

## NRC IN ASSAM

# ‘Those excluded won’t be deported, Modi told Hasina’

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MONTHS AFTER Home Minister Rajnath Singh conveyed to the Bangladesh leadership that those left out of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will not be deported to Bangladesh, a top Bangladeshi official on Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has personally assured premier Sheikh Hasina that people excluded from the NRC would not be deported to the country.

“Indian Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi personally assured our premier that those who were excluded from the list under the NRC exercise will not be sent to Bangladesh,” H T Imam, Political Adviser to Hasina, told PTI.

Although Imam did not elaborate on the two premiers’ communication, he emphasised, “We have been repeatedly assured by India that no such thing (deportation) will happen to create any sort of political instabil-

ity in Bangladesh, particularly when we (Bangladesh) are approaching our national elections by the end of the year.”

In New Delhi, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra did not comment.

Imam said that Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, “repeatedly told us not to worry about the exercise and indeed, it should not be our concern either”. It is

India’s internal affair, he added.

The Supreme-Court monitored update of the NRC is an exercise to identify genuine Indian nationals residing in Assam. A political controversy was triggered after the final draft list published on July 30 excluded more than 40 lakh people.

In September, BJP general secretary Ram Madhav had said that people excluded from the final list of Assam-specific NRC would be removed from the voter list and deported to their country.

Imam, however, said that the 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent had resulted in a huge exodus on both sides. “But once the exchange of population took place during Partition, people who settled on either side became citizens of the country where they migrated,” he said.

“You can see Bengalis who migrated to India from here are in leading positions on many fronts...but should they be treated as intruders and sent back to Bangladesh?” he asked.