

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.4119
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.12.2019**

HAJ QUOTA TO PTOs

4119. SHRI P.K. KUNHALIKUTTY:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Haj quota is being given to Private Tour Operators (PTOs) since last year and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the lobby of PTOs has become too strong to be handled; and
- (c) if so, the steps taken/ being taken to make the working of PTOs transparent and to deter them from indulging in malpractices?

ANSWER

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

- (a) No, Sir. Since 2002, the Private Tour Operators (PTOs) now called Haj Group Organisers (HGOs) are being registered as PTOs/ HGOs and allocated Haj quota by the Government of India as stipulated by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- (b) and (c) No, Sir. The HGOs are registered and allocated Haj quota in a transparent manner under the policy for HGOs framed by the Ministry. Under the current five year policy for HGOs for Haj 2019-23, following major safeguards are provided:
 - (i) The HGOs are registered under three different categories on the basis of their experience in conducting Haj or Umrah pilgrimages. New HGOs applying on the basis of Umrah experience should have five year's experience of conducting Umrah pilgrimage and should also have valid agreement with the licensed Saudi Umrah Operators for the years in which Umrah Pilgrims were facilitated by them.
 - (ii) HGOs are required to submit a security deposit of INR 25 Lakhs, INR 30 Lakhs and INR 35 lakhs as per their category, which is released to them after successful completion of Haj by them and after ensuring that no complaint of pilgrims is pending against them.
 - (iii) HGOs involved in court cases related to heinous crimes and/ or matters related with Haj operations are not considered at all for registration.

- (iv) Selling/ transfer of Haj quota seats to any other HGO is strictly prohibited. In case of receipt of any complaint against any HGO indulging in such activity, the HGO is liable to be blacklisted and its security deposit forfeited.
- (v) HGOs that misrepresent or mislead the authorities in their application and documents are debarred from applying for at least 5 subsequent years besides forfeiture of security deposit.
- (vi) HGOs are required to furnish full information of their pilgrims to the Consulate General of India (CGI), Jeddah and also upload it on the website of CGI www.cgijeddah.com before departure of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. The details of all pilgrims (name, mobile number, e-mail id, passport number, current address of pilgrim, and boarding point for the Saudi Arabia Travel, details of arrangements made in Saudi Arabia, package cost and the agreement signed with the pilgrims) are also uploaded on the Haj Group Organisers Portal of the ministry www.haj.nic.in/pto before their departure to Saudi Arabia.
- (vii) HGOs are required to sign and upload an agreement with each pilgrim indicating the services to be provided to the pilgrim and charges payable.
- (viii) In the last three years, punitive action has been taken against the HGOs for violation/ non compliance of terms and conditions of the HGO Policy including debarment of 3 HGOs for different periods, forfeiture of their security deposits and denial of Haj quota to 8 HGOs.
- (ix) The application for registration of HGOs is received online through HGO portal www.haj.nic.in/pto. Another web portal www.indianhajpto.gov.in has also been launched where different Haj packages and services offered by the HGOs may be searched and compared.
