

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.2981  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.12.2019**

**HAJ FACILITIES**

**2981. SHRI P.K. KUNHALIKUTTY:**

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of new initiatives taken to ensure proper and adequate facilities to the Haj pilgrims and to mitigate their recurring problems; and
- (b) the steps taken/ being taken to make the system of arranging accommodation for Haj Pilgrims in Saudi Arabia transparent?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) The process for Haj-2020 has been made 100% digital. This includes online application, E-Visa, Haj mobile app, digital pre-tagging of baggages of pilgrims, E-MASISA ( E-Medical Assistance System for Indian Pilgrims Abroad), Portal for Haj Group Organisers (HGOs) with their details and Haj packages.

Government of India takes a number of measures for the welfare of the Indian Haj pilgrims both in India and in Saudi Arabia. The Indian Haj pilgrims are provided all basic facilities and services for their smooth, safe and comfortable Haj experience. Haj Committee of India (HCOI) is empowered to make arrangements for the pilgrims only in India under present norms. Ministry of Civil Aviation makes arrangements of air travel of HCOI pilgrims. It supervises the air charter operations during Haj period from 21 Embarkation Points across India and deploys officials in India and Saudi Arabia for assistance in embarkation and disembarkation of the pilgrims. Consulate General of India (CGI), Jeddah, under the overall supervision of Ambassador of India in Saudi Arabia has the responsibility to make arrangements for accommodation, local transport, etc. for the Indian pilgrims for their stay in Saudi Arabia in coordination with Haj Committee of India and Ministry of Minority Affairs. It also has the responsibility to redress their grievances while they are in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It also provides various medical facilities to the Indian Haj pilgrims for which temporary Haj Medical Mission offices are opened during Haj season. Ministry of Minority Affairs sends government officials including doctors and para medical staff on temporary deputation to Saudi Arabia during Haj Season to assist CGI, Jeddah in the management of Indian pilgrims in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and providing

round-the-clock facilities to them. The new initiatives taken during last three years for ensuring better and adequate facilities for Haj pilgrims are given in Annexure.

- (b) The hiring of accommodation in both Makkah and Madinah is done in a transparent manner. The matter of hiring of accommodations in Saudi Arabia is discussed in the annual inter-ministerial Haj review meeting, in which the accommodation hired during previous Haj is reviewed and broad parameters such as categories of accommodation, upper ceiling of rates of hiring, etc. are fixed for ensuing Haj and mandate is given to CGI, Jeddah for starting the process of hiring of accommodations in Makkah and Madinah as per the decisions taken in the meeting.

For hiring accommodation, CGI, Jeddah issues advertisements well in advance in local newspaper and on their website, inviting landlords of buildings/ hotels or registered companies or building group dealing in renting of accommodation who are interested in renting their buildings/hotels for the Indian pilgrims coming through HCOI. The building hiring norms for accommodation in Makkah is placed on the website of the Consulate and hiring rates are also known to the building owners/companies in advance. Interested Landlords/Companies register their details on Consulate's website. After preliminary assessment of the offers received by a team of CGI Officials, the shortlisted buildings are physically inspected and measured by Building Selection Teams (BST) comprising of officials of State Governments/ State Haj Committees. Those buildings, which are recommended by BSTs are again visited by Building Selection Committees (BSC) comprising of Members of HCOI and CGI Officials, which approves or rejects or grants conditional approval for hiring the buildings. The number of units hired in a particular building is as per the hiring norms. Once, the building is finally approved, details of the building are uploaded on the website of Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. If the building fulfills all local conditions including approval during inspection by Saudi Ministry of Haj Team, payment gateways are opened after a particular time set by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah and all payments are to be mandatorily done exclusively through their website.

For hiring accommodation in Madinah, advertisements are placed in local newspaper as well as Consulate's website. Building Groups which deal with accommodation in Madinah, submit their intent to provide accommodation for the pilgrims. A delegation comprising of Chairman, Members and Chief Executive Officer of HCOI visit Saudi Arabia to discuss and negotiate with the groups who had conveyed their intent. The Delegation decides both the rates of accommodation of different categories as well

as number of accommodation units to be provided by each group. As the negotiation takes place in the open in the presence of all competitors for providing accommodation, the decision making is highly transparent.

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**ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2981 FOR 05.12.2019 RAISED BY SHRI P.K. KUNHALIKUTTY REGARDING HAJ FACILITIES**

**NEW INITIATIVES TAKEN DURING LAST THREE YEARS**

- (i) The Haj Quota of India of 2,00,000 pilgrims for Haj 2019 is the maximum since independence. During 2014, the Haj quota of the country was 1,36,020 pilgrims. There has been an increase of 47% in the Haj quota since Haj 2014 and 14% increase from the previous Haj 2018.
- (ii) New five year policy for Haj Committee of India Pilgrims for Haj 2018-22 and Policy for the Haj Group Organisers for Haj 2019-23 has been formulated and implemented.
- (iii) The Government has allowed Muslim women to go on Haj pilgrimage without "Mehram" (male companion). 1171 women performed Haj without Mehram during Haj 2018, which increased to 2229 pilgrims during Haj 2019.
- (iv) The demand of the smaller states for increasing their quota has been met. A provision has been made in the new Haj policy for allocation of quota to the States, which receive about 500 applications. The special additional quota for the Jammu & Kashmir State has also increased to 2000 pilgrims.
- (v) The reserved category of 70+ pilgrim has been retained and they are allowed with one companion each.
- (vi) In order to minimize financial burden on Haj pilgrims even after removal of Haj subsidy on air travel of the pilgrims, from Haj 2018, pilgrims from specified embarkation points are given choice to opt either for their designated embarkation point or the nearest specified economical embarkation point on the basis of actual airfare of previous year.
- (vii) Kozhikode (Calicut) has been re-started as Embarkation Point for Haj pilgrim from Kerala for Haj 2019. Vijayawada has been started as new Embarkation Point for the pilgrims of Andhra Pradesh from Haj 2020.
- (viii) Online Haj applications through web portal and mobile app were initiated by HCoI and the application process has been made completely online from Haj 2020.
- (ix) Registration process for Haj Group Organisers (HGOs) has been made online. Initiative was taken to increase transparency and competitiveness among HGOs through launching of a new website for Haj packages offered by the HGOs. The website facilitates the people to have a wider choice of HGOs on the basis of services and facilities provided by them.

- (x) During Haj 2019, additional quota of 10,000 pilgrims was allocated to HGOs. These pilgrims were charged by the HGOs as per the applicable rates of HCol.
- (xi) In the new Policy for HGOs for Haj 2019-23, provision has been made for allocation of minimum assured Haj quota to all eligible HGOs doing away with the system of selection by draw of lots.
- (xii) The number of officials including Doctors and para medical staff sent on temporary deputation to Saudi Arabia for Haj duty has been increased from 597 in Haj 2017 to 620 in Haj 2019.
- (xiii) For Haj 2019, arrangements were made for hiring better quality accommodation in Saudi Arabia, hiring of 2018 and latest model of buses for inter-city transportation of pilgrims and Azizia-Haram Sharief transport.
- (xiv) The number of temporary Branch Offices and Dispensaries set up by CGI, Jeddah in Saudi Arabia for the welfare and management of Indian pilgrims has been increased from 13 in Haj 2017 to 16 in Haj 2019. In addition to the dispensaries, three hospitals in Makkah and one main dispensary in Madinah, with diagnostic facilities like ultrasound, ECG, etc., were set up. Mobile medical teams visited High Risk Group (HRG) pilgrims on a daily basis at their accommodation in Makkah and Madinah.
- (xv) E-MASIHA (e-Medical Assistance System to Indian Hajis Abroad), an online system has been used since Haj 2018, to create and maintain comprehensive health database of Indian Hajis and management of medical stock, was used extensively in Haj 2019 for smooth management of medical arrangements.
- (xvi) Mobile SIM cards were distributed to the pilgrims at their respective embarkation points in India before their departure to Saudi Arabia for Haj 2019.

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