

SC to hear on July 10 pleas against Bihar roll revision

Several Opposition parties, NGOs, and activists move top court challenging the legality of the exercise; they say crores of people in the poll-bound State face prospect of disenfranchisement

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear urgently on Thursday a batch of petitions challenging the legality of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being conducted by the Election Commission in poll-bound Bihar.

The petitions were mentioned for early hearing before a Bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Joymalya Bagchi by a battery of lawyers, including senior advocates Kapil Sibal, A.M. Singhvi, Gopal Sankaranarayanan, and Shadan Farasat.

The Bench asked the petitioners to supply the Centre, the Election Commission, the Attorney-General, and other respondents with copies of



Serious questions: The petitioners urged the SC to ensure that the EC explain its 'hasty' decision. ANI

their petitions in advance.

The petitioners for whom the mentioning was made in the morning included Rashtriya Janata Dal MP Manoj Jha, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra, the non-governmental organisations As-

sociation for Democratic Reforms and People's Union for Civil Liberties, and activist Yogendra Yadav.

However, the day saw the challenge against the exercise gain further momentum, with leaders from various other Oppo-

Immediately stop roll revision, say INDIA leaders

PATNA

Demanding a halt to the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar, INDIA bloc leaders on Monday said the Election Commission (EC) was in a confused situation. The INDIA bloc coordination committee, headed by Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav, asked the EC to stop the SIR immediately and continue it after the election. » **PAGE 11**

sition parties moving the top court.

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Myanmar ethnic crisis drives 4,000 Chin people to Mizoram

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

A battle between two ethnic armed groups in Myanmar has forced some 4,000 Chin people in the country to take refuge in Mizoram.

Officials in Champhai district of Mizoram said waves of Myanmar nationals began crossing a border bridge at Zokhawthar and the Tiau river since the gunfights broke out on July 3. The river demarcates a part of the 510-km border between India and Myanmar. “The refugees are taking shelter in the houses of their relatives, schools, and community halls. They are concentrated in the Zokhawthar and Vaphai villages,” a district official said, declining to be quoted.

“Given the volatile situation across the border, we



Displaced population:

Children from Myanmar families who have taken refuge in Mizoram. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

have not asked these refugees, many of them women and children, to go back. Our villagers and members of NGOs such as the Young Mizo Association are looking after the basic needs of the refugees,” the official said.

On Sunday, Mizoram

Chief Minister Lalduhoma’s political adviser Lalmuanpuia Punte reportedly visited the border area to hold talks with the leaders of the two extremist groups for cessation of violence.

The Chins of Myanmar, and the dominant Mizos of Mizoram are members of the greater Zo community, as are the Kukis, Zomis, Hmars, and Kuki-Chins (Bangladesh). It is not unusual for these ethnic groups to have relatives on either side of the border.

According to community elders in Zokhawthar, the refugees started trickling in after observing the movement of armed men in areas close to the border less than a week ago. The “warning shots” erupted into a fierce gunfight on Saturday.

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Myanmar ethnic crisis drives 4,000 to Mizoram



A bridge connects Myanmar and India at the border village of Zokhawthar, Champhai district, in Mizoram. FILE PHOTO

Security officials guarding the border said the fight was between the Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) and the Chinland Defence Force-Hualngoram (CDF-H) for the control of areas deemed strategic for border trade with India. The two groups are part of the People's Defence Force that is leading a resistance movement against Myanmar's military junta, which captured power through a coup in 2021. After two days of exchanging fire, the CNDF was learnt to have captured all eight camps of the CDF-H in the area.

More than 30,000 refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh have been living in Mizorams since before the arrival of the 4,000 Chin people. About 2,000 Kuki-Chin refugees from Bangladesh arrived two years ago following clashes between their community-based armed ethnic group and Bangladeshi security forces.

Apart from the refugees, more than 5,000 Kuki-Zo people displaced by the ethnic violence in adjoining Manipur have also been taking shelter in Mizoram since 2023.

Gender gap in MSMEs

The data for the charts were taken from Reserve Bank of India, Press Information Bureau, SIDBI, NITI Aayog, Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd. (MUDRA)



Chart 1: The share of women-led MSMEs, share of women employed in MSMEs, share of investment attracted by women-led MSMEs and share of turnover of women-led MSMEs

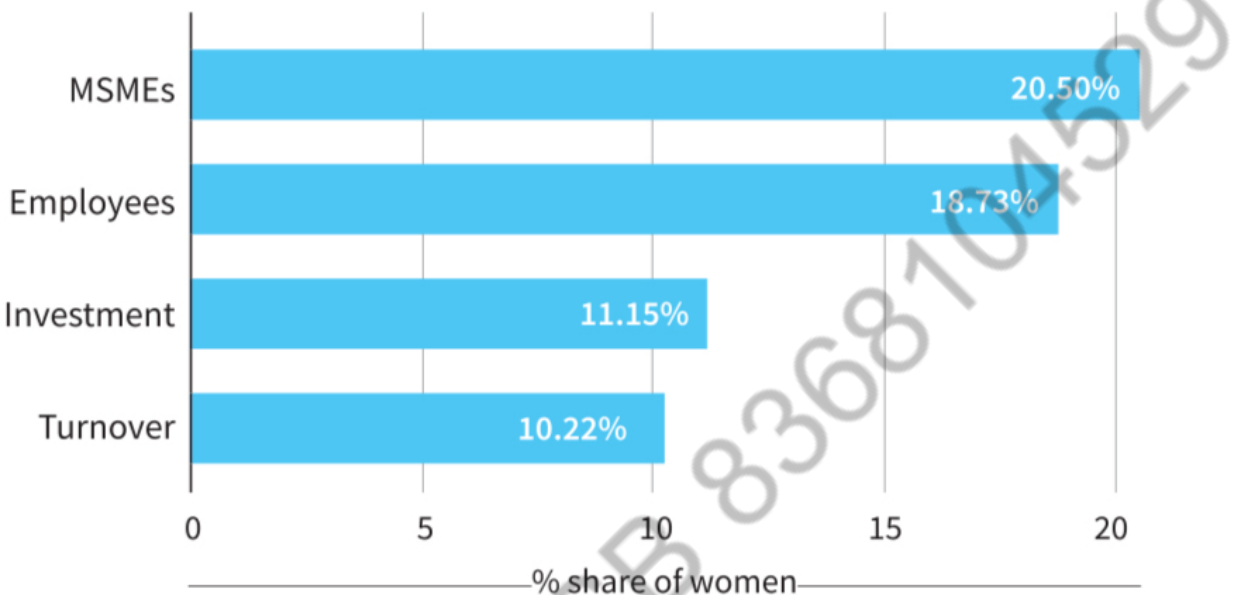


Chart 2: The credit gap across genders. Credit gap refers to the difference between the amount of credit requested by the borrower and the amount actually received

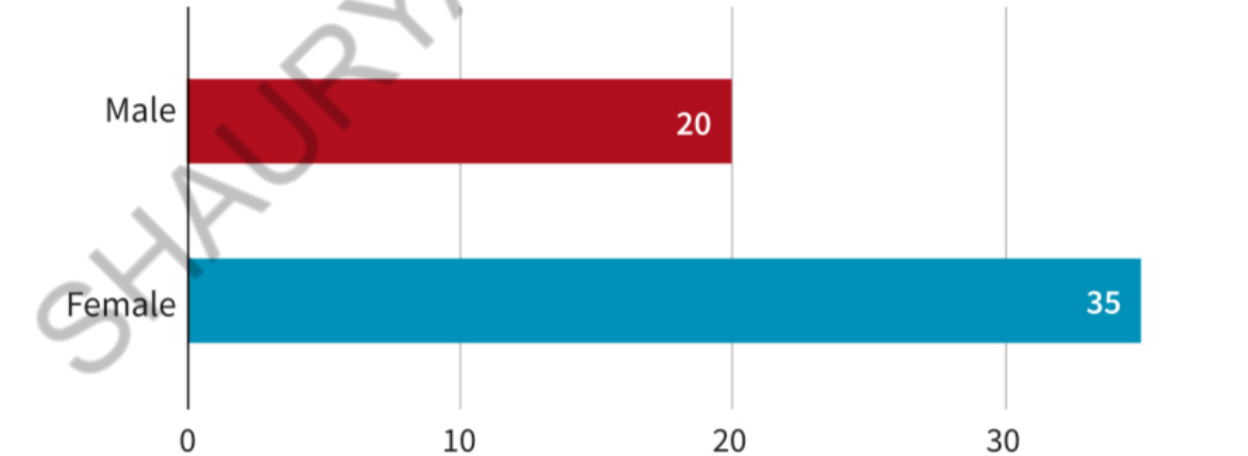
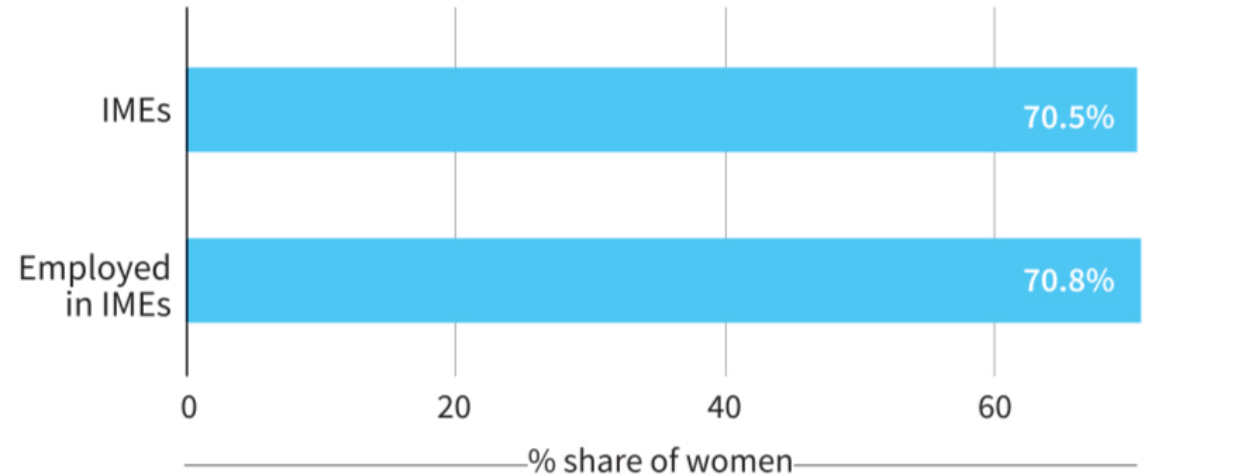


Chart 3: The share of women-led informal micro-enterprises (IMEs) and share of women employed in IMEs



For indigenous defence push, Rajnath Singh stresses swift decision-making

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The valour displayed during Operation Sindoor and the demonstration of domestic equipment during the operation have further increased the global demand for India's defence equipment, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Delhi on Monday.

He was addressing the Controllers' Conference of the Defence Accounts Department (DAD), where he emphasised the department's critical role in strengthening the operational readiness and financial agility of the armed forces.

"Our effort is to ensure that decisions are taken swiftly so that we can begin manufacturing larger engines right here in India and that this journey be-



Rajnath Singh with Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Army chief Gen. Upendra Dwivedi, Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh in New Delhi. PTI

gins with the hands of Indians," he added, reaffirming the government's commitment to building advanced indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities.

"The world is looking at our defence sector with new respect. A single delay or error in financial processes can directly affect

operational preparedness," he said.

"Most of the equipment we once imported is now being made in India. Our reforms are succeeding because of the clarity of vision and commitment at the highest level," he added.

Addressing the larger geopolitical context, Mr.

Singh mentioned the rising global military expenditure, reaching \$2.7 trillion in 2024 as per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and stated that this opens up tremendous opportunities for India's indigenous defence industries.

"Until recently, defence budgets were not seen as part of the national economy. Today, they are growth drivers," he asserted.

Mr. Singh mentioned that India, along with the rest of the world, is entering a new phase of re-armament, marked by capital-intensive investments in the defence sector. He urged the department to incorporate defence economics in their planning and assessments, including social impact analysis of R&D projects and dual-use technologies.

China protests PM's greetings to Dalai Lama on birthday

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI

The Chinese government has protested Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday greetings for Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama and the presence of Ministers at his 90th birthday celebrations in Dharamshala, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said on Monday.

The statement was made in response to a question at the daily press briefing, asking for a response to Mr. Modi's message on X, where he had praised the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, as an "enduring symbol of love, compassion, patience and moral discipline", as part of his birthday wishes.

While the Indian Ministry of External Affairs did not confirm receiving Beijing's protest, government sources pointed out that Indian Prime Ministers have a long-standing practice of wishing the Dalai Lama on his birthday, including on occasion over telephone calls.

"India needs to be fully cognisant of the sensitivity of issues related to Xizang, see clearly the anti-China



Mao Ning

and separatist nature of the 14th Dalai Lama, honour the commitments India has made to China on issues related to Xizang, act prudently, and stop using those issues to interfere in China's internal affairs," the Chinese MFA's spokesperson Mao Ning told presspersons, using the Chinese term 'Xizang' for Tibet or the Tibet Autonomous Region, which India uses.

"China has protested to India regarding its actions," Ms. Mao added, without sharing details on how the protest was delivered.

This is the second time in the last few days that China has objected to official greetings for the Dalai Lama, whose week-long birthday celebrations were marked in Dharamshala.

Bangladesh lawyers seek to quash ex-PM Hasina's murder trial

Agence France-Presse

DHAKA

State-appointed defence lawyers sought on Monday to throw out the charges against Bangladesh's convicted former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her crimes against humanity trial.

Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August last year, according to the United Nations, when Ms. Hasina's government ordered a crackdown on protesters in a failed bid to cling to power.

"I sought discharge from all the allegations... as they appear false, fabricated and politically motivated," Md Amir Hossain said. He added that he had not been able to speak to Ms. Hasina directly.

Prosecutors say that Ms. Hasina held overall command responsibility for the violence. Prosecutors have filed five charges against her – including failure to prevent mass murder – which amount to crimes against humanity under Bangladeshi law. The trial resumes on July 10.

Trump slaps allies Japan and South Korea with 25% tariffs

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened Japan and South Korea with 25% tariffs, stepping up pressure on the two historical U.S. allies and a dozen other economies to reach trade deals with the U.S.

In near-identically worded letters to the Japanese and South Korean leaders, Mr. Trump said the tariffs would apply from August 1 because their trading relationships with Washington were

Trump to sign an order delaying the deadline for steeper tariffs to take effect from August 1

"unfortunately, far from Reciprocal."

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters that Mr. Trump would sign an order later in the day to delay his July 9 deadline for steeper tariffs to take effect – postponing their imposition to August 1.

Macron due in the U.K., as London tries to balance ties with Europe, U.S.

Sriram Lakshman

LONDON

French President Emmanuel Macron and First Lady Brigitte Macron are due to arrive in London on Tuesday for a state visit, hosted by Britain's monarch Charles III and the Queen, Camilla. This is the first European head of state to be hosted by King Charles on a State visit, and an indication that the ties between London and Paris, which were under strain due to Britain's departure from the EU, have thawed.

While business is transacted during State visits, the ceremonial aspects and State dinner are instruments of the host country's soft power and used to bolster culture ties between the countries. The three-day visit will culminate in a



Emmanuel Macron

summit level meeting led by Mr. Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday. The visit comes at a time when the U.K. is trying to balance its ties with the EU and the U.S., as President Donald Trump has overseen a downgrading of ties between the U.S. and the EU.

Anglo-French security and defence ties, which are governed by the Lancaster House treaties of 2010, will

be updated during the summit, as per a statement by French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot in France's National Assembly. Mr. Barrot cited London and Paris cooperating on Ukraine's defence (by leading a group of mostly European countries called the 'Coalition of the Willing').

He also mentioned the two countries coordinating responses on Iran along with Germany, which, according to him, paved the way for negotiations (i.e., the June 20 negotiations in Geneva). Mr. Barrot also highlighted cooperation on the crisis in Sudan. The visit will also see politically sensitive issues discussed – such as fishing and migration. The U.K. and the EU recently concluded an agreement allowing reciprocal access to fishing waters until 2038.

On Tuesday, the French first couple will be welcomed on arrival by Prince William and Catherine Middleton, the Prince and Princess of Wales, before being taken to Windsor Castle, just outside London, where they will be hosted by the King and the Queen. The visit will include a carriage ride through the town of Windsor and a state dinner. Mr. Macron is scheduled to address the U.K. parliament on Wednesday.

Mr. Trump, who has expressed a fondness for the British Royal Family, has also been invited to the U.K. on a state visit, his second such visit, since 2019, when he was hosted by Queen Elizabeth. Mr. Trump's second visit is expected in September, though no dates have been announced.

Houthis claim first ship sinking this yr in Red Sea attack

JANA CHOUKEIR

DUBAI, JULY 7

YEMEN'S IRAN-ALIGNED Houthis said on Monday that a cargo ship they struck with gunfire, rockets and explosive-laden remote-controlled boats had sunk in the Red Sea, after their first known attack on the high seas this year.

The ship's Greek operator Stem Shipping told *Reuters* it had no independent verification. Reuters could also not immediately verify whether the ship had sunk. The Houthis claimed responsibility for Sunday's assault and said they had allowed the 19 crew members to disembark from the Liberian-flagged bulk carrier, the *Magic Seas*.

All crew were rescued by a passing merchant vessel and were expected to arrive in Djibouti later on Monday, Stem Shipping told *Reuters*. The *Magic Seas* was taking on water after the attack and remained at risk of sinking, the company's representative had said earlier. The ship had been carrying iron and fertiliser from China to Turkey.

ISRAEL HITS YEMEN, HOUTHIS STRIKE BACK

Aden: Israel struck Houthi targets at three Yemeni ports and a power plant, the military said early on Monday, in its first attack on Yemen in nearly a month. The strikes hit the ports of Hodeidah, Ras Isa and Salif, as well as the Ras Qantib power plant, the military said. Hours later, Israel said two missiles were launched from Yemen. Attempts were made to intercept them, though the results were still under review. Reuters

The attack ended half a year of calm in the Red Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping routes, where Houthi attacks from the end of 2023 through late 2024 had disrupted shipping between Europe and Asia. The Houthis launched more than 100 attacks on ships in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Bab al-Mandab Strait that links them. **REUTERS**

Why BRICS is a Trump target

RAVIDUTTA MISHRA

NEW DELHI, JULY 7

IN A fresh threat to the fast-growing BRICS coalition, which now includes 10 nations and was originally represented by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, US President Donald Trump said in a social media post that any country aligning itself with the “anti-American policies” of BRICS would face an additional 10 per cent tariff. Trump had threatened BRICS nations of a 100 per cent tariff “if they so much as even think” about reducing the use of the dollar in global trade.

Ever since the US weaponised the global financial infrastructure by excluding Iran (in 2012) and Russia (in 2022) from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), countries around the world have sought to reduce their dependence on the US dollar and the US-led global financial system. Most notably, Russia and China began trading in domestic currency.

BRICS now accounts for 45 per cent of the global population and contributes over 35 per cent to the world's GDP. At their summit held in Kazan, Russia, in October 2024,



US President Donald Trump looks up at the American flag as he arrives at the White House on Sunday.

AP

the founding five members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—formally admitted Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE as new members. Indonesia joined the grouping later in January 2025, bringing the total membership to ten. In June 2022, Russia proposed the creation of a new international reserve currency based on a basket of currencies from BRICS countries. However, according to a BRICS report, members said they “do not seek to replace the US dollar as a medium

EXPLAINED

E BRICS accounts for 45% of global population

BRICS NOW accounts for 45% of the global population and contributes over 35% to the world's GDP. In October 2024, the founding five members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—formally admitted Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE as new members. Indonesia joined the grouping in January 2025, bringing total membership to ten.

of exchange”. Instead, BRICS aims to “offer a viable alternative that will aid the market in its perpetual mission for efficiency” and foster greater prosperity, promoting universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalisation.

Trump's threat coincides with the US dollar hitting a three-year low this year, after declining by over 10 per cent against a basket of currencies such as the euro and yen, due to expected disruptions in the US economy stemming from proposed tariffs.

India's position

In October 2024, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar clarified that while US policies often complicate trade with certain countries, and India sought “workarounds” in pursuit of its trade interests, it did not “target” the dollar or seek to move away from it. “We have never actively targeted the dollar. That's not part of our economic, political, or strategic policy. Some others may have done so. What I will say is that we have a natural concern. We often have trade partners who lack dollars for transactions. So, we must decide whether to forgo dealings with them or find alternative settlements that work. There's no malicious intent towards the dollar,” Jaishankar said.

In December 2024, then RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had said India was not pursuing “de-dollarisation”, and that recent measures such as allowing Vostro accounts and entering local currency trade agreements were intended to only “de-risk” Indian trade. While BRICS nations have discussed the possibility of a shared currency, they have reached no decision, Das said.

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