

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3770
ANSWERED ON:18.02.2014
VISIT OF HINDUS FROM PAKISTAN
Sugavanam Shri E.G.

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of Hindus from Pakistan have visited India in the recent months on pilgrimage/medical tourism;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether many of them have expressed a desire not to go back to Pakistan;
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the action taken by the Government thereon;
- (e) whether the Government has initiated any dialogue with the Pakistani Government to protect the minority Hindus living there; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN)

(a) to (d): It has come to notice that a number of Pakistani nationals belonging to minority communities in Pakistan i.e. Hindus and Sikhs, who have come to India after obtaining Pilgrimage group visa, have not returned within their visa validity period and have been seeking extension of their visas. As per information available, 1,11,754 Pakistani nationals arrived in India during 2013. However, caste/religion-wise break up of Pakistan nationals visiting India is not centrally maintained.

Government has issued instructions on 7th March, 2012 to all State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to consider such cases of Pakistan nationals based on guidelines issued by the Government on 29.12.2011 regarding the procedure to be followed for dealing with foreign nationals who claims to be refugees.

These guidelines stipulate that in case it is found that prima facie the claim is justified on the grounds of a well founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, sex, nationality, ethnic identity, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, the State Governments/UT Administrations may recommend the cases to the Ministry of Home Affairs for grant of Long Term Visa after due enquiry.

(e) to (f): It is the primary responsibility of foreign Governments to discharge their obligations towards all their citizens including those that belong to their minority communities. Though the 'Simla Agreement' with Pakistan specially provides for non-interference in each others' internal affairs, nevertheless, based on reports of persecution of minority groups in Pakistan, Government has taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan has stated that it was fully cognizant of the situation and looked after the welfare of all its citizens, particularly the minority community.