'No instructions to include Bangla minorities in NRC'

Naresh Mitra| TNN | Aug 2, 2016, 05.00 PM IST

GUWAHATI: State coordinator of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) Prateek Hajela on Monday said there has been no instruction from the government regarding the inclusion of names in the NRC of people from religious minorities from Bangladesh who are sheltered in Assam, the process of updating which is underway.

Last year, the ministry of home affairs had issued a notification that Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Parsis and Buddhists from Bangladesh and Pakistan who were compelled to seek shelter in India due to religious persecution would be exempted from the rules under the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and the Foreigners Act, 1946 with respect to their entry and stay in India without such documents or after the expiry of those documents.

The Centre had introduced a bill in Parliament this year seeking to amend the Citizenship Act for granting citizenship to religious minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The issue of granting citizenship to religious minorities has triggered a volley of protests since last year. Many organizations in the state are continuing their agitation against the move.

Hajela said the updating process of NRC is being undertaken based on guidelines provided by the Supreme Court. "The NRC is being updated with March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date. There is no provision yet of inclusion of names of religious minorities from Bangladesh who came to Assam after that date," Hajela said here.

Hajela said 137 cases have been registered against people for submitting fake documents for inclusion of their names in the NRC.

He also pointed out that other states are yet to pick up speed for verification of documents of persons who wanted to include their names. There are a total of 5.25 lakh documents of persons which are linked to other states, and these needed to be verified by these respective states, he said.

"So far, we have sent 2.68 lakh documents to these states. Of these, we have only received 5,029 verified documents. The process of verification by other states is going a bit slow. We have has already taken up the matter with the Centre, and will soon take it up with the respective chief secretaries of the states," Hajela said.

West Bengal has received the highest number of documents for verification 64,547. Hajela said West Bengal has sent back only 30 verified documents so far. "Bihar has not sent any out of 31,380 document sent to the state yet," he added.

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