

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2074
ANSWERED ON:23.07.2014
PILGRIM VISA
Somaiya Dr. Kirit

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether as per the present policy, pilgrim visa is not issued to devotees to visit the temple of Mata Hinglaj Devi located at Balochistan;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up this issue with Pakistan; and
- (d) if so, the response of Pakistan in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) Under the new Visa Agreement signed in 2012, 'Pilgrim Visas' are issued to persons intending to visit religious shrines in India and Pakistan as per an agreed list of Shrines under the 1974 Bilateral Protocol on Visit to Religious Shrines. Presently Mata Hinglaj Devi Shrine in Balochistan (Pakistan) is not included in the agreed list of Shrines.

(c) & (d) Government has endeavoured to expand the agreed list of Shrines permitted for travel under the 1974 Protocol. An expanded list that included Mata Hinglaj Devi's Shrine has been handed over to Pakistan during the visit of then EAM to Islamabad in October 2005. The issue has been raised on several occasions thereafter.

There has been no response from Pakistan so far.