

## NAWAB OF SACHIN SEEKS JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR SIDIS

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Gujarat is home to nearly 55,000 Sidis, people of African descent who arrived in the state centuries ago. However, no concrete efforts are being taken to generate education and employment opportunities for this minority community, feels Nawab of Sachin, Sidi Mohammed Rezakhan. Rezakhan who was at Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) on Monday to inaugurate an exhibition said that Sidis may want reservation for them but they do not have leaders to press for their cause and convince the government. "Sidis are spread in different pockets across the state.

They do not have leaders. Earlier, they were soldiers and nawabs but later they were left jobless. More than

reservation, what is required is education and employment opportunities for Sidis, which they are deprived of. That is the way to ensure their social and economic development," he said. Rezakhan inaugurated the exhibition on 'Africans in India: A Rediscovery' on Monday morning. The ninth generation of Nawab of Sachin near Surat, Rezakhan said that heritage monuments built by Sidis in Gujarat are also lying in a dilapidated state.

"Monuments like Sidi Saiyyed mosque, Jhulta Minara and a dargah near Ankleshwar need better care if we are keen on preserving the history and culture of Sidis. I have decided to reach out to the state government to propose means of preserving our heritage. I believe that not everything is possible for the state government. However, a public-private partnership could go a long way in heritage conservation," he said. Regarding the protected monuments, he said that the government must ensure that the only a deserving person is given charge of the supervision. "Only officials who are interested in such work should be appointed. One should not appoint someone just for the sake of it. Only by preserving our heritage and protected monuments can tourism be promoted," he added.