

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1212
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2006
ASSISTANCE FOR PILGRIMAGE ABROAD
Athawale Shri Ramdas

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of pilgrims who undertook Haj and Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage during the last three years, year-wise;
- (b) the criteria laid down for selection of religious places as pilgrim centre abroad; and
- (c) the extent of assistance provided to the pilgrims during the above period?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) Year-wise figures of number of pilgrims who undertook Haj pilgrimage through the Haj Committee of India, and through Private Tour Operators and the number of pilgrims who performed Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage during the last three years is as under.

Year	Pilgrims through Haj Committee of India Mansarovar pilgrimage	Number of Pilgrims who performed Kailash
2004	71,707	537
2005	80,772	529
2006	99,660	592

In addition the pilgrims have also performed Haj pilgrimage through Private Tour Operators whose quota was 45,000 and 47,000 during the last two years respectively.

(b) There are no criteria prescribed by Government for selection of religious places for Pilgrimage abroad.

(c) The Government provides facilities and assistance to the Haj pilgrims which include making arrangements for transportation and accommodation in Saudi Arabia, reception at embarkation points, setting up of dispensaries and medical units in Saudi Arabia, supply of medicines, temporary deputation of medical, para-medical and administrative staff. The Consulate General of India in Jeddah also renders assistance in making various logistical arrangements for the pilgrims performing Haj. Government of India provides assistance to the pilgrims going for Kailash and Mansarovar also. A sum of Rs. 3250/- for each pilgrim is paid to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam, the agency on the Indian side authorized for making logistical arrangements for the pilgrims. This is to partially offset the expenditure incurred by Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam. In addition, the facilities include free medical assistance, security and escort cover by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) till the Lipulekh pass on the Indian side and communication links with China and provision of satellite phone to the liaison officer for each batch of pilgrims through-out the pilgrimage. A liaison officer is attached by the Government of India with each batch of pilgrims who is responsible for their general welfare.