

# Raj Kumar Goyal sworn in as Chief Information Commissioner; CIC reaches full strength

---

*A practitioner note on the composition of the Central Information Commission, the selection process, and the pendency position the Commission inherits.*

## The event

In December 2025, Shri Raj Kumar Goyal was sworn in as the Chief Information Commissioner by the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Eight new Information Commissioners took oath at or around the same period.

With these appointments, the Central Information Commission reached its full sanctioned strength of one Chief Information Commissioner and ten Information Commissioners. This is the first time since 2016 that the Commission has operated at full strength.

The post of Chief Information Commissioner had remained vacant from 13 September 2025, the date on which Shri Heeralal Samariya demitted office on completion of his term.

## Selection process

Appointments to the Central Information Commission are governed by Section 12 of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a three-member Committee comprising:

1. the Prime Minister, who is the Chairperson;
2. the Leader of the Single Largest Opposition Party in the Lok Sabha; and
3. a Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.

Under the Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019, the term, salary, and other conditions of service of the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners are no longer fixed by the Act itself. They are prescribed by the Central Government by rules made under the Act. The current rules provide a term of three years for both the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners. The Chief Information Commissioner is not eligible for reappointment.

The appointee is required to be a person of eminence in public life with wide knowledge and experience in one or more of the following fields: law, science and technology, social service, management, journalism, mass media, or administration and governance. On appointment, the appointee stands retired from any parent service from which they may have come.

## Composition of the Commission

As of April 2026, the composition of the Commission is as follows.

- Chief Information Commissioner: Shri Raj Kumar Goyal.
- Information Commissioners: ten members, with the eight newly sworn-in Commissioners together with those already in office at the time of Shri Samariya's demission.

A live list with the date of oath, the field of eminence, and the date on which the term expires is maintained on the [Updates](#) page of this site. The list is updated as and when a Commissioner is

appointed, demits office, or retires.

## Why full strength matters

Section 12(5) of the Act permits a Commission of up to ten Information Commissioners in addition to the Chief Information Commissioner. The Commission functions through benches. The disposal rate of second appeals and complaints depends directly on the number of benches available on any working day.

From 2016 onward, the Commission operated at less than its sanctioned strength. At various points in 2024 and 2025, only three or four Commissioners were in office, with a backlog that at its height exceeded 23,000 second appeals and complaints. The Supreme Court, in orders passed in *Anjali Bhardwaj v. Union of India* (2019) 10 SCC 1 and in subsequent proceedings, directed that vacancies be filled in a time-bound manner. In January 2025, the Supreme Court recorded concern about the functioning of the Commission.

The return to full strength allows the Commission to restore benches to the Sections that had been collapsed due to shortage of Commissioners. The first operational effect will be visible in the disposal rate over the next two quarters. The second-order effect, which is the time an applicant waits for a second appeal to reach hearing, will take longer to correct.

## Pendency position inherited by the Commission

On the basis of publicly available figures, the Commission had a pendency of the order of 23,000 second appeals and complaints as of January 2025. The disposal rate had crossed ninety per cent for the financial year 2023-24 on the strength of hybrid hearings. Pendency fell in that year but began to rise again as vacancies went unfilled.

Applicants whose second appeals were filed in 2023 and 2024 should expect hearings to be listed progressively over the next year as the new benches stabilise. A speaking order from the Commission, whether allowing or dismissing the appeal, is the end-point of the second appellate process. Thereafter, the remedy lies in writ jurisdiction before the appropriate High Court.

## Points for practitioners

### For applicants and appellants

- Second appeals pending before the Commission should be tracked through the Commission's portal. A case-status check can be set as a fortnightly reminder.
- A written request for early hearing, supported by grounds such as the age of the record or a time-sensitive public interest, may be made in appropriate cases.
- Where a second appeal engages the amended Section 8(1)(j) read with the DPDP framework, the grounds should specifically invoke Section 8(2) of the RTI Act.

### For Public Information Officers

- Replies on second appeals should be filed well before the date of hearing. Delay in filing is among the common grounds on which the Commission records adverse observations.
- Representations before the Commission should be authorised in writing, particularly where the representation is by a person other than the Public Information Officer who passed the

order under appeal.

## For First Appellate Authorities

- A well-reasoned speaking order at the first appellate stage reduces the scope of the second appeal and narrows the points for consideration before the Commission.
- Where the order of the Public Information Officer is set aside, the reasons should be recorded with the same particularity as in a judicial order.

## Pending questions

The constitutional challenge to the Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019 on the ground of institutional independence remains pending. The 2019 amendment altered the tenure, salary, and other conditions of service from those earlier fixed in parity with the Chief Election Commissioner to those to be prescribed by the Central Government by rules.

The question of whether the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners should be granted a constitutional status, similar to the Chief Election Commissioner, has been raised in academic and policy literature. The question is not currently before Parliament but continues to be raised in submissions to successive Law Commission exercises.

## Sources

- The Right to Information Act, 2005 (Act 22 of 2005), Section 12.
- The Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Act 24 of 2019).
- The Right to Information (Term of Office, Salaries, Allowances and other Terms and Conditions of Service of Chief Information Commissioner, Information Commissioners in the Central Information Commission, State Chief Information Commissioner and State Information Commissioners in the State Information Commission) Rules, 2019.
- *Anjali Bhardwaj v. Union of India* (2019) 10 SCC 1.
- Press Information Bureau, release on the appointment of the Chief Information Commissioner, December 2025.
- Press Information Bureau, release dated 6 November 2023 on the appointment of Shri Heeralal Samariya as Chief Information Commissioner.
- Central Information Commission, Annual Report 2023-24.

## Last reviewed

19 April 2026

**New to RTI? File your first application in ten minutes.** See [How to File RTI Online in India — 2026 Step-by-Step Guide](#) with a ready-to-use English and Hindi template, the Rs 10 online fee flow, and the appeal path.

## Related

- [Right to Information at twenty: the Information Commissions' report card for 2024-25.](#)

- Appearance of Advocate /Non Advocate in the hearing.
- Format for giving information to the applicants.
- Live tracker.
- Ministers Under RTI.

rti, cic, information-commission, appointments, 2026



## Right to Information Wiki

The working reference for India's Right to Information Act, 2005.



**Read online**

<https://www.righttoinformation.wiki/blog/raj-kumar-goyal-chief-information-commissioner>

**Main website**

<https://www.righttoinformation.wiki/>

**Last updated**

2026/04/20 01:14