

Dissanayake says he favours 'national consensus' before drafting Constitution

Meera Srinivasan

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has said his government will work on building a "national consensus" rather than "hastily" drafting a new Constitution.

He made the remarks during a discussion on Monday with leaders of political parties and alliances representing the island's Tamil-speaking minorities in the north and east, and the Malaiyaha Tamils living in the central and southern hill country.

Members of various political formations of Tamil, Tamil-speaking Muslim, and Malaiyaha Tamil communities – who are Sri Lanka's ethnic minorities – had recently launched a



Anura Kumara Dissanayake with representatives of Tamil-speaking ethnic minority communities in Colombo. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

common platform or "me-dai", called the Political Council for Tamil-Speaking People, to foreground issues affecting their constituencies.

The common platform comprises the All Ceylon MakkalCongress (ACMC), Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), Democratic Tamil

National Alliance (DTNA), Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), and the Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA). It has identified a limited programme focusing on three key areas: the introduction of a new Constitution, the early conduct of the long-pend-

ing Provincial Council polls, and the resolution of conflicts surrounding people's land.

According to a statement issued by the President's office following the discussion, Mr. Dissanayake reaffirmed the government's position that the Constitution needed to be reformed and the Executive Presidency abolished.

"However, he stressed that, rather than pursuing a hastily drafted constitutional amendment, the priority at this stage is to build a new national consensus. The President emphasised the importance of initiating a broad and inclusive national dialogue to achieve that objective," the statement said.

CWG high fuels calls to make Haryana co-host for 2030 games

Ashok Kumar
BHIWANI

Haryana's dominance at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games (CWG) in Glasgow has sparked a fresh demand from sportspersons and political leaders across party lines to make the State a co-host of the 2030 CWG scheduled to be held in Ahmedabad.

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said, "It is valid to say that boxing events – or at least some CWG events – should be held in Bhiwani. It is a hub for boxing in India."

Mr. Singh said he would seek an appointment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and raise the issue.

BJP leader and Olympic bronze medallist boxer Vijender Singh said while the final call rests with the government, "it would be good if the games are held in Haryana". Former BJP Rajya Sabha member Kiran



Haryana MPs in New Delhi on Tuesday demanding that the State co-host the 2030 Commonwealth Games. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Choudhry said she would take up the matter with the Prime Minister and Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

On Monday, Congress's Haryana MPs – Deepender

Hooda, Jai Prakash, Varun Mulana, Satpal Brahmachari, and Karmbir Baudh – staged a protest at the Parliament complex demanding that Haryana be

made the host or a co-host for the 2030 games.

Mr. Hooda asked why Haryana, which wins 50% of the country's medals at the CWG, Asian Games and Olympics with just 2% of India's population, continues to face neglect.

The Congress leader attacked the State government for not submitting a proposal to host the games and demanded that it immediately send a bid and that the Central government consider it seriously.

Gen Z loud and clear on the street but invisible in Parliament, Assemblies

Only 6 MPs & 20 MLAs from GenZ, given eligibility age is 25 for candidates, but population share is nearly 26%

Anjishnu Das
New Delhi, August 4

ON THE streets, Gen Z's voice rings loud and clear, but in Parliament and the state legislatures, it remains a faint echo.

The reason: Gen Z accounts for over a quarter of the country's population, yet its

representation in politics is restricted to just 26 legislators across the country — six Lok Sabha MPs and 20 MLAs, a low number even though the minimum age to contest elections is 25, which rules out a chunk of this demographic.

Defined as those born
»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

• Party-wise Gen Z MPs and MLAs

AIADMK: 1

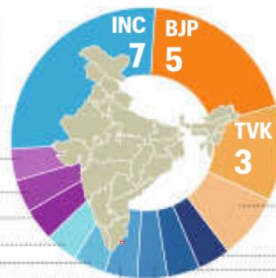
DMK: 1

HSPDP: 1

Independent: 1

JanaSena
Party: 1

JD(U): 1



Total Gen Z
legislators
26

SOURCE: LOK SABHA, STATE ASSEMBLIES, ADR

Gen Z

between 1997 and 2012, or in the age band of 14-29, Gen Z accounts for 36.74 crore, or 25.8%, of the country's 142.6 crore population in 2026, as per 2011 Census projections. The Gen Z population aged 25 and older alone accounts for an estimated 8.9% of the country's population.

When the age band is stretched to 40, the number of legislators in this group expands to 397 MLAs and 40 MPs.

6 MPs in Lok Sabha

The current Lok Sabha, elected in 2024, offered the first opportunity for Gen Z representatives to enter the Lower House. The Congress has the most Gen Z MPs at three, followed by the SP at two and the LJP(RV) at one. UP and Karnataka have two Gen Z MPs each, while Bihar and Rajasthan have one each.

The Gen Z MPs are: SP's Pushpendra Saroj (27) from Kausambi and Priya Saroj (27) from Machhlishahr in UP; Congress's Sagar Khandre (28) from Bidar and Priyanka Satish Jarkiholi (29) from Chikkodi in Karnataka, and Sanjna Jatav (28) from Bharatpur in Rajasthan; and LJP (Ram Vilas)'s Shambhavi (28) from Samastipur in Bihar.

These six MPs were the only winners among the 98 Gen Z Lok Sabha candidates in 2024 who accounted for just 1.2% of all 8,360 candidates in the fray.

Four of these six Gen Z MPs are women; four are college graduates; and two hold post-graduate degrees. According to their election affidavits, Priya Saroj, Khandre and Jatav are trained lawyers, Shambhavi holds an MA in sociology, Jarkiholi is an MBA, and Pushpendra Saroj holds an accounting and management degree from a

London university.

Five of these six Gen Z MPs belong to established political families; only Jatav, a Dalit MP, does not.

Pushpendra Saroj's father Indrajit is a former UP minister and national general secretary of SP, while Priya Saroj's father is a sitting SP MLA and three-time former Lok Sabha MP.

Among the Congress's Gen Z MPs, Khandre's father Eshwara is a sitting Karnataka MLA, former state minister and the party's state working president, while his late grandfather Bheemanna was a four-time MLA and prominent Lingayat leader. Priyanka Jarkiholi, the other Karnataka MP, is the daughter of four-time sitting MLA Satish Jarkiholi, from the prominent Jarkiholi political family that also has members in the BJP.

LJP(RV) MP Shambhavi's father Ashok Choudhary is a Cabinet minister in Bihar's NDA government and national general secretary of the Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (United).

The Lok Sabha has another 34 MPs aged 40 or under, taking the total number of under-40 legislators to just 40 in the 543-member House. UP has the largest representation in this group at 10 MPs, followed by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh at five each, and West Bengal and Maharashtra at four each.

20 MLAs in states

Of the 4,131 MLAs across 28 states and three Union Territories, just 20 belong to Gen Z. Six were elected from seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and three from Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Since a Gen Z candidate would have hit the eligible age to contest an Assembly election only in 2022, most of these MLAs were elected in the last two years, with as many as nine elected in 2026 alone.

Tamil Nadu has the most

Gen Z MLAs at four after its 2026 Assembly poll — three from the ruling TVK and one from the AIADMK. West Bengal has the next highest at three, all from the BJP, while Bihar, Meghalaya and Telangana have two each. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, Odisha, Puducherry and Rajasthan have one Gen Z MLA each. All these states last went to polls between 2023 and 2026.

A party-wise breakdown puts the BJP on top with five Gen Z MLAs, followed by the Congress at four and the TVK at three. Among the other parties with Gen Z MLAs are the AIADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu, the Jana Sena Party in Andhra, the JD(U) in Bihar, the NCP(SP) in Maharashtra, and two regional parties in Meghalaya — all with one MLA each — besides one Independent in Rajasthan.

Of the 20 Gen Z MLAs, 16 are at least college graduates, including five postgraduates. One is a diploma holder, another has studied up to Class 10 and two others up to Class 12. Nine were elected from reserved seats (six from SC and three from ST seats) and eight of them are women.

Twelve of these 20 Gen Z MLAs are political newcomers without prior electoral experience or family backgrounds, including Tamil Nadu MLA Dhilipan Jaishankar, a doctor; West Bengal MLA Santu Pan, a former journalist; and Bihar MLA Maithili Thakur, a prominent playback singer.

Keerthana S, the youngest minister in Tamil Nadu's newly elected TVK government, has no electoral experience but was a political consultant with I-PAC before contesting the 2026 polls. Ravindra Singh Bhati was a student leader before becoming a Rajasthan MLA as an Independent.

The remaining eight Gen Z

MLAs come from political families. Most prominent among them are Aditya Surjewala, a Haryana MLA and son of senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Surjewala; Rohit Patil, a Maharashtra MLA and son of former Deputy CM R R Patil; and Puducherry MLA Vignesh Kannan, whose father is former Lok Sabha MP and ex-Puducherry Assembly Speaker P Kannan. Several others, such as Mynampally Rohith in Telangana, Tanzil Hussain in Assam, Upasna Mohapatra in Odisha and Damanbait Lamare in Meghalaya, are also children of former legislators.

Under 40, bigger basket

As many as 397 MLAs across India are 40 or younger, including the 20 who belong to Gen Z. As a share of an Assembly's total membership, Chhattisgarh has the highest proportion of MLAs aged 40 or younger at 35.6%, followed by Tamil Nadu at 20.9%, Meghalaya at 16.7%, West Bengal at 15.7%, and Bihar at 15.6%. Of these states, Tamil Nadu and Bengal held their latest elections this year, while Bihar voted in late 2025. In absolute terms, Tamil Nadu has the most MLAs aged 40 or younger at 49, followed by Bengal at 46, Bihar at 38, UP at 37, and Chhattisgarh at 32.

These numbers matter because, by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, Gen Z could account for the largest share of India's voting-age population. While the 2011 Census does not have age-wise projections for 2029, its projections for 2031 place the Gen Z population, which will then be aged between 19-34, at approximately 26.3%. Millennials, in contrast, will comprise 21.7% of the population in 2031, down from roughly 22.2% in 2026. Older generations, including those born in 1980 or before, will together account for 24% of the population by then.

Amid Opp protests, RS passes Registration of Births and Deaths Bill

Express News Service

New Delhi, August 4

THE RAJYA Sabha passed the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026, by a voice vote on Tuesday afternoon, amid slogans from the Opposition. The Lok Sabha had cleared the Bill last week. The Upper House ran for less than an hour in the afternoon, before being adjourned for the day soon after the passage of the Bill.

The Bill, which has stricter provisions for delayed registrations, was introduced by MoS Home Nityanand Rai. The Bill seeks to amend provisions of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, to tighten the existing norms, mandating an order from a Judicial Magistrate (First Class) for birth and death registrations made over two years after the event.

Under the existing law, registrations delayed by over one year require an order from a district magistrate, sub-divisional magistrate, or an authorised executive magistrate, and the provision will continue to apply for delays of up to two years under the amended law.

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge started the discussion by saying that the only way to see the House function normally is if the Prime Minister shows up, but he was cut short by the Deputy Chairperson Harivansh. While BJP members supported the Bill, some members such as BJD's Santrupt Misra, United People's Party Liberal member Pramod Boro, and Shiv Sena's Jyoti Nagnath Waghmare objected to the provision of a

judicial magistrate's order for birth and death registrations. Boro said the judicial magistrates are overburdened and this requirement will lead to delays in registrations. He said there was a disparity in the number of judicial magistrates across states.

Waghmare said the registration process should be made easier with camps and door-to-door activities, and penalties should be removed. BJP member Biswajit Sinha, who gave his maiden speech in the House, said that the Congress members were against the Bill because they were allowing Pakistani and Bangladeshi citizens to register in India.

The Opposition members, on the other hand, tried to again raise the issue of the Home Minister's absence in the House. Congress's Phoolan Devi Netam and DMK's Tiruchi Siva said the Home Minister himself should have presented the Bill.

CPIM member V Sivadasan said the Bill was very important and there was a need for proper documentation. He went on to say that the cause of death should be accurately documented, such as malnutrition and paper leaks.

In his reply, Rai said there was a need for the members to understand the Bill. He said late registration, especially beyond two years, was being misused and therefore should happen on orders of a Judicial Magistrate. "This has been done so that ghosts do not continue to be voters for certain parties or babies born elsewhere are not registered here by some states," he said.

ONLY 63% OF ENUMERATION FORMS DIGITISED SO FAR

Delhi SIR deadline extended for 2nd time within weeks

Devansh Mittal
New Delhi, August 4

• THE REVISED TIMELINE

WITH ONLY around 63% of enumeration forms digitised in Delhi, the Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday extended the door-to-door verification exercise under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls until August 17. Now, the final electoral rolls will be published on October 27. The extension comes with just four days left before the earlier August 8 deadline.

Data released by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Delhi, showed that only around 63% of the forms had been digitised by 8 pm on Tuesday. The enumeration phase, which began on June 30 and was originally scheduled to end on July 29, had already been extended once to August 8. It will now continue until August 17.

In this phase, booth level officers (BLOs) conduct door-to-door visits to distribute enumeration forms, electors fill out their details and BLOs upload the details on the EC portal.

The draft electoral rolls will now be published on August 24 instead of August 17. (See box) The final electoral rolls will now be published on October 27 instead of October 19.

In a statement, the CEO's office said the schedule had been revised "keeping in view the main objective of the SIR that 'no eligible citizen is left out while no ineligible person is included in the electoral roll'" and to give electors more time to submit their enumeration forms. It also requested all electors, who are yet to submit their enumeration forms, to do the same at the earliest.

Officials in the CEO's office had earlier told *The Indian Express* that they expect 30-40% of names in Delhi's electoral rolls to be deleted. "Delhi has a large population of migrant labourers, government em-



BLOs in Sangam Vihar. GAJENDRA YADAV

JUNE 30 - AUGUST 17:

House-to-house visit by BLOs

AUGUST 24: Draft electoral rolls publication

AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23: Filing claims & objections

AUGUST 24 - OCTOBER 22: Notice phase/disposal of claims and objections

SOURCE: OFFICE OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER.

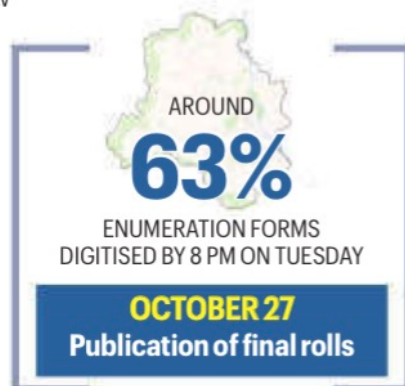
ployees and private sector professionals, all of whom move frequently and often do not update their addresses. This is why the deletions may exceed 30%," an official had said.

Neighbouring Gurgaon, where the enumeration exercise just got over recently, also saw 29% of the electors getting excluded – the highest in Haryana.

The extension in Delhi comes days after the EC similarly revised the SIR schedule in Odisha and Telangana.

Delhi has over 1.45 crore registered voters. Among its districts, South East had the lowest digitisation rate at around 50%, followed by South (56%) and East (57%). Outer North (73%) and South West (71%) recorded the most digitisation of forms.

The exercise, meanwhile, has become a political flashpoint. AAP leader Somnath Bharti on Monday alleged that BJP was using SIR to delete



around 30 lakh genuine voters. "The EC's requirement for voters or their parents to be listed in the 2002 electoral roll is excluding lakhs of eligible voters. Among poorer sections, landlords often do not allow tenants to obtain any permanent address proof. Thus, names of many such tenants are being deleted," he had said.

"During elections, you will see many lower income electors returning to their villages to vote. They want to remain registered in their villages because they receive government benefits. Many people have their names on electoral rolls in both places. One of those votes will now be deleted," a senior BJP functionary had told *The Indian Express* earlier.

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'U.S. has used virtually all of its precision missiles during Iran war'

The missiles are principally the Army's surface-to-surface weapons, known as Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) and Precision Strike Missiles (PrSM); CENTCOM has reloaded the munitions from U.S. military supplies elsewhere in the world

Reuters
NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

The U.S. Army has used up much of its stockpile of highly accurate long-range missiles during its five-month war with Iran, according to three people familiar with the data, raising concerns about the military's readiness for future conflicts.

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The U.S. Army conducting live fire tests of the Army Tactical Missile Systems at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. AFP

of the sources.

The long-range munitions – which cost more than \$1 million each – are an important part of the

military's arsenal, allowing accurate strikes from a safe distance.

U.S.-supplied ATACMS have played a key role in

the war in Ukraine, allowing Ukrainian forces to attack targets inside Russia. The PrSM is a newer, more advanced generation that will replace the ATACMS, which have a shorter range.

Dramatic fall

The dramatic rundown in precision, long-range missiles means U.S. President Donald Trump may have to rely more on riskier, pilot-led bombing missions if he relaunches large-scale attacks on Iran.

As the war drags on, the three people familiar with the matter expressed worry that the falling missile

supplies could limit the U.S. ability to deter adversaries, including Russia and China. A fourth person familiar with the matter said that while Central Command – which oversees U.S. forces in West Asia – has nearly used up the land-based missiles it had before the war began, it has been able to reload from U.S. military supplies elsewhere in the world.

Asked for comment on the stockpile data, the White House issued a statement from Mr. Trump, saying the U.S. had "far more munitions than anyone in the world" and "far more than we need".

CONTRADICTION STATEMENTS CAST DOUBT ON SWIFT DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION; ANOTHER SHIP COMES UNDER ATTACK IN STRAIT

Once open waterway, deal could cement Iran's control over Hormuz

New York Times
August 4

IRAN AND Oman are closing in on an agreement to reopen shipping traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, according to Iranian and American officials, but if the accord goes into effect it could come at a high price — ratifying Tehran's control over what, before the war, was an open, international waterway.

As described by officials familiar with the emerging accord, vessels heading into the Persian Gulf will transit a channel controlled by Iran, and close to its coast. Ships leaving the Gulf will travel on a channel near Oman.

Iranian officials say that while there will be no tolls charged, the agreement includes a "service fee" to cover the environmental impact of the shipping, security for the cargo ships and tankers and staffing. Revenues would be divided equally between Iran and Oman, two Iranian officials said.

A US official familiar with the negotiations said Monday that the Iranian account was "not accurate," and said that any "temporary" routes established through the strait would not involve approvals or permissions by Iran, and would involve no tolls.

For US President Donald Trump, the deal, if it happened,

could address his most urgent political problem: allowing ships to flow again. For their part, Iranian officials said the strait would remain closed, despite any agreement, until the US lifts its naval blockade against Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf and both countries return to the 14-point plan laid out in the Islamabad MoU.

The US could ease the market pressure even further, some officials said, if it decided to issue exemptions on sanctions against Iran so it could legally sell and deliver oil.

But if, ultimately, Iran asserts continued control over the passageway, the opening might come with a geopolitical cost. Iranian officials say they are designing the accord to ratify their capacity to control the strait and therefore retain strategic leverage that they did not enjoy before the war.

Such restrictions would directly violate the goal set by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who said repeatedly in recent months that the strait must return to the kind of open waterway that it was before the war.

Getting the strait reopened is vital for Trump politically. And so despite Rubio's statements, the administration appears to be preparing the world for a reopening in which Iran exerts daily control over traffic.

Qatar says progress made toward US-Iran peace talks

Qatar, Pakistan and Oman are working closely for a truce

Reuters
Dubai, Washington, August 4

QATAR SAID mediators were making progress in efforts to end the US-Iran war on Tuesday, driving oil prices lower, although Tehran has denied President Donald Trump's assertion that talks are already underway.

Benchmark Brent crude fell more than 4% after the comments from Qatar, extending Monday's steep losses on hopes that an arrangement could soon be reached to restore traffic through the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.

But for now, the strait remained virtually shut, with another ship reportedly coming under attack while trying to cross it.

Trump said on Monday that talks with Tehran had started and Iran faced a "last chance" to reach a deal. Iranian officials insisted no negotiations with the United States were taking place. Iran says its only talks are with Oman about the strait, and that no major meetings were planned this week.

But senior US officials struck an optimistic tone on



A woman holds a mock-up of a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) next to a Hezbollah flag during the Arbaca rally in Tehran on Tuesday. REUTERS

Tuesday, with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Secretary of State Marco Rubio both pointing to progress in discussions aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a corridor that normally carries about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments.

"There's been progress made in those talks, but not finality yet. We're hoping that will happen very shortly,"

Rubio told reporters at the State Department. Bessent said a deal with Iran on the reopening of Hormuz could be reached by Tuesday or Wednesday. Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said diplomatic contacts had reached "very progressive stages".

He said mediators including Qatar, Pakistan and Oman were coordinating closely to facilitate negotiations and exchange draft proposals between Washington and Tehran.

A senior Pakistani security official said: "A lot is happening in the background ... We are talking to both sides. Our sole goal at this moment is to make both parties at least agree to start talking."

Trump's comments followed his weekend decision to cancel what he described as "massive attacks" on Iran, extending a pattern in which he has threatened major military action before later backing off and pointing to diplomatic contacts.

Iran has halted most traffic through Hormuz while Washington maintains a blockade of Iran-related shipping and ports. Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis have also imposed a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea, further restricting oil export routes. A cargo vessel reported being struck by an unidentified projectile near the Strait of Hormuz off Oman's coast, according to the UKMT maritime security agency. Maritime sources told Reuters on Tuesday that the vessel was a dry bulk ship. Its crew had to abandon the vessel and one seafarer was missing.

Iran has long demanded control over the strait, which it says it should share with Oman, which controls the opposite shore. Tehran rejected an Omani proposal last week that would have allowed shared oversight of the strait and the collection of voluntary fees from ships. A senior Iranian source said Iran is seeking full control over inbound shipping through the strait, and visibility over outbound traffic, with the ability to intervene if necessary.

Giving Iran such control would be a major shift in the regional balance of power and make it more difficult for Washington to argue that "Operation Epic Fury", which Trump launched alongside Israel in February, had weakened Washington's longstanding foe.

TWO YEARS AFTER OUSTER

Delhi distances itself from Hasina event today, Dhaka warns its media not to air

Exiled leader who faces death sentence set to announce return

Shubhajit Roy

New Delhi, August 4

MOVING TO address concerns in Dhaka, Delhi made it clear Tuesday it was neither involved in nor was it going to endorse any view aired during ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's public interaction scheduled Wednesday in the Capital.

She is expected to announce her return home and outline her vision for Bangladesh.

The event, being held at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia, is timed to coincide with the second anniversary of the fall of the Hasina government on August 5, 2024.

Faced with widespread protests in Bangladesh, Hasina had fled the country. She has been living in India ever since. This is the second time she will be addressing the public via virtual mode in Delhi.

Bangladesh has sought India's cooperation to ensure that Hasina, or anyone linked to her organisations that have been banned, is not allowed to use Indian territory to deliver political speeches or carry out activities aimed at creating instability in Bangladesh.

News agency *Reuters* reported Tuesday that Bangladesh Information Adviser Zahed Ur Rahman warned his country's media that announcing or publicising Hasina's planned speech would violate a December 2024 order by Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal that prohibits media outlets and social media platforms from publishing or broadcasting Hasina's speeches, statements, interviews, and audio or video messages.

Hasina aide Abu Obaidha Arin said the event would go ahead, adding that Dhaka's "efforts to silence dissent cannot extinguish voices" beyond the country's borders.



Wednesday marks two years of the fall of Hasina government

E. EXPLAINED

Amid steps to restore ties

Relations between Delhi and Dhaka dived after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government two years ago. The two countries have been trying to repair ties ever since Tarique Rahman took charge as PM earlier this year. Visa services have been restored and India has invited Rahman to the BRICS summit next month.

In New Delhi, responding to questions about Hasina's scheduled interaction, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, said, "The interaction you refer to is being organised by a private media entity. The government has no involvement whatsoever in it. Neither does it endorse any views that may be expressed at the forum."

This is a carefully calibrated response to an issue that is a diplomatic hot-button for the Bangladesh government led by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, who is also chief of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Rahman's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir raised the issue of Hasina's interaction during a meeting with Dinesh Trivedi, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, at the Prime Minister's Office Monday.

Kobir said such activities could undermine the positive progress in Bangladesh-India relations. In response, Trivedi assured him that the matter

would be considered appropriately, saying the Indian side would conduct the necessary inquiries and remain vigilant on the issue.

India and Bangladesh have been working towards repairing ties since February when Rahman's BNP won the elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first to congratulate him on his victory, which was followed by a phone call.

Prior to the Bangladesh elections, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had travelled to Dhaka for the funeral of Rahman's mother and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. After the elections, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, accompanied by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, had attended Rahman's swearing-in ceremony.

India has also invited Rahman to the summit of the BRICS leaders scheduled next month.

On Tuesday, Jaiswal confirmed the invitation. "You would be aware that a formal invitation for a bilateral visit to India was extended to the Bangladesh PM upon his assumption of office in February 2026. As far as the BRICS Summit is concerned, India has separately extended an invitation to Bangladesh PM in his capacity as the current Chair of BIM-STEAC to attend the outreach session of the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi," he said.

"The invitation has been extended as per the standard practice being followed in BRICS for the outreach sessions. Other heads of regional groups have also been invited in a similar manner," he said.

For Dhaka, however, the Hasina event in Delhi, where she and her Awami League leaders will get a platform, is a major political issue.

FCC president Waiel Awwad, in an invitation email, said the topic was "Sheikh Hasina's Homecoming". "In this exclusive engagement, Sheikh Hasina will address the international media virtually to announce her homecoming and outline her vision for Bangladesh," he said.

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Data released by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Delhi, showed that only around 63% of the forms had been digitised by 8 pm on Tuesday. The enumeration phase, which began on June 30 and was originally scheduled to end on July 29, had already been extended once to August 8. It will now continue until August 17.

In this phase, booth level officers (BLOs) conduct door-to-door visits to distribute enumeration forms, electors fill out their details and BLOs upload the details on the EC portal.

The draft electoral rolls will now be published on August 24 instead of August 17. (See box) The final electoral rolls will now be published on October 27 instead of October 19.

In a statement, the CEO's office said the schedule had been revised "keeping in view the main objective of the SIR that 'no eligible citizen is left out while no ineligible person is included in the electoral roll'" and to give electors more time to submit their enumeration forms. It also requested all electors, who are yet to submit their enumeration forms, to do the same at the earliest.

Officials in the CEO's office had earlier told *The Indian Express* that they expect 30-40% of names in Delhi's electoral rolls to be deleted. "Delhi has a large population of migrant labourers, government em-

• THE REVISED TIMELINE



BLOs in Sangam Vihar. GAJENDRA YADAV

JUNE 30 - AUGUST 17:

House-to-house visit by BLOs

AUGUST 24: Draft electoral rolls publication

AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23:

Filing claims & objections

AUGUST 24 - OCTOBER 22:

Notice phase/disposal of claims and objections

SOURCE: OFFICE OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER.

ployees and private sector professionals, all of whom move frequently and often do not update their addresses. This is why the deletions may exceed 30%," an official had said.

Neighbouring Gurgaon, where the enumeration exercise just got over recently, also saw 29% of the electors getting excluded – the highest in Haryana.

The extension in Delhi comes days after the EC similarly revised the SIR schedule in Odisha and Telangana.

Delhi has over 1.45 crore registered voters. Among its districts, South East had the lowest digitisation rate at around 50%, followed by South (56%) and East (57%). Outer North (73%) and South West (71%) recorded the most digitisation of forms.

The exercise, meanwhile, has become a political flashpoint. AAP leader Somnath Bharti on Monday alleged that BJP was using SIR to delete

around 30 lakh genuine voters. "The EC's requirement for voters or their parents to be listed in the 2002 electoral roll is excluding lakhs of eligible voters. Among poorer sections, landlords often do not allow tenants to obtain any permanent address proof. Thus, names of many such tenants are being deleted," he had said.

"During elections, you will see many lower income electors returning to their villages to vote. They want to remain registered in their villages because they receive government benefits. Many people have their names on electoral rolls in both places. One of those votes will now be deleted," a senior BJP functionary had told *The Indian Express* earlier.

