

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:451

ANSWERED ON:27.07.2005

AGREEMENT ON BUS SERVICE WITH PAKISTAN

Ajnala Dr. Rattan Singh;Badi Shri Rajendra Kumar;Bose Shri Subrata;Dhindsa Shri Sukhdev Singh;Kharventhan Shri Salarapatty
Kuppusamy;Mandlik Shri Sadashivrao Dadoba;Paraste Shri Dalpat Singh

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether an agreement was reached between India and Pakistan during recent months to start early bus-service between Amritsar and Lahore and to religious places like Nankana Sahib;
- (b) if so, the current status of the said agreement;
- (c) the various other issues discussed during the same period including the gains and progress made so far in each of them;
- (d) whether the Government has made efforts to open the Kargil-Skardu and Kailash-Mansarovar roads for the benefit of pilgrims;
- (e) if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (f) Whether Pakistan has offered for talks on bilateral issues including Kashmir as reported in the Times of India dated June 14, 2005; and
- (g) if so, the details alongwith the reaction of the Indian Government thereto?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): During the first technical talks in May 2005 between India and Pakistan on the Amritsar-Lahore/Nankana Sahib bus service, the two countries discussed the modalities for operationalization of the Amritsar-Lahore bus, and agreed in principle to start the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib Bus Service.

(c): During recent months, various other issues have been discussed with Pakistan, which, interalia, include enhancing interaction and cooperation across the LoC; re-establishing the Khokhrapar-Munnabao route by 1st January 2006; opening the Consulates General of the two countries in Mumbai and Karachi respectively before the end of the current year; alleviating the situation of prisoners; taking forward the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline projects; reactivating the Joint Commission as early as possible and an early convening of the Joint Business Council.

(d) & (e): India has proposed starting a Kargil-Skardu to Pakistan during President Musharraf's visit to India in April 2005. Pakistan's response is awaited. India has also proposed to China on several occasions the opening of an alternative route to Kailash-Mansarovar. Government is continuing efforts with both the countries to open the above-mentioned routes.

(f) & (g): Government is committed to continuing the present process of confidence-building, and discussing any outstanding bilateral issue with Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence.