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Assam to move SC on NRC

- Document verification by other states very slow

RAJIV KONWAR



NRC coordinator for Assam Prateek Hajela addresses the news conference in Guwahati on Monday. **Picture by UB Photos**
Guwahati, Aug. 1: The NRC authorities in Assam will seek the Supreme Court's intervention in expediting NRC verification by states like Bengal and Bihar.

The other states have so far responded poorly in verifying documents of NRC applicants sent to them by the NRC authority of Assam.

NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela told reporters here today that they have so far sent 2.68 lakh documents to other states, of which 5,029 (less than two per cent) have been returned after verification. He said they would send altogether 5.25 lakh documents to other states for verification.

"The response from other states is not good. We will write to the Centre about it. We will also place the matter in the Supreme Court," he said. The Supreme Court has been monitoring the update of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Hajela said the highest number of documents has been sent to West Bengal. Of the 64,547 documents sent to that state, only 30 have been verified and returned. Nagaland has returned only 542 of the 49,692 documents sent to it, Meghalaya 493 of the 34,438 documents, Arunachal Pradesh 290 of the 33,486 documents and Tripura 1,029 of the 25,008 documents. Bihar has not returned even a single of the 31,380 documents sent to it.

Hajela said the states had responded poorly despite the Registrar General of India sending letters to the chief secretaries of each state to work in a speedy manner.

The NRC authority follows three steps in updating the NRC - field verification, office (or document) verification and tracing family tree. So far, 97 per cent field verification work has been completed and verification through family tree is expected to start by the first week of August, he said.

"Field verification is not a problem for us. We can expedite it by sending more people. But verifying documents by digging out old records is a cumbersome and time-consuming process," he said. The NRC authority has received 6.5 crore documents, of which 4.5 crore have been verified.

It has come to light during verification that many people have submitted fake documents. So far, 137 cases have been registered in different police stations across the state. The highest number of cases has been registered at Nalbari (33) followed by Barpeta (17), Nagaon (14), Darrang (11), Kamrup (9), Cachar (6), Bongaigaon (6), Kokrajhar (6), Morigaon (5), Dhubri (5), Karbi Anglong (5), Goalpara (4), Sonitpur (3), Dibrugarh (3), Hailakandi (3), Dima Hasao (2), Chirang (2), Jorhat (1), Karimganj (1) and Golaghat (1).

Hajela said there have been misgivings among some people about the provision of "original inhabitants" identification under NRC update. He requested the public not to have any unnecessary misgivings and insecurity that persons in the "original inhabitant" category would have additional privileges compared to those who enter the updated NRC through documentary evidence.

The Supreme Court had last year clarified that the expression "original inhabitants of the state of Assam" in Clause 3 (3) of the schedule appended to The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 would include "tea tribes" and the inclusion of such original inhabitants would be on the basis of proof to the satisfaction of the "registering authority which establishes the citizenship of such persons beyond reasonable doubt".

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160802/jsp/northeast/story_100057.jsp#.V6BRRfI97IV