

# NRC fair and objective: Rajnath

**ASSURANCE** Says no coercive action will be taken, slams 'attempts' to create disharmony

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Union home minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said the process of creating the final draft of the National Register of Citizen (NRC) in Assam was "fair and objective" and "no coercive action" would be taken against those whose names are not present in the list.

The minister's remarks come against the backdrop of the Opposition trying to corner the government over the exclusion of four million people in the draft citizen registry, which was released on Monday.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Singh said the draft NRC was not the "final one" and those who had been left out of Monday's list would get a fresh opportunity to provide the documents required in order to be listed in the citizens' list. "I would like to repeat that it's a draft and not final, everyone will get chance to appeal. It's a totally fair process," he said.

He added that there was no question of Indian citizens being excluded from the NRC and assured the House that nobody would be discriminated against.

The Opposition has accused the government of using the NRC to target certain communities for political benefits

Stating that the exercise to compile the citizen list was undertaken under the supervision of the Supreme Court, Singh took a veiled dig at the Opposition by stating that "some people" were trying to "create an atmosphere of fear" and fuel communal disharmony in the country.

"It is unfortunate that an atmosphere of fear has been created. Propaganda has been carried out by vested interest (groups) on social media to inter-



■ Rajnath Singh

nationalise the issue," he said.

Adding that it was the responsibility of every country to identify its genuine citizens, Singh sought the cooperation of all parties on the issue, which he said was linked to national security.

The Opposition had disrupted the functioning of the Upper House for the better part of the week on the issue. On Friday, it continued its attack on the government after the home minister's speech. Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Derek O'Brien said Singh and BJP chief Amit Shah were speaking in different voices on the issue. "This is classic double-speak. What is the real voice of the government? What home minister says here or what BJP president says outside?" he said.

Stating that there should be "no dichotomy in the language of government and the ruling party", leader of Opposition in the RS and senior Congress leader, Ghulam Nabi Azad, highlighted instances of military veterans not figuring in the NRC draft. Congress MP Ripun Bora said guidelines related to the NRC should be modified keeping in mind that a large number of women and children were facing difficulties in proving their ancestry. RJD MP Manoj Jha argued that those who were not in the draft list should not be termed as "infiltrators".