

Pakistan participation to the India Social Forum

Visa denial frowned upon

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LAHORE: The Pakistan Social Forum (PSF) on Friday condemned the Indian Government for denying them visas to attend the India Social Forum gathering in New Delhi.

The Indian High Commission in Islamabad said it had issued more than 200 visas for the event, which began on Thursday and will continue until November 13.

The Lahore-based PSF, a collection of several groups, including workers' movements, farmers' movements, media groups, lawyers, scholars, and civil society organisations, said the Indian Government had "consciously" stopped nearly 500 delegates from Pakistan from attending the conference.

"Right denied"

"By denying visa to Pakistani peace activists, social workers, human rights workers and representatives of progressive and pro-peace elements of Pakistani society, Indian Government had also denied their right to be part of open dialogue and pro-people process in the region. It also indicates that Indian Government does not want to be ally with pro-peace and progressive forces in Pakistan or the region," a PSF statement said.

`Pro-capitalist agenda'

India had revealed its "pro-capitalist" agenda, it said.

The Indian High Commission said it had issued 230 visas for Pakistani delegates.

An official said the High Commission gave visas to all Pakistani delegates whose host organisations in India had submitted all particulars of their invitees to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and whose names the Ministry had cleared.

P.S.

* From The Hindu: <http://www.thehindu.com/2006/11/12/stories/2006111204571200.htm>