

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2463
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.12.2018

DENIAL OF CONSULAR ACCESS

2463. SHRI KAMAL NATH:

SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government is aware that an Indian Consular team in Islamabad, Pakistan was prevented from meeting pilgrims visiting Nankana Sahib recently;
- (b) if so, the facts and details in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government of India has lodged any strong protest with Pakistan Government on the issue; and
- (d) if so, the response of the Pakistani authorities in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) The Indian High Commission consular officials were denied entry into various Gurudwaras and not allowed to meet the Indian pilgrims who were visiting Pakistan under the bilateral Protocol on visit to religious shrines, 1974 in the months of April, June and November 2018, despite travel permissions having been granted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

The Government of India lodged strong protests with the Government of Pakistan for denial of entry to Indian High Commission's consular/protocol teams to the Gurudwaras in Pakistan and for preventing them from performing consular duties for Indian citizens.

India shared its grave concern and conveyed to Pakistan that these incidents were in violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963. These were also in breach of the letter and spirit of the bilateral Protocol on visit to religious shrines, 1974 and the Code of Conduct for the treatment of diplomatic/consular personnel in India and Pakistan, 1992.

Pakistan's claim that the Indian pilgrims declined to meet the High Commission officials was categorically refuted. It was, *inter-alia*, conveyed to Pakistan that the Indian organisers Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) have expressed grave concern and dismay that the High Commission's officials were denied access despite the visiting pilgrims from India having asked Pakistan organisers to facilitate a meeting with them.
