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25th November, 2025



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- The sea beckons: INS Mahe
- Goa government does a U-turn on 'permanent' tiger presence in State
- Missing 'Ubuntu'
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Goa tops in digitisation of SIR forms, Kerala lags

The Election Commission says **47% of enumeration forms** in the ongoing **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls have been **digitised**, with **99% forms collected** from the 12 participating States/UTs. **Goa (76.89%)** and **Rajasthan (72.20%)** lead in digitisation, while **Kerala (23%)** and **Uttar Pradesh (26.6%)** are the lowest.

The enumeration phase (distribution, collection, and uploading of forms) runs from **November 4 to December 4**, with the **draft rolls to be published on December 9**.

Goa tops in digitisation of SIR forms, Kerala lags

Election Commission says enumeration forms of 99.07% people have been collected and over 47% of them digitised; BLOs race against time to finish exercise, many complain of 'excess workload'

Vijaita Singh
Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

With 10 days remaining to complete the enumeration phase of the second round of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the Election Commission on Monday said more than 47% of the enumeration forms distributed across 12 States and Union Territories have been digitised.

Goa has achieved the highest digitisation at 76.89% followed by Rajasthan at 72.20%, while Kerala and Uttar Pradesh have the lowest at 23% and 26.6% respectively.

The enumeration phase, which began on November 4, will end on December 4. The draft list will be published on December 9 following which the period for claims and objections will begin.

According to the EC, out of the 51 crore voters being covered in this SIR, enumeration forms of 50,50,24,723, or 99.07%, have been collected and 24,13,75,229 (47.35%) have



Collecting information: Special intensive revision (SIR) camps were held across Chennai on Monday. S. VELANKANNI RAJ

been digitised. The enumeration phase involves distribution of forms, collection of the filled ones, and uploading the data on the commission's website.

The whole exercise is being done by booth-level officers (BLOs), making them the most important cog in the wheel. However, the BLOs are racing against time. While some States such as West Bengal have witnessed protests over 'excess workload', there have been some reports of suicides by BLOs over alleged work-related stress.

In Kerala, a BLO, who complained of stress, was offered to quit SIR duties.

However, he has expressed willingness to continue.

A correspondent from *The Hindu* visited a tehsil office in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh and saw BLOs swarm a camp being run by district authorities to monitor the implementation of the SIR. Most were seeking clarifications from senior officials on uploading of documents.

"How are we supposed to fill so many forms in such a short span of time. I am a teacher. Do I complete the syllabus or fill these forms? I am 55-years-old and do not have the technological wherewithal

BLO threatens to kill himself over SIR workload

KOTTAYAM

In another instance of a booth level officer expressing distress over the mounting workload from the special intensive revision, an official from Kottayam district of Kerala threatened to take his own life, citing pressure associated with the exercise. » PAGE 3

to understand all this," an anguished Manju Devi told *The Hindu*.

She said she was confused with the process as forms were being distributed only to those who had voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "What is the point of conducting the exercise then? When we upload the data, sometimes it throws up similar names," she said.

Currently, the SIR is being held in Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Puducherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep.

BLOs- booth-level officers complain about **short deadlines, technological challenges, and confusing instructions**, especially regarding distribution solely to those who voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The SIR is being conducted in **12 regions**, including major States like **UP, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, MP, Rajasthan**, and UTs like **Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep**.

The sea beckons: INS Mahe

The sea beckons



Grand debut: Navy officials with Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi during the commissioning ceremony of *INS Mahe*, the first of Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft, in Mumbai on Monday. EMMANUAL YOGINI (REPORT ON PAGE 12)

INS Mahe:

- It's an **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Craft** designed to hunt submarines and operate close to the coast.
- Over **80% of the ship is made in India**, showing India's push for self-reliance in defense
- It's about **78 meters long**, displaces ~1,100 tonnes, and can do a top speed of 25 knots.
- Equipped with **torpedoes**, anti-submarine rockets, advanced sonar, and surveillance systems.
- **Significance:** It's the **first of eight** such ships, boosting India's coastal defense
- Named after the town of **Mahe** (on the Malabar Coast). Its crest has the **Urumi** (a flexible sword in



- Kalaripayattu) symbolizing agility and lethality. Motto: “Silent Hunters”.

‘Permanent’ tiger presence in Goa?

Goa has given contradictory statements about tigers — telling one SC appointed committee that tigers do not reside permanently in the State, but telling a river-water tribunal earlier that Goa does have a resident tiger population connected to major tiger habitats in Karnataka.

Goa government does a U-turn on ‘permanent’ tiger presence in State

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The answer to whether tigers “reside” in Goa depends on who is asking the question. The Goa Government, earlier this year, argued before a Supreme Court-appointed committee that there was “...no permanent presence of tigers” in the State.

However, in a separate matter concerning a dispute involving Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra over the sharing of water from the Mahadayi river in Goa, it stated the opposite.

“...The State of Goa states that there is evidence to show that tigers in Goa are not merely transient animals, but are a resident population, and the forests around Chorla, Mann and Kankumbi comprise a contiguous tiger landscape corridor, to the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka to its south-east and the Anshi Dandeli Tiger Reserve to its south that has around 35 tigers.” The latter appears in a 2018 report of the Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal. “Thus, were the flow of Mahadayi river to be impeded,” Goa argued, “it would impact the prey base as well as tiger ecosystem”.

The issue of tiger presence (or absence) in Goa has come to the fore following the Goa government challenging a July



The Goa government says only three tigers were found through ‘camera trapping’ during the NTCA survey of 2018. PTI

2023 order of the Bombay High Court that directed the State to declare the Mhadei sanctuary and other connected regions — as recommended by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA, the nodal Central body tasked with overseeing tiger conservation) — a ‘tiger reserve’ within three months.

The Goa government filed a special leave petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court challenging this order. Its core arguments in the SLP are that, as per the NTCA guidelines, an area of 800-1,000 sq. kms would have to be declared an inviolate space for a tiger reserve. The area already under protection in the State, in the form of parks and sanctuaries, added up to 745 sq. km. “Therefore, to declare an area larger than the already protected area an inviolate space would be an aberration.”

Secondly, the area that would have to be declared a tiger reserve had a “huge population” of about 1,00,000 individuals spread across several villages. Given the paucity of alternative areas to settle them and the ‘unwillingness’ of this resident population, the move could translate to social unrest.

In terms of tiger presence, it argued that only three tigers were found through ‘camera trapping’ during the NTCA’s tiger estimation survey of 2018. There was “no evidence” that these tigers were “residents” of the area; there were no cubs or young animals either.

“The protected area is only a corridor whereby the tigers transit from Maharashtra to Karnataka or vice versa, and the area of Mhadei is only a route, which is used by tigers to transit,” the State argued in its petition. “Such ‘transi-

tory presence’ of tigers in Mhadei was due to very few deer (as prey), and thus, declaring Mhadei sanctuary as a reserve... would not serve any significant purpose,” it said.

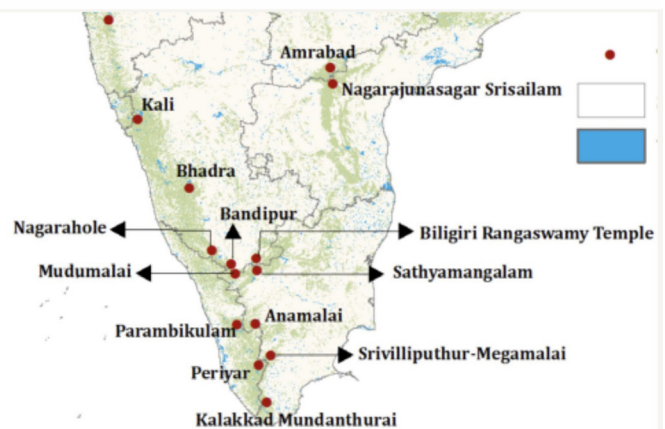
SC seeks report

The Supreme Court, this September, directed a Central Empowered Committee of the Union Environment Ministry to hear all the “stakeholders” in the matter and submit a report in “six weeks.” The Committee has reportedly sought an extension to file this.

The case traces back to 2011, when the Centre and the NTCA made multiple requests to the State of Goa to notify Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) and certain other adjacent areas as a tiger reserve. But this did not happen.

In January 2021, four tigers were found poisoned following which the Goa Foundation, a non-profit, filed a petition for the region to be declared a tiger reserve. Doing so puts the onus on the State to improve protection measures for conservation of animals.

On September 8, 2025, after counsel for the Goa Foundation informed the top court that some proposals for resorts were being approved in the proposed tiger reserve, the court stayed all such activity till final order and judgment.



Issue:

The debate intensified after the **Bombay High Court** ordered Goa to declare the **Mhadei Sanctuary** and nearby areas as a tiger reserve based on NTCA recommendations.

Goa challenged this order in the **Supreme Court**, arguing that:

- A tiger reserve needs **800–1,000 sq. km**, while Goa has only **745 sq. km** of protected area.
- Declaring more land as a reserve would affect **1 lakh people living in those villages**, risking social unrest.
- Only **three tigers** were recorded in 2018 camera traps, with **no proof of resident breeding tigers**, meaning the area is only a tiger corridor, not a tiger habitat.



The Supreme Court has asked a Central Empowered **Committee to examine** all sides and submit a report, though it has sought more time.

The issue began in 2011 when the Centre repeatedly asked Goa to notify the region as a tiger reserve; after four tigers were poisoned in **2021**, a petition was filed. In **September 2025**, the SC also **stopped resort approvals** in the proposed reserve area until the final decision.

Missing 'Ubuntu'

The 2025 G-20 summit held in **Johannesburg**, the first ever in Africa reflected this **Global South spirit as leaders discussed conflicts, rising inequality and economic uncertainty, and called for peace in Sudan, DRC, Palestine and Ukraine.**

PM Modi proposed six India-led initiatives, including training a million Africans, a traditional knowledge repository, a global health response team, satellite data sharing and a critical minerals initiative.

Yet, the summit was overshadowed by the **U.S. boycott**, with President Donald Trump skipping the event and sending only a diplomat, raising concerns about America's commitment to the G-20 before it assumes the presidency in 2026.

This undermined the unity the group hopes to represent. The declaration's reference to **Ubuntu** — "I am because we are" — serves as a reminder that true global cooperation requires participation from all major powers.

Missing 'Ubuntu'

The U.S. boycott of the G-20 summit in Johannesburg was impolitic

The G-20 leaders' summit in Johannesburg, the first ever held in an African country, was unique in many positive, and some not-so-positive ways. The summit has an added voice as the African Union was made a member during India's G20 Presidency in 2023. As a result, the deliberations and the declaration seemed imbued by the spirit of the "Global South", as they listed the multiple challenges the world faces including conflicts, deepening inequality and increasing economic uncertainty. In particular, the nations gathered called for a "just, comprehensive, and lasting peace" in "Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Occupied Palestinian Territory [and] Ukraine", invoking the UN charter. Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke at all three sessions of the G-20, suggesting six initiatives that India could lead in order to address some of those issues, particularly on the need to "reconsider" the parameters of global development. These initiatives included a Traditional Knowledge Repository, a G20-Africa Skills Multiplier Initiative (where India proposed to train a million people across Africa), a Global Healthcare Response Team, an Initiative on Countering the Drug-Terror Nexus, an Open Satellite Data Partnership" to share agriculture, fishing and disaster related information, and a

Ethiopia's Hayli Gubbi volcano erupts

Background

A volcano called **Hayli Gubbi in Ethiopia** erupted on Sunday. Volcanic eruptions release huge clouds of volcanic ash into the atmosphere. This ash can travel thousands of kilometres depending on winds. The ash is dangerous for aircraft because it contains **tiny glass-like particles** that can melt inside aircraft engines and damage them.

After passing over Yemen and Oman, the **ash cloud entered India through western Rajasthan on Monday. It is expected to move northeast overnight** — across central India, near Delhi around midnight, and then over parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.

India braces for disruption of air travel after Ethiopia's Hayli Gubbi volcano erupts

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

India is bracing for potential disruption to air travel with volcanic ash from Sunday's eruption of Ethiopia's Hayli Gubbi volcano forecast to drift towards mainland India.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued advisories urging airlines to strictly steer clear of affected altitudes and regions to ensure flight safety as volcanic ash can harm aircraft engines due to its abrasive, glass-like particles that melt at high temperatures. When ash is ingested, it can melt on hot engine components, harden into a glass-like substance, and stick to turbine blades. Airlines have also been advised to report any suspected impact of ash on engine performance or



Ash clouds from the Hayli Gubbi volcanic eruption (in photo) has entered the Indian subcontinent from western Rajasthan. AP

cabin smoke or odour.

Airports too have been told to inspect runways for contamination and suspend or restrict flight operations, if need be.

Large plumes of smoke were initially visible over Ethiopia though the volcanic eruption stopped. After travelling over Yemen and Oman, ash clouds entered the Indian subconti-

nent from western Rajasthan on Monday and were moving north-east wards. Over the course of the night, they are expected to sweep across central parts of the country and cross Delhi close to midnight, and travel over parts of Uttar Pradesh, parts of Bihar and in the North East over Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.