

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1125
ANSWERED ON:25.11.2009
INDIAN HAJ PILGRIMS
Deora Shri Milind Murli

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of Indian Haj Pilgrims during the last three years, year-wise;
- (b) the details of the facilities being provided by the Central Government to Hajjis;
- (c) whether as a result of Saudi Arabian Government's decision for having a compulsory international passport during Haj there will be a drastic reduction in the number of Indian Pilgrims going for Haj;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (DR. SHASHI THAROOR)

- (a) The total number of Haj pilgrims who proceeded on Haj during last three years through Haj Committee of India are as under:

2006-II 2007 2008

1,55,723 1,57,415 1,66,993

(b) The Government of India makes arrangements to facilitate the transportation of the pilgrims going to Saudi Arabia through the Haj Committee of India and facilitates provision of accommodation and other logistical support for them. For efficient management and supervision of Haj arrangements, a large contingent of seasonal local staff, supervisors, data entry operators, drivers and messengers are appointed by the Consulate General of India, Jeddah. In addition, Doctors, Nurses and other para-medical staff, Coordinators, Assistant Haj Officers, Haj Assistants and Khadimul Hujjaj are sent from India on Short-term deputation to Saudi Arabia. A hospital in Makkah and Branch offices -cum- dispensaries in Makkah and Madina are set up for Haj pilgrims. Medicines provided at these dispensaries and hospitals are supplied from India and also procured locally. The Government is also making arrangements for providing polio, meningitis and influenza vaccinations for the pilgrims. The Haj Committee of India is providing to the pilgrims information regarding confirmation of their seats, travel documents, transportation, accommodation, release of foreign exchange, embarkation points and departure dates etc. The Government has taken a number of decisions to streamline the functioning of Private Tour Operators so that they provide proper services and facilities for the pilgrims. For Haj-2009, two embarkation points viz Mangalore and Ranchi have been added to the already existing 17 embarkation points spread across the country.

- (c) No.
- (d) & (e) Does not arise.