

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:411

ANSWERED ON:22.02.2006

ASSITANCE TO KAILASH MANSAROVAR PILGRIMS

Patel Shri Jivabhai Ambalal;Singh Deo Smt. Sangeeta Kumari

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether any assistance is being given by the Government to the pilgrims visiting Kailash Mansarovar;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has held talks with China on any new scheme to provide pilgrims with more facilities and assistance;
- (d) if so, the details in this regard; and
- (e) the time by when the new scheme is likely to be introduced?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) Yes.

(b) The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is presently organised by the Government under a bilateral arrangement with the Chinese Government through the Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragarh (Uttaranchal). Government pay Rupees Three thousand two hundred and fifty (Rs.3,250/-) for each pilgrim to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) for arrangements made by KMVN for the Yatra. In addition, during the course of the Yatra, facilities provided by the Government to the pilgrims include free medical assistance, security and escort cover by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) till the Lipulekh Pass on the Indian side, communication links with China, and provision of satellite phone to the Liaison Officer for each batch of pilgrims for use during emergency throughout the Yatra. A Liaison Officer is attached by the Government with each batch of pilgrims, who is responsible for their general welfare.

(c)-(e) It is Government's endeavour to improve and upgrade facilities for the pilgrims going on the Yatra on a continuing basis. In this spirit, Government have, from time to time, also raised with the Chinese Government issues regarding the improvement of facilities on their side for the pilgrims. There has been progressive improvement over the years. In addition, Government have proposed to the Chinese side on several occasions in recent years opening of an alternative route to Kailash-Mansarovar through Demchok in Jammu and Kashmir, or Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh, which would be shorter and more convenient. The Chinese side have cited difficulty in opening these routes on the ground that it would involve travel over longer distances on their side through difficult terrain, with poor road conditions and lack of proper infrastructure for accommodation and communications.