

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Nobody is allowed, sit down now.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Naik, why can't you sit properly? You are unnecessarily creating trouble.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have told him not to do it. Now, you are starting it again.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Look here, I have told you time and again that no State matters should be raised in this House. It is unconstitutional. I cannot and I shall not allow it whether it is Tamil Nadu, West Bengal or Gujarat or whatever it is.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: We are discussing the Centre-State relations. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Doesn't matter. Sit down. You are unnecessarily creating trouble.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have told you that nothing can be discussed, nothing goes on record. Dr. Kalanidhi, why can't you sit down? You are unnecessarily creating trouble. I will name you if you don't sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Bhagat-ji, what is this going on? Why can't these Members behave properly?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Unnecessarily, without rhyme or reason they are doing it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Kalanidhi, please sit down. Otherwise. I will name you.

12.16 hrs.

STATEMENT *RE* IMPLEMENTATION OF
SCHEME FOR PRE-ARRANGED
ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HAJ
PILGRIMS AT MECCA AND MADINA

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (PROF. K.K. TEWARI): Sir, twelve years ago the Saudi Government introduced the Scheme of Pre-arranged Accommodation for Haj pilgrims at Makkah and Madinah. The Scheme provides for advance renting of accommodation at Makkah and Madinah for Haj pilgrims of a particular country through negotiations with concerned Saudi Haj authorities. A number of countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, etc. have adopted this Scheme for their pilgrims. Some years ago the Central Haj Committee sought to introduce this Scheme on a voluntary basis for a limited number of Indian Hajis. The response was unsatisfactory and the Scheme was abandoned in the following year despite insistence by the Saudi authorities on its implementation. In 1988 in view of the Saudi Government's insistence the Central Haj Committee implemented the Scheme at Makkah for a limited number of 10,000 Hajis for Haj 1988. Unfortunately, for various reasons including lack of experience on the part of the Central Haj Committee the Scheme could not be implemented efficiently resulting in some inconvenience and hardship to Indian Hajis. The reasons for the failure of this effort have been identified.

For Haj 1989 the Saudi Haj Minister categorically told our Ambassador that the Scheme should be implemented for all Indian Hajis sponsored by the Central Haj Committee as is done by virtually all other countries. According to Saudi regulations

[Prof. K.K. Tewari]

exemption from the Scheme could be granted only to those pilgrims who intend to stay with their blood relations or who have confirmed accommodation with recognised Rubats. Faced with the Saudi insistence and our inability to obtain exemption from the Scheme for our Hajis Government decided to implement the Scheme for Haj 1989 and accordingly the Central Haj Committee advertised the Scheme in the Annual Haj Announcement 1989.

In view of a large number of representations received by Government from intending Hajis and eminent Muslim leaders and personalities against adopting the Scheme, the question of exempting Indian Hajis from the Scheme for Haj 1989 was once again raised with the Saudi authorities through diplomatic channels. The Saudi authorities did not relent. In view of the ensuing contradictory press reports and strong public feeling against the Scheme. I was deputed to lead a delegation to Saudi Arabia which included Shri Ibrahim Sulaimen Sait, M.P., Maulana Asad Madani, M.P., Shri Saeedul Hasan, Minister of Labour of Government of Uttar Pradesh and Shri A.S. Gonsalves, Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, to hold discussions with the Saudi Haj and Auqaf Minister with a view to explaining difficulties anticipated as a result of implementation of the Pre-arranged Accommodation Scheme.

12.18 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

<i>Category</i>	<i>Distance from Holy Kaaba</i>	<i>Rent originally demanded</i>	<i>Rent now reduced to</i>
Type 'A'	400-700 metres	SR. 1200/-	SR. 1150/-
Type 'B'	Within 1 Km.	SR. 1000/-	SR. 900/-

A delegation consisting of the representatives of the Central Haj Committee and the State Haj Committees of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka,

From the discussions of clearly emerged that the Scheme was applicable to pilgrims from all countries and an exception could not be made in the case of Indian Hajis. The delegation was also given to understand that the purpose of the Scheme was to ensure the comfort and welfare of the pilgrims. For tens of thousands of pilgrims who come to Makkah during the Haj season each day it was virtually impossible to find suitable accommodation on arrival. Many pilgrims therefore suffered exploitation and discomfort. The Pre-arranged Accommodation Scheme is intended to obviate all these difficulties. The delegation was also informed by the Saudi authorities that rents for buildings in Makkah and Madinah are not controlled by the Saudi Government and are fixed between the landlords and the Moassassa through negotiations. After selecting various buildings the Moassassa grades them and fixes broad rental levels and then offers them to the authorised delegations from various countries. The rentals are applied uniformly and the Indian Hajis have to pay the same rents as Hajis from other countries for comparable accommodation. All members of the delegation were satisfied that the Saudi authorities would insist on implementation of the Pre-Arranged Accommodation Scheme and that it could actually improve the lot of our Hajis.

I am pleased to inform the House that consequent upon discussion held by my delegation with the Saudi Minister at Riyadh on March 4, 1989 the concerned Saudi authority had offered to reduce rents for the two types of accommodation at Makkah as per the following details:-

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal is at present in Saudi Arabia and has negotiated and signed an agreement on March 25, 1989 with the Saudi Moassassa to

rent 22,000 units of accommodation at Makkah as per the reduced rates mentioned above. The delegation will now inspect and select buildings available for renting at Makkah and Madinah.

We are deeply conscious of our responsibility to look after the comfort and welfare of our pilgrims, many of whom are old and weak and need care and assistance. It is our objective that the pilgrims should live in suitable accommodation arranged for them in advance to eliminate confusion and hardship. This year not only will the accommodation be pre-arranged but it is also our intention to ensure allotment of accommodation in a scientific and rational manner through computerised information. Every Haji on completion of his immigration and customs formalities after arrival will be promptly guided to his place of residence with the help of reservation charts. Computerisation of information will also be of invaluable help in the matter of helping lost Hajis.

We are confident that the Pre-arranged Accommodation Scheme will add greatly to the comfort and well-being of our pilgrims. The Government has also sanctioned additional seasonal staff for the Consulate General, Jeddah, to ensure proper implementation of the scheme. Another significant step taken by the Government for the welfare of the pilgrims is the establishment of a ten-bed hospital in Makkah during the forthcoming Haj. This would facilitate treatment of many cases of illness which are too serious for our Medical Mission but not serious enough for the Saudi medical authorities to admit in their hospitals. An additional ambulance is also being supplied, the quantity of medicines augmented and the strength of the Medical Mission increased.

For the long-term welfare of our pilgrims, we also propose to locate a Rubat Officer at the Consulate-General of India at Jeddah to go into the question of retrieval of Rubats. As Hon'ble Members are aware, Indians had established endowments both in Makkah and Madinah which were of invaluable help to the pilgrims. Once the Rubat

Officer completes collection of legal documents concerning these Rubats, the task of obtaining compensation for Rubats since acquired by the Saudi Government could commence. As per Saudi regulations the compensation can be used only for establishing new Rubats where our pilgrims can stay free of cost in future.

I trust Hon'ble Members will agree that Government have taken due care to ensure that our pilgrims performing Haj this year can look forward to orderly arrangements for their stay in Saudi Arabia which will not only ensure their comfort and welfare but also ensure that they are not exploited by unscrupulous landlords. I should like to inform the House in conclusion that despite acute financial constraints Government have agreed to raise the quota of Haj pilgrims who would be provided with foreign exchange for their travel from 23,000 to 24,000 this year.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla): Sir, I welcome the hon. Minister's statement, I congratulate him. It is a comprehensive statement but I would like to seek a clarification...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. No. Now, matters under Rule 377. Except that nothing goes on record.
(Interruptions)*

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: Sir, I have given a notice.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will look into that.

12.26 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

- (1) Demand for reviewing the decision to set up the head-quarter of General Manager, Western Coal fields of Wani area at village Tadall in Chandrapur district, in place of Wani itself

SHRI UTTAMRAO PATEL (Yavatmal): In reply to my Unstarred Question, it was stated that the decision regarding location of the headquarters of the General Manager of Western Coal fields, Wani will be taken by the Company in due course. Now it is understood that the Government and the company