Minority organisations in Assam apprehend a large-scale exclusion from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) to be published on July 31. They have attributed it to the alleged pressure on officers handling the vetting process to be strict in accepting certain documents issued in other States, including in the northeastern region.

Vetting, or careful examination of documents, is the last and most crucial phase of the exercise. It has two stages.

The revenue circle officers take care of the first and the Deputy Commissioners of the districts handle the second.

Expected to be completed by Saturday in some districts, vetting entails critically investigating the opinions of some 3,300 disposing officers for inclusion or exclusion of the applicants.

The draft, published in July 2018, excluded 40.07 lakh people, out of which 36.2 lakh reapplied for inclusion. Another 1.02 lakh names were removed from the NRC and put on an additional exclusion list on June 26, but they were allowed to reapply.

The fear that the applications of most of those who reapplied — primarily the Bengali-speaking Hindus and Muslims and Gurkhas — could be rejected has stemmed from the NRC authority’s alleged instruction to treat certain documents with “utmost suspicion”. These include birth certificates issued in States such as Nagaland and refugee registration and citizenship certificates issued in Tripura and West Bengal, besides Assam.

“Despite the Supreme Court allowing these documents... we have come to know that officials handling the vetting process have been told not to entertain them. There is a conspiracy to deliberately keep certain communities out of the NRC,” said a leader of the All Assam Minority Students’ Union.