

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 04.08.2011
ANSWERED ON
PASSPORT FOR HAJ APPLICANTS .

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Shri Sabir Ali

Will the Minister of COAL, PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) the arrangements that have been made for issuing passports to the applicants for Haj 2011;
- (b) the period within which these passports are being issued;
- (c) whether it is a fact that touts are operating at each RPO and Police extort money during verification;
- (d) whether it is also a fact that longer time is being taken in issuing passports to Muslims than to others; and
- (e) if so, steps taken to solve these problems?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) All Passport Offices have been instructed to issue full validity passport to Haj pilgrims on priority basis on receipt of clear police verification report (PVR). Where PVR is required, but not received by the requisite deadline, the Passport Issuing Authority is required to issue Haj passport valid for 8 months. The Passport Issuing Authority is, therefore, issuing Haj passport valid for 8 months for Saudi Arabia only, subject to usual checks and formalities and the following:

(i) Haj cover number under seal and stamp of the Chief Executive Officer of Haj Committee/Executive Officer, State Haj Committee is submitted by the applicant, with reference to his pending application,

(ii) Passport Offices (POs) who face a rush of applications from aspiring Haj pilgrims are instructed to open special counters for acceptance of applications in liaison with the State Haj Committee, whose authorised volunteers will be allowed to render assistance in such counters,

(iii) All passport Officers have been specifically instructed to hold passport Adalats as and when required and extend due courtesies to avoid any inconvenience, and

(iv) POs have also been instructed to nominate nodal officers to attend to the cases of Haj applicants who would ensure that passports to Haj pilgrims are issued well before the deadline.

(b) All Haj pilgrims selected by the Haj Committee of India shall be given eight months validity passport irrespective of police verification.

(c) This is a matter of law enforcement and, therefore, outside the purview of this Ministry. However, on behalf of the Ministry of External Affairs, whenever such instances are brought to our notice, we have taken up the matter with Police authorities on an urgent basis.

(d) No Sir.

(e) Does not arise.