

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:315

ANSWERED ON:18.03.2015

HAJ QUOTA

Karra Shri Tariq Hameed;Mufti Smt. Mehbooba

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the norms laid down for allocation of Haj quota to various States;
- (b) whether there is persistent demand for increase in Haj quota for the States, including Jammu and Kashmir; and
- (c) if so, the details in this regard along with the response of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 315 REGARDING "HAJ QUOTA" FOR ANSWER ON 18.03.2015

(a) The quota of Haj Committee of India is fixed in terms of Bilateral Agreement between Government of India and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia every year. The quota for Haj pilgrims from India is decided by the Government of Saudi Arabia on the basis of 1000 pilgrims for every million of the Muslim population. The Saudi Arabia Government has granted a total quota of 1,36,020 for Haj-2015, which has been distributed as follows: 1,00,020 seats for Haj Committee of India and 36,000 seats for Private Tour Operators (PTOs). The Haj Committee of India distributes seats among 35 States/Union Territories in proportion to their Muslim population, as per 2001 Census. In addition, seats are separately allocated by the Ministry of External Affairs to the States of Jammu and Kashmir (1500 seats), Union Territory of Lakshadweep (250 seats) and other smaller States/UTs for excess applications against their allocated quota (500 seats).

If the number of Haj Application Forms received by a State Haj Committee is less than the quota allotted to the State/Union Territory concerned, such excess quota stands surrendered to Haj Committee of India (such States are referred as under-quota States.) The surrendered seats are redistributed among the States/Union Territories where the numbers of applications are received in excess of their allocated quota in proportion to their Muslim population as per 2001 Census. Any seats becoming available due to cancellation in under-quota states are again redistributed in proportion to Muslim population as per Census 2001.

(b) In the last few years, there has been a steady increase in the number of applications received by Haj Committee of India from all over India. For Haj 2015, approximately 3,83,000 applications have been received against the quota of 1,00,020. Formal requests regarding increase in quota have been received from some States, such as Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

(c) Government of India's effort has been to obtain an overall increase in the allocation of quota for India. However, since 2013, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia decided that there would be an overall 20% reduction of quota for pilgrims from foreign countries, including from India and 50% reduction for Saudi nationals, due to the ongoing renovation around Haram Sharif in Makkah. This renovation is expected to be completed by 2015 and there is high probability that the quota for India would be restored from 2016.

During Haj 2014, External Affairs Minister had written to Minister of Haj in Saudi Arabia to allot additional quota of 10,000 seats for Haj 2014. However, this was not agreed to by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as no exceptions are made for any country. During Annual Haj Meeting for 2015 held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on 3 February 2015, Minister of State for External Affairs, requested the Minister of Haj in Saudi Arabia to increase Haj quota for India from 1,36,020 to 1,41,890 according to the latest estimates for Muslim population in India. However, the Saudi Government has conveyed that due to Haram Sharif expansion project, they would not be able to increase the quota for any country for Haj 2015. As and when the quota allocated by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India is increased, the same would be passed on to the States according to existing norms.