

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1074  
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2006  
CONVERSION OF SACRED POND INTO COMMERCIAL PLAZA  
Paraste Shri Dalpat Singh

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Evacuee Property Trust Board (EPTB), the government body maintaining properties of minorities in Pakistan plans to convert a pond which had been used by Hindus since partition as a sacred place to bathe, into a commercial plaza;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) whether any protest has been lodged by India in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the reaction of Pakistan thereto?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) & (b) 'The Daily Times', a Pakistani newspaper, reported on 18 October 2006 that the Evacuee Property Trust Board of Pakistan (EPTB) had invited applications from contractors to construct a 12-storey building at a site in Lahore that members of the local Hindu community used in the past for ceremonial bathing. The same report, however, also quoted the Chairman of EPTB as saying that the applications had been invited "only to solicit the constructors' interest. We do not intend to really build over the asnan ghat."

(c) & (d) The maintenance of temples in Pakistan is the responsibility of Pakistani authorities. In pursuit of international and bilateral cooperation, India continues to strive, together with other countries that no damage is caused to religious places abroad.