

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.