

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5946
ANSWERED ON:04.05.2005
REGISTRATION FOR TRAVEL ON SRINAGAR MUZAFFARABAD BUS SERVICE
Reddy Shri K. Jayasurya Prakash

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government has started registering the names of the passengers who want to use the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service;
- (b) If so, the number of registrants so far;
- (c) Whether the Government is not insisting on any visa or passport for this bus service;
- (d) If so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) and (b) The Regional Passport Office, Srinagar, has been issuing application forms for those who want to travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Bus. 250 application forms were given out on March 4, 2005. Out of these, 29 people received due clearance from Pakistan to travel on the first bus. 19 out of these 29 actually traveled on the first bus on April 7, 2005. Thereafter, 500 application forms were given out on 21 March, 2005, bringing the total number of application forms distributed so far to 750. 26 passengers undertook the journey on the second trip of the bus on April 21, 2005.

(c) and (d) Travel on the bus is by an entry permit system, once identities are verified. The application form, which requires details, including photographs, as are normally required for a passport and a visa, is subjected to due verification on our side to establish the bonafides of the traveller. These verified forms are passed on to Muzaffarabad. The returned forms then indicate who is allowed travel to the other side. Similar procedure is followed for travel to the Indian side. Thus the procedure followed involves all checks and pre-verifications as in the case of grant of visas.