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## Gujarat Grants Indian Citizenship to 185 Pakistani Refugees

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– Categories: Human Rights



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The Gujarat government has granted Indian citizenship to 185 displaced persons from Pakistan under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The move, carried out during a government-hosted ceremony in Rajkot on July 25, is in line with the law's provision to provide legal recognition to persecuted minorities.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), enacted in 2019, provides a path to Indian citizenship for non-Muslim minorities, namely Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians who have faced religious persecution in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh and arrived in India before December 31, 2014. This latest citizenship drive aligns with the CAA's objective of granting Indian citizenship to eligible minorities facing religious persecution in their countries of origin.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Harsh Sanghvi led the event, distributing naturalisation certificates to the new citizens, many of whom have resettled in Kutch, Morbi, and Rajkot. Sanghvi remarked during the ceremony. "A new life has begun. Keep smiling, from now on, you are citizens of India." His comments were met with chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," underscoring the pride and gratitude felt by those who had finally been recognized by the nation.

Speaking to the suffering these communities endured, Sanghvi highlighted the brutal realities of religious minorities in Pakistan. "Some lost their husbands, some lost their homes to fire, and yet they endured. I salute their strength," he said. He drew a firm contrast between India's pluralistic ethos and Pakistan's discriminatory practices, calling for international attention to the ongoing persecution of Hindus and other minorities in the region.

Personal stories from the recipients brought the ceremony to life. Bhavanaben Maheshwari, now settled in Rajkot, shared, "I faced a lot of hardships there. But today, after years of struggle, I proudly call myself an Indian." Another recipient, Champa Khambhala from Morbi, said, "Life in India is far better than in Pakistan, where Hindus can't even celebrate festivals freely."

The event marked a major step in implementing the provisions of the Citizenship Amendment Act. The successful implementation of this provision under the CAA demonstrates the government's resolve to protect vulnerable communities while fulfilling its stated legislative goals.