

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2933
ANSWERED ON:18.08.2004
RELIGIOUS PLACES IN PAKISTAN
Khanna Shri Avinash Rai

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether some religious places of Hindus, Sikhs and Jains are located in Pakistan ;
- (b) if so, the number of such religious places and their location thereof ;
- (c) whether the Union Government has framed any rule for Indians visiting these religious places ;
- (d) if so, the details thereof ;
- (e) the condition of these religious places and the mechanism in place for their maintenance ;
- (f) whether the Government is contemplating to give the responsibility of maintenance of these places to Indian institutions ; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

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

(a) to (g) Visits of pilgrim groups to a number of religious places located in India and Pakistan are regulated by the bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines, signed in September 1974. It outlines the principles for facilitating such visits. In keeping with the provisions of the Protocol, the two sides have agreed to a list of shrines to be visited, and the size of the visiting pilgrim groups. Accordingly, pilgrim groups from India visit shrines such as Panja Sahib (Hasanabdal), Nankana Sahib (Pindi), Shadani Darbar (Hyat Pitafi), etc. that are located in Pakistan.

Under the Protocol, it is the obligation of the concerned country to make every effort to ensure that the places of worship in the agreed list are properly maintained and their sanctity preserved. Government are aware of reports that some of the shrines in Pakistan are not being maintained properly and their sanctity is not being preserved. Government of Pakistan has been apprised of the complaints received from time to time in this regard.