

SOUTH ASIA JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

Mass Voter Exclusion & Risk of Mass Disenfranchisement by Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls in India

Facts, Key Concerns, Emerging Evidence, and Developments to Watch

1. Introduction

On 29 April 2026, the Election Commission of India (ECI) [announced](#) that legislative assembly elections in the eastern state of West Bengal (WB)—bordering Bangladesh, and home to over a 100 million people—had recorded a staggering combined turnout of 92.47%: reportedly the highest in the state's history.

However, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the party that controls the incumbent government in the state—and the principal regional opponent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which controls the central government that appoints the members of the ECI¹—alleged that the elections were held amid systematic and coercive interference by central authorities, describing them as ["not at all free and fair."](#)² Polling in WB was held in two phases, on 23rd April and 29th April. Votes will be counted on the 4th of May.

Independent observers have described the West Bengal election as ["one of the darkest moments in India's electoral history."](#) Over 12 million registered voters—approximately one in six—has been unable to cast a ballot. In the months before polling, the ECI had conducted an unprecedented exercise known as a "Special Intensive Revision" (SIR), through which [over 9 million names](#) were removed from the state's voter rolls.³ A further [3.4 million citizens](#) had been flagged by the ECI's algorithmic tools and remained in adjudication limbo—and none were permitted to vote, after the Supreme Court of India ruled that the mere pendency of an appeal did not confer voting rights. Emerging evidence indicates that the exclusions [disproportionately affected Muslim voters](#) accounting for [34% of total deletions](#), higher than the 27% share of Muslims in the state's population. This disproportion is significantly starker at the final 'adjudication' stage, where a leading analyst estimates that "nearly two-thirds of those deleted are from the minority community."⁴

¹ India's Election Commission is a constitutional body whose members are appointed by the central (federal) government, after selection by a panel comprising the Prime Minister, Home Minister, and the Leader of Opposition. The current government, led by the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has faced persistent criticism for undermining the ECI's independence, including by altering the process by which Election Commissioners are appointed with an effective executive veto. See analysis by Independent Panel for Monitoring Indian Elections (IPMIE), ["Baseline Report Ahead of 2024 General Election"](#) (Chapter: 'Is Conduct of Elections in India Independent and Objective?', p. 42)

² The TMC pointed to, inter alia, the deployment of [over 200,000 central paramilitary personnel](#)—federal security forces stationed at polling booths, officially to prevent electoral malpractice and maintain order during voting—which the TMC alleged were used for partisan purposes; the [transfer of over 50 state government officials](#) by the ECI, which the Chief Minister described as "political interference of the highest order"; and the arrest by the Enforcement Directorate—a federal financial crimes agency—of a [co-founder of the TMC's campaign strategy firm](#) ten days before polling.

³ According to a [three-stage analysis by psephologist Yogendra Yadav](#) in the *Indian Express* (28 April 2026): before the SIR, West Bengal had 76.6 million registered voters. In the first stage (draft SIR list, published 16 December 2025), 5.8 million names were excluded. A second screening for "logical discrepancies"—a term the ECI uses for algorithmically flagged mismatches between digitised historical records and current voter data—yielded a further 600,000 deletions. In the third stage, 2.7 million more names were deleted through an adjudication process. Of the 6 million names sent for adjudication, approximately 3.4 million remained unresolved at the time of polling, with appellate tribunals reportedly having [disposed of less than 2000 of the approximately 3.4 million pending appeals](#), before polling began. Of the appellate decisions that were reviewed, approximately 89% of the ECI's initial deletions were overturned (SABAR Institute analysis, cited in [Yadav](#))—suggesting the vast majority were wrongful.

⁴ Ibid (Yogendra Yadav)

This selective purging of Muslims and other marginalised sections from the electoral rolls is, in fact, happening nationwide: in Bihar, where the ECI first piloted the SIR in mid-2025, Muslims—approximately 17% of the state's population—accounted for [roughly one-third](#) of the 4.7 million voters removed from the final electoral rolls, and the BJP-led alliance subsequently won 202 of 243 seats in the state assembly election.⁵ The SIR was then extended to 11 further states, several of which witnessed systematic campaigns by the BJP⁶ to file bulk voter-deletion applications targeting Muslim residents.⁵ In Uttar Pradesh—India's most populous state, with over 200 million people and elections expected in early 2027—[20.5 million voters have been deleted](#), with the steepest declines, again, recorded in Muslim-majority districts. In Assam—where a [separate but analogous voter roll revision](#) was conducted ahead of elections on 9 April 2026—the chief minister, Hemanta Sarma [publicly directed](#) BJP workers to file such applications against Muslim residents.⁷ In [total](#), over 56 million voters⁸ have been removed from electoral rolls across India—a scale of reduction without precedent since the introduction of universal adult franchise in 1950. Preparations for a third and final phase of the SIR are currently underway, covering 22 additional states and union territories.

In parallel, 'delimitation'—the redrawing of electoral constituency boundaries—has also been used to dilute Muslim political representation. Exercises completed in [Jammu and Kashmir in 2022](#) and in [Assam in 2023](#) reshaped electoral maps in both territories, with effects now being felt in recent elections. In Assam—where Muslims constitute over 34% of the population—Muslim-majority constituencies were [reduced from approximately 35 to 20](#) before elections held on 9 April 2026, in what one leading analyst described as "[communal gerrymandering](#)" analogous to racial gerrymandering in the United States;⁹ a BJP cabinet minister stated that constituency boundaries in Assam had been redrawn so that "[there's no point for miyas to try and win it](#)", "Miya" being a derogatory term for Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam. An attempt by the federal government to extend delimitation nationwide—the [Delimitation Bill, 2026](#)—was [defeated in parliament on 17 April](#), but would have expanded the lower house from 543 to 848 seats on the basis of population, favouring northern states where the BJP draws its electoral base at the expense of southern states that have controlled population growth.

Available evidence suggests that the SIR has operated as a mechanism of selective disenfranchisement, amplified by organised deletion campaigns by the ruling party targeting Muslim residents, and effectively ratified by a Supreme Court that is yet to rule on the process's legality, despite beginning hearing the first batch of challenges brought before it, back in July 2025. The deletions have fallen disproportionately on Muslims, women, and other marginalised communities. The legal architecture now exists, observers fear, to escalate voter roll purges into citizenship adjudication—raising the spectre of mass denationalisation. Section 2 of this note sets out these concerns in detail; Section 3 highlights critical developments to watch in the coming weeks and months; and Section 4 provides further reading and useful resources.

⁵ In 174 of Bihar's 243 constituencies, the number of voters deleted during the SIR exceeded the victory margin in the subsequent election. Of 91 seats that changed hands, the BJP-led NDA won 75. Muslims—24.7% of those initially flagged—accounted for [32.1% of confirmed deletions](#); the disparity was widest in the Seemanchal region, where Muslim-majority districts such as Kishanganj recorded [deletion rates of 9.7%](#) against a state average of approximately 6%.

⁶ See Section 2.ii

⁷ Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, publicly directed BJP workers to file Form 7 applications against Muslim residents, and later stated: "[As far as possible, our party members filed complaints. Names have been struck off based on these.](#)" Of 1.29 million Form 7 applications submitted in Assam, 1.06 million were accepted. "Miya" is a pejorative used in Assam for Bengali-speaking Muslims, many of whom are accused of being undocumented migrants from Bangladesh. See Section 2.ii

⁸ See Annexure

⁹ Jayanta Mallah Baruah, Assam cabinet minister, quoted in [Al Jazeera](#) (1 April 2026). "Communal gerrymandering": Yogendra Yadav, [Indian Express](#) (4 March 2026). See Section 2.ii

2. Key Concerns and Emerging Evidence

Concerns about the SIR were first raised during its pilot in Bihar in mid-2025, including by the [Independent Panel for Monitoring Indian Elections](#) (IPMIE), among others. The evidence documented below—drawn primarily from the second phase of the SIR in West Bengal, with corroborating data from other states—suggests that many of those concerns have since been borne out at a significantly larger scale:

- i. **Scale and nature of mass disenfranchisement:** Over 56 million voters have reportedly been removed from electoral rolls across the 13 states and union territories covered by the first two phases of the SIR (see [Annexure](#) for state-wise figures).¹⁰ The most significant deletions—in both absolute and proportional terms—are concentrated in six large states: Uttar Pradesh (20.5 million, -13.21%), West Bengal (8.4 million on the final roll, rising to [12.2 million at the time of polling](#)), Tamil Nadu (7.4 million, -11.5%), Gujarat (6.8 million, -14.5%), Bihar (4.7 million, -5.95%), and Madhya Pradesh (3.4 million, -5.96%).

In West Bengal, a leading analyst remarked that the SIR was carried out as "[a Special Impediment Removal exercise designed by the BJP, executed by the ECI and certified by the Supreme Court.](#)" The proportion of voters flagged as "unmapped" was 4.5%—against 3.5% in Chhattisgarh, 2.3% in Tamil Nadu, and 1.6% in both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.¹¹ In other SIR states, the ECI overlooked or corrected spelling variations and minor discrepancies; in Bengal, [13 million notices](#) were issued for "logical discrepancies" on the draft list alone. According to the ECI, a 'logical discrepancy' is a mismatch flagged by software between a voter's current details and those recorded in digitised historical rolls—such as spelling variations in names, discrepancies in listed relations, or improbable age gaps between a voter and their listed parent. The ECI also deployed [8,000 micro observers](#) in the state, while no other SIR state had a single one. Micro observers are officials ordinarily deployed by the ECI at sensitive polling booths on election day to monitor the voting process; in WB, they were instead assigned to oversee the SIR revision process itself. In [14 of 16 constituencies in Kolkata](#), the state capital, the number of deleted voters exceeded the previous election's winning margin.

In Uttar Pradesh, the draft voter list published in January 2026 showed [28.9 million deletions](#)—the steepest absolute reduction of any state. Approximately [8.4 million were restored](#) during the claims and objections period, leaving 20.5 million confirmed deletions. The scale of restoration itself suggests massive initial over-deletion.

- ii. **Disproportionate impact on Muslims:** Across every state where disaggregated data is available, the SIR has removed Muslim voters from electoral rolls at rates far exceeding their share of the population. In several states, members of the ruling BJP conducted organised and large-scale campaigns to file voter-deletion applications specifically targeting Muslim residents. The evidence suggests that this disproportionate impact intensified at each successive stage of the process—from initial screening, through algorithmic flagging, to final adjudication. (Broadly, the SIR proceeded in three stages: an initial screening in which Booth Level Officers conducted door-to-door verification and flagged voters as absent, shifted, or dead; an algorithmic flagging stage in which the ECI's software identified "logical discrepancies" by matching current voter rolls against digitised historical records; and a final adjudication stage in which flagged voters were required to appear before designated officers and produce documents from a prescribed list proving their identity and residence.)

¹⁰ Phase 2 aggregate (51.8 million across 12 states and union territories) from [The Hindu](#), "[Consolidated voters' list of 9 states and 3 UTs that underwent SIR Phase II trimmed by 10.2%](#)". Bihar Phase 1 (4.7 million) from [The Wire](#). See Annexure for full state-wise breakdown.

¹¹ "Unmapped" is a term the ECI uses for voters whose current records could not be matched against digitised historical electoral rolls—often handwritten in regional scripts—using the ECI's algorithmic tools. All comparative data from [Yogendra Yadav, Indian Express](#) (28 April 2026).

In West Bengal, as noted earlier, Muslim voters accounted for [34% of total deletions](#) despite constituting approximately 27% of the state's population. This disproportion grows sharper at each successive stage of the SIR: at the adjudication stage—where [2.7 million names were deleted out of 6 million sent for adjudication](#)—one analyst estimates that "nearly two-thirds of those deleted are from the minority community."¹² The targeting is visible at every level of analysis. At the constituency level, in Nandigram, Muslims are 25% of the population but account for [95% of deleted names](#); in Bhabanipur, Muslims are 20% but account for [40% of deletions](#). At the booth level—in Bhabanipur booth 116—Muslims were 11% of those flagged as absent, shifted, or dead, but [72.2% of those flagged for "logical discrepancies."](#)¹³ suggesting that the ECI's algorithmic tools, rather than routine administrative processes, drove the disproportionate impact. Geographically, the highest deletion numbers were concentrated in Muslim-majority border districts: [Murshidabad \(455,000\), North 24 Parganas \(325,000\), and Malda \(239,000\)](#).¹⁴ In [ground reporting from Taki constituency](#), near the Ichamati River on the Bangladesh border, a Hindu voter told reporters that "no one was cut in Hindu villages," while in the same area a Muslim family's children were deleted from the rolls after their birth certificates were rejected by the local verification officer.¹⁵

In several states, these disparities were clearly the product of organised campaigns by BJP personnel. Under Indian electoral law, any citizen may file a 'Form 7' application to object to another voter's inclusion on the rolls—a mechanism intended for individual corrections, not mass targeting. In western Gujarat's [Somnath constituency](#), over 15,000 Form 7 applications were filed by just 269 individuals—each submitting 50 or more forms, in violation of Election Commission guidelines.¹⁶ The objectors included the local BJP women's wing president; six of them subsequently filed affidavits stating that their names and identity details had been used without their knowledge. In Madhya Pradesh's [Indore](#), over 11,000 Form 7 applications were uploaded, with seven of the bulk objectors confirmed as BJP-affiliated.¹⁷ In Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district, [544 pre-printed Form 7 applications](#)—all targeting Muslim residents of a single village, Louharipur—were traced to one applicant; the forms accounted for nearly half the village's registered voters.¹⁸ These are only illustrative documented cases; the BJP is likely to have conducted similar campaigns in other states where the SIR was carried out.

In Assam—where a separate but analogous "Special Revision" of electoral rolls was conducted—Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma himself directed BJP workers to file Form 7 applications against Bengali-speaking Muslim 'Miya' residents. In January 2026, he stated that ["4–5 lakh Miyas will get deleted... my job is to make them suffer."](#) After the final electoral rolls were published, he confirmed that ["as far as possible, our party members filed complaints. Names have been struck off based on these."](#) Of the 1.29 million Form 7 applications submitted in Assam, 1.06 million were accepted.¹⁹

In Uttar Pradesh—India's most populous state, with elections expected in 2027—[20.5 million voters have been deleted](#) from the electoral rolls, the steepest absolute reduction of any state. At the district level, [ten Muslim-majority districts](#) recorded an average deletion rate of 18.75% in the draft rolls—with Saharanpur at 16.37%, Moradabad at 15.76%, and similar figures across Muzaffarnagar, Rampur, and

¹² Ibid (Yogendra Yadav)

¹³ SABAR Institute analysis, as reported by the [Reporters' Collective](#) (8 February 2026). Constituency-level data from [Scroll](#) and [The Quint](#), both citing SABAR Institute research.

¹⁴ District-level deletion figures from [Outlook India](#).

¹⁵ Neelanjana Sircar and Bhanu Joshi, reporting for the [Hindustan Times](#), describe the scene in Taki constituency, where the Ichamati River marks the border with Bangladesh. A Hindu man who had returned from working in Gujarat stated that the SIR "had to be done" and that "no one was cut in Hindu villages." In the same area, a Muslim man's son and daughter were deleted after their birth certificates were rejected by the local booth-level officer.

¹⁶ [Newslandry](#) investigation, 11 February 2026.

¹⁷ [Scroll](#) investigation, 20 February 2026.

¹⁸ [Siasat Daily](#), March 2026. All 544 forms were traced to a single applicant named Ved Pal. The District Magistrate of Shamli ordered a probe but subsequently stated the case "didn't have any substance."

¹⁹ Sarma's January 2026 statement reported by [The Quint](#) (28 January 2026) and [Scroll](#) (28 January 2026). His February confirmation and the 1.29 million / 1.06 million figures reported by [Scroll](#) (11 February 2026). "Miya" is a pejorative term used in Assam for Bengali-speaking Muslims, many of whose families migrated from what is now Bangladesh during or after Partition (1947).

Sambhal. Targeted village-level campaigns have already been documented, such as the [Shamli case](#) described above. The state's chief electoral officer has [disputed](#) any correlation between deletions and Muslim population share, but no independent or disaggregated analysis of the final rolls has yet been published. The post-SIR registered voter sex ratio stands at just 834 women per 1,000 men—against a projected population ratio of 943—suggesting massive under-registration that cuts across communities but is likely to fall heaviest on Muslim and marginalised women. With less than a year before polling, the conditions in Uttar Pradesh closely mirror the early stages of what unfolded in West Bengal. Given the BJP's acute electoral stakes in the state, there is a significant risk that the organised Form 7 campaigns and algorithmic targeting documented in West Bengal and Assam will be replicated—or escalated—ahead of the 2027 elections. The precedent set in West Bengal, where millions of voters were placed in adjudication limbo after the final rolls were published and denied the right to vote, underscores what is at stake.²⁰

- iii. **Disproportionate impact on women and marginalised groups:** The SIR has also disproportionately impacted women and other marginalised groups. In Bihar, [women constituted nearly 60% of those excluded](#) from the draft voter rolls—despite making up 47.8% of the electorate. In 43 of Bihar's 243 assembly constituencies, [the proportion of women among those excluded exceeded 60%](#). In Uttar Pradesh, as noted above, the post-SIR registered voter sex ratio stands at just 834 women per 1,000 men, against a projected population ratio of 943.

Analysts have noted that the underlying cause is structural.²¹ The SIR's evidentiary requirements demand documents from a prescribed list that excludes widely held forms of identification. This disproportionately burdens women—whose names frequently differ across documents due to marriage, and who are less likely to hold property records or formal employment documentation—as well as rural communities, migrant workers, Dalits, Adivasis, and communities whose births and marriages are seldom formally registered.

The human cost of the SIR has also fallen on the local officials tasked with implementing it. A [report by the SPECT Foundation](#) documented at least 33 deaths of Booth Level Officers across six states since November 2025, including nine by suicide. BLOs are typically schoolteachers or low-ranking government employees assigned to conduct door-to-door verification under [compressed and unrealistic timelines](#). No accountability or investigation outcomes have been reported.

- iv. **Linkage to citizenship determination, and the looming danger of mass denationalisation:** Unlike routine electoral roll revisions, the SIR empowers local officials to refer "suspected foreign nationals" for action under India's citizenship and immigration laws—effectively allowing the initiation of citizenship adjudication proceedings alongside what is formally a voter verification exercise. This replicates a model that has operated in [Assam since the 1990s](#), where citizens flagged as "D-voters" (doubtful voters) are referred to quasi-judicial Foreigners Tribunals that have the power to strip them of citizenship entirely. Analysts have described the SIR as the [reappearance of this "Assam disenfranchisement model"](#) in other states.²²

The legal architecture for expanding this nationwide is now in place. The newly-enacted [Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025](#) empowers the central government to constitute Foreigners Tribunals in any state or union territory—not just in Assam, where they have operated since 1964. These tribunals now carry the [powers of a first-class judicial magistrate](#), including the authority to issue arrest warrants and send

²⁰ District-level draft data from [Clarion India](#) (January 2026). Final electorate figures from [The Federal](#). The chief electoral officer's statement is from [The Print](#) (April 2026); no independent verification of his claim has been published. The district-level figures are from the draft stage, before approximately 8.4 million names were restored during the claims period; a full disaggregated analysis of the final rolls, when available, will be critical to assessing the SIR's impact on Muslim voters in Uttar Pradesh.

²¹ For instance, see IPMIE, 'Preliminary Analysis of Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls in Bihar, India'

²² See [The Wire](#) (Angshuman Choudhury).

individuals to detention centres. While the Chief Justice of India was reported to have [remarked](#) in court that "the Election Commission cannot declare someone a foreigner unless a tribunal records such a finding," no administrative firewall prevents the referral of SIR-deleted voters to such tribunals, and no documented safeguard exists to prevent this pipeline from being activated.²³

The risk of denationalisation and statelessness is compounded by the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019, which fast-tracks citizenship for non-Muslim migrants from neighbouring countries. In practice, this creates a two-track system: Hindu residents of border areas can regularise their status through the CAA, while Muslim residents flagged by the SIR face potential referral to Foreigners Tribunals with no equivalent pathway. [Recent ground reporting from West Bengal's border districts](#) documented this nexus directly: in Thakurnagar, members of the Namasudra community—a Hindu Scheduled Caste group—were using a CAA assistance centre to apply for citizenship certificates, while Muslim voters in the same border districts were being deleted from electoral rolls. Analysts conclude that "the sum total of exclusionary and documentary procedures... has been to pave the way for a differentiated citizenship between Hindus and Muslims."²⁴

While there have been no documented cases yet of SIR-deleted voters being formally referred to a Foreigners Tribunal, the legal architecture for mass denationalisation now exists—the Assam model demonstrates how it operates, and there are no meaningful safeguards to prevent its activation.

- v. **Opaque and defective algorithmic processes:** The ECI is reported to have deployed untested algorithmic tools to flag voters for deletion—tools that its own officials subsequently [admitted to the Supreme Court](#) were defective and produced "variable results." Despite this admission, the ECI reactivated the same software [eight days later](#) across 12 states, without the procedural safeguards its own manual required. The tools were used to [flag 36.6 million voters as "suspects"](#) across West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh alone, with an [estimated false-positive rate of 54%](#). The Supreme Court criticised the software's parameters as "not based on ground realities."²⁵

The ECI provided no transparency about the tools' design, procurement, or error rates. It [told the Supreme Court](#) that local officers were "applying mind" before issuing deletion notices; an [investigation by the Reporters' Collective](#) found this misleading. The ECI's own centralised software [stripped local Electoral Registration Officers](#) of their statutory power to reinstate voters, requiring instead that centrally appointed observers (suspected as holding the BJP's brief) approve any restoration—effectively overriding a legal safeguard designed to protect against precisely this kind of mass error.²⁶

²³ The Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, consolidates and expands the legal framework for citizenship determination. Sections 16–20 grant Foreigners Tribunals powers of a first-class judicial magistrate, including authority to issue arrest warrants and commit individuals to detention centres ([PRS India](#); [Amnesty International](#)). The CJI's oral observation—that the ECI "cannot declare someone a foreigner unless a tribunal records such a finding"—was made on 19 February 2026 during the hearing of a petition challenging the Special Revision in Assam ([NewKerala](#)).

²⁴ Ground reporting from Taki constituency and Thakurnagar by Neelanjan Sircar and Bhanu Joshi in the [Hindustan Times](#). The Namasudra community constitutes approximately 18% of West Bengal's Scheduled Caste population and is concentrated in border districts where the BJP won 5 of 7 Bongaon sub-division constituencies in 2021. The Prime Minister held a rally in Thakurnagar on the penultimate day of the 2026 campaign. The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, grants expedited citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who entered India before 31 December 2014 — explicitly excluding Muslims.

²⁵ The ECI informed the Supreme Court on 24 November 2025 that its de-duplication software was defective and had "last been used in 2023" ([Reporters' Collective](#)). Eight days later, it reactivated the software across 12 SIR states without field verification, voter notification, or a 15-day response window ([The Wire](#), 28 December 2025). The tools included a de-duplication module and a "mapping" software that digitised handwritten electoral rolls from 2002 and matched them against current records via algorithmic transliteration—producing systematic errors with names in Bangla, Urdu, and tribal languages (e.g., the surname "Xalxo" was auto-transliterated as "Khalkho"). Figures: 13.1 million flagged in West Bengal (17.1% of the electorate), 23.5 million in Madhya Pradesh (~40%). False-positive estimate from [The Squirrels](#). Supreme Court observation from [SC Observer](#).

²⁶ Internal ECI documents showed that 13.1 million voters in West Bengal were flagged algorithmically in mid-December 2025 and local officers were forced to sign off on tens of thousands of notices within two weeks ([Reporters' Collective](#)). The centralised platform, ERONET 2.0—operated by Tata Consultancy Services since 2023 (disclosed in TCS's annual report, not by the ECI)—removed the

- vi. **Absence of meaningful judicial remedy:** To date, no Indian court has ruled on the legality of the SIR. The principal challenge—filed after the Bihar pilot was announced and heard over 29 days by the Supreme Court—was reserved for judgement in late January 2026 and remains undelivered. In the meantime, Bihar, Kerala, Assam, and West Bengal have all held state elections on the basis of purged electoral rolls, the SIR has been expanded nationwide, and over 56 million voters have already been removed—all while the question of legality remains unanswered.²⁷

In West Bengal, where 3.4 million appeals against deletion were filed, the appellate process established by the Supreme Court of India (SC) was incapable of providing effective remedy at the scale required. Approximately 700 judicial officers were drafted from three states to hear cases, but [fewer than 2,000 appeals were disposed of](#) before polling began—and of the small number that were reviewed, approximately [89% of the ECI's original deletion decisions were overturned](#), suggesting that the vast majority of deletions were wrongful. SC [refused to set a deadline](#) for the resolution of pending appeals, [refused interim inclusion](#) of voters whose cases had not been heard, [ruled](#) that the pendency of an appeal did not confer the right to vote, and directed that parallel petitions before state High Courts be deferred—effectively foreclosing every available avenue of relief while simultaneously acknowledging that the system it had put in place could not process the volume. West Bengal's Chief Minister [argued in person](#) before the SC on 4 February 2026—reportedly the first sitting Chief Minister to do so—but failed to obtain a stay of the SIR.³⁵

By the time the SC delivers its judgement, the disenfranchisement it was asked to prevent will likely be irreversible.

- vii. **Delimitation of constituencies compounding disenfranchisement:** As noted in the introduction, recently-concluded delimitation exercises in Assam and Jammu & Kashmir have already redrawn constituency boundaries in ways that systematically diluted Muslim electoral weight—reducing Muslim-majority constituencies in Assam from approximately 35 to 20 before the April 2026 elections. The techniques used reportedly included merging Hindu-majority areas into evenly split seats, splitting Muslim pockets across multiple Hindu-majority constituencies, and reserving redrawn seats for non-Muslim candidates.²⁸

An attempt to extend delimitation nationwide—the Delimitation Bill, 2026—was defeated in parliament on 17 April. But the BJP's underlying political intent remains, and the debate over delimitation is expected to resume after the conclusion of the ongoing Census exercise.²⁹

"approve" button from local officers' interfaces, requiring additional approvals from centrally appointed observers before any voter could be restored. Under Sections 22 and 23 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, the power to include or exclude voters is vested personally in the Electoral Registration Officer. District Magistrates of at least three West Bengal districts wrote to the state Chief Electoral Officer requesting instructions and received no response. In one constituency, ~45,000 of 50,000 hearing notices were for algorithmically generated "logical discrepancies"; data entry operators processed 300–350 cases per day with no written standard operating procedure ([Reporters' Collective](#)).

²⁷ ADR v. Election Commission of India, before Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi ([SC Observer](#)). Judgement reserved 28–29 January 2026.

²⁸ In Katigorah, Hindu-majority areas from across the Barak River were merged into a previously evenly split constituency—in apparent violation of the ECI's own guidelines, which state that areas divided by rivers should not be placed in the same constituency. In Barpeta, which had elected Muslim representatives in all but two parliamentary elections since 1967, the Muslim share of the electorate was reduced from 60% to 35%. In Naoboicha, Muslim-dominated pockets were split across four neighbouring Hindu-majority seats, and the constituency was reserved for a Scheduled Caste candidate. See [Al Jazeera](#), [Scroll](#), and [Maktoob Media](#).

²⁹ The constitutional amendment received 298 votes in favour and 230 against, falling 54 short of the required two-thirds majority ([LiveLaw](#)). The bill would have expanded the lower house from 543 to 848 seats on the basis of 2011 Census population data, disproportionately benefiting northern states where the BJP draws its electoral base. It had been linked to the implementation of women's parliamentary reservation, leading one analyst to observe that "the goal was, perhaps, to make the country swallow

Thus, the SIR removes voters from the rolls, while delimitation reshapes the constituencies in which those diminished electorates vote. Together, they compound the erosion of Muslim political representation in ways that neither mechanism could achieve alone.

3. Developments to Watch

- Election results and their implications:** Counting and declaration of results across all four states and one union territory—West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry—that recently went to polls is scheduled for [4 May 2026](#). West Bengal's combined turnout (in the purged rolls) across both phases was [92.47%](#), with Muslim-majority constituencies in Murshidabad recording turnout [above 95%](#), suggesting significant mobilisation in precisely the communities most affected by SIR deletions. A critical question will be whether the disenfranchisement materially affected electoral outcomes, including in constituencies where the number of deleted voters exceeded previous winning margins, and in Assam, where delimitation and voter roll purges compounded each other.
- Supreme Court proceedings:** The judgement in *ADR v ECI* on the legality of the SIR was reserved on 29 January 2026 and remains undelivered. Key questions that will determine the impact of the eventual ruling include whether the Court addresses the legality of the SIR process *itself* or confines itself to Bihar-specific relief; whether it addresses the ECI's claim to conduct a nationwide de novo re-verification under Article 324; whether it issues any post-election directions on states that have already conducted elections on purged electoral rolls; and whether it will establish any safeguard preventing the use of SIR deletion data for citizenship adjudication proceedings.
- Rollout of SIR Phase 3:** The ECI has [announced](#) the expansion of the SIR to 22 additional states and union territories from April 2026—including Delhi, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Haryana, and Punjab—bringing the total to 34, effectively nationwide, and covering the entire electorate of India. No completion date has been announced. At least four Phase 3 states— Punjab, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Manipur—have assembly elections expected in early 2027; the SIR will determine the rolls on which those elections are conducted. A critical question for the coming months will be whether any safeguards will be introduced in light of the evidence documented above.
- Uttar Pradesh elections in 2027:** India's most populous state—and the BJP's most electorally critical—has assembly elections due in February–March 2027 (with some accounts suggesting the incumbent government will call elections early in late-2026), and will go to the polls on rolls from which [20.5 million voters have already been deleted](#) (13.24% of the electorate). Steep declines of voter rolls in Muslim-concentration districts—and targeted Form 7 campaigns—have already been reported. Given the documented precedent of organised disenfranchisement campaigns in West Bengal and Gujarat, the risk of such targeting intensifying ahead of 2027 is substantial, and the condition of UP's electoral rolls warrants sustained monitoring.
- Assam after 4 May:** The incumbent Chief Minister has acknowledged forcibly expelling over 2450 Bengali-speaking Muslims since May 2025 (out of India, into no-man's-land with Bangladesh), and publicly stated that his government ["can expel 10,000 to 50,000 foreigners if identified"](#) in 2026, if returned to power.

delimitation without debate" ([Yamini Aiyar, Hindustan Times](#)). The Delimitation Bill was withdrawn after the amendment's defeat ([The Wire](#)).

4. Further reading and useful resources

- [SC Observer — ADR v ECI case page](#) — Live tracker of the principal Supreme Court challenge to the SIR; day-by-day hearing summaries
- [Association for Democratic Reforms \(ADR\)](#) — Lead petitioner in the SIR case; publishes election data, legal filings, and analysis
- [Reporters' Collective — SIR investigation series](#) — Multi-part investigative series on ECI's algorithmic tools, suppression of statutory safeguards, and misleading of the Supreme Court
- [Yogendra Yadav, "SIR and the Anatomy of Exclusion," Indian Express, 28 April 2026](#) — Breakdown of the three-stage deletion process in West Bengal
- [SABAR Institute](#) — Booth- and constituency-level analysis of SIR deletions in West Bengal
- [Neelanjan Sircar & Bhanu Joshi, "How WB's Voter Roll Revision is Redrawing Citizenship Lines," Hindustan Times](#) — Ground reporting from West Bengal border districts documenting the SIR-CAA nexus
- [The Wire — "Five Points from the Uttar Pradesh SIR's Final Figures"](#) — Analysis of deletions in the UP SIR
- [Al Jazeera — "'Gerrymandering' in India's Assam Cuts Muslim Representation Before Vote"](#) — Detailed analysis of how Assam's delimitation reduced Muslim-majority constituencies from ~35 to ~20
- [Scroll — "Why Delimitation in Assam and Kashmir Led to Charges of Gerrymandering"](#) — Comparative analysis of delimitation techniques used in both territories

Annexure: State-wise impact of the SIR

Figures reflect ECI final published electoral rolls (February 2026) unless otherwise noted. All figures in millions.

State / UT	Pre-SIR Electorate	Post-SIR Electorate	Voters Deleted	Change (%)
Phase 1 (June–September 2025)				
Bihar	78.9M	74.2M	4.7M	-5.95%
Phase 2 (October 2025–February 2026)				
Uttar Pradesh	154.4M	133.9M	20.5M	-13.21%
West Bengal	76.9M	68.6M	8.4M*	-10.9%*
Tamil Nadu	64.1M	56.7M	7.4M	-11.5%
Gujarat	50.8M	44.0M	6.8M	-14.5%
Madhya Pradesh	57.4M	53.9M	3.4M	-5.96%
Rajasthan	54.6M	51.5M	3.1M	-5.7%
Chhattisgarh	21.2M	18.7M	2.5M	-11.8%
Kerala	27.8M	26.9M	0.9M	-3.24%

Goa	1.19M	1.06M	0.13M	-10.8%
Puducherry	1.02M	0.94M	0.08M	-7.54%
A&N Islands	0.31M	0.26M	0.05M	-16.6%
Lakshadweep	0.06M	0.06M	206	-0.35%
Phase 2 Total	510M	458M	51.8M	-10.2%
Combined Total (Phase 1 + 2)	588.9M	532.2M	56.5M	-9.6%

***West Bengal:** ECI figures reflect the final published roll (21 February 2026). A subsequent [analysis by Yogendra Yadav](#) in the Indian Express (28 April 2026) estimates that a further 2.7 million names were deleted during post-roll adjudication before polling, and that 3.4 million remained in adjudication limbo at the time of voting—bringing the total number of citizens unable to vote to approximately 12.2 million (15.9% of the pre-SIR electorate).

Sources: Phase 2 state-wise data from ECI final electoral rolls as reported in [The Hindu](#). Bihar (Phase 1) from [The Wire](#). West Bengal adjudication data from [Yogendra Yadav, Indian Express](#) (28 April 2026).

Note: A third phase of the SIR is currently underway, covering 22 additional states and union territories—including Delhi, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, and Karnataka—bringing the total to 34: effectively nationwide. Figures for Phase 3 are not yet available.