

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.522
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.09.2020

PILGRIMAGE SITES

522. SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:
SHRI SANJAY SADASHIVRAO MANDLIK:
SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has identified pilgrimage sites and temples in other countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, country-wise;
- (c) the condition of pilgrimage sites and temples in these countries; and
- (d) the steps taken or likely to be taken to ensure pilgrimage to these places by the pilgrims?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) to (d) The Government has identified 15 religious shrines in Pakistan for pilgrimage under the 1974 Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines between India and Pakistan. The details of these shrines are attached at Annexure. These 15 pilgrimage sites in Pakistan are maintained by the Evacuee Trust Property Board, Government of Pakistan. The Government of India, through its High Commission in Pakistan, coordinates with Pakistan authorities to ensure smooth pilgrimage of Indian pilgrims to these religious shrines in Pakistan. These pilgrimage sites are in a functional state.

The Government has come across reports regarding vandalism and desecration of places of religious worship belonging to the minority communities in Pakistan. Recently, following the reports of vandalism and desecration of Mata Rani Bhatiyani Temple in Sindh on 26 January 2020, the holy Gurudwara at Sri Nankana Sahib on 3 January 2020 and a Gandhara style Buddha statue in Mardan on 18 July 2020, the Government strongly condemned these reprehensible acts and called upon Pakistan to ensure safety, security and welfare of the members of the minority communities in Pakistan, including their places of worship, and take immediate measures to expeditiously bring the perpetrators to justice.

There are many temples in Bangladesh which are also visited by pilgrims from India. Some of these places are centuries old and have been declared preserved heritage/archaeological sites by the Government of Bangladesh. The famous Dhakeshwari temple has been declared as the national temple of Bangladesh.

Annexure to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 522

The religious shrines identified under 1974 Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines between India and Pakistan in Pakistan are:

1. Shadani Darbar in Hyat Pitafi, Ghotki, Sindh
2. Katasraj Dham in Chakwal, Punjab
3. Gurudwaras of Nankana Sahib, Punjab
4. Gurudwara Panja Sahib, Hassan Abdal, Attock, Punjab
5. Samadhi of Marahaja Ranjit Singh Ji, Lahore, Punjab
6. Gurudwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, Punjab
7. Gurudwara Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib, Punjab
8. Gurudwara Deewan Khana, Lahore, Punjab
9. Gurudwara Shaheed Ganj, Singhanian, Lahore, Punjab
10. Gurudwara Bhai Tara Singh, Lahore, Punjab
11. Gurudwara of Sixth Guru, Mozang, Lahore, Punjab
12. Birth place of Guru Ram Das, Lahore, Punjab
13. Gurudwara Cheveen Padshahi, Mozang, Lahore, Punjab
14. Shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh, Lahore, Punjab
15. Sadhu Bela, Khanpur and Mirpur Mathelo, Sindh
