

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-953**  
ANSWERED ON 08.02.2024

**HAJ PILGRIMS**

953. SHRI Y.S. AVINASH REDDY:  
SHRI MANNE SRINIVAS REDDY:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a delegation visited the city of Madinah and other countries/towns and interacted with the officials of Saudi Arabia and also with Indian volunteers who provided services to Haj Pilgrims and Umrah Pilgrims of India and sought their suggestions to ensure that arrangements are made for Haj 2024 in a manner that it would be a comfortable experience for Indian Pilgrims;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the progress made in this regard, country-wise since 2014 onwards to till date; and
- (c) the issues resolved/pending in this respect till date?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS  
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (c): An inter-ministerial delegation, led by the Minister of Minority Affairs, visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for signing of bilateral agreement with Minister of Hajj and Umrah, KSA. A total quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims from India has been finalised for Haj 2024 with 1,40,020 seats being reserved for pilgrims to proceed through Haj Committee of India which will greatly benefit the common first time pilgrims intending to undertake the Haj pilgrimage in 2024 whereas 35,005 pilgrims would be permitted to proceed through Haj Group Organisers.

During the bilateral meeting with the Minister of Hajj and Umrah, KSA, the digital initiatives of the Government of India in facilitating and promoting ease and convenience for the Indian Haj pilgrims by providing last mile information to the pilgrims were greatly appreciated by KSA and KSA offered to extend all possible help in this regard. The initiative of the Government of India towards encouraging participation under the Ladies without Mehram (LWM) category was discussed, deeply appreciated and lauded.

The delegation visited the Haj Terminal at Jeddah, to oversee the arrangements for Haj pilgrims and explore ways to facilitate better logistics and monitoring mechanism for the convenience of the Indian Haj pilgrims.

The delegation visited the perimeters of the Prophet's Mosque (Al Masjid Al Nabwi) in the Markazia area of Madinah, the mountain of Uhud and the Quba Mosque. During the visit to Madinah, the delegation also took an overview of the accommodation available at Madinah for the pilgrims. The delegation interacted with Indian volunteers who provide dedicated and selfless service to Indian Haj pilgrims, including during Haj 2023 and also interacted with Umrah pilgrims from India. The visit to Madinah helped provide a firsthand insight into the arrangements required to be made for ensuring a comfortable Haj 2024 for the Indian pilgrims. The scope for digital initiatives for seamless delivery of services including grievance redressal and setting up and enhancement of robust and reliable medical facilities for the pilgrims were discussed.

The Minister led delegation attended the inaugural session of the Hajj and Umrah Conference and Exhibition at Jeddah. This global conference included sessions, workshops, and training seminars by key decision makers, experts, academics and researchers. The event was attended by ministers and officials from diverse locations worldwide, along with the presence of over 200 entities representing both private and public entities engaged in the Haj and Umrah sector. This provided valuable insights on the best practices globally, and facilitated exchange of ideas and information, which would prove useful in improving the Haj experience for the Indian pilgrims. On the sidelines of the Conference, there was a meeting with the Deputy Governor of Makkah Region in which there was discussion on scope for further close cooperation for improving facilities and services for Indian pilgrims during the Haj pilgrimage at Makkah.

India and KSA share warm and cordial ties and the special gesture of the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, KSA in facilitating the visit of the Indian delegation to Madinah is deeply appreciated. The visit would go a long way in providing better services to the Haj pilgrims and improving people to people contact with the Saudis.

The Government of India is sensitive and cognizant of the best interests of the pilgrims and is deeply committed to provide better facilities and services to Indian Muslims who undertake the Haj pilgrimage, thereby providing them with a comfortable and fulfilling Haj experience.

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