



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

LEGISLATION TRACKER

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019

27 March 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

POLITY

SOCIAL ISSUES

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotesFree UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →

ADVERTISE

Advertise with Ujjyari

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

epicbharat@gmail.com

ACT NUMBER	YEAR ENACTED
Act No. 47 of 2019	2019

KEY PROVISIONS

- 1 Fast-track citizenship for persecuted religious minorities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Christians) from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan
- 2 Reduces residency requirement from 11 years to 5 years for eligible migrants from the three countries
- 3 Cut-off date: persons who entered India on or before December 31, 2024 (extended from December 31, 2014 in September 2025)
- 4 Does not apply to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura under Sixth Schedule and areas under Inner Line Permit
- 5 Exempts Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura tribal areas and ILP states (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram)
- 6 Amends the Citizenship Act, 1955 by inserting provisos to Section 2(1)(b) and Section 6B
- 7 Persons covered shall not be treated as illegal migrants under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and Passport Act, 1920

BACKGROUND

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) was enacted on December 12, 2019, amending the Citizenship Act, 1955. It provides a pathway to Indian citizenship for persecuted religious minorities — specifically Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians — from three neighbouring Muslim-majority countries: Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.

The constitutional basis for citizenship in India is found in Articles 5-11 (Part II) of the Constitution. Article 11 empowers Parliament to regulate citizenship by law. The Citizenship Act, 1955 is the primary legislation governing acquisition, termination, and deprivation of Indian citizenship. It has been amended multiple times — in 1986, 1992, 2003, 2005, and 2015 — before the 2019 amendment.

The CAA was one of the most politically contentious legislations in recent Indian history, triggering nationwide protests from December 2019 through early 2020. Critics argued that the Act violated the secular character of the Constitution (part of the Basic Structure doctrine per *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India, 1994*) by using religion as a criterion for citizenship. Supporters contended that it was a humanitarian measure to protect persecuted minorities from theocratic states. The CAA Rules were notified on March 11, 2024, operationalising the Act nearly four years after its passage.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Illegal Migrant:** Under Section 2(1)(b) of the Citizenship Act, 1955, a foreigner who enters India without valid travel documents or stays beyond the permitted period. The CAA creates an exception for specified communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan — they shall not be treated as illegal migrants (new proviso to Section 2(1)(b))
- **Citizenship by Naturalisation:** Under Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, a foreigner may apply for citizenship by naturalisation after residing in India for 11 years (of the preceding 14 years), with at least 12 months of continuous residency immediately before the application. The CAA reduces this to 5 years for eligible persons from the three specified countries
- **Section 6B (New Insertion):** Specific provision inserted by the CAA for granting citizenship to persons belonging to the six specified communities from three countries who entered India on or before December 31, 2014. Applications are made to an Empowered Committee through an online portal
- **Sixth Schedule Areas:** Areas in Assam (Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Bodoland Territorial Region), Meghalaya (Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills), Mizoram, and Tripura governed by autonomous councils under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution — exempted from CAA
- **Inner Line Permit (ILP):** A document required by non-residents to enter certain states in the north-east, currently applicable to Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 (Manipur and Mizoram added in December 2019 alongside the CAA)
- **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI):** Provision for OCI cardholder registration can be cancelled if the OCI holder violates any provision of the Citizenship Act or any other law — the 2019 Amendment also amended the OCI provisions

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS

Section 2 — Amendment to “Illegal Migrant” Definition: The CAA inserts a proviso to Section 2(1)(b) of the 1955 Act, exempting Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014 from being classified as illegal migrants. They

shall not be subjected to proceedings under the Foreigners Act, 1946 or the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.

Section 6B – Citizenship by Registration or Naturalisation: New section inserted by the CAA providing that persons belonging to the six specified communities from the three countries, who have been exempted from the illegal migrant definition, may apply for citizenship by registration or naturalisation. The aggregate period of residence requirement is reduced from 11 years to 5 years. The application is processed by a committee constituted by the Central Government.

Third Schedule Amendment – Residency Reduction: The Third Schedule to the 1955 Act (which prescribes qualifications for naturalisation) is amended to reduce the residency requirement from “not less than eleven years” to “not less than five years” for persons eligible under the CAA.

Exemption for North-East: Section 6B(4) provides that the CAA shall not apply to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule. It also does not apply to states with the Inner Line Permit system. This exemption was a key concession to address concerns about demographic change in tribal north-eastern areas.

Section 7D – Cancellation of OCI Registration: The CAA also amended Section 7D of the 1955 Act, broadening grounds for cancellation of OCI registration. An OCI card can now be cancelled if the holder has violated any law “for the time being in force” – expanded from the narrower grounds in the pre-amendment provision. However, no OCI registration can be cancelled without giving the cardholder an opportunity of being heard.

CAA Rules, 2024 (Notified March 11, 2024): The rules prescribe: (a) online application process through a designated portal; (b) Empowered Committee at district level to process applications; (c) Intelligence Bureau verification; (d) applicant need not possess any document from the country of origin – Indian documents (Aadhaar, voter ID, ration card, licence, etc.) or any document issued by the country of origin are acceptable; (e) citizenship certificate to be issued within a specified timeframe.

LANDMARK JUDGMENTS

Indian Union Muslim League v. Union of India (Pending, Supreme Court): Over 250 petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the CAA and the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024 are pending before the Supreme Court. Key arguments: (1) The Act violates Article 14 (equality) by classifying illegal migrants on the basis of religion; (2) It violates the secular character of the Constitution (Basic Structure); (3) The classification of only three countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan) and exclusion of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, etc. is arbitrary. The Supreme Court declined to stay the CAA in October 2024. Final hearings are scheduled for May 5-7, 2026 before a bench led by CJI Joymalya Bagchi.

Assam Sanmilita Mahasabha v. Union of India (2015): The Supreme Court upheld the validity of the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act repeal and directed completion of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) update in Assam. The NRC (published August 31, 2019) excluded approximately 19.06 lakh

persons. The interplay between NRC and CAA remains a contentious political and legal issue.

S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994): The 9-judge Bench held that secularism is part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. This judgment is cited by CAA challengers to argue that a religion-based citizenship criterion violates the Basic Structure.

Sarbananda Sonowal v. Union of India (2005): The Supreme Court struck down the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983 as unconstitutional, describing illegal immigration into Assam as “external aggression” under Article 355. This case is part of the broader legal and political context in which the CAA operates.

RECENT AMENDMENTS / DEVELOPMENTS

CAA Rules Notification (March 11, 2024): The Central Government notified the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024 on March 11, 2024, operationalising the CAA nearly 4 years and 3 months after the Act was passed. The rules established the online portal (indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in) for applications, created District-level Empowered Committees (headed by the Director — Census Operations) and State-level Empowered Committees for processing.

First Citizenship Certificates (May 15, 2024): The first set of 14 migrants received Indian citizenship certificates under the CAA in Delhi on May 15, 2024. Over 350 migrants received Indian nationality digitally under CAA on the same day in other parts of the country.

Cut-off Date Extended to December 31, 2024 (September 3, 2025): The Government of India extended the cut-off date under the CAA from December 31, 2014 to December 31, 2024 through a notification issued under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025. This allows Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2024 to stay in the country and apply for Indian citizenship, even without valid travel documents — effectively a 10-year extension of the eligibility window.

Supreme Court Final Hearing Scheduled (May 2026): The Supreme Court scheduled the final hearing for over 250 petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the CAA and the 2024 Rules for May 5-7, 2026. A bench comprising Chief Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice Vipul Pancholi took up the matter for procedural directions. Petitioners will be heard on May 5-6, respondents on May 7. Senior Advocate Indira Jaising urged the Court to hear petitions concerning Assam and North-Eastern states separately, citing issues related to Section 6A of the Citizenship Act and the Inner Line Permit. The Court indicated that petitions concerning the rest of the country will be heard first, followed by those concerning Assam and Tripura.

Nationwide Protests (December 2019 — March 2020): The CAA triggered widespread protests across India, with major demonstrations at Shaheen Bagh (Delhi), Jamia Millia Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University, and other locations. The Shaheen Bagh sit-in protest lasted from December 15, 2019 to March 24, 2020 (when it was cleared during the COVID-19 lockdown). Several states (Kerala, Punjab, West Bengal, Rajasthan) passed resolutions against the CAA, though these have no legal force as citizenship is a Union subject (Entry 17, List I).

ILP Extension: Alongside the CAA, the Central Government extended the Inner Line Permit system to Manipur (December 11, 2019) and confirmed its application to Mizoram through the Adaptation of Laws (No. 2) Order, 2019. This was done to address north-eastern concerns about demographic change.

No Connection with NRC: The Central Government has repeatedly stated that the CAA and NRC are separate processes. However, critics argue that the combination of a nationwide NRC (proposed in 2019) and CAA would result in non-Muslim illegal migrants getting a pathway to citizenship while Muslim illegal migrants would face statelessness.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Six communities covered, three countries specified, December 31 2014 cut-off, 5-year residency (reduced from 11), Sixth Schedule and ILP exemptions, citizenship under Union List (Entry 17), Articles 5-11, Section 6B of Citizenship Act 1955, CAA Rules notified March 11 2024 **Mains GS-2:** CAA and Article 14 (equality before law), secularism as Basic Structure, religion-based classification and reasonable classification test, federal dimensions (state resolutions vs. Union subject), NRC-CAA linkage, Sixth Schedule and tribal autonomy protections **Mains GS-1:** Migration and demographic change in north-east India, historical context of Partition and cross-border migration, Assam Accord (1985) and its clause 6 **Interview:** “Is the CAA consistent with the secular character of the Indian Constitution? How would you reconcile humanitarian concerns with the principle of non-discrimination?”

RELATED TERMS

[Citizenship](#)
[Secularism](#)
[Fundamental Rights](#)



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujyari →](#)<https://ujyari.com/legislation/citizenship-amendment-act-2019/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujyari.com · bharatnotes.com