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## **DIVISIVE LAW, INDIA EXCLUDES MUSLIMS: HOW FOREIGN MEDIA REACTED TO CITIZENSHIP BILL**

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Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed the landmark and contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Bill that has created sharp divides and pushed the Northeast towards violent protests. The Bill seeks to grant citizenship to persecuted religious minorities from religious minorities of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

The northeastern states are up in arms with the government rushing Army to the burning Assam and Tripura to diffuse tension. A curfew has been imposed in many parts of the Northeast while Army was called in at four places and Assam Rifles personnel were deployed in Tripura.

Army has also been deployed in Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Jorhat districts and Internet services have been suspended.

While the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the passing of the Citizenship Bill as historic, the soon-to-be legislation has divided the political camps and citizens. Here's how the foreign media reacted to the landmark change in India's citizenship laws:

The New York Times has carried an article with the headline, "Indian Parliament Passes Divisive Citizenship Bill, Moving It Closer to Law". The article further writes, "The upper house of the Indian Parliament passed a contentious citizenship bill on Wednesday, bringing a religiously polarizing measure one step closer to law as new protests erupted across the country."

"The measure, called the Citizenship Amendment Bill, uses religion as a criterion for determining whether illegal migrants in India can be fast-tracked for citizenship. The bill favors members of all South Asia's major religions except Islam, and leaders of India's 200-million-strong Muslim community have called it blatant discrimination," read the New York Times report.

The Washington Post has carried the headline, "India passes controversial citizenship law excluding Muslim migrants". The article says, "Lawmakers in India on Wednesday passed a fundamental change to its citizenship law to include religion as a criterion for nationality for the first time, deepening concerns that a country founded on secular ideals is becoming a Hindu state that treats Muslims as second-class citizens."

The Post further adds, "The new legislation creates a path to citizenship for migrants who belong to several South Asian religions but pointedly excludes Islam, the faith practiced by 200 million

Indian citizens."

Al Jazeera has written, "The bill brings sweeping changes to India's 64-year-old citizenship law by giving citizenship to "persecuted" minorities - Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians - from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan."

The Independent has said, "India's ruling Hindu nationalist government has won parliamentary approval for a controversial law that would make it easier for refugees of certain faiths from neighbouring countries to gain citizenship, but not Muslims."

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/how-foreign-media-reacted-to-citizenship-bill-1627579-2019-12-12>

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