

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:308

ANSWERED ON:30.07.2014

HAJ PILGRIMAGE

Karra Shri Tariq Hameed;Meghwal Shri Arjun Ram

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Saudi Arabia has recently reduced the Haj quota allotted to India and if so, the details and reasons therefor along with the percentage so reduced;
- (b) the details of quota allocated to the Private Tour Operators (PTOs) during the last three years and the current year along with the details of registered PTOs for Haj in the country and the terms and conditions for registration and renewal of such PTOs;
- (c) whether the Government has accorded its approval for increasing the quota to PTOs and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Haj quota of Members of Parliament has been withdrawn and if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) whether the Government has any proposal to construct permanent service centres in Mecca and Medina to provide better facilities to Haj Pilgrims and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 308 REGARDING 'HAJ PILGRIMAGE' FOR ANSWER ON 30.07.2014

(a) Since Haj 2013, the Saudi Government has reduced the overall Haj quota for pilgrims from foreign countries, including from India, by 20% and for domestic pilgrims by 50% due to the ongoing Mataaf expansion project in Makkah. Haj quota for India has been reduced to 1,36,020 since Haj-2013.

(b) During Haj 2012, quota allotted to PTOs was 45,000. During Haj 2013, PTOs quota was reduced to 14,600 as against their original allocation of 45,000. During Haj 2014, quota allotted to PTOs is 36,000 after a proportional reduction of 20% from their allocation of 45,000 in Haj 2012.

The list of qualified PTOs for Haj-2014 has been published vide press release of 21 April, 2014 issued by the Haj Cell in the Ministry of External Affairs (The list is available on the official website of the Ministry of External Affairs).

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has approved the PTO Policy 2013-17 vide its judgement of 16 April, 2013 in the Petition for Special Leave to Appeal (Civil) no. 28609/2011. The terms and conditions for registration of PTOs are enumerated in the approved policy annexed to the judgement (The approved PTO Policy is available on the official website of the Ministry of External Affairs).

(c) No.

(d) Yes, Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its judgement of 23 July, 2012 in the Petition for Special Leave to Appeal (Civ:!) no. 28609/2011 has limited the Hajj discretionary quota to the following dignitaries:-

- (i) Hon'ble President - 100 Seats
- (ii) Hon'ble Vice President - 75 Seats
- (iii) Hon'ble Prime Minister - 75 Seats
- (iv) Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs - 50 Seats

The Hon`ble Supreme Court has not granted any special Haj quota to Hon`ble Members of Parliament.

(e) No.