

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION  
RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO : 3538  
(TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018)

**Global tender for flying Haj pilgrims**

3538. SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR  
SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Government proposes for global tender from airlines to ferry Haj pilgrims, as Government is extorting double the market rate of air tickets from Haj pilgrims;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons and rationale therefor;
- (c) whether Air India and other airlines are levying GST on air tickets of Haj pilgrims while Ministry of Finance has exempted Haj from GST; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

(Shri Jayant Sinha)

(a) and (b): As per regulations of General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the third party can not participate in the carriage of pilgrims between the two countries. Such traffic is shared equally by the designated or nominated airlines of India and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, Global tender cannot be issued for Haj pilgrimage.

Further, The fares of regular flights between India and Saudi Arabia vary from time to time. These are not comparable to the Haj fares. Haj operation is a specialized operation which requires committed resources in terms of aircraft and crew. While scheduled flights carry passengers to-and-fro in the sector, the chartered flights are not carrying any passengers on the return phase of the operation, thereby necessitating deployment of more number of flights. Since a large number of Haj pilgrims are to be transported to Saudi Arabia and back in a short span of time, which is not possible in regular flights, operation of chartered flights are essential.

(c) and (d): Services on transport of passengers are not exempted from Goods & Service Tax (GST). In Haj operations 2017, participating airlines have made payment of GST to the GST Authorities and upon production of proof of deposit of the GST by airlines, the Government of India has reimbursed the due amount to the airlines.

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