

### **Formation of Haj Corporation**

2962. SHRI AHMAD SAEED MALIHABADI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has any concrete plan to remove hardship of Haj pilgrims from India with regard to air lifting and arrangements of accommodation in Saudi Arabia;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there is also any plan to form a Haj Corporation to handle Haj arrangement properly; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by Government to provide lump sum aid to establish Haj Corporation to ensure its smooth functioning?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (d) For the Haj pilgrims traveling on the quota of the Haj Committee of India, set up under an Act of Parliament in 2002, the Government of India makes arrangements for the airlifting of such pilgrims and their accommodation in Saudi Arabia. The Consulate General of India, Jeddah is also actively involved in the making of such arrangements. The airlifting of pilgrims, which is subsidized by the Government, is arranged from several embarkation points in India. To facilitate the travel of pilgrims utilizing the services of Private Tour Operators, the Government has taken a number of decisions to streamline their functioning so that they provides the necessary services and facilities to the pilgrims. The Consulate General of India, Jeddah, Embassy of India, Riyadh and Haj Committee of India, along with the State Haj Committees, are involved in the hiring of accommodation for the pilgrims in accordance with well set procedures and norms. The Haj Committee of India, in coordination with the State Haj Committees, provides to the pilgrims information regarding confirmation of their seats, travel documents, transportation, accommodation, release of foreign exchange, embarkation points and departure dates etc. It is the constant endeavour of the Government to keep making improvements in the arrangements for the Haj pilgrims and to provide them with better facilities after taking into account the feedback received from all concerned.

### **Issues raised in Indo-Pak talks**

†2963. SHRI OM PRAKASH MATHUR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the issues taken up in the foreign secretary level talks held recently between India and Pakistan;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.