

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:992
ANSWERED ON:14.07.2004
STRENGTHENING TIES WITH PAKISTAN
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India and Pakistan have agreed to issue more visas to the nationals of both countries to encourage people to people contact programme ;
- (b) if so, the details thereof ;
- (c) whether there has been an increase in the demand of visas from nationals of both the countries in the recent past ;
- (d) if so, whether the Union Government has taken up the matter with Pakistan; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) to (e) Government have always supported greater people to people contacts between India and Pakistan.

The heightened interactions between the two countries in the recent past has led to an increase in the demand for visas from the nationals of both the countries.

During the Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan in New Delhi on June 27-28, 2004 it was agreed that the strengths of the respective High Commissions would be restored immediately to the original level of 110. It was also agreed in principle to re-establish India's Consulate General in Karachi and Pakistan's Consulate General in Mumbai. These steps would further facilitate issuing of visas.