

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.224
ANSWERED ON 04.02.2019**

EXPENDITURE ON PILGRIMAGE YATRAS

224. SHRI ARVIND SAWANT:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the expenditure made by the Government in the financial year 2017-18 on activities that were religious in nature such as pilgrimage yatras and melas; and**
- (b) whether the Government plans to invite tenders for airway during Haj, for promotion of competition in order to bring down the air fares, especially after the Supreme Court ruling that directs phasing out of Haj Subsidy by 2022?**

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)

(SHRI K.J. ALPHONS)

(a): During the year 2017-18 an expenditure of Rs.56.71 Crores has been incurred by the Ministry of Minority Affairs for the welfare of Indian Haj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. Further, an expenditure of Rs.210.63 Crores has been incurred by the Ministry of Civil Aviation as subsidy to the airlines for Haj Pilgrims going through Haj Committee of India (HCoI). The Government of India does not extend any direct monetary subsidy to individual pilgrims for the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra. However, Ministry of External Affairs provides assistance, on self-financing basis, to the Yatris undertaking the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra by providing facilities like transportation, accommodation, food, medical tests, guides, etc.

(b): Yes, Madam. The Haj operation is carried out on charter basis through tendering process to invite bids from designated airlines of India and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where all the designated carriers of India & Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may participate. To ensure that there is minimum financial burden on Haj pilgrims even after removal of Haj subsidy on air travel of the pilgrims, choice has been given to the pilgrims to opt either for their designated embarkation point or the nearest economical embarkation point on the basis of actual airfare of previous year.
