

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3496
ANSWERED ON:24.08.2011
ADDITIONAL HAJ VISA
Raghavan Shri M. K.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the status of obtaining additional Haj Visa for the country from Saudi Arabia; and
- (b) the actions initiated to ensure safety and medical assistance to senior citizens who are over 70 years while performing Haj?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) The Government of India has requested the Saudi authorities for an additional quota for Haj – 2011. The response from the Saudi Authorities is awaited.

(b) The Government of India makes exhaustive arrangements to ensure safety of all Hajjis and provides extensive medical facilities to them. These include 12 Branch Offices in different parts of Makkah and 4 Branch Offices in different parts of Madinah to assist and serve Indian pilgrims facing problems. 24X7 Helpline is operated by the Consulate for addressing problems of the Hajjis. One 50-bedded hospital, 17 branch dispensaries and temporary dispensaries function in Makkah, Madinah and Jeddah Haj terminal during Haj season to attend medical problems of Indian Haj Pilgrims. Temporary dispensaries are also operated at Mina & Arafat during the Haj Week in the Embassy camps. Doctors and Paramedics are sent on short term deputation to man these hospitals and dispensaries. Medicines are supplied from India for these hospitals and dispensaries. In addition, our Consulate in Jeddah also operates mobile hospitals and ambulances for the Indian Hajjis.