Fate of voters deleted during SIR hangs in balance for upcoming municipal polls in Kolkata

Opposition parties as well as civil society members in West Bengal have demanded that the State Election Commission in view of the large number of eligible electors deleted from the electoral roll under SIR, consider holding elections only after the conclusion of the special re-enrolment drive and SSR

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SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY



The ECI, on its part, has also begun special drives to re-enrol voters left out during the SIR and has also announced the annual Special Summary Revision (SSR) following widespread protests over large-scale deletions of voter names. File | Photo Credit: PTI

appeals are stuck in tribunals, remains hanging as it is unclear whether they would be able to vote in the urban local body polls.

As per Article 243ZA of the Constitution, the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for all municipal elections vests with the State Election Commission and not with the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The State Election Commission, according to Section 5 of the West Bengal State Election Commission Act, 1994, has the "discretion" on whether it wants to adopt the electoral rolls used for Assembly polls in the municipal elections. It also has statutory powers to undertake additions and deletions to the electoral rolls, which has been used for Assembly polls.

The ECI, on its part, has also begun special drives to re-enrol voters left out during the SIR and has also announced the annual Special Summary Revision (SSR) following widespread protests over large-scale deletions of voter names. The final SSR list is to be published on January 4, 2027.

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deleted from the electoral roll under SIR, consider holding elections only after the conclusion of the special re-enrolment drive and SSR as this would allow the re-enrolment of eligible electors deleted under SIR, before the above-mentioned municipal corporation or municipality elections are held.

In a memorandum submitted to State Election Commissioner Krishna Gupta on Monday (October 26), they also urged him to include all appellants, whose appeals are pending before the SIR appellate tribunals.

Those who signed the memorandum included Pradesh Congress President Subhankar Sarkar, TMC MP Sougata Roy and former MPs Samik Lahiri and Jawhar Sircar.

According to the leaders, the office of the State Election Commissioner has informed that he will meet a delegation of representatives of the signatory organisations on Wednesday (October 28) to deliberate upon the issue.

In West Bengal, nearly 60 lakh voters were removed during the enumeration phase under the Absent/Shifted/Duplicate and Dead category. Simultaneously, the cases of more than 37 lakh voters are stuck in Appelate Tribunals.

In the Kolkata and Howrah Municipal Corporation region, the number of cases under appeal stands at around 1.6 lakh.

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