

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.3656
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.03.2018**

**ABOLITION OF POLICY OF PREFERENTIAL SELECTION BY RESERVATION OF HAJ
PILGRIMS**

3656. SHRI MAJEED MEMON:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether new policy announced on 13 November, 2017 contains several changes including cancellation of "Preferential Selection by Reservation" of Haj Pilgrims applying continuously since the last four years and brought them at-par with the freshers;
- (b) if so, whether major cities of Maharashtra like Mumbai, Akola, Bhiwandi, Malegaon, Dhule, etc. are extraordinarily at the looser's end as thousands of pilgrims in Maharashtra alone are bound to suffer from this injustice which is Pro-rich favouring PTOs; and
- (c) the steps Government proposes to save the interest of Financially Backward Pilgrims who wish to go to Haj after saving for "Decades Together?"

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
(SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI)**

- (a) & (b) The Ministry had constituted the Haj Policy Review Committee (HPRC) on 31.01.2017 to review the Haj Policy 2013-17 and to suggest framework for new Haj Policy 2018-22. The Committee submitted its report on 07.10.2017. In the report, the Committee inter alia recommended that the reserved category of applicants viz. 70+ and 4th timers should be abolished. The Ministry examined the recommendation of the Committee taking into consideration the suggestions/ representations received from Haj Committee of India and other stakeholders and it has been decided to retain the reserved category of 70+ pilgrims. For Haj 2018, as recommended by the HPRC, 4th time reserved category has been abolished. As a result of adoption of new formula for distribution of Haj quota among the States/ Union Territories, many of the States have benefitted. The Haj quota of Maharashtra has been increased from 9680 during Haj 2017 to 11527 during Haj 2018.
- (b) To ensure that there is minimum financial burden on Haj pilgrims even after discontinuation of Haj subsidy on air travel of the pilgrims, for Haj 2018 option was given to the pilgrims of specified Embarkation Points (EPs) to opt either for their designated EP or the nearest economical EP on the basis of indicative airfare of Haj 2017.
