National Register of Citizens for Tripura

Why in news?

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The Supreme Court recently tagged the Tripura NRC (National Register of Citizens) plea with Assam NRC case.

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What is the case on?

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- It relates to a public interest petition filed by the Tripura People's Front and some others.
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- The petition asked the Supreme Court to direct the authorities to update the NRC with respect to Tripura.
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- This is in terms of The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
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- The court has directed the court registry to tag the petition along with petitions in the Assam NRC case.
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- So it would now be heard by a Special Bench monitoring the Assam NRC case.
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- The Supreme Court issued a notice to the centre and the Election Commission of India in regards with the plea.
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What is the rationale?

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- The purpose is to detect and deport the “illegal immigrants” from Bangladesh, as is being done in Assam.
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- Much of the migration into Tripura occurred before the creation of Bangladesh.
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- Uncontrolled influx of illegal migrants has caused huge demographic changes in Tripura.
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- Indigenous people who were once the majority have now become a minority in their own land.
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- Resultantly, Tripura, a predominantly tribal State, has now become a non-tribal State.
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- The presence of illegal immigrants violates the political rights of the citizens of Tripura.
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- The petition noted that the “influx” of illegal immigrants amounted to ‘external aggression’ under Art 355 of the Constitution.
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- Given this, the Union is bound to protect the State of Tripura from this.
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- Also, the 1993 tripartite accord signed by the Government of India with the All Tripura Tribal Force was cited.
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- It asked for the repatriation of all Bangladeshi nationals who
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i. had come to Tripura after March 25, 1971 (and)
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ii. are not in possession of valid documents authorising their presence in the State
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- The petitioners went further and demanded the cut-off date to be July 19, 1948, as provided for in Article 6 of the Constitution, dealing with citizenship

rights.
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How has Tripura been in the recent decades?

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- After years of struggle, in 1979, the tribal people of the State had gained special autonomy provisions -
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i. the institution of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council
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ii. recognition of their spoken language and other assurances
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- Since then, the council has been empowered and the tribal rights have been ensured protection.
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- These have steadily eroded the tribal versus non-tribal differences that once existed in the State.
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- Resultantly, over the last three decades, multiple insurgent groups have also ended violent struggles.
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What is the concern now?

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- The judicial-bureaucratic process in deportation of long-settled migrants is much as already being faced in Assam.
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- Here, the fate of the four million people whose names did not figure in the final NRC draft for Assam remains uncertain.
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- So any bureaucratic exercise without considering its deep humanitarian impact will only create new fault lines.
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- This is especially the case in a State like Tripura where there is no such unanimity of views on the NRC process.
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- So deportation may likely undo the years of work to bring about reconciliation between Bengali-speaking and tribal people.
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- The Supreme Court should take this into consideration while hearing the petition.
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Source: The Hindu

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