

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1150
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2006
ALTERNATIVE ROUTE FOR KAILASH MANSAROVAR PILGRIMAGE
Gadakh Shri Tukaram Gangadhar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India had proposed to China on several occasions regarding opening of an alternative route for Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage;
- (b) if so, the response of China thereto;
- (c) the efforts made by the Union Government to make this route operational; and
- (d) the current status of the said proposal?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) Yes.

(b)-(c) Government has proposed to the Chinese side the opening of an alternative route to Kailash-Mansarovar through Demchok in Jammu and Kashmir or Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh. The Chinese side has cited difficulty in opening these routes on the ground that it would involve travel over longer distances on their side through difficult terrain, with poor road conditions and lack of proper infrastructure for accommodation and communications.

(d) During the recent visit of President Hu Jintao of China to India from November 20 to 23, 2006, the two sides agreed to explore the possibility of opening an additional route for the Yatra.