

MHA ALLOWS 2 DISTRICT COLLECTORS IN GUJARAT TO GRANT CITIZENSHIP

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency & Accountability including Right to Information and Citizen Charter

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) empowered the District Collectors of two more districts in Gujarat — Mehsana and Anand — to grant citizenship certificates to the members of Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Buddhist and Jain communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.

This is not the first-time the magistrates or collectors have been delegated such powers by the MHA. Similar orders were issued in 2016, 2018 and 2021 empowering District Magistrates in several districts of Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab to grant citizenship certificates to migrants from the six communities who entered India on valid documents. The notification is not related to the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that is yet to come into effect. The CAA passed in 2019 seeks to grant citizenship to the six undocumented communities who came to India till December 2014.

The only way the CAA could have helped the legal minority migrants is in fast-tracking their applications as it reduces the mandatory requirement of stay in India to five years.

The notification said that the application should be made online and the verification shall be done by the Collector at the district level and forwarded to Central agencies.

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