

Another six lakh names likely to be removed from West Bengal voter list

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

About six lakh more names are likely to be removed from the West Bengal voter list, as hearings for the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the State are set to end on February 14. In the first phase of the SIR, 58 lakh names were already removed from the State's voter list, and the total number of electors dropped to 7.08 crore.

Sources at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of West Bengal pointed out that, so far, approximately 6.25 lakh electors were absent from their SIR hearings.

Notices for 'logical discrepancies' in enumeration forms were issued to



People waiting during hearings under the special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Nadia, West Bengal. PTI

about 1.36 crore voters, and the details of 1.23 crore of them have been verified. While details are yet to be uploaded for a few lakh voters, about 6.25 lakh voters did not appear for their hearings despite notices being issued to them by the Election Commission (EC).

Meanwhile, West Bengal

Chief Secretary Nandani Chakravarty met EC officials in the national capital on Friday. She was summoned to Delhi amid reports that the State government had not implemented several directions, including orders to file FIRs against four officials and the suspension of another official involved in the SIR process.

CEC holds meeting

During the day, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar held a meeting with officials at the West Bengal CEO's office, as well as the District Magistrates (DMs) who are also the District Electoral Officers. According to sources privy to the meeting, the Chief Election Commissioner expressed

displeasure over the role of about half a dozen DMs involved in the SIR.

The CEC questioned how documents which are not accepted by the Commission were being uploaded and why DMs have not overseen the process. The DMs of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur were among those who faced the CEC ire.

The CEC directed that names of valid voters should not be struck off electoral rolls while no foreigners should be allowed in the electoral list.

The final voter list in the State is likely to be released on February 28.

Elections to the West Bengal Assembly are due in the next few months.

CJI's office received 8,630 complaints against judges from 2016 to 2025: Minister

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) received 8,630 complaints against sitting judges in the last decade, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

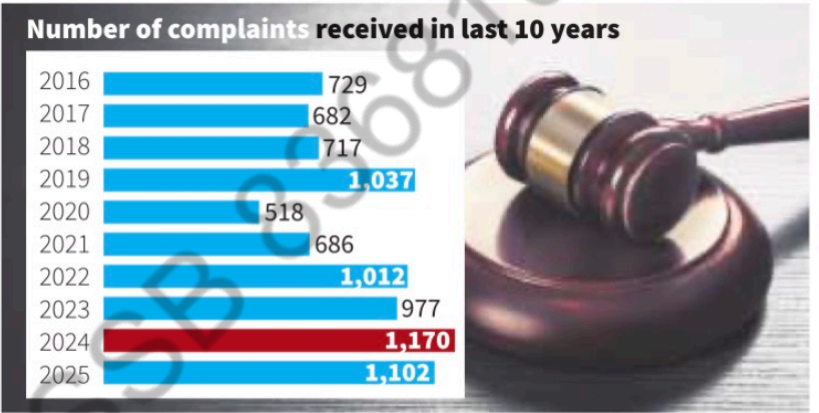
The information came in response to a question raised in the House by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MP V.S. Matheswaran who had sought the database of complaints regarding corruption, sexual misconduct, or other serious impropriety received against judges of the High Courts or the Supreme Court.

Responding to the query, Mr. Meghwal submitted that 8,360 complaints against judges were recorded between 2016 and 2025.

As per the data shared by the Minister, the CJI's office got 729 complaints against judges in 2016, followed by 682 in 2017, 717 in 2018, and 1,037 in 2019. In 2020 and 2021, such complaints stood at 518 and 686 respectively. In 2022, 1,012 complaints were received, followed by 977 in 2023, 1,170 in 2024, and

Court scrutiny

Under the judiciary's in-house mechanism, complaints against judges are handled internally by the CJI and Chief Justices of the High Courts, with no public disclosure on outcomes



1,102 in 2025.

Though Mr. Matheswaran asked if any action had been taken on the complaints, the Minister did not address the query.

To another question by the MP on whether the Centre was aware of any system maintained by the apex court to track complaints related to corruption, sexual misconduct, or other serious impropriety against judges of the higher judiciary, the Minister said that under the existing "in-house procedure", the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justices of the High Courts are

authorised to receive and handle such complaints.

The Minister further noted that complaints submitted through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) or other channels are forwarded to the CJI or the respective High Court Chief Justices.

The MP also enquired if the government intended to introduce guidelines to ensure proper documentation, monitoring, and accountability in dealing with complaints against members of the higher judiciary. However, the Minister did not address it.



Security forces deployed at Litan village in Ukhrul. FILE PHOTO

Authorities restore Internet services in Manipur's Ukhrul

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

The Manipur government on Friday restored Internet services in Ukhrul district.

Mobile data and broadband services were suspended temporarily in the hill district's Litan area on February 10 after an assault case snowballed into a localised conflict between the Kuki-Zo and Naga tribes.

"The ban was lifted after a general understanding among the stakeholders to maintain peace," Ukhrul's District Magistrate Asish Das told *The Hindu*.

He said the decision to lift the Internet ban fol-

lowed an assessment of the ground situation. "The State government facilitated the peace-building efforts of the district administration and the security forces," he said.

Arson attack

More than 40 houses belonging to both communities were set ablaze and a few people were injured during the first three days of the conflict from February 8. Some of the injured were treated at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences in the State's capital, Imphal.

The Litan area is located between Imphal and Ukhrul town.

India accounts for 16% of global growth, poised to drive world economy, says PM

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, February 13

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Friday said India contributes more than 16% to global growth today and expressed confidence that the country will emerge as a new engine of world economy.

In this decade of the 21st century, he said, India is riding on the 'Reform Express', and its biggest specialty is that "we are accelerating it not out of compulsion, but with conviction and with reform commitment".

Modi made the remarks while speaking at the ET Now Global Business Summit 2026.

"India accounts for 16% of global growth, and I am confident that our contribution will continue to increase in the future. India is poised to drive the world's economic growth and emerge as a new engine of global growth," he said.

The PM spoke on host of issues, including how India is moving towards becoming the world's third largest economy.

Observing that at the start of last decade, India was the 11th largest economy, he said "amid so much upheaval, there was apprehension India would slip even further down. But today, India is rapidly moving forward and heading towards becoming the world's third largest economy". Referring to the pandemic and supply chain disruptions, Modi said a country's true potential emerges during crisis. "I am



India heading towards becoming world's third largest economy: PM Narendra Modi

proud that despite numerous disruptions, this decade has been marked by unprecedented development, remarkable delivery and strengthening of our democracy,"

Modi said numerous FTAs were being signed now. "Have you wondered why this wasn't the case before 2014, even though the country and its circumstances largely remained the same? The key difference lies in the government's vision, as well as changes in its intentions and policies."

Previously, Modi said when India was considered part of the 'Fragile Five', "the prevailing environment of policy paralysis, frequent scams, and widespread corruption discouraged other nations from entering into agreements with us". "Back then, who would have had confidence in India?" The PM said India is making trade deals with the world, because the country is filled with confidence and is ready to compete with the world.

BNP secures landslide victory in Bangladesh

Transfer of power likely by February 17 or 18, say interim government officials; Modi congratulates Rahman on his win, says India will continue its support; national referendum approves reforms

Kallol Bhattacharjee

DHAKA

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, led by chairman Tarique Rahman, is set to return to power in Dhaka after two decades, following a landslide victory in the February 12 parliamentary election, winning an absolute majority of seats, according to the Election Commission of Bangladesh.

The BNP-led alliance has secured 212 seats, giving it a two-thirds majority in the Jatiyo Sansad. The 11-party alliance led by the Jamaat-e-Islami has won 77 seats, while independent candidates won eight seats.

Mr. Rahman has started receiving congratulatory messages from world lead-



Big win: Bangladesh Nationalist Party chairman Tarique Rahman greets his supporters in Dhaka on Friday. AFP

ers, including from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"I convey my warm congratulations to Mr. Tarique Rahman. This victory shows the trust of the people in your leadership. India will continue to stand in support of a democratic, progressive and inclusive

Bangladesh. I look forward to working with you to strengthen our multifaceted relations and advance our common development goals," Mr. Modi said on X.

While the process of transfer of power from the interim government led by Chief Adviser Muhammad

Yunus will be clearer after a gazette notification by the Bangladesh Election Commission, the interim government has indicated that it is set to hand over the reins to the newly elected government by February 17 or 18.

National referendum

Bangladeshi voters have endorsed sweeping democratic reforms in a national referendum, the Election Commission said. According to the commission, 60.2% of voters backed the reform package.

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BNP secures landslide victory in Bangladesh

The BNP spent the day in internal consultations as the top winners and the members of the party's standing committee, including Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Mirza Abbas, Salauddin Ahmed and Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, met chairman Rahman in the Gulshan neighbourhood of Dhaka.

'No victory parade'

Mr. Rahman, the Prime Minister-designate, issued an internal order saying the party should avoid taking out a victory parade and join his colleagues for Friday prayers at the Gulshan Navi Jame Mosque. Mr. Alamgir told the media that the BNP would take all sides along as it prepares to govern Bangladesh.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the Chinese Foreign Ministry congratulated BNP.

Nepal's interim government's Prime Minister Sushila Karki and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu also congratulated Mr. Rahman on Facebook, expressing their desire to advance bilateral ties.

"Law Adviser Asif Nazrul and legal luminaries are carrying out a consultation and by Saturday we will get to know when the oath-taking ceremony for the members of Parliament and the government will be completed," Mr. Yunus's press advisor Shafiqul Alam told *The Hindu*.

'Hasina's presence in India, Ganga waters treaty to be key priorities for BNP govt.'

Kallol Bhattacharjee

DHAKA

Stopping "border killings", starting negotiation for renewal of the Ganga waters agreement, and increasing the number of medical visas are some of the priority areas for Bangladesh's incoming government, sources in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) told *The Hindu* on Friday.

The BNP, led by its chairman Tarique Rahman, is set to return to power in Dhaka after two decades, following a landslide victory in the parliamentary election.

Giving an insight of the list of deliverables, BNP's sources said India should urgently deal with the issue of ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's presence on Indian soil as Ms. Hasina has been making comments about the developments in her country.

Border issue

"Out of all issues, it is the border killings by the Border Security Force of India that creates great difficulty for the Government of Bangladesh. Reports of killings in the bordering areas immediately inflames passion especially in university campuses where protests break out escalating the sit-



India should deal with the issue of deposed Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina's presence on Indian soil, BNP sources said. AP

uation," said a source who is working on the neighbourhood projects of the BNP. The BNP member said that India and Bangladesh have a settled border and it makes no sense to shoot to kill someone.

He further said that India should look into the issue of continued presence of Ms. Hasina and her top aides on Indian soil as the Awami League leader's comments will pose a challenge to normalisation of ties and indicated that these issues will be among the first items that would be discussed by the incoming government.

The other big issue that will have to be prioritised, *The Hindu* was told is the renewal of the Ganga Waters Treaty that will have to be renewed before December 2026. Indian diplomatic sources had flagged that the technical teams that

were supposed to meet to iron out the details of the renewal agreement in the two years did not meet though the matter featured during the June 2024 visit of Ms. Hasina when she was Prime Minister.

He further said the number of medical visas that are issued by India are inadequate and that India must relax medical visas as it is a great people-to-people connector.

"We are being pushed to go to China in search of medical treatment. If pushed by denial of medical visa, we will find an alternative as in today's world an alternative will present itself automatically but our cultural commonalities make medical treatment in India a more comfortable process," said the source urging India to enhance people-to-people diplomacy.

U.S. PRESIDENT SEEKING TO CONSTRAIN IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

Iran's failure to strike deal will be traumatic: Trump

Netanyahu presses Trump to toughen stance in Iran talks

Associated Press
Dubai, February 13

THE DEATH toll from a crack-down over Iran's nationwide protests last month has reached at least 7,005 with many more still feared dead, activists said Thursday.

The continued rise in the tally of the dead from the demonstrations adds to the overall tensions facing Iran both inside the country and abroad as it tries to negotiate with the United States over its nuclear program.

A second round of talks remains up in the air as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pressed his case directly with US President Donald Trump to intensify his demands on Tehran in the negotiations.

"There was nothing definitive reached other than I insisted that negotiations with Iran continue to see whether or not a Deal can be consummated. If it can, I let the Prime Minister know that will be a



The USS Gerald R Ford on one of its first sea trials in April 18 2017. AP

preference," Trump wrote afterward on his Truth Social website.

"Last time Iran decided that they were better off not making a Deal, and they were hit.... That did not work well for them. Hopefully this time they will be reasonable and responsible."

Trump told reporters at the White House Thursday that Iran should come to an agreement with Washington "very quickly."

Asked about his timeline for striking a deal with Iran over its nuclear program, Trump said, "I guess over the next month, something like that."

Trump, who is seeking a deal

to constrain Iran's nuclear program and who also has suggested the US might take military action in response to Iran's crackdown on protesters, warned Iran that failure to reach a deal with his administration would be "very traumatic."

Meanwhile, Netanyahu told reporters before boarding a plane to return to Israel that Trump believes that his terms and Iran's "understanding that they made a mistake the last time when they did not reach an agreement, may lead them to agree to conditions that will enable a good agreement to be reached."

Second US aircraft carrier is being sent to the Middle East

Associated Press
February 13

THE UNITED States will send the world's largest aircraft carrier to the Middle East to back up another already there, a person familiar with the plans said Friday, putting more American firepower behind President Donald Trump's efforts to coerce Iran into a deal over its nuclear program.

The USS Gerald R Ford's planned deployment to the Middle East comes after Trump only days earlier suggested another round of talks with the Iranians was at hand. Those negotiations didn't materialize as one of Tehran's top security officials visited Oman and Qatar this week and exchanged messages with the US intermediaries.

Already, Gulf Arab nations have warned any attack could spiral into another regional conflict in a Mideast still reeling from the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Trump dismantles legal basis for U.S. climate rules, draws condemnation

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump has revoked a landmark scientific finding underpinning U.S. regulations to curb planet-warming pollution, marking his biggest roll-back of climate policy to date. The repeal of the Environmental Protection Agency's 2009 "endangerment finding" was paired with the immediate elimination of greenhouse gas standards on automobiles.

But it also places a host of other climate rules in jeopardy, including carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and methane



President Donald Trump arrives in the White House Roosevelt Room to make the announcement, on Thursday. AP

leaks for oil and gas producers.

Legal challenges are expected to follow swiftly. "This determination had no basis in fact, had none

whatsoever, and no basis in law," Mr. Trump said at a White House event on Thursday. He dismissed concerns that the repeal could cost lives by worsen-

ing climate change, reiterating his belief that human-caused global warming is a hoax. The administration also framed the measure as a cost-saving move, claiming it would generate more than \$1 trillion in regulatory savings and bring down new car costs.

The announcement immediately drew condemnation from Democrats and green groups.

"We'll be less safe, less healthy and less able to fight climate change – all so the fossil fuel industry can make even more money," warned former President Barack Obama, under whose government the finding was created.

Consumers get a raw deal as global oil price fall benefit remains 'frozen'

While oil price spikes are passed on to Indian consumers, the benefit of falling prices are not, according to analysts; petrol prices in India have been cut barely by 1.9% since June 2022 even as oil prices have declined 41% since then

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

The price of petrol sold in India has been reduced 1.9% since June 2022, even as the price of oil has fallen 41.5% since then, an analysis of official data by *The Hindu* shows.

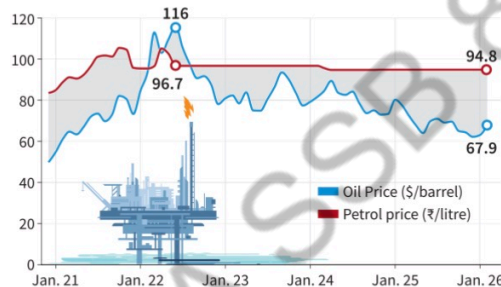
Data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) show that the price of oil, as captured by the Indian basket of crude oil, rose to over \$100 a barrel in the period March-July 2022, soon after Russia invaded Ukraine in February that year.

Frozen prices

In response to this spike, oil marketing companies (OMCs) increased the price of petrol to ₹105.1 per litre by April 2022. However, they froze the price at ₹96.7 per litre in May 2022, when the average oil prices jumped to around \$110 a

Static pricing

While oil prices have fallen sharply since June 2022, this benefit has not been passed on to consumers in the form of lower petrol prices.



Source: Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell, Government of India
Note: Data for each month is the average for that month.

barrel. Fuel prices were kept unchanged for more than 21 months thereafter, until mid March 2024.

This freeze, however, marked an unofficial digression from the official dynamic pricing policy the government had adopted in 2017 for petrol under which OMCs were to fix the price of fuel on a daily ba-

sis based on prevailing oil prices.

Oil prices rose to \$116 a barrel by June 2022. The price of oil available to India for purchase declined to an average of \$67.9 a barrel by February 2025, a 41.5% decrease. During this period, the price of petrol sold in India was reduced 1.9% from ₹96.7 a

litre to ₹94.8 a litre.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas had repeatedly informed Parliament that the setting of fuel price is the exclusive domain of the OMCs, and that the government has no part to play in this.

'Based on convenience'

According to energy sector analysts and experts, OMCs have in the past passed on oil price hikes to consumers in the form of higher petrol prices, but have not passed on the benefits of falling oil price.

"In a regulated system, the consumer would have been insulated from both kinds of shocks," Rohit Azad, Professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) said.

"However, in this case, when crude oil prices go up, it is passed on to consumers, but when it goes

down, it is not reflected in the prices. It is a mechanism based on convenience."

Notably, even the 1.9% reduction in petrol prices since June 2022 has been due to cuts in taxes on fuel rather than actions by OMCs to reduce the underlying price of petrol.

That is, the excise duty on petrol was cut in mid-March 2024 by ₹2/litre, reducing the price from ₹96.7/litre to ₹94.7/litre. Since then, the price has increased marginally to ₹94.8/litre.

In response to a query in Parliament, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi pointed out that despite there being a ₹2 per litre hike in the excise duty of petrol in April 2025, it was not passed on to consumers. India's largest state-run OMC, IndianOil Corporation, did not respond to a request for comment.