

Subsidy on Haj pilgrimage

†2921. SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the year since when the subsidy on Haj has been started;
- (b) the details of the number of Haj pilgrims and the per capita subsidy given to them during last five years, State-wise;
- (c) whether subsidy is also given to the followers of other religions on their pilgrimage to sites situated abroad; and
- (d) if so, the details of the subsidy given during last five years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) Subsidy is being made available since 1991.

(b) The details are as follows for the pilgrims who traveled through Haj Committee of India and for whom subsidy was given. Subsidy is not given State-wise:—

| Haj Year | No. of pilgrims traveled | Subsidy per pilgrim (Rs.) |
|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2005 | 80786 | 24,844 |
| 2006-I | 99676 | 29,176 |
| 2006-II | 108518 | 35,495 |
| 2007 | 110000 | 35,838 |
| 2008 | 121695 | 60,876 (Provisional) |

(c) and (d) Government pays Rs. 3250 per pilgrim to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam for making some additional logistical arrangements for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

Fishermen captured by Sri Lanka

2922. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether hundreds of fishermen from Tamil Nadu and their fishing boats were captured by Sri Lankan security forces during the last three years and the current year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including fishermen and their boats, year-wise;
- (c) the number of fishermen released by Sri Lankan Army during the said period; and
- (d) the steps taken by Government for the release of remaining fishermen from Sri Lankan Army?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) As per available information, following are the year-wise details of Indian fishing vessels and fishermen apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy: in 2006, 5 boats and 19 fishermen apprehended; in 2007,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

19 boats and 107 fishermen apprehended; in 2008, 334 boats and 1456 fishermen apprehended; and in 2009, 21 boats and 85 fishermen apprehended up till 10th July.

- (c) All the fishermen have been released by Sri Lankan authorities.
- (d) Does not arise.

Sub-committee for Haj

2923. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that a sub-committee is formed to look after the arrangements of Hajis at Jeddah;
- (b) the composition of such sub-committee;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that in addition to such Committee another delegation is also sent to supervise the arrangement for pilgrims during annual Haj;
- (d) the number of delegates sent in such annual delegation for the last five years; and
- (e) the rationale of sending such a delegation despite the existence of a sub-committee in Central Haj Committee?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) No.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) and (d) A three member delegation including Chairman of the Haj Committee of India visit Saudi Arabia each year during Haj pilgrimage. Last year, Chairman could not go during Haj.

(e) Not applicable.

Problems of Hajis

2924. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Hajis undertaking the pilgrimage through Central Haj Committee have been complaining about the erratic schedules of the Air India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Haj Committee has taken up the issue with the Air Lines; and
- (d) if so, the details of arrangements made to remove the difficulties?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (d) There have been some complaints regarding delay in Air India flights which was raised with Air India and Ministry of Civil Aviation. The delays happened due to airport congestion, delay in allotting the parking bay at Jeddah and inordinate delays at immigration counters.