'Dear Bengal Poll Chief, How Many Voters Have ECI Staff Tried to Delete?' Asks Jawhar Sircar - The Wire

The Wire Staff

New Delhi: Jawhar Sircar, former Rajya Sabha MP and former secretary to the government of India has written to the Chief Election Officer (CEO) West Bengal, Neelam Meena, asking her nine questions related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR). The queries relate to most of the key issues raised in media reports, including on The Wire, about how the process has gone on in the state.

They relate to the disposal rate of the tribunals especially set up for West Bengal to tackle the appeals against mass exclusion of voters to whether the tribunal judges have “refused” to use the Election Commission of India’s (ECI) new portal to how it has been processing Form 7 (voter deletion) requests.

Jawhar Sircar, IAS (R)

Ex Member of Parliament
Ex Secretary, Govt of India

To Smt Neelam Meena,
Chief Electoral Officer WB
Kolkata

Dated 23 October'26

9 QUESTIONS TO CEO WEST BENGAL

Dear Madam,

I seek your cooperation by providing responses to these specific issues/questions concerning SIR and thereafter in this State:—

1) Numbers Received & Disposed by Tribunals

What are the total numbers of applications for inclusion and deletion of voters received by the SIR Appellate Tribunals and how many of each category were rejected vis-à-vis the total of that category received, so far?

2) Difficulties by Tribunals

Is it a fact that Tribunal Judges refused to log into the new portal (by using their Aadhaar credentials) that was introduced by ECI on September 21 and what is the progress of disposal in that concerned month vis-à-vis the earlier three months?

3) Deletion Applications by ECI and CEO's Officers

How many applications were filed by election officials before the Tribunals for deletion of names; under what authority was this done and how many names were thus deleted — after observing each of the legal provisions, including hearings?

4) Form 7 Applications

In addition, how many Form 7 objections were received directly by authorised registration authorities within stipulated period; how many were deleted thus; was each objector's details duly verified and were publication plus hearing facilities given to those objected to?

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5) Reports of BLOs, EROs vis-à-vis the Final Rolls

Have the reports filed by BLOs after physical verification been stored and the decisions of the EROs and AEROs on inclusion, exclusion or modification of voters' names/details recorded and matched with the names appearing on electoral lists finally generated by the ECI's system?

6) Discrepancies between Final Lists & ERO decisions

What is the extent of discrepancies discovered between the decisions of the EROs/AEROs based on their exclusive, statutory powers under Sections 21 and 22 of The Representation of the People Act, 1950 and have these been pointed out to the Election Commission?

7) Logical Discrepancies in WB

Can you please provide the notification of ECI which introduced 'logical discrepancies' and the total number thus affected in the State, as well as post on website the details of those affected?

8) ECINET Restricts EROs of WB

Is it a fact that (as reported) the Election Commission's portal, ECINET, has a feature that can bar the EROs from viewing or reviewing voters' enumeration forms as well as the notice-and-hearing dashboard and was such a bar was applied in West Bengal, but why?

9) Why is ECI's Recent Drive Restricted in West Bengal

Are all 'left out voters' in West Bengal covered by the ECI's post-SIR drive (its order of 1st October '26) or are they deprived of this second opportunity because of your order of 6th October restricting its scope to only those voters under ASDD — Absent, Shifted, Dead and Duplicates category?

Kindly respond to these queries at the earliest, in parts, if required.

One last request to you is to kindly concentrate right now on appeals for inclusion of deleted names in electoral rolls for those municipal bodies where elections are expected soon.

With best regards,

23/10/26

Jawhar Sircar



At least 12 of 19 judges heading tribunals to review SIR appeals complained in August about the ECINET portal, saying it failed to work as intended, The Wire has reported.

Question number 3 on his list is particularly relevant to recent developments. Sircar asks:

> How many applications were filed by election officers before the tribunals for deletion of names; under what authority this was done and how many names were thus deleted – [was it] after observing each of the legal provisions, including hearings?

As per numbers verified by the Civic Research Group, an independent group of researchers in West Bengal, the EC has filed appeals against 16,08,175 (over 16 lakh) of the 32,53,401 (around 32.5 lakh) cleared voters, or nearly half of them.

The Wire reported these details on October 21, including how these 16 lakh voters had been cleared by judicial officers during the SIR.



On September 27, The Wire had reported how a judge presiding over a SIR tribunal had noted clearly that the Additional CEO of the state had appealed to remove voters examined by judicial officers and restored to the rolls.

According to the *Indian Express*, Election Commissioner Sukhbir Singh Sandhu wrote to ECI officials asking who had been authorised to file appeals on the commission's behalf before the West Bengal tribunals, and who had actually filed them.

Now that the ECI is conducting a Special Summary Revision (SSR) of voter lists – the usual revision it carried out until the process was halted for the SIR – it has announced that voters will get a chance to return to the rolls through "special" drives, apart from using Form 6, meant for first-time voters.



Chief Electoral Officer... · Follow

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As per instructions of Election Commission of India, 24 DEOs of the state of West Bengal have started a proactive campaign to ensure that No eligible elector is left out of the electoral rolls.
#PressNote

Election Commission of India

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
West Bengal
13, Strand Road, Kolkata 700001

No. 74/CEO/PN/2026 **Dated: 12.10.2026**

PRESS NOTE

As per instructions of Election Commission of India, 24 DEOs of the state of West Bengal have started a proactive campaign to ensure that No eligible elector is left out of the electoral rolls.

Special camps are being held throughout the state to ensure this.

If any person has any complaint, please feel free to contact the

If any person has any complaint, please feel free to contact the concerned BLO, AERO, ERO or DEO.

We are committed to ensure that No eligible voter is excluded from the voter list.

Sd/-
(Arindam Niyogi)
Additional Chief Electoral Officer
West Bengal

Special camps are being held across the state so that no eligible voter is left off the roll. The CEO's note announcing the drive on October 12 calls it a "proactive campaign".

Sircar has also asked if reports filed by Booth Level Officers (BLO) after physical verification have been stored and if the reports of Electoral Roll Officers (ERO) and Assisstant EROs have been matched against the final electoral roll generated by the SIR.

Further, he wants to know what extent of "discrepancy" has been found between the decisions made regarding voter exclusion and inclusion by the EROs and AEROs.

He has tellingly sought the CEO's response on a crucial issue introduced in the Bengal SIR: Logical discrepancy.

> "Can you please provide the notification of ECI which introduced 'logical discrepancies' and the total number thus affected in the state, as well as a post on website [with] the details of those affected?"

Also read: In Bengal SIR, 'Logical Discrepancy' Became the Election Commission's Alibi for Mass Voter Exclusion

The Wire has reported on how this unfolded in Bengal, starting with approximately 1.63 crore voters initially flagged across seven categories of discrepancies, a result of software-generated red flags. Later, this number reduced to 1.34 crore, still a sizeable proportion of the voting population. The Wire's Aparna Bhattacharya reported on January 1:

> Out of these 1.34 crore, 85 lakh voters (approx. 11% of the electorate) have been flagged for "Father Name Mismatch", forcing them

> to defend potential spelling errors. Another 23.6 lakh individuals are under the scanner for the "Progeny > 6" rule, while 19.3 lakh face questions over age anomalies like "Elector Age > 45".
>
> The scope of scrutiny also includes 12.9 lakh voters for "Gender Mismatch" and 10.8 lakh flagged for having a "Parent Age Difference < 15 Years". When combined with the earlier No Mapping figures, nearly a quarter of West Bengal's voting population is now navigating a bureaucratic obstacle course to prove their citizenship.

Sircar's letter also points to a more recent development – the revelation that the software/portals used by the election staff across the country was being centrally controlled. He asks whether it is true that ECINET, the portal of the ECI, has a feature that can bar the EROs from viewing or reviewing voters' enumeration forms as well as the notice and hearing dashboard on the portal.

"And was such a bar applied in Bengal, but why?" he asks, referring, without mentioning by name, a recent audit by Charchagram, a civic-tech initiative, which found that only in West Bengal, EROs and AEROs could be restricted from accessing these forms and the dashboard.

Further, Sircar writes in his letter, are all 'left-out' voters in West Bengal covered by the ECI's post-SIR drive (its October 1, 2026 order) or are they deprived of this second opportunity because of your order of October 6 restricting its scope to only Absentee, Shifted, Deceased and Duplicate (ASDD) voters.

The CEO's press note of October 6 invites people on the list of absent, shifted and dead voters to walk into a camp and fill in Form 6 – unless they had appealed their exclusion before one of the 19 tribunals.

Another issue that features in Sircar's letter has to do with Form 7 applications processed by ECI in the state. Specifically, he seeks details about how many applications were received during the claims and objections period, how many voters ended up deleted in this process and whether those voters were given a chance to be heard.

Until January 15, The Wire has reported, political party agents had not filed a single objection for exclusion. On January 16, the day the commission told the CEO there was no limit to how many objections could be filed, 604 claims for exclusion first appeared. Recently, a cap was imposed – of 10 form 7s – but this does not help voters already removed based on objections filed in January.

For our full coverage on the SIR and the issues it has brought to citizens, click here.