

Collectors to process Citizenship under CAA 2019

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Polity

Why in News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has empowered District Collectors in eight States/UTs to process and grant citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019.

- The move transfers pending applications from Empowered Committees to District Collectors.
- **Jurisdictions covered** - 8 states
 - Gujarat
 - Rajasthan
 - Punjab
 - West Bengal
 - Assam - except tribal areas
 - Tripura - except tribal areas
 - Jammu & Kashmir
 - Ladakh

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019

- CAA amended the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- It provides a route to Indian citizenship through registration or naturalisation for specified migrants belonging to 6 non-muslim communities:
 - Hindus
 - Sikhs
 - Buddhists
 - Jains
 - Parsis
 - Christians
- They must have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh or Afghanistan.
- The law covers those who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.
- The Act introduced Section 6B into the Citizenship Act.
- The Citizenship (Third Amendment) Rules, 2026 - District Collectors can now receive, scrutinise and decide citizenship applications under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Recent changes

- Under the Citizenship (Third Amendment) Rules, 2026, District Collectors can:
 - Receive citizenship applications.
 - Scrutinise documents.
 - Conduct necessary enquiries.
 - Administer the Oath of Allegiance.
 - Determine eligibility.
 - Grant citizenship if the applicant satisfies the conditions.
- Applications may be rejected if applicants fail to appear personally for the required procedures despite reasonable opportunities.

Previous arrangement

- Applications were processed by Empowered Committees involving Central government officials.
- These included officials associated with the Census, Intelligence Bureau and postal departments.
- The new arrangement makes these committees redundant in the specified jurisdictions.

Constitutional significance

- Citizenship is a **Union List** subject under the Seventh Schedule.
- Parliament has the power to regulate citizenship under **Article 11** of the Constitution.
- The Citizenship Act, 1955 is the principal legislation governing acquisition and termination of Indian citizenship.

Citizenship Amendment Act: Mythbusters focusing on North-East

Myth

CAA will violate provisions of Article 371

Fact

No provision of Article 371 would be violated by this Bill. The linguistic, cultural and social identity of the people of the North East would be preserved.

Myth

Provisions of Citizenship Amendment Act will apply to the tribal areas of NE

Fact

Provisions of the amendments to the Citizenship Act would not be applicable to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution.

*CAA: Citizenship Amendment Act

Reference

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