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Bengal

# Proof of Citizenship? Amartya Sen and Millions in Bengal Face 'Doubtful' Voter Scrutiny

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By: [Shahnawaz Akhtar](#) January 8, 2026

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**Kolkata:** Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, Indian fast bowler Mohammed Shami, actor and Trinamool Congress MP Dev Adhikari, former Kolkata Police Commissioner Prasun Mukherjee and his son Ranajit, acclaimed actor Anirban Bhattacharya, veteran poet Joy Goswami, actor-couple Laboni Sarkar and Kaushik Bandyopadhyay, and former Left Front minister Kanti Ganguly have all received hearing notices under West Bengal's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

They are among lakhs of voters in Bengal—including senior citizens, migrant workers and ordinary residents—who have been summoned by election officials over alleged discrepancies in voter records, raising serious questions about the legality, intent and scale of the exercise.

## SIR Sparks Political and Legal Storm

Reacting sharply, Ranajit Mukherjee, member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and son of former Police Commissioner Prasun Mukherjee, said the notices exposed the arbitrary nature of the process.

"The most famous Bengali, Amartya Sen, has received an SIR notice over discrepancies in his mother's age. But it can be easily corrected, so there was no need to serve notice. In my case, I was a candidate for the Lok Sabha in 2019, and scrutiny was done by the Election Commission itself. They can easily go through my Aadhar details and get every information, but they did not," Ranajit told **eNewsroom**.

The father-son duo are scheduled to appear for hearings on January 14 and 15.

## 'Why No BJP Leader Got Notice?' Congress Alleges Bias

"We will appear, but the entire exercise is needless and public exchequer are being spent on it," he said.

Raising a pointed political question, Ranajit said:

"Interestingly, almost all the political party leaders got notices in Bengal, except the BJP. Whether it is technical (read AI) or human error, how did it not impact them? The Congress questioned and claimed, 'It is a political exercise.'"

## Celebrities to Migrants: Voters Flagged 'Doubtful'

The SIR notices have not been limited to political figures. Among those summoned are Mohammed Shami, Anirban Bhattacharya, Joy Goswami, and several senior citizens and migrant workers.

The inclusion of such diverse groups has intensified fears that legitimate voters are being

indiscriminately flagged as “doubtful”.

### **SIR Has No Legal Basis Under Election Law**

Former IAS officer and ex-Chief Election Officer (CEO) of West Bengal Jawhar Sircar raised fundamental objections to the process.

“As I have insisted, there is no legal sanctity for ‘Special’ Intensive Revision as the law (Registration of Electors Rules 1960) authorises only ‘Intensive Revision,’” Sircar told **eNewsroom**.

Explaining further, he said: “So many of the instructions being issued by ECI under SIR are beyond its remit and highly questionable. Rule 8 of the 1960 Rules says, ‘Information to be supplied by occupants of dwelling-houses.—The registration officer may, for the purpose of preparing the roll, send letters of request in Form 4...’”

“No citizen has been issued Form 4, and instead they have been compelled to fill in an Enumeration Form, which finds no mention in the Rules. Based on the ECI’s data and discrepancies thereof, citizens are being summoned like offenders before AEROs, just because the ECI so desires. Dr Sen is one such victim of ECI’s arbitrariness.”

### **“If Bharat Ratna Amartya Sen Must Prove Citizenship...”**

Social activist Yogendra Yadav, who opposed SIR from its inception, said the notice to Amartya Sen exposed the deeper danger of the exercise.

“In a way, I am glad that the SIR notice was served to Amartya Sen, because it highlights the plight of an ordinary citizen. If a Bharat Ratna has to prove his citizenship, and that too because of a dubious and secretive software that enjoys no legal standing, then we can understand what it would be like for an ordinary citizen, the poor woman. The kind of people prof Sen has spoken for.”

Yadav recalled that when SIR began in Bengal, **he had warned** that the second phase—notice and hearing—would be very dangerous for the state, alleging the exercise was designed for Bengal, not for Bihar or any other state.

### **Crores Dropped from Draft Rolls, Democracy at Risk**

More than 90 lakh voters in Bengal are yet to receive—or are expected to receive—hearing notices before the final roll is published in February.

Across 12 Indian states, over 7.5 crore voters out of an estimated 53 crore have been removed from draft electoral rolls during the ongoing SIR. While some names may return to the final lists, critics warn the scale signals a serious threat to voting rights.

“The election commission **should clarify the reason** why such a large number of voters got removed. They need to cite the reason. In the world’s largest democracy, voters are losing their rights, without ECI giving any specific reason. It is so outrageous,” said a Kolkata-based researcher.

Questioning the stated objective of SIR, Ranajit Mukherjee said: “I and my father will attend the hearings. We have no fear or tension. But the larger question is about common people. It is a political exercise, billions are being spent, yet few infiltrators are found. Through SIR, widespread harassment is done to legitimate voters.”

