

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3826
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2014
SUBSIDY FOR PILGRIMAGES ABROAD
Mishra Shri Bhairon Prasad

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is providing/proposes to provide subsidy/assistance and other facilities for pilgrimage to holy places abroad on the lines of subsidy being provided to Haj pilgrims;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

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

(a) to (c) The Government of India conducts the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra between June and September each year under a bilateral agreement with the People's Republic of China. At present, the Yatra is organized in 18 batches of a maximum of 60 yatris each, through the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited, which, on self-payment basis, provides transport, accommodation and food to the Yatris on the Indian side of the Yatra route; and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the State Government of Uttarakhand, which provide security cover and basic medical assistance to Yatris on the Indian side.

Ministry of External Affairs appoints one Liaison Officer for each batch who is responsible for the safety and well-being of pilgrims. The Liaison Officer is provided with a satellite phone to stay in touch with Indian authorities concerned and to seek assistance in case of any emergency. A provision of air-lift of pilgrims by helicopter is also made for medical emergency.

No individual specific subsidy is provided. Each year, Ministry of External Affairs allocates sufficient funds for the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra and on continuing basis improves facilities en route. The expenditure incurred on the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra by the Government of India in 2013 was Rs.65.00 Lakh.