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Title: Regarding releasing of quota to States for Haj Pilgrimage.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (PERIYAKULAM) : I would like to appreciate the positive measures taken by the UPA Government led by Dr. Manmohan Singh under the guidance of Madam Sonia Gandhi. I would like to place on record our deep appreciation for the efforts of this Government to help increase the facilities to the Annual Haj Pilgrims. I have been assigned with the responsibilities to lead one of the Haj Committees. So I would like to reflect upon certain urgent needs like increasing the number of quota for various States in this Country. As far as Tamilnadu is concerned only 3250 people could go as Haj pilgrims. Whereas this number was on the higher side in States like Kerala which had send ten thousand Haj pilgrims last year. More than 7500 people have gone from Kashmir. I feel the opportunity given to Tamilnadu is comparatively less. I would like to impress upon the Union Government through this August House that we need to be bit more liberal to States where there are more people waiting for this opportunity. There is a need to increase the Haj Committee quota.

The Government headed by our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and guided by our UPA Chair person Annai Sonia Gandhi has acted upon the Sachar Committee report which has analysed the problems faced by the minorities especially the minority committee. We welcome this and appreciate this Government on this count.

As of now there is one volunteer to a group of three hundred Haj Pilgrims. The number of volunteers must be enhanced. There must be one volunteer for every hundred Haj pilgrims. The volunteers must be those who are well informed and experienced with exposure as a Hajee who has made Haj pilgrimage earlier. Merely Government servants are nominated as volunteers. We must rope in people from the social service sector also. Nominees of various political parties can also be considered. Only then the pilgrims will get real service. Muthalippa, Meena, Harappa are the places that are covered in the last five days of Haj Pilgrimage. Haj pilgrims are much

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*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

dependent on the services of volunteers during these visits. Inadequate guidance and insufficient medical care affects the pilgrims at this stage. They must have sense of security with properly trained volunteers to guide them. At this stage most of the pilgrims are not properly explained about duties to be performed as pilgrims. The Government can earn a good name and it will be in good stead in the eyes of Haj pilgrims. Hence I urge the Union Government to increase the quota for Tamilnadu so that more Haj pilgrims can go from there. Private tour operators resort to unhealthy practices. In Tamil Nadu, there are about nineteen tour operators. Some ten more are in the waiting list. They may also be given approval . This increase in quota must be effected through the Tamilnadu Haj Committee. We must identify the real good ones among the tour operators. We must evaluate how effectively they can render the service. State Haj Committees must be entrusted with the responsibilities to the tour operators from every State. The Tamilnadu Haj tour operators must be selected through Tamilnadu Haj Committee. Volunteers from Social Service Organisations must be involved while increasing their numbers deploying one volunteer for every hundred pilgrims. I understand in Mumbai the Haj quota sold at a premium. Such unfair methods must be curbed. The quota must be increased to benefit the pilgrims to avail themselves of Air fare concession and transport facilities. With this I conclude.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 9th May 2007 at 11 a.m.

19.21 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock

on Wednesday, May 9, 2007 / Vaisakha 19, 1929 (Saka).

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