being ignored by India's institutional framework," he said. The Leader of Opposition emphasised that "if the votes are stolen, any law be-

Demands CEC Gyanesh Kumar's resignation



ing made by the Parliamentarians, who won on stolen votes, is illegal".

"Any institutional changes they make is also illegal," he added. Rahul Gandhi referred to a law passed on De-

cember 21, 2023, that "makes the Election Commissioner immune to investigations" and also to the previous "vote chori" allegations made by the Congress, including the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra'. Citing

the claims of the media report, the LoP alleged that action was not taken on the letters sent by the two Election Commissioners, "because Gyanesh Kumar was being protected by Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and others." Claiming that the Indian electoral system has been exposed, Rahul Gandhi claimed that there is enough material to prove it. "This has never happened before in the history of independent India. Today elections are fundamentally broken and the laws that have been passed by the Parliament are open to question because the vote has been destroyed," he said. Rahul Gandhi also sought the immediate resignation of Gyanesh Kumar.

Directly addressing the CEC Gyanesh Kumar, the LoP said: "What you have done amounts to treason. It is an attack on the Constitution and the legal structure of the country...you were

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supposed to ensure that the vote is protected." "We are not going to let democracy be destroyed in India and sit in silence. People who are responsible for this are going to get punished someday or the other," he asserted.

Rahul Gandhi appreciated the two ECs, saying they have done a "wise thing by coming clean". At the same time, the LoP advised Gyanesh Kumar to turn "approver", say-

ing that it would be an act of nationalism. "The Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) and Home Minister Amit Shah are undoubtedly going to be investigated for what they have done...This is an act against the Indian State and its people. A person who attacks votes and fundamentally destroys India's democratic institution is an anti-national, nothing else," Rahul Gandhi remarked.

Xi Jinping calls for stronger China-US friendship at white house dinner



Washington, Sept 24 (GNS): ing to my wife and me your gracious hospitality and thoughtful arrangements. You and Mrs. Trump have made many special arrangements for our visit, all prepared with meticulous care and consideration in every detail. You make us feel truly at home. I would also like to extend my sincere greetings to Americans from all sectors of society who about China-US relations and support the further growth of our bilateral ties, the Chinese President said.

Xi recalled Trump's visit to China in May this year, saying both leaders had agreed to build a constructive China-US relationship based on strategic stability.

He added that his visit to the United States followed Trump's invitation and marked an important moment in bilateral engagement. "In May this year, President Trump paid a successful visit to China at my invitation. We agreed to build a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability. During the visit, President Trump warmly invited me to visit the United States, and I have come as promised.

Jantar Mantar 2.0 if CEC Gyanesh Kumar doesn't quit in 48 hrs: CJP

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): Amid the escalating controversy over voter lists, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Thursday demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and threatened a nationwide agitation, including 'Jantar Mantar 2.0', if he failed to step down within 48 hours. It also sought an independent inquiry into the manner in which electoral-roll decisions are processed through the Election Commission's centralised technology platform.

Addressing a press conference here, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke and co-conveners Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka alleged that the centralisation of electoral-roll functions had created a system in which a voter may be found eligible by a



constituency-level Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), but still remain excluded from the final electoral roll because the decision cannot be recorded through the software. The allegations come amid reports that two Election Commissioners had raised concerns about the centralisation of voter-database access and the functioning of ECINet, the

software platform used in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process.

Citing reports from Goa, the party claimed that 97 voters remained excluded from the final electoral roll despite decisions by EROs in their favour. According to the reports referenced by the party, the facility to record their inclusion was controlled centrally from Delhi.

"The issue is no longer just deletion; it is who can reverse it," CJP leaders said.

Das alleged that powers traditionally exercised by EROs were being effectively constrained by the centralised system and questioned the role of the Election Commission's IT division in determining whether decisions taken at the constituency level

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could be implemented. The Election Commission's voter-service infrastructure states that electoral-roll registration, correction and updating are administered through its digital systems. Its official portal also says that the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for the preparation, revision and correction of electoral rolls

within a state. Ranka argued that exclusion from the electoral roll could have consequences beyond voting, alleging that welfare benefits in some states were linked to voter status. He presented the claim as part of the party's broader argument that electoral-roll verification requires greater transparency.

Madras HC rejects plea to bar resigned MLAs from contesting bypolls

Chennai, Sept 24 (GNS): The Madras High Court has dismissed a petition seeking to make legislators who resign for political reasons pay the cost of the resulting bypolls and face a five-year ban on contesting elections.

The court said the changes sought by the petitioner would require legislation, which is a matter for Parliament or the legislature. Judges cannot introduce such provisions through a court order, the bench observed while rejecting the public interest litigation. The petition was filed by Sudhan, an advocate from Saidapet in Chennai. He argued that legislators who step down soon after winning an election disregard the mandate given to them by voters and force the public to bear the expense



of another poll.

He asked the court to direct the Election Commission to devise a procedure requiring such former MLAs to deposit the cost of a bypoll when they file nomination papers to contest it. His petition also sought a legal amendment that would prevent legislators who resign for political reasons from contesting elections for five years. As an interim measure, Sudhan wanted the court

to halt the bypolls in the Madurantakam and Dharampuram constituencies until his petition was decided. The matter came before a bench of Chief Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice G. Arul Murugan. During the hearing, the petitioner cited the possibility of an elected representative resigning within two weeks of a victory and then entering the contest again as a candidate of another party.

K'taka to appeal in court against cauvery water release order: CM Shivakumar

Chitradurga, Sept 24 (GNS): Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Thursday said the state government would file an appeal in court against the direction to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu, while assuring that the interests of farmers would be protected.

Speaking to reporters near the helipad of Sirigere Mutt in Chitradurga, CM Shivakumar said Karnataka would release water if there was sufficient availability, but pointed out that inflows into the state's reservoirs had stopped and rainfall had also declined.

"We will release water if there is water. But inflows into our reservoirs have also stopped, and the rains have stopped. There is considerable pressure on us



in this matter. I will assess the water situation and discuss it with the Irrigation Minister before informing you about the next course of action," he said. On the drought situation in the state, the CM said the government was preparing a framework on the measures required to support farmers and the assistance needed from the Centre.

"Since a drought-like situation has developed in

the state, we need to prepare a plan on how farmers should be assisted and what kind of support is required from the Central government. These issues have also been discussed in the Legislative Assembly. The government will discuss and take the necessary measures," he said.

CM Shivakumar thanked Opposition leaders for cooperating with the government on the proposal to take an all-party delegation to the Centre to highlight Karnataka's concerns.

He also said leaders of different political parties had agreed with the state's decision on the Kasturirangan report and the protection of the Western Ghats, keeping in mind the interests of the Malnad and coastal regions.

PSLV is obstructing ISRO's transition to a new era. Don't delay its handover to industry

Ashwin Prasad
ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV, has suffered two consecutive failures within eight months. These are anomalies for a rocket revered as the Indian Space Research Organisation's most reliable workhorse. They are fuelling deep concerns about the ripple effects on India's space sector and its broader ambitions.

But for us to try and understand what this moment means, it helps to hold two ideas at once: The weight of PSLV's long record of performance, and the fragility of the transition currently underway in India's space programme.

Discounting the recent failures of flights C61 and C62, the PSLV held a success rate of approximately 95 per cent. For decades, it maintained an unbroken streak of successes. It earned a global reputation as one of the most reliable launch vehicles. It carried the weight of India's most visible scientific missions like the first lunar probe (Chandrayaan-1), the first Mars orbiter (Mangalyaan), and the first solar observatory (Aditya-L1). Few rockets have demonstrated this level of mission flexibility.

The point here is this: The PSLV is a mature piece of technology. It is a platform designed, optimised, and perfected over three decades. But even mature technology is not immune to entropy. Systems can drift when suppliers change,



components age, and processes evolve. However, ISRO has proven it knows how to build a reliable launch system, how to run missions repeatedly, and how to recover from setbacks. It is reasonable to believe ISRO can fix PSLV again. Space has a lot many more participants and stakeholders. Back-to-back failures hurt more today than they might have a decade ago because of this. It is now tied to commerce, national security, universities, startups, and international partnerships.

With the recent failed launches, multiple satellites were lost. The consequences of failure spread across many stakeholders.

Until PSLV returns to

service cleanly, global customers and insurers may hesitate to book rides on a launcher under scrutiny. This hesitation comes at a critical time, when India is trying to grab a larger slice of the global launch economy. This crisis also arrives at an awkward institutional moment. ISRO's ambition set has expanded. Human spaceflight (Gaganyaan), the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station demand deep attention from the agency's best engineers and scientists.

The Indian Space Policy 2023 reflects this new direction. It outlines ISRO's role being reoriented to dedicate more time doing what

only ISRO can do, which is frontier R&D, while routine services move outward to industry. This is where the PSLV confusion lies. It is vital, yet it belongs in the "routine operations" bucket. The ideal scenario was a smooth handover of a perfected PSLV to industry partners like the HAL-L&T consortium. These failures complicate that handover. ISRO is forced to stall to fix a legacy platform, creating friction across the national roadmap. ISRO has to clear this bottleneck and restore momentum. To achieve this, it must prioritise three decisive actions.

First, be transparent. After consecutive failures, transparency becomes

crucial for all stakeholders and the public. Even if ISRO cannot release every technical detail immediately, it should commit to a clear cadence of communication: What is known, what is still being tested, what hypotheses have been ruled out, and when the next update will come. Silence creates a vacuum that gets filled with speculation. It is bad for commercial confidence.

Second, publish a return-to-flight plan with timelines. This is the most practical way to rebuild confidence through process. The industry needs to see a checklist. By when will the failure investigation be closed? By when will corrective actions be completed? What additional verification tests will be done on the ground before flight? What are the "go/no-go" criteria for declaring PSLV ready again? This restarts the rest of the ecosystem and commercial planning. Third, keep the long game in sight. As ISRO moves toward higher-risk missions, failures become more likely because the frontier is harder. That is exactly why a culture of openness and process discipline must begin now.

Space has moved to the centre of global geopolitics and economics. Reliable access to orbit is the entry ticket to space. India has secured its seat at the table through decades of perseverance and brilliance. It should protect that position now with openness and clarity.

India's growth numbers look great, but it has a private investment problem

Mihir Sharma
India's economy should be the envy of the world. Official statisticians have just announced that it will grow at a blistering 7.4% in the financial year ending March. But New Delhi isn't breaking out the champagne just yet. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a big decision to make later this month — and growth can and will falter if he chooses wrong. It's one he's been ducking for the decade-plus that he's been in power. Since he was first elected in 2014, Modi's economic policy has had two pillars: Fiscal restraint and ever-higher infrastructure spending. He may no longer be able to manage both. Which will win?

From the outside, the economy looks like it is in a "Goldilocks phase," as the commentator TN Ninan has argued: inflation is low, the trade deficit manageable, and private-sector balance sheets are healthy. But, he points out, that doesn't mean the economy is actually growing any faster than it was a decade ago, when it had far more troubles.

Investors by and large agree. Writing in the Financial Times, Ruchir Sharma points out that India's "not getting any love" for its world-beating growth — capital isn't flowing in like it should.

There's an additional, underlying problem here that explains why the numbers look great but its future



feels uncertain. And that is that private investment is persistently low. In fact, Modi has made at least one big structural change to the economy. He shifted the burden of investing for growth from companies to the public sector. The share of federal government capital spending in GDP terms has doubled since 2014.

Alongside that, however, debt has ballooned. The number that defines Modinomics isn't 7.4% GDP growth, It's 81%, the current debt-to-GDP ratio. That was in the 60s when the current government took over.

This has had real world consequences. The state gobbles up the available credit, interest rates are higher than they could be, and entrepreneurs don't think it's worth getting out of bed. It's a self-reinforcing downward spiral. Capital scarcity means private

investment is low. The government, as spender of last resort, steps in to keep the economy humming. This makes capital even scarcer. Breaking out of this cycle requires considerable political will. So far, Modi has bet on the opposite: That massive infrastructure projects will "crowd in" private capital. Shiny new ports and highways, however, haven't been enough to get companies to borrow and invest. Instead, they have created a growth model that is fueled by government spending. New Delhi is now running out of money to burn.

In a few weeks, the government will present its budget for the next year, in which it will be forced to make a choice. It can maintain the capital-expenditure push, at the risk of missing its fiscal consolidation goals. Or it can trim the

construction pipeline, accepting slower medium-term growth in key sectors — including steel and cement — that have become dangerously dependent on public-sector orders.

The economic choice may be clear, but the political one isn't. The marginal return on a new expressway might be lower than the marginal benefit of a lower risk premium for Indian borrowing. But the electoral return of the first is a lot higher. Modi has built his political image around big spending — streamlined trains that zip through rural stations, highways to forgotten towns, and the like. Fiscal consolidation isn't quite as photogenic. Nobody organizes ribbon-cutting ceremonies when the debt-to-GDP ratio ticks downward.

Nevertheless, ministers have promised to lower this

proportion to 50% by 2031. The main reason for this might be to get markets to look away from persistently high fiscal deficits — almost 5% last year — by focusing their attention on another figure. But reducing debt by 30 percentage points of GDP won't be easy either, even if growth stays above 7%. Officials will have discovered by now that either route means that capital expenditure will have to be cut.

Infrastructure spending hasn't gotten the private sector to invest, and isn't paying for itself through additional growth. Modi has to accept that the government must tighten its belt; he doesn't have any other weapons left in his arsenal. A state that mops up less credit is his best chance to get private investment flowing again. To ensure India's future growth, he should stop borrowing against it.

India has an import dependency problem

India approaches the Union Budget season with a rare degree of global confidence. The International Monetary Fund has consistently identified the country as the fastest growing major economy and a significant contributor to global economic growth, particularly at a time when most of the other regions are experiencing a slowdown. This assessment is indicative of robust domestic demand, public investment, and macroeconomic stability. However, maintaining this momentum necessitates an examination beyond mere headline growth figures. It requires critical analysis of India's production, import patterns, and underlying reasons. Within this analysis lies a subtle contradiction: India remains reliant on imports in sectors where it should not be. This is most evident in the food and agriculture sectors. Despite being one of the largest global producers of crops, India imports approximately 60 per cent of its edible oil consumption, regularly imports 2-3 million tonnes of pulses, and is increasingly reliant on imports for animal feed. At the same time, rice production consistently surpasses domestic requirements, necessitating either exports or costly storage solutions. This simultaneous occurrence of surplus and shortage is not quite imposed by nature, but rather shaped by policy.

Governments globally express concern regarding food inflation and India is no exception. When the prices of essential commodities increase, political pressure escalates rapidly. The immediate reaction is to impose export restrictions, reduce import duties, and release buffer stocks. These interventions often succeed in mitigating price increases in the short term. However, what is less frequently examined is the impact of these measures on long-term production patterns. Farmers make decisions several months prior to harvest, investing in seeds, fertilisers, and labour, based on anticipated prices and policy conditions at the time of market entry. When prices rise one year but markets are abruptly closed the following year, farmers learn a straightforward lesson: the potential for profit is temporary, while the risk of loss is permanent. Over time, they tend to favour crops for which the state mitigates price risk through assured procurement, and avoid crops where policy responses are unpredictable.

This phenomenon explains why India produces an excess of rice and insufficient oilseeds. It is not due to farmer conservatism or a lack of capability; rather, it is a rational response to the incentives presented. Trade serves to then fill these gaps engendered by domestic policy. Imports mitigate the shortfall in production that is discouraged by policy itself. What may be perceived as reliance on global markets is, in fact, dependence cultivated domestically. The fiscal implications are significant and persistent. Public funds are allocated to the procurement, transportation, and storage of surplus grain, while additional resources are deployed to manage imports through tariff adjustments and ad hoc interventions. These expenditures recur solely because the underlying incentive structure remains unaltered.

Economists often use the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) as a metric to assess market concentration. In simple terms, it evaluates whether production or sourcing is diversified or dominated by a limited number of items or suppliers. A high HHI indicates vulnerability, whereas a lower HHI suggests resilience.

From this perspective, India encounters a dual concentration issue. Domestically, agricultural production is concentrated in a limited range of crops, with rice and wheat predominating in terms of land use and public expenditure. Internationally, imports of edible oils and pulses are sourced from a restricted number of countries. This combination renders the system fragile, as any climatic shock, global price surge, or geopolitical disruption can have a disproportionately large impact. There exists a more profound concept that explains the persistence of this concentration: the Product Complexity Index (PCI). As I discussed in a column of mine from September 2025, the PCI does not measure the monetary value of a country's production but rather the knowledge embedded within it. Products that are easily manufactured by numerous countries are ranked low, whereas those necessitating advanced capabilities and coordination are ranked high. Nations that move up the PCI ladder tend to experience accelerated growth, diversify with greater ease, and exhibit increased resilience to economic shocks. Even though this concept is primarily applied to manufacturing, it matters just as much in agriculture.

Rice and wheat, while fundamental, are characterised as low-complexity products. Their production requires minimal coordination beyond the agricultural stage and results in limited spillover effects. In contrast, oilseeds, pulses, protein crops, and processed foods exhibit greater complexity. These products require advanced seed systems, efficient storage, processing capabilities, logistics, and market integration. They contribute to higher income per hectare and establish connections with related industries. In short, their complexity is the very attribute that makes them valuable for sustainable long-term growth.

India faces a challenge wherein policy certainty is strongest for the simplest products and least assured for the more complex ones. When complexity is met with uncertainty, production tends to concentrate in areas where risk is mitigated, capability development is hindered, and imports increase.

This pattern is not confined to the agricultural sector alone. The broader Indian economy similarly exhibits a propensity to expand in scale more rapidly than in depth. The consistent lesson is that complexity does not arise spontaneously; it requires stable incentives and patience.

The implication for the Union Budget is that food security should increasingly be viewed not only in terms of availability, but also in terms of production incentives and resilience. Instead of repeatedly responding to price shocks through export bans, import-duty changes and stock releases, policy could focus on creating a more predictable environment for farmers. Stable trade policies, better market infrastructure and clearer signals on procurement can encourage farmers to diversify production without exposing them to sudden policy reversals.

A shift towards higher-value and more complex agricultural products would also require investment beyond the farm gate. Improved seed research, irrigation, cold storage, food processing, warehousing and logistics can help create an ecosystem in which farmers have access to reliable markets. Such investments can generate employment across multiple stages of the value chain while reducing the need to depend on imported processed products and agricultural inputs.

The same principle applies to India's manufacturing ambitions. Moving from assembly and low-value production towards components, specialised machinery, advanced materials and technology-intensive products requires sustained investment in skills, research and development, infrastructure and supplier networks. Incentive schemes can help initiate such transitions, but long-term competitiveness ultimately depends on whether domestic firms develop capabilities that remain viable after temporary policy support ends.

Import dependence should therefore not automatically be interpreted as a weakness. Imports can improve efficiency, provide consumers with greater choice and give domestic producers access to essential inputs. The concern arises when imports become necessary because domestic policy discourages the development of productive capacity in areas where India has the resources and capabilities to compete. The objective should be strategic diversification rather than blanket import substitution.

The Budget therefore offers an opportunity to address the deeper structure of growth rather than merely its immediate symptoms. India's strong headline growth provides room for greater ambition, but sustaining that growth will require policies that reward diversification, capability building and complexity. If incentives become more predictable and investment extends across the full production chain, India can gradually move from managing shortages and surpluses to building a more resilient and sophisticated economy.

Wetland Conservation Must Become a People’s Movement: Kirti Vardhan Singh

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav on Monday said that wetlands nurture not only ecosystems, but also communities, culture and livelihoods. On the occasion of World Wetlands Day 2026, the Minister, in a post on social media platform 'X', said that water is life and wetlands are the lifelines of the planet.

Yadav said that India has made communities and culture central to its approach to wetland conservation. He noted that under the environmentally conscious leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India's Ramsar network has expanded to 98 sites from 26 in 2014. To mark this year's World Wetlands Day, an event was organised by the Ministry at Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary on the theme ‘Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage’. The event focused on the importance of wetlands and the role of traditional knowledge and communities in their conservation.

Addressing the event, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh said that wetlands are not just water resources but also play a crucial role in people's daily social lives. He said that wetlands are deeply connected with culture, festivals and

the next two years.

Secretary (EFCC) Shri Tanmay Kumar said environmental protection is not possible without community support. He said that under the leadership of the Union Environment Minister, Wetland Mitras play an important role in conserving wetlands, having a direct impact on the surrounding environment, culture and livelihoods of people. Referring to the increase in the number of Ramsar sites since 2014, Shri Kumar said this reflects growing public awareness about the importance of wetlands and the role of communities in their conservation.

The event kicked off with dignitaries inaugurating an exhibition featuring institutions and organisations working on wetlands, biodiversity and environmental conservation. The programme also included the felicitation of States for newly designated Ramsar Sites. During the event, the Ministry also released the document Cultural Wonders of Ramsar Sites, which highlights the lesser-known cultural significance of Ramsar Sites and their role in preserving intangible cultural heritage linked to wetlands.

Swachhata Pakhwada 2025 Awards were presented to the National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi; Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata; and Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, in recognition of their exemplary

NHAI Signs MoU with NFSU to Strengthen Digital Security for National Highway Management

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): To strengthen digital security and data protection, Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), a Government of India Institution of National Importance headquartered in Gandhinagar, Gujarat to foster collaboration in the fields of research, training and consultancy, particularly in cyber forensics, digital evidence integrity and advanced technological applications relevant to the National Highway manage-

ment. The MoU was signed by Shri A.R. Chitranshi, Chief Operating Officer, IHMCL and Dr. S.O. Junare, Campus Director, NFSU, Gandhinagar in presence of NHAI Chairman, Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav; Shri Vishal Chauhan, Chairman and Managing Director, IHMCL and other senior officials from NHAI, IHMCL and NFSU.

The MoU aims to facilitate mutually beneficial academic and research-oriented cooperation between the two government bodies to enhance knowledge creation, technological resilience and institutional capacity building. The collaboration will contribute towards

strengthening cyber security frameworks and forensic reliability in critical National Highway operations and digital platforms. Under the MoU, NFSU will provide technical guidance and support to IHMCL for the development of laboratories equipped with state-of-the-art technologies, including CCTV, multimedia analysis, audio-video analysis and digital as well as cyber forensics laboratories.

In addition, the University will support IHMCL in strengthening cyber resilience and evidence integrity by providing specialized training programs in cyber & digital forensics, multime-

dia analysis and related domains. The MoU will focus on enhancing collaboration in areas such as Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF), Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS), Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Traffic Management Systems (TMS) and Weigh-in-Motion (WIM).

Identified areas also include secure camera-based imaging systems, encrypted data storage and retrieval, cybersecurity reviews of critical applications, Evidence integrity and Forensic reliability, scientific improvement of imaging accuracy, and establishment of Security Operations Centre (SOC)

services and forensic validation laboratories.

Also, both organizations will undertake joint research, development and consultancy projects in mutually agreed areas. A coordinator will be nominated by each organization to oversee implementation and periodically review progress. The MoU will remain valid for a period of three years.

Defining step forward in India-US economic relations: Nitin Gadkari

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, on Tuesday welcomed the India-US trade deal, calling it a "defining step" forward in bilateral economic ties. India and the US reached a trade deal on Monday following a phone call between PM Modi and President Trump, cutting US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent and easing Indian trade barriers on US products. "Today marks a defining step forward in India-US economic relations as the trade deal is finalised with tariffs reduced to 18 per cent, opening new avenues for growth and co-operation. My heartfelt con-

gratulations to Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump for their leadership in securing this historic outcome," Gadkari posted on X. He further stated that the agreement "strengthens trust, boosts business confidence, and sets the stage for deeper trade, investment, and shared prosperity for both nations".

Earlier on Monday, Trump said a phone call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi led to the deal. He said India would also stop buying Russian oil and increase purchases of US energy, technology and agricultural products. He said the agreement would strengthen ties

between the two countries and support efforts to end the war in Ukraine.

PM Modi also took to X and said, "Wonderful to speak with my dear friend President Trump today. Delighted that Made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18 per cent.

Big thanks to President Trump on behalf of the 1.4 billion people of India for this wonderful announcement." He said that when two "large economies" and the "world's largest democracies" work together, "it benefits our people and unlocks immense opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation".

Transforming India into a Global Biopharma Hub

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): The Union Budget 2026-27 marks a decisive shift in India's approach to pharmaceuticals by placing biopharma and biologic medicines at the centre of its healthcare and manufacturing strategy. This aligns with the Government of India's vision of transforming India into a leading global biopharma industry and capturing 5% of the global biopharmaceutical market share.

Acknowledging the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and the increasing global reliance on biologics and biosimilars, the Budget positions biopharma as a high-value, future-facing segment critical for both public health and economic growth.

Biopharma involves production, manufacturing, or extraction of therapies through biological organisms, such as human cells, fungi, or microbes. Some examples of biopharmaceuticals include vaccines, antibody treatments, gene therapies, cell implants, modern insulin, and recombinant protein drugs.

The Budget links manufacturing scale, skilled human resources, clinical research capacity and regulatory credibility into a single framework. This signals a clear intent to move India up the pharmaceutical value chain—from being a cost-efficient producer of generic medicines to a global hub for high-quality, innovation-driven bio-

pharmaceutical products. This Budget push further strengthens the groundwork for India to compete in the global biopharma market while improving domestic access to advanced and affordable biologic therapies.

In recent years, medicines have increasingly moved beyond traditional chemical drugs to therapies that are developed using biology itself. This shift has brought biopharma to the forefront of modern healthcare. Biopharma, or biopharmaceuticals, refers to the part of the pharmaceutical industry that focuses on developing and manufacturing medicines using living biological systems, rather than relying solely on chemical synthesis. In simple terms, biopharma medicines are produced by working with cells.

, microorganisms or other biological materials. These may include human or animal cells, bacteria, fungi or similar biological platforms that are used to grow or produce therapeutic substances. Using biotechnology-based research methods, these living systems are guided to produce medicines that can prevent, diagnose or treat disease. Because they are created through biological processes, biopharma products are often more complex and targeted than conventional drugs, allowing them to interact more precisely with biological pathways.

Stock market cheers India-US trade deal, Sensex rallies over 2,400 points

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): The Indian equity markets surged sharply by around 3 per cent early on Tuesday with broad-based buying across sectors, buoyed by the announcement of the India-US trade deal. As of 9.25 am, Sensex added 2,421 points, or 2.97 per cent, to reach 84,088, and Nifty gained 741 points, or 2.96 per cent to settle at 25,829.

India and United States have agreed to a trade agreement under which reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods will be slashed to 18 per cent from 25 per cent, and the additional 25 per cent duty on purchases of Russian crude oil will be eliminated. The trade deal will be "effective immediately", President Donald Trump said, following a phone call

with Prime Minister Narendra Modi late on Monday, offering immediate tariff relief for India. Main broad-cap indices posted strong gains, as the Nifty Midcap 100 surged 3.10 per cent, and the Nifty Smallcap 100 added 3.25 per cent. All sectoral indices were showed huge gains with realty, auto, consumer durables and IT being the major gainers, up 4.47 per cent, 3.78 per cent, 3.69 per cent and 3.04 per cent, respectively.

At 18 per cent, India's tariff rate is now lower than that of several major export-oriented Asian economies. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Vietnam face tariffs of 20 per cent, while Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan face tariffs of 19 per cent.

Immediate support for Nifty lies at 25,600-25,800 zone, while resistance is anchored at 26,200-26,350 zone, market watchers said.

"The dramatic announcement of the long-awaited US-India trade deal and the US decision to cut tariffs on India from 50 per cent to 18 per cent is a game changer for the Indian economy and stock markets as its delay was the single important factor weighing on the markets," an analyst said.

According to market watchers, India's growth rate will rise to around 7.5 per cent in FY27, assisted by higher exports to the US from the deal, and corporate earnings already on revival could accelerate to around 16 per cent to 18 per cent in FY27. Analysts also

said that the rupee will rebound sharply, adding that the combination of US-India trade deal, the EU-India trade deal and the growth-oriented Budget will boost the market sentiments. The positive sentiment could trigger immediate foreign capital inflows, potentially turning India's Balance of Payments (BoP) position.

Large caps including banking leaders, non-banking financials, telecom, capital goods and IT, which are trading the favourites of FII can see huge inflows, market watchers said.

In Asian markets, China's Shanghai index gained 0.38 per cent, and Shenzhen added 0.93 per cent, Japan's Nikkei surged 3.23 per cent, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index edged up

0.11 per cent. South Korea's Kospi surged 5.04 per cent.

The US markets ended largely in the green in the last trading session as Nasdaq gained 0.56 per cent. The S&P 500 advanced 0.54 per cent, and the Dow added 1.05 per cent.

On February 2, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) net sold equities worth Rs 1,832 crore, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) were net buyers of equities worth Rs 2,446 crore.

Market participants said the tariff reduction could provide a boost to sectors with significant exposure to the US market, particularly textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, auto components and other export-oriented industries.

Lower tariff barriers could

improve the price competitiveness of Indian products and support order flows, although the actual impact will depend on the details and implementation of the agreement.

The sharp rise in equities also reflected expectations of improved investor confidence and stronger corporate earnings. A reduction in trade-related uncertainty could encourage companies to accelerate investment and expansion plans, while greater visibility over export demand may support earnings in several manufacturing and services segments.

Analysts, however, cautioned that the immediate market reaction should be distinguished from the longer-term economic impact of the agreement.

Mega Telescopes, Advanced Research Infrastructure to Boost India’s Global Science Standing: Dr Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, Sept 24 (GNS): Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh today said that the Union Budget 2026-27 pushes technology-driven AI-integrated structural reforms to shape India's future and lays down a forward-looking roadmap for the next quarter century.

Addressing the media in a post-Budget interaction organised by the Ministry of Science & Technology, the Minister said the Budget may take time to be fully appreciated, but it reflects

a clear, sequential vision where structural reforms are powered by cutting-edge technologies, and cutting-edge technologies are increasingly driven by AI. He said this makes the Budget inherently futuristic and places a responsibility on informed stakeholders, including the media, to communicate its long-term benefits to citizens.

Dr Jitendra Singh addressed concerns regarding benefits for the middle class, stating that the Budget's true impact lies in long-term relief from rising healthcare and living costs, rather than short-term income calculations. He said large-scale investment in biopharma, diagnostics, vaccines, and gene-based

therapies would significantly reduce the financial burden on families dealing with chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and metabolic disorders.

Highlighting India's growing health challenges, the Minister noted that the country has over 11-12 crore diabetics, nearly 14 crore pre-diabetics, and a rapidly increasing incidence of cancer, with projections touching two million cases annually by 2030. He said affordable drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics, supported by domestic biomanufacturing, would be a major social and economic support, especially for the middle class and vulnerable sections. Referring to the 10,000 crore Biopharma

Shakti initiative, Dr Jitendra Singh said India has already emerged as a global biomanufacturing hub, ranking among the top bio-economies globally and within the Indo-Pacific region. He said the new outlay will further strengthen this position by expanding capabilities in biologics, biosimilars, vaccines, medical devices, and gene-based technologies.

The Minister described biotechnology as the next major industrial driver, comparable to the role played by IT in previous decades, and said the upcoming industrial revolution will be a bio-revolution, encompassing recycling, regeneration, circular economy, and advanced life-science innovations. Dr Jitendra Singh

said the Budget also addresses non-communicable diseases and mental health, areas that were neglected in earlier decades. He announced that new speciality academic and clinical institutes for mental health will be established in North India, ensuring wider and more equitable access to care. He also highlighted the decision to establish new institutes of Ayurveda and pharmaceutical education, saying these initiatives will strengthen traditional medicine systems while integrating them with modern research and healthcare delivery. The Minister said the extension of customs duty exemptions on imported components for nuclear power plants till 2035 will

improve project efficiency and attract credible domestic and international investment. He said this aligns with recent reforms aimed at expanding private sector participation in the nuclear ecosystem. Dr Jitendra Singh also referred to the development of rare earth corridors and critical mineral initiatives, stating these will support clean energy technologies, electronics manufacturing, and strategic industries, while reducing import dependence.

Calling the National Geospatial Mission a foundational reform, the Minister said it will play a decisive role in planned urbanisation, infrastructure design, and land management, especially as India witnesses

rapid rural-to-urban migration. Implemented through the PM Gati Shakti platform, the Mission will enable evidence-based planning using satellites, drones, and advanced mapping tools.

Dr Jitendra Singh highlighted the 20,000 crore allocation for Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) as a critical step towards industrial decarbonisation, circular economy, and environmental sustainability. He also announced structured deployment of AI in agriculture, ensuring farmers benefit from technology while being safeguarded from its unintended effects. The Minister said, the Budget ensures inclusivity, with measures that directly benefit the

poorest sections, including improved healthcare access, affordable medicines, district-level cancer care facilities, women-led entrepreneurship programmes, and livelihood generation through science-based interventions.

Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Prof. Abhay Karandikar, said the Budget places strong emphasis on science, technology, and innovation, with the term “technology” appearing repeatedly in the Finance Minister's speech. He announced the creation of two mega science R&D infrastructure facilities, a 30-metre National Large Optical Telescope, and a National Large Solar Telescope near Pangong Lake.

Dy CM Bhatti directs officials to ensure grand invest Telangana summit

Hyderabad, Sept 24 (GNS) Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, directed officials to formulate a comprehensive action plan to further develop the tourism sector in Telangana and establish the state as a prominent tourist destination at the national and international levels.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that tourism development is not limited to developing tourist destinations alone, but also

involves showcasing the Telangana brand to the world. He directed officials to take the tourism sector to a new level by increasing investments, employment and revenue opportunities through public-private partnerships.

A review meeting with senior officials of the Tourism and Culture Departments was held at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad on Thursday under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka. Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao attended

the meeting. The meeting discussed various issues, including tourism projects across the state, utilisation of departmental assets, budget allocations, private investments, protection of heritage structures and tourism branding.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed officials to expand private-sector participation along with government investments in the tourism sector and develop new projects under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. He stressed the need to utilise tourism



department assets efficiently rather than relying solely on government funds. He instructed officials to prepare a special list identifying properties with existing buildings, vacant lands and other locations that have

potential for development under the PPP model. He also directed them to develop these assets in a manner that generates revenue and take steps to attract private investments.

Bhatti Vikramarka called

for the integrated development of various tourism segments in Telangana, including temple tourism, eco-tourism and hill tourism. He suggested undertaking extensive branding and marketing initiatives to place the state's historical, cultural, spiritual and natural tourism destinations on the global tourism map.

He said special tourism circuits should be developed to encourage domestic and international tourists visiting Hyderabad to explore other parts of Telangana. The private sec-

tor should be encouraged to participate in developing hotels, resorts and other infrastructure facilities in tourism destinations, he said. The Deputy Chief Minister said protecting the state's historical monuments and heritage assets is an important responsibility of the government. He assured that necessary government support would be provided for conservation, maintenance and infrastructure development at historical sites such as Ramappa.

At the same time, he di-

rected officials to explore avenues for increasing revenue through new tourism projects. He stressed the need to maintain a balance between conservation activities that must be undertaken by the government and development projects that can be implemented through private participation. The meeting also discussed the effective implementation of the "Telangana Darshini" programme aimed at creating awareness among students about the state's history, culture and tourist destinations.

Youth Spotlight on Nizamabad Tourism



Falaknuma News State Bureau M.A.Samad Nizamabad, Sept 24 Efforts are underway to further strengthen tourism development in Nizamabad district by conserving its tourist attractions and bringing greater attention to their potential, Zilla Parishad CEO Sai Goud said.

Participating as the chief guest at a programme organised to mark World Tourism Day, he congratulated school and college students who took part in various competitions. He said Nizamabad had several tourist destinations with considerable historical, cultural and natural significance and stressed the need for their systematic conservation and development.

Sai Goud said a detailed report on measures required for the development and protection of tourist

places in the district had been submitted to the government. He urged people and young citizens to extend their cooperation and actively participate in tourism-related initiatives.

Nearly 250 students from schools registered with Youth Tourism Clubs participated in the competitions. Events included elocution, essay writing, painting, short reels and skits, providing a platform for students to display their creativity and understanding of tourism.

District Tourism Officer Pavan Kumar said the winners would be selected to represent Nizamabad at the State-level competitions in Hyderabad.

Kokila Nagaraju, along with Polytechnic College faculty members Raghavendra, Lalitha, Suresh and Ganga Das, attended the programme.

Laxman Kumar Challenges BRS Leaders Over Alleged Government Land

Hyderabad, Sept 24 (GNS): Telangana Social Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar challenged former minister Koppula Eshwar and BRS leaders to prove that government land is located in the farmhouses allegedly under the control of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, K. T. Rama Rao, T. Harish Rao and other BRS leaders.

Addressing a media conference in Dharmaram on Thursday, Laxman Kumar said that if government land was found in the possession of BRS leaders, the government would establish the facts with evidence and take action according to law. He challenged Koppula Eshwar to quit politics permanently if such allegations were proved. The



Minister also questioned the former Chief Minister's response to the alleged incident in which a spot where Dalits had staged a protest near KCR's farmhouse was reportedly "purified" with turmeric water. He said BRS SC Cell leaders should press KCR to apologise over the incident.

Laxman Kumar alleged that the previous BRS government had not conducted proper reviews of cases

registered in connection with attacks on Dalits. He said the Congress government recently held a state-level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting chaired by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to review cases registered under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The Minister said several people had allegedly purchased lands distributed to poor beneficiaries in Dharmaram and manipulated records. He said a comprehensive inquiry would be conducted into encroachment of government and assigned lands and that government land found in the possession of financially well-off individuals would be recovered and distributed to eligible poor people.

Tummala Opposes Cut in Palm Oil Import Duty, Seeks Farmer Protection

Hyderabad, Sept 24 (GNS): Telangana Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao has strongly criticised the Centre's decision to reduce the import duty on crude palm oil, stating that the move could adversely affect domestic oil palm farmers and create uncertainty over prices.

The Minister questioned the Centre's policy of encouraging farmers to take up oil palm cultivation while simultaneously reducing import duties on palm oil from abroad. He said the total import duty on crude palm oil has been reduced from 16.5% to 11%, which could give imported palm oil a competitive advantage and put pressure



on prices received by domestic oil palm farmers.

Tummala said Telangana had been seeking an increase in import duty to 44%, but the Centre instead reduced it. He urged the Union government to reconsider the decision immediately. The Minister said oil palm is a long-term crop requiring substantial investment in planting, irrigation,

fertilisers and maintenance. Sudden changes in market and import policies could affect farmers who have invested for several years, he said. According to Tummala, around 88,000 farmers are currently cultivating oil palm across nearly 3.20 lakh acres in Telangana. The State government is promoting the crop through investment subsidies, expansion of plantations, drip irrigation, infrastructure, processing units and refineries.

He said the Centre's National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEOP) also aims to expand domestic oil palm production and reduce India's dependence on edible oil imports.

Senior Citizens' Rights, Welfare Highlighted in Nizamabad



Falaknuma News State Bureau M.A.Samad Nizamabad, Sept 24

The Senior Citizens Welfare and Empowerment Week-2026 was inaugurated in Nizamabad on Thursday as part of the programmes being organised in connection with the International Day of Older Persons.

The inaugural programme was held at the chamber of the Additional Collector (LB), Nizamabad, with the participation of senior government officials, representatives of the Police Department, members of the district-level Senior Citizens Committee and office-bearers of various organisations working for the welfare of elderly persons.

During the programme, informational pamphlets outlining the various welfare schemes being imple-

mented by the government for senior citizens and the legal provisions intended to safeguard their interests were formally unveiled. The initiative was aimed at improving awareness among elderly persons about the support mechanisms and statutory protections available to them.

Additional Collector (LB) Sri Bhujanga Rao participated in the programme along with District Welfare Officer Smt. D. Soundarya, supervisors Sri Srinivas and Ms. Rekha, and Police Department representative SI Sri Raju. District-level Senior Citizens Committee members Anjaneyulu, Mayawar Rajeshwar, Narayana Reddy and Fayazuddin, along with Vasavi Club representative Ravi, were among those present. Representatives of Senior Citizens Forums,

Associations, Trusts and Foundations from across Nizamabad district also attended the programme. Presidents, secretaries and representatives of these organisations participated in the proceedings, reflecting the collective involvement of government agencies and civil society organisations in senior citizens' welfare.

The programme emphasised the importance of ensuring that elderly persons receive information about government welfare initiatives and legal safeguards and are able to access the support available to them. It also underlined the need for continued cooperation among government departments, the police, voluntary organisations and senior citizens' forums to promote a safe and dignified life for older persons.



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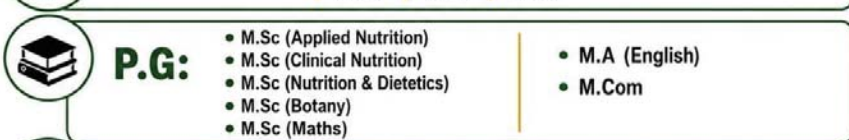
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SC Upholds Danam Nagender's Disqualification

Hyderabad, Sept 24 (GNS): A Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justice Joy-malya Bagchi, and Justice V. Mohanan dismissed the appeal filed by Danam Nagender. High Court decision upheld: The apex court clarified that the Telangana High Court had correctly interpreted the law and, therefore, there were no grounds to interfere with that verdict. Must face re-election: The court made it clear to Danam Nagender, "You have been disqualified; therefore, you must face re-election."

Khairatabad seat vacant - By-election certain: With

Danam Nagender's disqualification confirmed, the Khairatabad Assembly seat has officially become vacant. The court directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to take immediate steps to conduct a by-election for the constituency.

Interesting arguments in court: Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi presented arguments on behalf of Danam Nagender in the Supreme Court. He argued that he had not officially resigned from the BRS party and contended that merely contesting the Lok Sabha elections did not result in the cancellation of his membership.



WAKE UP TELANGANA

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MOHD ATHER RAHEEM

Journalist



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CHIEF GUEST
T. HARISH RAO
Former Minister
Deputy Floor Leader for the BRS in the Telangana state assembly.



CHIEF GUEST
K. T. RAMA RAO
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BRS



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Nagendra



For More Info Call & Whatsapp : **+91 7337334543**
Email : wakeuptelangana2021@gmail.com

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