



Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi flags off 1st batch of 300 Haj pilgrims from New Delhi Airport

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The Minister of State for Minority Affairs (Independent Charge) & Parliamentary Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi today morning flagged off the first batch of 300 Haj pilgrims from New Delhi Airport with prayers of country's safety and prosperity.

Shri Naqvi congratulated to Haj pilgrims and extended best wishes to them for their pilgrimage. Shri Naqvi said that the Ministry of Minority Affairs, in cooperation with Haj Committee of India and other concerned agencies, had completed preparations for Haj 2017 well before in time to ensure smooth Haj pilgrimage.

Shri Naqvi said that new Haj Policy 2018 will be finalised soon and Haj from next year will be organised according to this new Haj policy. A high-level committee constituted in this regard will soon submit its report. The new Haj policy is aimed at making Haj process transparent and smooth.

Shri Naqvi also said that reviving the option of sending Haj pilgrims through sea route also is part of the new Haj policy. Sending pilgrims through ships will help cut down travel expenses by nearly half as compared to airfares. It will be a revolutionary, pro-poor, pilgrim-friendly decision. The practice of ferrying Haj pilgrims between Mumbai and Jeddah by waterways was stopped from 1995.

Shri Naqvi said that another advantage with ships available these days is they are modern and well-equipped to ferry 4,000 to 5,000 persons at a time. They can cover the 2,300-odd nautical miles one-side distance between Mumbai and Jeddah within just two-three days. Earlier, the old ships used to take 12 to 15 days to cover this distance.

Saudi Arabia has increased annual Haj quota of India by 34,005. After significant increase in India's Haj quota by Saudi Arabia Government, a total of 1,70,025 people have been going to Haj pilgrimage this year from India out of which 1,25,025 pilgrims will go through Haj Committee of India while 45,000 people will go through Private Tour Operators from 21 embarkation points. 1628 Haj pilgrims will go from Delhi. A total of 16,600 people will go from Delhi embarkation point which include Haj pilgrims from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh.

Besides Delhi, Haj pilgrims are going to Saudi Arab today from embarkation points in Goa, Guwahati, Lucknow, Mangalore, Varanasi, Srinagar and Kolkata today. Haj Flights will also go from Gaya (27 July), Ranchi, Kolkata, Bhopal and Bangalore (08 August), Nagpur (10 August), Ahmedabad, Aurangabad, Chennai, Cochin & Jaipur (13 August) and Indore and Hyderabad (14 August).

The 21 embarkation points include- Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Guwahati, Lucknow, Mangalore, Varanasi, Srinagar, Kolkata, Gaya, Ranchi, Bhopal, Bangalore, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Aurangabad, Chennai, Cochin, Jaipur, Indore, Hyderabad.

A total of 10958 Haj pilgrims from Ahmedabad, 11657 from Cochin, 12380 from Lucknow, 5605 from Mumbai, 2729 from Aurangabad, 4641 from Bangalore, 3370 from Chennai, 4483 from Guwahati, 6273 from Hyderabad, 4777 from Jaipur, 10348 from Kolkata, 2187 from Nagpur, 3159 Haj pilgrims from Ranchi have been going to Haj this year.

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