

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5043
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2014
HAJ QUOTA
Wanaga Shri Chintaman Navsha

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has approached Saudi Arabia for augmenting the Haj Quota and if so, the response of Saudi Arabia thereto; and

(b) the details of expenditure incurred on Haj during the last three years, year-wise?

Answer

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

(a) Yes, the Government has approached the Government of Saudi Arabia for augmenting the annual Haj quota for India. The Government of Saudi Arabia has conveyed its inability to accede to our request due to lack of capacity of Mataaf (circumambulation area) during the implementation of the ongoing expansion projects in the Holy Mosque and the Holy Shrines.

Since Haj 2013, the Saudi Government has reduced the overall Haj quota for pilgrims from foreign countries, including from India, by 20% and for domestic pilgrims by 50% due to the ongoing Mataaf expansion project.

(b) The expenses incurred for various facilities provided to the Haj pilgrims by the Haj Committee of India are borne by the Hajis themselves. The Government does not provide any financial aid/grant directly to the pilgrims.

However, subsidy is provided on Haj air travel. Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, vide order of 8 May 2012, has directed the Government to progressively reduce the amount of subsidy on air tickets so as to completely eliminate it within a period of ten years. As per this directive, the Government has been reducing the Haj subsidy in a phased manner.

The air travel subsidy for the past three years is as follows:

2011 Haj-Rs 685 Crores
2012 Haj-Rs 836.56 Crores
2013 Haj-Rs 680.03 Crores

In addition, the Government of India allocates funds to the Consulate General of India in Jeddah to tie up the administrative and logistics arrangements required for the annual Haj exercise.

During the past three years, the budget allocated for Haj-related expenditure to the Consulate in Jeddah is as follows:

2011-12 - Rs 33.8 Crores
2012-13 - Rs 39.4 Crores
2013-14 - Rs 44.8 Crores