

State for External Affairs in August, 2003 and a core-group headed by the Additional Secretary (Administration) in the Ministry of External Affairs in September, 2003 to look into this matter and take necessary measures. As a step in this direction, an Advocacy Paper to present the Indian case with regard to introducing Hindi in the UN has been prepared. However, this has financial, procedural as well as legal implications. The procedure for getting any language recognised as one of the Official Languages of the UN involves obtaining approval of the General Assembly to amend Rule-51 of the Rules of Procedure. Such a proposal has to be approved by more than half of the members of the General Assembly where every member-State has a vote. At present the proposal would require approval of 96 member States given the current membership of 192. In addition, recognising any language as the official language of the UN entails a substantial increase in the expenditure of the UN necessitating an enhanced contribution by every member country, which is why most of the members remain reluctant to support such a proposal.

A formal proposal has yet to be made to the United Nations.

However, the Government of India has always attempted to promote the use of Hindi in the UN. On several occasions Indian leaders have delivered statements at the UN in Hindi. Necessary arrangements were made for simultaneous interpretation of these statements in English by the Permanent Mission of India in New York.

Government of India's sustained efforts have also ensured that United Nations offers its programmes on UN Radio Website in Hindi Language too.

Lack of enquiry and response system in Haj Committee

918. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no proper enquiry and response system in the Central Haj Committee and State Haj Committees;

(b) whether most of the selected applicants for Haj 2006-II were not properly intimated in time and their queries on websites and phones were not entertained;

(c) whether it is a fact that their interactive websites were not updated and made functional in time;

(d) whether Government are aware that Haj pilgrims are facing lot of difficulties due to incooperative attitude of Central Haj Committee, State Haj Committees and the CGI, Jeddah; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken to solve these problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) An enquiry Cell is available in the office of Haj Committee of India, Mumbai. It has six telephone lines in addition to the facility of Website www.hajcommittee.com which provides information regarding allotment of flights including other general information. In addition, an Inter-active Voice Response System (I.V.R.S.) is also functional which provides information pertaining to the allotment of flights.

(b) The information regarding selected applicants is disseminated by various State Haj Committees—some of them give information in writing; others display the list of selected applicants in their office. Lists of selected applicants are given to various Social Workers Groups in some States.

(c) The website and the Inter-active Voice Response System (I.V.R.S.) are updated within 48 hours after receipt of allotment of seats from Consulate General of India in Jeddah, which is the time taken for reconciliation of data.

(d) Consulate General of India, Jeddah, Haj Committee of India and State Haj Committees are under instructions to extend all possible assistance to pilgrims and have a cooperative and helpful attitude. The attitude of the Haj Committee of India and Consulate General of India, Jeddah has been co-operative and helpful. The Ministry takes steps in this regard as and when it is necessary.

(e) The following new steps have been taken by the Haj Committee of India:

- (i) A system of Current Booking Counters at embarkation points has been introduced for effecting any changes in allotment.
- (ii) The receipt of drafts from the Pilgrims has been computerized from the current year.

- (iii) The Consulate General of India, Jeddah has made necessary logistical arrangements for reception, transportation and accommodation of the pilgrims. Consulate General of India, Jeddah provides all pertinent information to the pilgrims and their relatives and the website of the Consulate General of India, Jeddah is interactive and user-friendly.

-Visit of Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister

919. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister visited India in September, 2006 and held talks with Indian leaders on the need to accelerate the implementation of on-going cooperations projects between two countries in the energy and transport infrastructure areas;

(b) whether the Prime Minister of India also subsequently urged upon the Iranian President telephonically to honour Teheran's commitment to sell LNG to India; and

(c) if so, what were the details of discussion/outcome of talks held between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes.

(b) No.

(c) The discussions covered bilateral and regional issues and focussed in particular on the nuclear issue and cooperation in the energy sector. On the nuclear issue Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister explained his Government's response to the P5+1 package. He emphasised that Iran was open to negotiations and was willing to cooperate fully with IAEA but would insist on its rights under the NPT and on the issue being reverted to the IAEA. On cooperation in the energy sector India emphasised the importance of Iran honouring the LNG deal signed in June 2005. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the gas pipeline project.