

## News

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**West Bengal SIR: According to the Supreme Court, a 75-year-old lawyer who was excluded should be added to the voter list**



However, the Court mandated that a determination be made as soon as possible and left the final say to the SIR appellate body.

A 75-year-old attorney who was left off of West Bengal's final voter list following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls appeared to be eligible for inclusion, the Supreme Court noted orally on Friday.

A challenge contesting this exclusion was being heard by a bench made up of **Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice V Mohana**. The Murshidabad-based attorney has been practicing law for about fifty years.

He told the Court that even though he had submitted an appeal to the appellate panel, it had not yet been resolved.

In the end, the Court delegated the decision to the appeal panel.

However, the Court also ordered that the lawyer's plea be decided more quickly due to the reported delays in the tribunal's handling of appeals.

**"On the surface, we believe he has a right to be included in SIR. However, see the process we developed.** The Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court called and said, "Let the time to decide appeals be extended because there are a lot of them pending."

#### **Justice V. Mohana and CJI Surya Kant**

The petitioner has been a practicing attorney in **Murshidabad since 1977**, according to the Court's ruling. The Court instructed the appellate tribunal to make a decision within a specified timeframe after noting that the petitioner had already filed an appeal.

According to the plea, the petitioner began practicing law in **Murshidabad in 1977**. In order to be included in SIR, the petitioner has filed an appeal with the appellate tribunal. We ask the appellate panel to make a decision as soon as possible, ideally within two months, as the appeal has not yet been considered," the Court said.

The order coincides with ongoing worries over the extent of voter roll exclusions during West Bengal's SIR exercise and the length of the appeals procedure.

Over 58 lakh voters were disqualified during the exercise's enumeration phase, according to data presented to the court in connected hearings. Approximately 9.64 lakh applications for inclusion and 99,118 petitions for deletion have been submitted by January 2026.

However, the final electoral records released on **February 28, 2026, only included approximately 1.82 lakh additions**, raising concerns regarding the discrepancy between names restored and claims lodged.

The absence of publicly accessible standards for submitting and ruling appeals before SIR tribunals, as well as the lack of comprehensive, constituency-specific statistics on these additions and deletions, have also drawn criticism.

The issue has grown in importance since, despite tribunals having a large backlog of cases, millions of voters whose names were excluded now rely on the appeals process to have their names added back to the voter roll.

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