

ITEM NO.52

COURT NO.1

SECTION X

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

SUO MOTO WRIT PETITION(CIVIL) No(s). 3/2026

IN RE: SAFETY AND SECURITY OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS DEPUTED FOR WORK
RELATING TO SIR OF ELECTORAL ROLLS IN THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL AND
ANCILLARY ISSUES Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

Respondent(s)

Date : 13-04-2026 This petition was called on for hearing today.

CORAM : HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI

Counsel for the
parties

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UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

1. We have received a DO letter dated 13.04.2026 from Hon'ble the Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta. It is *inter alia* pointed out in the letter that in compliance of the orders passed by this Court, the SIR exercise was commenced in the State of West Bengal in the last week of February, 2026 by the Judicial Officers of the State, with the assistance of Judicial Officers of the States of Jharkhand and Odisha. The herculean task of deciding more than 60 Lakh objections in the SIR process has been completed in the first week of April, 2026. To be precise, Hon'ble Chief Justice has pointed out that 60,06,675 objections were required to be verified, out of which 60,04,852 have since been verified. Only 1823 are pending due to technical reasons. Similarly, the exercise of e-signature to the extent of 99.69% has also been completed.
2. Hon'ble Chief Justice has further pointed out that in reference to our subsequent order dated 06.04.2026, a Committee of three former Chief Justices/Judges was constituted to establish the procedure to be consistently followed by all 19 Appellate

Tribunals, which have been constituted to decide appeals against the orders passed by the Judicial Officers while deciding objections.

3. It is further explained that the three-Member Committee has prepared a Standard Operating Procedure [SOP], which will be followed by all the 19 Appellate Tribunals. The DO Letter informs that yesterday i.e. on 12.04.2026, a portal introduction session and interaction was organized in the presence of Chief Justice, Committee Members, the former Chief Justices of the High Court and other members of the Appellate Tribunals. The Hon'ble Chief Justices/former Chief Justices/Judges, who constitute the Appellate Tribunal, were introduced the 1st hand experience of handling the appellate portal and they were apprised of the procedure to be uniformly followed so as to enable them to decide the functioning from today i.e. 13.04.2026.

4. We place on record our acknowledgment and appreciation for the otherwise impossible task performed by the Chief Justices of the High Court with the able assistance of Judicial Officers of the State of West Bengal and the neighbouring States. The information given to us from time to time undoubtedly reveals how difficult it was for the Judicial Officers to undertake the task, for which they worked even on Saturdays and Sundays without taking any leave.

5. Hon'ble Chief Justice also, while performing his judicial duties in the normal course, continued to devote extra hours for the purpose of constant monitoring and ensuring that the assigned responsibility was completed smoothly. We equally appreciate the zeal and enthusiasm with which the Judicial Officers have also

performed their duties.

6. We have no reason to doubt that the former Chief Justices/Judges, who have graciously agreed to be a part of the Appellate Tribunal and to whom the first hand experience of handling the appellate portal has been introduced, will also be able to complete their task within a reasonable time and all stakeholders will continue to extend their cooperation to them in this regard.

7. The DO letter sent by Hon'ble Chief Justice also highlights the areas of concern, first of which is the security required to be provided to the Judicial Officers of the State, who are engaged in the SIR exercise. In this regard, we direct the Election Commission of India and the State Government to ensure that the security already provided to the Judicial Officers is not withdrawn and/or to assess the further threat perception to them and deploy additional security, if so required. It is made clear that the security cover provided to the Judicial Officers shall not be withdrawn without prior permission from this Court, and in any case, till the entire election process is over. The deployment of Central Forces in terms of our order dated 02.04.2026 will consequently continue till further orders.

8. In compliance with our orders dated 02.04.2026 and 06.04.2026, the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of the State of West Bengal have also filed their respective compliance affidavits. It is stated by the Chief Secretary that a virtual meeting was called on 03.04.2026, in which necessary directions were issued to the Police Authorities/civil administration to ensure security

arrangements for Judicial Officers. It has been further stated that the security arrangements have been enhanced by including additional CAPF personnel.

9. The Director General of Police has also, in his affidavit, explained that a comprehensive security plan has been prepared for all districts by the Police Commissionerate for the security of the Judicial Officers, and that the necessary deployment and arrangements have been made. These arrangements include 1) provision of PSOs; 2) escort during transit; 3) security arrangements at the place of work; and 4) enhancement of CAPF forces in sensitive districts.

10. In light of the directions issued in the earlier part of this order and the recommendations of the Chief Justice of the High Court, we direct the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police and other police and civil administration authorities to ensure that the security arrangement made for Judicial Officers including the enhanced security given to them is not withdrawn without prior permission from this Court.

11. Re-list the matter on 24.04.2026.

(JAYANT KUMAR ARORA)
ASTT. REGISTRAR-cum-PS

(PREETHI DILEEP KUMAR)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR