



Haj Committee presents report on New Haj policy 2018-22 to Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

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Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India had constituted a Committee to review the existing Haj Policy of the Government for 2013-17 and to suggest framework for new Haj policy 2018-22. The Committee presented its Report to the Union Minister of Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi in the presence of Secretary (Minority Affairs), Shri Ameising Luikham, Chairman of Haj Committee of India, Shri Chaudhary Mehboob Ali Kaiser, Ambassador of India in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Shri Ahmed Javed, other Members of HCoI and senior officials of the Ministry of Minority Affairs in Mumbai today.

Haj is one of the most complex organizational tasks undertaken by Government of India outside its borders. Although a five day religious congregation, it is virtually a year-long managerial exercise. Indian Haj pilgrims who constitute one of the largest national group perform Haj through two streams - (i) the Haj Committee of India (HCoI), and (ii) registered Private Tour Operators (PTOs). HCoI established under the Haj Committee Act 2002 is responsible for making the arrangements for pilgrims performing Haj through them. All arrangements for the HCoI pilgrims in Saudi Arabia are coordinated by the Consulate General of India, Jeddah. The Haj quota for India fixed by the Saudi Arabian Government was fixed at 1,36,020 after Haj 2013. In 2016, 135,902 pilgrims performed Haj out of which 99,902 went through HCoI and 36,000 through PTOs. The Haj quota was substantially increased to 1,70,025 for Haj 2017 out of which a quota of 1,25,025 was allocated to HCoI and 45,000 to PTOs.

In terms of the Supreme Court directions regarding Haj Policies for the HCoI and PTOs, it was decided to review the existing Policies and frame a new Policy. Accordingly, Ministry of Minority Affairs constituted a Committee with Shri Afzal Amanullah, IAS (Retd.), former Secretary to Govt. of India and Ex CGI, Jeddah as Convenor and Justice S.S. Parkar, Retd. Judge of Bombay High Court, Shri Qaiser Shamim, IRS (Retd) & former Chairman, Haj Committee of India, Shri Kamal Faruqi, noted Chartered Accountant & Muslim Scholar as Members. Shri J. Alam, Joint Secretary, in-charge of Haj, Ministry of Minority Affairs was the Member Secretary of the Committee.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee included the following;

- (i) Review the existing Haj policy pertaining to HCoI and PTOs in the light of its objectives and achievements.
- (ii) Examine implications of various directions of the Supreme Court with regard to the existing policy and to suggest suitable amendments in the said policy in the light of such directions.
- (iii) Review the effectiveness of arrangements made by HCoI for Haj pilgrims' accommodation and air travel including issues related with Haj subsidy.
- (iv) Examine the effectiveness of inter-relationship and coordination in the functioning of Haj Committee of India and CGI.
- (v) Examine the aspects of transparency, consumer satisfaction and disclosure requirements for PTOs to protect interest of the Haj Pilgrims with a view to make the new policy of greater assistance to the pilgrims.
- (vi) Suggest measure for ensuring fair competition among PTOs and enhanced value for services provided by them.
- (vii) Examine any other issues relevant to Haj policy for HCoI and PTOs.
- (viii) Suggest the framework for new Haj policy for HCoI and PTOs in the light of the above.

The Committee started its work on 15th February, 2017 and had a number of meetings to compile the information and finalise its report. It had extensive consultations with all the stake holders, community leaders and general public. It held meetings in Mumbai, Kolkata and New Delhi for interaction with the Haj Committee of

India and various State/ Union Territory Haj Committees and also interacted with private tour operators and their associations in Mumbai. The Committee met with the officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and airlines engaged in the Haj air charter operations including Air India and Saudi Airlines, officials of Ministry of Shipping and Shipping Corporation of India. The Committee invited suggestions from the general public by publishing an advertisement in all the leading newspapers in Hindi, English and Urdu and had personal interaction with the public and other stakeholders on 25th May, 2017 in New Delhi.

6. The Committee visited Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in April, 2017 to see the entire gamut of Haj arrangements undertaken by Consulate General of India (CGI), Jeddah at various places in KSA. The Committee interacted with Consul General and his team on the role and functions of the Consulate and had discussion on effectiveness of inter-relationship and coordination between HCoI and CGI. The Committee interacted with the operational functionaries of Moassasa and officials who are involved in Haj operation viz. representatives of Naqqaba Sayyarat, Maktabul Wukla, Adillah Establishment, Saudi Airlines and GACA etc. The Committee also interacted with a cross section of Indian community based in Saudi Arabia to elicit their views. During their visit, the Committee also undertook field visit of Makkah and Azizia where the buildings for the Indian pilgrims are hired, Mina, Muzadalifa and Arafat and Metro Train Stations of Mashaer region.

After extensive consultations and deliberations, the Committee finalised its recommendations.

Major recommendations of the Committee are as under:

Haj Policy of the Government for Haj Committee of India

1. Distribution of quota between HCoI and PTOs to be rationalised in the ratio of 70:30 for the next 5 years.
2. Seats among the States/ Union Territories to be distributed in the ratio of their Muslim population as well as in proportion to the number of applications received.
3. Quota for Mehram to be increased from 200 to 500.
4. Special quota for Jammu & Kashmir to be increased from 1500 to 2000.
5. States/ UTs receiving less than 500 applications to get priority in distribution of surplus seats. This will benefit UTs like Andaman & Nicobar Island, Lakshadweep, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu & Puducherry as well as smaller States like Chhattisgarh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh and Manipur.
6. Reserved category of applicants viz. 70+ and 4th timers to be abolished.
7. Ladies above 45 years of age to be allowed in a group of 4 or more to go for Haj without Mehram.
8. Only one category of accommodation in Makkah, in Azizia and adjoining areas to be hired with new, multi storied modern buildings with transportation facilities for the pilgrims
9. Re-hiring arrangement to be made for new, good and big buildings in subsequent year.
10. All accommodation in Madinah to be hired in Markazia only.
11. Stay of all Indian Hajis to be ensured within the traditional boundaries of Mina.
12. Adahi coupons to be made compulsory for each pilgrim.
13. Breaking cartel of contractors with transparent bidding process. Hiring rate to be brought down with better negotiations.
14. Embarkation Points (EPs) to be reduced from 21 to 9 which are (1) Delhi (2) Lucknow (3) Kolkata (4) Ahmedabad (5) Mumbai (6) Chennai (7) Hyderabad (8) Bengaluru and (9) Cochin. Suitable Haj houses to be built at these EPs. States/Districts to be tagged with each EP properly.
15. Facilities created in discontinued EPs to be used for round the year training, orientation of pilgrims and other productive uses for the community.
16. Saudi Government to be consulted regarding Haj travel by ship and thereafter floating an EOI to gauge the market for such travel.

Policy of the Government for Private Tour Operators

17. A robust portal to be developed for processing of PTO applications.
18. A committee of 2-3 experts to consider representations of PTOs aggrieved by Haj Division's decisions.
19. PTOs to be categorised in three categories in accordance with their experience and financial strength. The PTO quota to be divided in the ratio 30:40:30 among the three categories with the provision of allocation of seats in the ratio 200:100:50 to the individual PTOs.

20. A comprehensive empanelment policy for the PTOs to be formulated that would facilitate easier and quicker renewals. Empanelment to be done on the basis of documents as well as physical inspection of the PTOs. Stringent norms to be followed for blacklisting and forfeiture of security deposit of PTOs.
21. PTOs to collect full package costs from pilgrims through bank accounts only and render details to the Ministry before departure of pilgrims from India.
22. Each PTO to have a proper website with pre decided disclosure norms.
23. Nomenclature of PTO to be changed to Haj Group Organiser (HGO).

Other recommendations

24. Steering Committee to be co-chaired by Secretary (MoMA) and Secretary (MEA) with senior officials of other concerned Ministries to be constituted for better coordination.
25. Two members Haj Goodwill Delegation from India to continue.
26. Amendment in Haj committee act to include Umra and Ziyarat to Syria, Iran, Iraq and Jordan, removal of obsolete provisions, inclusion of official of MoMA in the HCoI, etc.

Besides the above, there are several other recommendations for ensuring better coordination and accountability among various Ministries/ Agencies and to provide better facilities to the Haj Pilgrims. After its presentation, the report of the HPRC will be examined in the ministry and shared with all concerned for implementation of the accepted recommendations from Haj 2018 onwards. With the implementation of these recommendations, it is hoped that management of Haj will be further streamlined, which will help in realising the objective of comfortable and cost effective Haj pilgrimage for Indian Pilgrims.

[Kindly click here for summary of recommendations of the Report](#)

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