Final Draft of Updated NRC in Assam

Why in news?

\n\n

\n
- The final draft of the updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam was released recently.
\n
- Click here to know more on NRC in Assam
\n

\n\n

What are the highlights?

\n\n

\n
- The updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) listed 2.89 crore citizens.
\n
- These were out of the 3.29 crore applicants for inclusion.
\n
- So there are 40 lakh applicants who were not included in the NRC.
\n

\n\n

What is the status of these 40 lakh?

\n\n

\n
- Since it's only a draft, it does not necessarily mean that the excluded 40 lakh are not citizens.
\n
- No one will lose citizenship rights or be sent to a detention camp merely on the basis of the draft NRC.
\n
- They can file claims and objections at various NRC Seva Kendras during the specified period.
\n
- The Home Ministry has announced that after these, the final NRC will be

published by December 31, 2018.
\n

\n\n

How were they dealt before?

\n\n

\n
- Since 1964, the Foreigners Tribunals have identified an estimated 90,000 foreigners in Assam.
\n
- But many of them are dead and many more are “untraced”.
\n
- Until recently, around 900 “declared foreigners” and “D-voters” (doubtful voters who could not establish their citizenship) were in the six detention camps.
\n
- The NRC has put “on hold” 2.48 lakh names in four categories.
\n
- These are “D-voters” and their descendants, and people whose cases are pending in the tribunals and their descendants.
\n
- There have been reports about “D-voters” subsequently being declared Indian citizens by the tribunals.
\n
- But they are being marked “D” all over again in later electoral rolls.
\n
- To resolve such issues, plans are being made for a centralised database.
\n
- This will link to real-time information on the status of “suspected foreigners”.
\n

\n\n

Who are eligible for further inclusion?

\n\n

\n
- The draft includes only those who could establish their linkage to March 24, 1971 or earlier (the cut-off date in the Assam Accord).
\n

\n\n

\n
- The excluded 40 lakh would thus have submitted papers that were not

enough to establish this linkage.
\n
- They now have to back up their claims for inclusion with other eligible proofs.
\n

\n\n

\n
- They will have to prove that they or their ancestors were citizens on or before March 24, 1971.
\n

\n\n

\n
- Anyone who figured in electoral rolls up to March 24, 1971, or who are descendants of such citizens, are eligible for inclusion.
\n
- Various other documents are admissible such as birth certificates and land records.
\n
- But these are valid only as long as these were issued before the cutoff date.
\n
- The claims-and-objections process will also take into account errors during the update, if any.
\n

\n\n

What after the final NRC?

\n\n

\n
- Once the final NRC is published, there will still be some out of the register.
\n
- **Appeal** - They can approach any of the state's 100 Foreigners Tribunals (the quasi-judicial bodies established in 1964).
\n
- They can also approach the Gauhati High Court and then the Supreme Court.
\n
- The Assam Border Police can refer any "suspected foreigner" to these tribunals following an inquiry.
\n
- **Deportation** - If even these legal recourse fails for those excluded, they could be deported.
\n

- Assam also has six detention camps for illegal migrants within existing jails, and proposes to build a seventh.
  \n
- These cannot, however, be expected to accommodate all the exclusions, which could finally run into lakhs.
  \n
- Also, Bangladesh has never officially acknowledged that any of its citizens migrated illegally to Assam.
  \n
- **Stateless** - So if not deported or detained in a camp, they would officially remain to be non-citizens.
  \n
- But what happens to these non-citizens remains a grey area as India has no fixed policy for “stateless” persons.
  \n
- The only aspect that is more or less clear is that a “stateless” person will not have voting rights.
  \n
- The Centre may consider formulating a policy for the “stateless”, after the final NRC.
  \n
- He or she may, however, be provided certain facilities on “humanitarian grounds”.
  \n
- There have also been suggestions in Assam that they be given work permits.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n

