

# Bangladesh agrees to take back 33 nationals from Assam

They were declared infiltrators by the Foreigners' Tribunals in the State

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GUWAHATI**

For the first time, the Bangladesh government has agreed to take back 33 of its nationals who were declared infiltrators by the Foreigners' Tribunals in Assam, a senior police officer said on Wednesday.

The Bangladesh Assistant High Commissioner based here recently visited detention camps in the State and found 33 inmates declared as foreigners to be the citizens of his country, Additional Director General of Police (Special Branch) Pal-lab Bhattacharya said.

These foreigners were kept in detention camps after they were declared to be illegal migrants from Bangladesh by various Foreigners' Tribunals, Mr. Bhattacharya said.

He hailed the decision of Bangladesh to take them back, saying it was a "good-will gesture" because there was no deportation or repatriation treaty between the two neighbouring countries.

Asked when these foreign-



Members of the All Assam Students' Union and 12 other students' bodies at a rally against the increasing number of alleged Bangladeshi migrants in Assam. ■ FILE PHOTO

ers would be sent back, Mr. Bhattacharya said it would take some time as the modalities for their repatriation would be worked out by the External Affairs Ministry with its Bangladeshi counterpart.

#### **Addresses verified**

The addresses of the people in the detention camps were sent to the Bangladeshi government and after their verification it became clear that they are Bangladeshi citizens, he said.

Being declared a foreigner by a tribunal did not necessarily mean that the person

was from Bangladesh as their addresses had to be verified by that country, he added.

In 2013, the Centre had issued instructions to the Assam government not to push back but deport illegal foreigners to Bangladesh, Mr. Bhattacharya said.

Bangladesh had last month identified 152 of its nationals lodged in the detention camps and written to the External Affairs Ministry with a proposal for their repatriation in batches, official sources said.

According to the White Paper of the Assam govern-

ment on the Foreigners' Issue, "Government of India has authorised the State government under the provisions of Section 3(2) (e) of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and Para 11(2) of the Foreigners Order, 1948 to set up detention centres."

"Accordingly, detention centres have been set up at Goalpara, Kokrajhar and Silchar for keeping persons declared as foreigners. The number of such foreigners kept is three detention centres (as on 15/10/2012) is Goalpara (66), Kokrajhar (32), and Silchar (20)," it said.

"Their fingerprints and photographs are kept and the photographs of absconding foreigners are being published in newspapers," the White Paper added.

The Supreme Court had earlier ordered to update the National Register of Citizens (NRC). Its final draft would be out on June 30 when those applicants without legacy data would be detected as not Indian citizens, official sources said.