

- (ii) To streamline air travel arrangement of Hajis by ensuring effective management for timely arrival and departure of flights.
- (iii) To improve catering facilities in Madinah.
- (iv) To strengthen medical services for Haj pilgrims.
- (v) To strengthen arrangements for transportation of Hajis to Haram and back who are accommodated in Azizia.
- (vi) Upgradation of the Mobile phone Application - "Indian Haj Accommodation Locator" with more information for pilgrims.

Meeting of SAARC Culture Ministers

2070. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India has hosted South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) Culture Ministers meeting recently;
- (b) if so, the details of the discussions held therein;
- (c) the names of the countries whose Culture Minister attended the meeting; and
- (d) the details of decisions arrived at the meeting and the benefits likely to accrue to India and other countries as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH): (a) Yes. The 3rd Meeting of the SAARC Ministers of Culture was held in New Delhi on September 25, 2014.

(b) Issues of cooperation in such areas as Libraries, Archives, Museums, Performing Arts and Cultural Festivals were discussed during the meeting.

(c) Culture Ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India attended the meeting.

(d) The meeting adopted "The Delhi Resolution" and the "SAARC Agenda for Culture". It also decided to:

- (i) Designate Bamiyan (Afghanistan) as the SAARC Cultural Capital for 2015-16
- (ii) Declare 2016-17, as the SAARC Year of Cultural Heritage
- (iii) Launch a dedicated SAARC Website on Culture
- (iv) Establish a SAARC Cultural Heritage Committee (SHC)

The decisions will help preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of SAARC region.