

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 341
ANSWERED ON 24.07.2024

INDIAN PILGRIMS IN HAJJ 2024

341. SMT. SAJDA AHMED:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the Indian pilgrims who died in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during Hajj 2024 including the reasons for their deaths;
- (b) the details of measures taken by the Hajj Committee of India to provide better facilities for Indian pilgrims in Mecca and Madina; and
- (c) whether the Government is reviewing and improving preparations for future Hajj events to address issues related to climate change and to ensure the well-being of pilgrims?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIREN RIJU)

(a) As of 21st July 2024, 201 Indians pilgrims have died during Hajj pilgrimage 2024 with a majority of them attributed to cardio-respiratory and cardio-pulmonary arrests. It is to further state that more than 70% of the total fatalities have occurred among pilgrims aged 60 and above.

(b) and (c) The Government of India has placed significant emphasis on the successful conduct of Hajj Operations and ensuring the safety and well-being of Indian pilgrims. Government of India is committed to improve the overall Hajj experience of the Indian Hajj Pilgrims. In pursuit of this objective, a number of progressive reforms have been introduced in the last few years, which has led to qualitative improvement in Hajj experience.

In Hajj-2024, the number of Khadim-ul-Hujjaj (KuH) deployed by Hajj Committee of India sent to assist the pilgrims has been increased to 641 which is more than double the previous year. Even the number of temporary deputationists (administrative and medical) deployed by Government of India for Hajj management and administration was increased to 620 in Hajj-2024 from 461 during Hajj-2023.

Special provisions were made for the 4,558 ladies who travelled to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), by providing them dedicated buildings for accommodation as well as dedicated medical services.

In order to cope with inclement and adverse climatic conditions of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, specific interventions have been introduced. At Makkah, 3 medical centres with a capacity of 100 beds were operationalised along with 14 medical dispensaries, a Command Control Centre, 20 Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances and a 24 hour helpline were made available 24 X 7, during the entire Hajj period. At Madinah, a 20 bedded medical centre was

established along with 2 dispensaries, supported by a Control Command Centre, 4 Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances and a 24 hour helpline. A medical dispensary and helpline was also operationalised at Jeddah Haj Terminal to cater to the pilgrims' healthcare requirements at the time of arrival/departure. For the first time, emergency teams were deployed at Haramain High-Speed Railway stations, providing on-ground medical assistance. A dedicated task force consisting of six teams, provided medical aid during Friday prayers at the Holy Mosque. All the dedicated helplines were integrated with the Haj Suvidha App to receive Emergency/SOS medical calls.

The Haj Suvidha App was launched during Haj-2024 with the objective of leveraging Information Technology towards providing greater ease and convenience to the Indian Haj pilgrims by facilitating access to training content, accommodation/flight/baggage details, emergency helpline (SOS), grievance redressal, feedback, language translation and miscellaneous information related to the pilgrimage. The App also provided for an administrative interface for the Government of India in order to ensure prompt grievance redressal. With the help of the App, various instances of medical emergencies, missing pilgrims, grievances & SOS messages have been handled thereby saving precious lives. Further, the number of missing baggage cases have reduced drastically due to the App.

For the Indian pilgrims, satisfactory arrangements were made for hassle-free reception at airports in Jeddah & Madinah, comfortable stay in good accommodation at Makkah & Madinah, and transportation using comfortable buses. Arrangements in Mashaer area during core- Haj period included stay, meals and transportation. 486 buildings were hired in Makkah for accommodation and round the clock transport services through buses was provided to Indian Haj pilgrims from their accommodation in Makkah to Haram Sharif. India was the only country which provided round the clock bus services within Makkah as other. In Madinah, 95% of accommodation for Indian pilgrims was in Markazia area, i.e. the area preferred due to its proximity to holy cites.

For the first time, 33,169 Haj Pilgrims landing at Jeddah proceeded to Makkah by High Speed train thereby reducing the time of travel by 3hrs.

Government of India continues to review and improve facilities promoting ease and convenience to the Indian pilgrims, based on the feedback/ experience from previous Haj and inputs from different stakeholders. The ambit of review and reform includes every aspect of Haj management, including issues related to climate change and to ensure the overall well-being of the pilgrims.
