**Over 300 people become Indian citizens under CAA**

The Union government on Wednesday granted citizenship certificates to more than 300 people who applied under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, a senior government official said.

At least 14 people were handed their certificates by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla in Delhi, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement.

The country of origin of the applicants was not disclosed by the government, but a government source said that most applicants were Pakistani Hindus. The 14 people who received the certificates in Delhi came from Pakistan in 2013.

The source said that as applications were being scrutinised and finalised, certificates were being sent by post to beneficiaries in other parts of the country. Most Pakistani Hindus who entered India legally are living in Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, and Delhi.

The Hindu met the families who were granted citizenship in Delhi. They said it was the first time since coming to India on a tourist visa in 2013 that they had applied for citizenship.

Jhoola Ram, a resident of Majnu Ka Tila in north Delhi, said that a priest at a nearby temple had signed the eligibility certificate validating his religion. One of the documents required to apply under the CAA is an eligibility certificate issued by a “locally reputed community institution”.

Another applicant, Seetal Das, said that a local NGO working with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) had signed the eligibility certificate. “We will be able to get out of the jhuggi (slum) now. We have documents. I did not receive proper education, but now, my children will go to a better school. Citizenship means hope for us…,” Mr. Das said. He added that citizenship had brought relief because he had been living with his family in Delhi on a tourist visa.

“Getting extension of tourist visa was another hassle because, who listens to poor people? It costs ₹2,000-4,000 per person,” he said.