

(b) if so, the participating countries in the proposed conference; and

(c) whether participating countries have agreed upon or likely to be agreed regarding housing of the same by India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. At the Third International Conference on Federalism held in Brussels on 3-5 March 2005, MOS (PMO) had announced the Government of India's offer to host the Fourth International Conference on Federalism in 2007-08. Going by the last Conference, more than 500 participants from 60 countries are expected to participate in the next conference also.

(c) Modalities are being firmed up by the Inter-State Council Secreariat in consultation with the organizing body, The Forum of Federation, which is studying India's offer.

Opening of Hussainiwala Indo-Pak border

3764. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up the matter with Pakistan to open the Hussainiwala Indo-Pak border in Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (c) It is the policy of the Government of India to promote trade and economic relations with Pakistan and encourage people to people contacts between the two countries.

In keeping with this policy, during the visit of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to India from 16 to 18 April 2005, agreements were reached to start early a bus service between Amritsar and Lahore and to religious places such as Nankana Sahib; and to re-establish the Khokhrapar-Munnabao route by 1st January, 2006.

The Government would examine other routes after the implementation of the routes currently in pipeline.