

# NRC is final, rules Assam Foreigners' Tribunal

But no notification yet from Registrar General of India

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While the Registrar General of India has not yet issued a notification on Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC) to make it a legal document, a Foreigners' Tribunal has gone ahead and recorded it as the "final NRC" while declaring a man to be Indian.

Hearing a case against one Bikram Singha of Jamirala village whose name figured in the NRC list, member of FT-II in Karimganj town Sishir Dey said, "...there is no doubt that this NRC Assam published in 2019 is nothing but Final NRC.."

## State govt. caution

The FT-II's 'order cum opinion' comes just days after Assam's Political (B) Department had on September 4 asked the FTs not to pass "consequential orders/directions" and stick to giving an "opinion" as mandated by the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964. The letter to the FTs followed an assessment by the State's Judicial Department of the "opinions" given by the members in the case of people suspected to be foreigners or doubtful voters.

The Assam police's Bor-



**Identity concerns:** A file photo of people waiting at the Foreigners' Tribunal office in Barpeta, Assam. ■ AP

der wing had, in May 2008, filed a case against Mr. Singha, of Jamirala village under the Patherkandi Assembly constituency of southern Assam's Karimganj district. The man, marked a D or 'doubtful voter', remained untraced until June 28 and appeared before the Foreigners' Tribunal-II (FT-II) in Karimganj town two months later, seeking time to return from Bengaluru where he was working.

Mr. Singha produced before the FT-II several documents to prove his Indian citizenship.

These included a 1968 land deed in the name of his grandfather Madan Kumar Singha and proof of his father Bharat Chandra Singha having been an Indian Air Force employee for 29 years since 1972.

FT-II member Sishir Dey heard his case on September 1. The prosecution lawyer argued that Mr. Singha had no document establishing that his family was living in India prior to 1966.

She referred to the 'White Paper on Foreigners' Issue' published by Assam's Home and Political Department on October 20, 2012, which says that anyone born between January 26, 1950, and July 1, 1987, can be considered an Indian citizen by birth irrespective of the nationality of his or her parents.

However, Mr. Dey observed that Mr. Singha's documents pointed to his father and grandfather having been residents of Jamirala village before 1968.

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