

Indian passengers of Samjhauta Express cross Wagah border on foot

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Lahore: After spending three days at the Lahore Railway Station and its adjacent hotels in Pakistan's Punjab province, a total of 86 Indian passengers have left for their home by crossing the Wagah border on foot.

Some 200 people were going to India by Samjhauta Express last Thursday when it was stopped at the Wagah Border by the Indian authorities who cited potential security risks due to protests by farmers.

The train then returned to the Lahore Railway Station and the Pakistani authorities provided stay to the passengers at the station and adjacent hotels.

The Pakistani passengers, however, left for their homes. The departure of the Samjhauta Express was yesterday cancelled again on the same ground.

Pakistan Railways Minister Saad Rafique said the Indian passengers would be send back to their homes by road. "As the Indian authorities again refused to allow the train to their territory again yesterday on the farmers issue we had no other choice but to send them by road at Wagah," according to a Railways spokesman.

He said a total of 86 Indian passengers including 25 women and 10 children were shifted to Wagah from Lahore railway station who crossed the border on foot yesterday. The 100 or so Pakistani passengers have protested the decision and demanded the railways to make arrangements for their travel to India by road as well.

On the other hand, adviser to the prime minister on foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz has expressed concern over the suspension of Samjhauta express train service and asked the Pakistani high commission in New Delhi to help the stranded Pakistani passengers at the Indian railway station.

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