



Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi Launches Portal for private tour operators for Haj 2018

Last date for Haj application Extended upto December 22

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Union Minister for Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has said that the Government's decision to lift the ban on Muslim women going for Haj without "Mehram" (male companion) has generated very positive results, as Muslim women, from across the country, are applying in large numbers to go for Haj without "Mehram". Launching a portal for private tour operators (PTOs) here today, Shri Naqvi said that the decision of the Government, led by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, to allow Muslim women for Haj without "Mehram" has been welcomed across the country. 'This is another important step towards women empowerment by the Government led by Shri Modi', the Minister said.

He said that application process for Haj 2018 had started on November 15 and more than 1000 women have applied to perform Haj without "Mehram" till now (December 13). The last date for Haj application has been extended up to December 22. According to the new Haj policy, women above 45 years of age, who wish to go for Haj, but do not have a male companion, are allowed to travel for Haj in groups of 4 or more women.

The Minister pointed out that the portal for PTOs has been launched for the first time by Ministry of Minority Affairs to ensure that the entire process related to Haj becomes fully transparent. This PTO portal has been developed to carry forward the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's "Digital India" programme. The portal is aimed at addressing several issues of PTOs and Haj pilgrims.

Through this portal, PTOs can apply online with the required documents. The applications will be scrutinized by the Haj Division of Minority Affairs Ministry. After this, a draw of lots will be done online and the quota will be allocated. This portal also aims at displaying details of the rates, packages and facilities offered by the PTOs across the country. Thus, Haj pilgrims will have the option to choose the PTO of their choice, not only from their region, but from anywhere in India. In order to ensure smooth rollout of the portal and its various modules, it has been decided to invite applications from the PTOs online as well as manually for Haj 2018.

Shri Naqvi stated that on the one hand, while for private tour operators, the entire process has been simplified and made transparent, on the other hand, it has also been clearly instructed that any discrepancies in facilities for Haj pilgrims going through PTOs will not be tolerated. Minority Affairs Ministry has taken strict measures in this regard.

The Minister pointed out that more than 2 lakh 63 thousand people have applied for Haj, as of now, out of which about 1 lakh 38 thousand applications have been made online. This has provided a boost to Minority Affairs Ministry's decision to make the entire Haj process digital. Besides, people are also applying for Haj through the mobile app.

Shri Naqvi said that distribution of quota between Haj committee of India and private tour operators has been retained, like previous year. He added that Haj 2018 will be conducted according to the new Haj policy.

Saudi Arabia Government had increased India's Haj quota to 1 lakh 70 thousand and twenty five in the year 2017.

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