

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:947

ANSWERED ON:25.11.2009

REDUCTION IN PERSONAL EXPENSES OF PILGRIMS HAJ

Joshi Shri Mahesh;Kumar Shri Shailendra

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the personal expenses of Haj Pilgrims granted by the Government have been reduced;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to meet the situation arising out of huge number of applications being received for Haj pilgrims?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b) Expenditure on Haj depends on extraneous factors like rental of accommodation, exchange rate of foreign currency, excess baggage carried by the pilgrims and other miscellaneous expenses. This year, the Government has taken a decision to increase the pilgrims' share of airfare from Rs. 12000/- to Rs. 16000/-.

(c) The pilgrims are selected through a transparent computerized qurrah (lots) since the number of applications is significantly higher than the Haj quota allotted to India. The Haj quota is allotted by the Saudi Government on the basis of the size of the Muslim population of each country. Requests to increase the number of places available to Indian pilgrims have been made to Saudi authorities each year, and some additional seats have been provided.