



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Nick Barton
Birmingham Airport
Birmingham
B26 3QJ

4th July 2022

Dear Nick,

We are writing to you as the elected representatives of the large Punjabi and Sikh diaspora communities in the West Midlands about the frequency of flights from Birmingham International Airport to Sri Guru Ram Das Jee Airport, Amritsar.

As you know there is a significant Sikh and Punjabi population in the West Midlands, in Birmingham, Coventry, Sandwell and Wolverhampton. Over 130,000 Sikhs were registered in the West Midlands in the 2011 Census.

It was therefore extremely welcome that a direct flight from Birmingham to Amritsar, the city of the Golden Temple, the holiest Gurdwara and most important pilgrimage site in the Sikh faith, was introduced in 2017, and subsequently increased to five and six flights per week the following year.

While it was welcome that the Birmingham-Amritsar direct flight resumed last August as Covid travel restrictions relaxed, we are concerned that the regularity of flights have remained significantly scaled down. Currently there is only one direct flight per week to Amritsar, Punjab from Birmingham International Airport.

The result of this is to lay an expensive and restrictive burden on the West Midlands' sizeable Sikh and Punjabi diaspora population. Our constituents have complained that they are having to travel to London to secure flights, which are more expensive in their own right, never minding the additional travel costs, parking fees and inconvenience this entails.

The establishment of regular direct flights from Birmingham-Amritsar was a great boon to tourism and trade links between the UK and India, not to mention its importance to the Punjabi and Sikh diaspora. Therefore we are writing to you now to ask what plans there are to scale up the frequency of direct flights again and what obstacles exist to doing so without delay.



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We are confident that demand from my community is there, and are keen to work with whoever necessary to ensure this important air route is restored.

We look forward to your response.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Preet Kaur Gill".

Preet Kaur Gill MP
Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Edgbaston

Shabana Mahmood MP
Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Ladywood

Taiwo Owatemi MP
Member of Parliament for Coventry North West

Khalid Mahmood MP
Member of Parliament for Perry Barr

Paulette Hamilton MP
Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Erdington

Steve McCabe MP
Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Selly Oak

Tahir Ali MP
Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Hall Green

Jess Phillips MP
Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Yardley

Liam Byrne MP
Member of Parliament for Hodge Hill

The Rt Hon Valerie Vaz MP
Member of Parliament for Walsall South

John Spellar MP
Member of Parliament for Warley

Pat McFadden MP
Member of Parliament for Wolverhampton South East