

NPR SLIPS VALID FOR LONG-TERM VISAS: MHA

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

Heavy data: The NPR was first compiled in 2010 along with the Census exercise, and later updated in 2015. file photo

Migrants belonging to six non-Muslim minority communities from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, while applying for long-term visas (LTVs), can also produce National Population Register (NPR) enrolment slips as proof of the duration of their stay in India, according to a Union Home Ministry manual.

The NPR number is part of an illustrative list of more than 10 documents that could be provided to apply for an LTV, which is a precursor to acquiring Indian citizenship either by naturalisation or registration under Section 5 and 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, for the six communities — Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists — from the three countries. The special provision of LTVs for Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan and Afghanistan was first made in 2011.

The NPR was first compiled in 2010 simultaneously with the decadal Census exercise and later updated in 2015. It already has a database of 119 crore residents. The NPR is a register of usual residents linked with location particulars down to the village level and is updated periodically “to incorporate the changes due to birth, death and migration”.

The next phase of the NPR, expected to include contentious questions on date and place of birth of father and mother, last place of residence and mother tongue, was to be simultaneously updated with the 2021 House Listing and Housing Census that has been indefinitely postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to detailed guidelines issued by the Home Ministry on documents that can be produced to prove the date of entry of the minority community migrants currently in India, the “slip issued by the Census enumerators” during the survey for the preparation of the NPR prior to December 31, 2014, can be provided. Migrants who can apply for LTVs will have to produce any document issued by the governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan “clearly showing the religion of the applicant like school certificate etc. to establish that the applicant is from a minority community”, the guidelines said.

As reported, the Home Ministry has been sensitising the States about the relevant provisions under the Citizenship Act, 1955, which could help the six communities who entered India on legal documents before 2014 and are here on LTVs, expedite their citizenship applications. Ministry officials assert that the awareness drive is not related to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), which is intended to benefit undocumented migrants from the six groups who entered India before the 2014 cut-off date. The CAA is yet to be implemented.

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