**National Press Release – to be released across India**

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**Swarna Bharat Party calls for calm and a rules-based approach to deal with NRC in Assam**

Mr Pankaj Das, Swarna Bharat Party’s Assam State Coordinator, today spelled out SBP’s position regarding the National Register of Citizens.

He said that as India’s only liberal party, SBP is committed to free trade between India and neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh. Through free trade any impetus for labour migration can be mitigated or better regulated. SBP considers that any genuine refugees should be dealt with in accordance with the UNHCR Refugee Convention, which India should ratify as soon as possible.

In this regard, SBP opposes the Modi Government’s Citizenship Bill which is inconsistent with the Assam Accord and would potentially regularise illegal economic migrants based on their religion. Mr Das called upon the Union Government to fulfil the 1985 Assam Accord, in particular, to complete the fence between India and Bangladesh.

Mr Das condemned political leaders who are trying to use the NRC issue to divide the people of Assam for their political gain. He called for calm and for a rules-based and transparent approach to the NRC issue. SBP wants the NRC to be 100 percent accurate so that no genuine Indian citizen is left out. Likewise, no non-Indian should be included in the register.

He asked the Government of India to disclose its plans for any non-Indians ultimately found living in Assam. He said that India must set the highest standard of due process and consultation, and ensure that everyone is treated humanely.

As part of this process, Mr Das asked the Government of India to set up a close relationship with relevant nations, such as Bangladesh, to consider options for repatriation. Options may also be explored to absorb – in various parts of India – any highly skilled non-Indians who wish to continue living in India. The Union Government should consult not only with the Assamese people but all other States so a national consensus can be achieved on how any detected aliens are to be dealt with.

Mr Das added that sometimes misunderstandings can occur in Assam because some migrants do not appear to have adopted the local language and customs. He suggested that all residents of Assam try to learn at least one local language and get involved with the local community, in support of harmonious integration.

**Notes for Editors**

SBP is India’s only liberal party, committed to defending liberty and promoting prosperity.

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