

**Discontinuation of temporary passport for
Haj pilgrims**

†1904. CHAUDHARY MUNABBAR SALEEM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the issuing of temporary passports for one year to the Haj pilgrims has been discontinued for sometimes back, whereas this facility was there earlier, due to which Haj pilgrims used to perform their Haj duty conveniently;

(b) whether many Haj pilgrims are deprived for performing their Haj duty due to the delay in carrying out police verification and observing other formalities as mandated by the International passport (permanent) system; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (c) Yes. Saudi Authorities have made it mandatory that the pilgrims proceeding for Haj should have valid International Passport for endorsement of Haj visa since 2009. As per procedures, passports for full validity are issued after the completion of Police Verification and other required formalities. At the time of Haj 2012, due to time constraints, Passport Offices were also authorized to issue short validity passports for one year, only for travel to Saudi Arabia, to those prospective Haj Pilgrims whose Police Verification was not received by Passport Offices in time.

In the context of Haj 2013, Haj Committee of India and this Ministry (through Passport Offices) have run a campaign to create public awareness about the requirement of a valid passport by Haj applicants. All Regional Passport Offices have also been directed to extend requisite assistance for expeditious issuance of Passports to prospective Haj applicants.

Goodwill visit by Prime Minister of Britain

†1905. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the British Prime Minister Mr. Cameron had recently made a goodwill visit to India;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.