

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:388
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2015
DENIAL OF VISA TO BISHOPS
Antony Shri Anto

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has allegedly denied visas to two Bishops from Vatican who were coming to India to attend the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India; and

(b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD))

(a) & (b) No, the visas were not denied to the two Catholic Bishops of the Vatican who wanted to attend the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Bengaluru. Although the Vatican is accredited to Embassy of India, Berne (Switzerland), the applications were submitted at Embassy of India, Rome on 20 January 2015. The prescribed processing time for visa applications from third countries is longer than for applications from the same or accredited countries and conference visas have to be processed as per prescribed guidelines. As the applications were incomplete, the applicants were requested to submit the necessary documents, including Conference clearances from Indian authorities concerned. On 30 January 2015, an official from the Vatican came to the Embassy without the required documents and insisted that visas be issued. The Mission again requested for the required documents which were, however, not provided. Thereupon, on 2 February 2015, an official from the Vatican came to the Embassy demanding immediate withdrawal of passports and the same were returned.