

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3787
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2013
HAJ REFORMS
Barq Shri Shafiqur Rahman;Bhujbal Shri Sameer

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Indian Haj Committee has introduced an array of reforms in connection with Haj;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the schemes formulated by the Government to make Haj Pilgrimage more transparent, smooth and flexible?

Answer

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

(a) Yes.

(b) As per directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, an affidavit was filed in the Supreme Court on April 12, 2012 wherein it was stated that the number of pilgrimages to a Haj applicant through the Haj Committee of India (HCOI) be restricted to "once in a life time" as against the existing "once in five years" . This will ensure that applicants who have never performed Haj will get the benefit of performing Haj through HCOI. This clause has been introduced from Haj-2013. Secondly, all applicants have been asked to enclose a copy of a cancelled cheque along with the Haj Application Form to ensure faster issue of refunds, if any, to the designated bank account of the applicant during Haj-2013.

(c) It is the constant endeavour of the Government to conduct the Haj operations in an efficient and transparent manner. Improvements are incorporated on the basis of experience acquired in successive Haj operations with a view to provide the pilgrims with better services in each ensuing Haj pilgrimage.