

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CIVIL AVIATION  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4371  
ANSWERED ON:24.04.2008  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR HAJIS  
Azmi Shri Ilyas

**Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government is aware that Air India left thousands of Hajis stranded at Jeddah Airport for upto one week this year at the time of their return;
- (b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the luggage of the Hajis reached to them late and Jamjam of most of the Hajis is still awaited;
- (d) if so, the reasons and the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to float an international tender for selecting a company to make travel arrangements for the Hajis; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION( SHRI PRAFUL PATEL )

(a) and (b): A number of flights were delayed during the return phase of Haj 2007 due to reasons such as demolition of remote check in area at the Haj terminal; in Jeddah airport, availability of only 4 check-in counters in place of 16; non availability of aircraft bays for immigration/security/ boarding of passengers on immediate basis; disruption caused by 4 Hajis (carrying over 100 kgs excess baggage) on the first Lucknow flight on 25.12.2007, which delayed the flight by 10 hrs and consequently delaying the subsequent schedule etc.

(c) and (d): Air India allows 20 to 30 kgs of free baggage allowance to its international passengers. However, Hajis are allowed 45 kgs of free baggage and 10 kgs of Zam Zam water, but many Hajis carry baggage in excess of the free baggage allowance on extra payment basis. Besides this, the hand baggage being carried by the pilgrims exceeds the 10 kgs allowed. This is a safety hazard and excess hand baggage has to be retrieved and transferred to the baggage hold. As the payload of 767 and 737 aircraft do not permit carriage of such large volume of baggage, Air India was left with no option but to leave the baggage in order to accommodate the stranded passengers. The left behind baggage was afterwards transported by special freighter flights. So far as Zam Zam water is concerned, this year the problem arose as the supplier of Saudi Airlines refused the supply and even created problems for Air India's supplier. The problem was however resolved with the intervention of CGI and Indian Mission at Jeddah. Except for few misplaced baggage, all the left behind baggage and Zam Zam water has been entrusted to the respective State Haj Committees.

(e) & (f): International tender is floated by Air India for leasing additional capacity for transportation of Haj pilgrims.