

Short Brief on re-opening of Sharda in POK

Sharda – the basic seat of learning for Hindus is the oldest civilization and was once the part of Sharda desh and also Adi Shankracharya's seat. We are struggling for re-opening of Sharda Pilgrimage in PoK that was last held in 1948 by our Guru Swami Nand Lal ji - a Kashmiri saint. It was from this peeth that Sanatana was reborn after Adi Shankracharya's debates with Buddhist monks, when Buddhism had overshadowed Santana particularly from 273 BC King Ashoka to 750 AD King Lalitaditya's period.

We have LoC permit in force for travel across LoC that is meant for J&K residents. This LoC permit was formulated by MEA after Vajpayee – Gen. Musharaf summit and is in force since 2007.

We have taken up the matter with GOI for bringing an amendment in LoC permit rules by way of addendum to include annual pilgrimage to Sharda Peeth on the lines of sikhs pilgrimage to Nankana sahib in Lahore that is held annually and now the Kartarpur yatra. We at Save Sharda Committee are pressing for cross LoC Heritage & Religious tourism that should bring people closer. People of PoK should also be allowed pilgrimage to our part of Kashmir in J&K state. The batches could be 3-5 pilgrims only.

Recently we had written and hailed judgement on Katas Raj temple in Punjab by SC of Pakistan and we have written to SC of AJK as well for passing a similar judgement on Sharda Peeth too. We have got a positive reply from SC of AJK in this regard. The landmark judgement has been received by the Head of the Committee in New Delhi in January'2018.

We have raised a civil society of about 150 members across loC in PoK that is working in tandem with us. Prominent persons include Rayees Mohammad (a Forester), Tanveer Ahemad (British passport holder), Khwaja Farooq, Haji Shabbir (Nizamuddin Aulya group), Kh. Nazir (Ex-conservator of Forests), Khawaja Ab. Ghani (Author), Adv. Iftikhar Anjum (Researcher), Ms Sadiyah Rehman (activist) amongst others. Now that for the first time since partition flowers have been laid by civil society of POK in Nov '2016 and later in March '2017, a photograph of Sharda Devi was installed inside temple - first time in the last 72 years. Sindoor (Vermillion) was applied inside peeth in Oct' 2020 by a group led by Mohammed Rayees. A portrait of Swami Nand Lal & Sharda Mata was installed inside Sharda peeth on 10 sept'2021 by civil society members across LoC.

An order by DG Archeology & Tourism PoK Govt. in favour of Save Sharda committee for maintaining sanctity of the Peeth in Dec'2018 has added to the depth of the mission. Nearly 53 minorities shrines in 10 districts of PoK have also been brought under the aegis of Deptt of Archeology there vide Order dated 29.06.2019.

The visit of Dr. Ramesh Vankwani with a delegation of 5 Pakistani Hindu Council members on 24 June '2019 to Sharda peeth was also historical & in consultations with Save Sharda committee. But Pakistani Govt. upon submission of report by Dr. Vankwani took a decision to allow only Pakistani Hindus to visit Sharda Peeth.

Then in a coordinated move Save Sharda Committee sent a Hong kong based couple Venkataraman and Sujata, who performed Puja near Sharda in Village Pateeka on the banks of river kishenganga on 4th Oct.'2019. It was the first ever puja since 1948 in Sharda Land.

A large section of the civil society in PoK have expressed their desire and support our cause. As per LoC permit rules only relatives living across LoC are allowed to travel on special occasions via Uri-Muzaffarabad and Poonch- Rawalkote routes. Thus a common J&K resident feels discriminated as those who do not have relatives living on either side of LoC cannot go to either side. This deprived section not includes J&K Hindus alone, but muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and others as well. LoC trade is also going on through these specified routes, presently suspended though.

All Shankracharya followers are keen for restoration of Sharda peeth to its pristine glory. The recent opening of Kartarpur corridor has added a new dimension to the issue & rekindled hopes for early reopening of Sharda Peeth. The Head of Save sharda committee visited Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan on 24th November'2019 and presented a memorandum to the Sikh Prabandhak Committee for reopening of Sharda on similar lines. Prime Minister Mr. Modi has time & again emphasised for People to People contact for such issues.

Nowhere, in the world has any major religious site been closed in any conflict zone as Sharda. Prayers in Al Aksa mosque in Jerusalem or Dura europos Church in Syria have never stopped for a day. Question. No: 1128 on 20 Dec'2018 in Rajya Sabha on Sharda reopening is on record. The treaty between two nations can be reviewed and annual pilgrimages initially on LoC permit for J&K residents and an addendum be made to the present rules for cross LoC religious & Heritage tourism. Later devotees from all over the country can undertake this pilgrimage. This can be viewed as biggest CBM too.

Recently SSCK organised Sharda Puja right on LoC at Keran on banks of Kishenganga river on eve of Sharda Divas August'2020. Civil society members across LoC applied vermilion{ sindoor} at Sharda Peeth this Navratri in November – again first time in last years.

The soil Shilas got from POK were also used in the foundation stone laying at Ram Mandir in Ayodhya by Prime Minister this year. Recent Puja at LoC Keran on 26 Aug'2019 on river Kishenganga and now at LoC Teetwal on 14 Sep'2021 has added new dimension to the mission, where civil societies on both sides of LoC greeted each other, first time in last 72 years.

The reopening of Sharda Yatra will be a big CBM between the countries, for which the civil societies on both sides of LOC are working hard - a way forward.

This Civil society movement in a conflict zone deserves appreciation *

Regards,

Ravinder Pandita, Head / Founder

Save Sharda Committee Kashmir (Regd.) Tel : 9811143024.

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Installation of Sharda Photo at Sharda Peeth



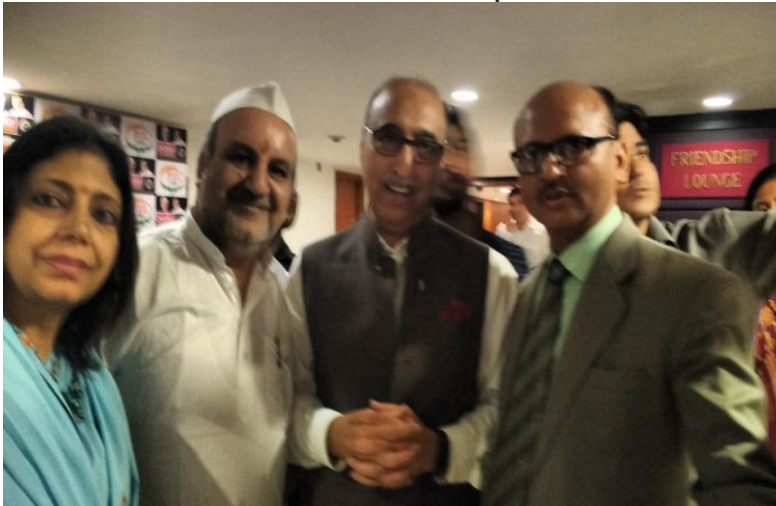
Laying of flowers by Civil society of POK in 2016



Dr. Vankwani visit to Sharda peeth '2019



Sh.Venkat & Smt. Sujata at puja near Sharda peeth'2019



Meeting Pak High Commissioner Ab. Basit



Sharda Puja at Kishenganga LOC Keran {just across river is POK}



Meeting at Kartarpur Gurudwara, Pakistan



Meeting with NSA Sh. Ajit Doval on Sharda issue

How to Apply for LoC Permit

LoC permits are normally issued by RPO Jammu and RPO Srinagar to Jammu & Kashmir residents who want to visit their relatives living across the Line of Control (LoC) for valid reasons such as attending wedding ceremonies.

Please read the following instructions related to documentary requirements and other details for LoC applications:

● Where to Apply

- Jammu & Kashmir residents need to apply at their respective passport office i.e. RPO Jammu or RPO Srinagar, as applicable.

● Photograph

- Please paste a coloured photograph (4.5 cm X 3.5 cm) with white background in the box provisioned for photograph in the printed application form.
- Please also carry three more recent coloured photographs while submitting the application form.

● Documents Required

Please submit one copy of the LoC permit application form duly filled and signed in BLUE/BLACK ink along with following documents:

- Proof of Date of Birth (Any one of the below mentioned documents)
 - Matriculation Certificate attested by Gazetted Officer (G.O.)
 - S.M.C. / T.A.C Certificate
 - Passport Photocopy
 - Annexure 'A' (format available for download in PSP website) in case of illiterate
- Proof of Address in India (Any one of the below mentioned documents)
 - State Subject Certificate attested by Gazetted Officer(G.O.)
 - Election Commission Identity Certificate
 - Tele / Mobile Phone bill
 - Electricity Bill
 - Border Card
 - Passport Photocopy
 - Aadhaar Card

Note: Passport Office may demand additional documents, if required.

● Other Instructions

- Parents need to separately apply for LoC Permits for infants travelling with them
- Travelers are permitted to carry Indian currency worth rupees 5000/- (five thousands only) on both way (Exit/Entry)
- The maximum permissible baggage per person is 30 Kg by weight with dimension not exceeding 2.5*1.5*1.5 feet
- Defaulters are liable to be prosecuted

**REGISTRAR
SUPREME COURT OF
AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR**



Muzaffarabad

Tele: Off: 05822-929711

Fax No: 929713

No SC/ /2017

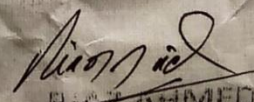
Dated: 03.01.2018

To

Dear Mr. Ravinder Pandita,
Founder Save Sharda Committee,
Kashmir (Regd.)

Your letter addressed to Mr. Justice Chaudhary Muhammad Ibrahim Zia, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Azad Jammu & Kashmir was placed before his Lordship on the 2nd day of January, 2018. I have been directed to convey that already this Court in the cases reported as **Rehmat ullah Khan & 3 others Vrs. Azad Govt. & 3 others (2014 SCR 1358)** and **Azad Govt. & 5 others Vrs. Ghulam Nabi Shah (2015 SCR 816)** has been pleased to issue direction to the State Authorities for protection of the Religious Places and Symbols such as Temples and Gordwara etc. You may approach the concerned State Authorities seeking remedy as claimed by you in the letter. In case failure on the part of State functionaries in carrying out of the judgments you may approach this Court for redressal of your grievance. (The copies of judgments for perusal and further action are enclosed herewith as annexures "A&B").

The Honourable Chief Justice of Azad Jammu & Kashmir has appreciated the efforts of your committee for humanity. It is expected that the committee shall not confine itself only to restoration of the places relating to a specific religion but also shall focus on restoration and protection of the Holy Places and Symbols of the other Religions. It is also desired that the committee shall raise voice against worst fanatic acts like demolishing of the Babri Masjid in Ayudhia and the religious places of other religions especially the buildings and sacred places relating to the religion of Islam.


RIAZ AHMED
REGISTRAR



**THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL
OF TOURISM & ARCHAEOLOGY**
AZAD GOVT. OF THE STATE OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

NO:

Dated:

Circular.

On the humble request of Save Sharda Community Kashmir (Regd) New Dehli, Headed by Mr. Ravinder Pandita sent a Email for save Sharda Pilgrim, Mr. Ravider also suggested for sanctity of the shrine and 2,Nos awareness sign boards, should be installed, one at the entry near stairs of Sharda Premises and other before entering the temple (Sanctum Sanctorum) by these sign boards, the visitors should be made aware to put off their shoes before entering the Temple, to maintain religious sanctity being a religious place of Kashmir Pandits. Keeping in view being a Muslim and a religious Nation we are bound to protect and secured of this historical shrine. In this regard Supreme Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir secured a order no Sc/2017 dated 03-01-2018 as well.

No 9973-80 Dated 31¹²/₁₈

Copy to:-

1. PS to The Secretary Tourism and Information GoAJK.
2. BM 5-AK Brigade for information.
3. Comanding Officer 33 FF for information.
4. Deputy Commissioner Nellum for information and implementation.
5. SSP Nellum for information.
6. Assistant Director Tourism District Nellum for implementation.
7. Assistant Director Archaeology Mzd, for necessary action.
8. Mr Ravindar Pandita Head of Save Sharda Community (Reg)

Director General
Tourism & Archaeology,
GoAJ&K

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Tourism & Archaeology,
GoAJ&K