

LOK SABHA PASSES CITIZENSHIP BILL

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It also reduces the mandatory requirement of 12 years stay in India to seven years to be eligible for citizenship if they do not possess any document.

Seeking to allay concerns of an influx in Assam, Mr. Singh said, “Assam alone should not have to bear the entire burden. The beneficiaries of Citizenship Amendment Bill can reside in any State of the country. The burden of those persecuted migrants will be shared by the whole country,” he said.

There has been a strong resistance to the Bill in BJP-ruled Assam and other northeastern States who fear it would pave the way for granting citizenship mostly to illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh, who came after March 1971, in violation of the 1985 Assam Accord.

“The proposed amendment will make these persecuted migrants eligible to apply for citizenship. Citizenship will be given to them only after due scrutiny and recommendation of district authorities and the State Government,” Mr. Singh said.

To become a law, the Bill will have to be cleared by the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, the last day of its current session.

Opposition warning

Trinamool lawmaker Saugata Roy said the Bill was “divisive and insidious that goes against the basic tenets of the Constitution.” “This is the worst form of vote-bank politics,” Mr. Roy said.

Rejecting the Bill, Badruddin Ajmal of the AIDUF asked, “You may have the majority to pass the Bill. Have you delivered the basic facilities to all Indians that you want to grant citizenship to foreign nationals?”

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