

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2032

ANSWERED ON:08.03.2000

PILGRIMAGE TO MANSAROVAR AND NANAKSAR

BRIJLAL KHABRI;CHANDRAKANT BHAURAO KHAIRE;CHINMAYANAND;SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PATIL)

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of persons who went on pilgrimage to Mansarovar (China), Nanaksar (Pakistan) and Haj (Mecca) during each of the last three years;
- (b) whether the Government had provided any financial assistance and other facilities to persons going on pilgrimage to Mansarovar and Nanaksar at par with haj pilgrims during the above period; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the amount spent thereon during the above period; and
- (e) if not, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a)
Year
Mansarovar (China)
Nanaksar (Pakistan)
Haj (Mecca)
1997
516
6680
81,766
1998
487
6525
94,602
1999
459
2308
98,072

(b) - (e)

Mansarovar (China) :

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, along the traditional route across Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragarh District of Uttar Pradesh, is co-ordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs and conducted with the assistance of various Central and State Government agencies. Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) makes the required logistical arrangements for the Yatra on the Indian side, including boarding and lodging. During 1999-2000, MEA provided Rs.3250 per yatri to KMVN for this purpose. Government provided for medical examination prior to the Yatra and medical assistance, security and escort cover, insurance cover and communication links between the Indian and Chinese sides for the duration of the Yatra. The Government also deputed a Liaison Officer and a doctor with each batch of yatris. The Delhi State Government provided for stay of yatris at Ashok Yatri Niwas in New Delhi for 4-5 days during their onward and return journey. It is the endeavour of Government to improve and upgrade facilities for the yatris on a continuing basis.

The total expenditure incurred by MEA on account of logistical arrangements, communication links and publicity for the Yatra is indicated below:-

1997 : Rs.25,78,000
1998 : Rs.14,61,000
1999 : Rs.42,09,688

Nanaksar (Pakistan) :

In respect of Jathas visited Pakistan, no financial assistance is provided. But the Government provides assistance in issuance of

visas, issue of foreign exchange through RBI, special train services for the pilgrims, both for onward and return journeys, and attaches a Liaison Officer from the High Commission of India, Islamabad with the visiting jathas, who renders assistance to the pilgrims when the pilgrims contact for any kind of help.

Haj (Mecca) :

The financial assistance is provided by the Government in the form of a subsidy to partially defray the cost of air-fare. The assistance is given to only those pilgrims who perform Haj under the aegis of Haj Committee. The quantum of subsidy to defray the cost of air-fare over the last three years has been as follows:-

1997 : Rs. 80.01 Crores
1998 : Rs.119.44 Crores
1999 : Rs.109.55 Crores

To facilitate the smooth performance of Haj by the Indian pilgrims, the Government deposes medical, para-medical and administrative staff from India and also augments the staff strength of our Consulate in Jeddah by recruiting temporary staff for the duration of Haj. In addition, the Government also sends medicines in Saudi Arabia for use by Haj pilgrims in case of need.