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Ministry of Minority Affairs

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Union Minister for Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that for the first time after the Independence, a record number of Muslims from the country will go to Haj this year and that too without any subsidy. He was speaking today at a training camp organised for Haj "Khadim-UI-Hujja" at Haj House, in Mumbai.

Shri Naqvi said that the Government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has succeeded in getting India's Haj quota increased for the consecutive second year and for the first time after the Independence, record 1,75,025 pilgrims from India will go to Haj 2018.

A total of 3,55,604 applications had been received for Haj which included 1,89,217 male and 1,66,387 female applicants.

This year, a total of 1,28,002 pilgrims will go through Haj Committee of India which include about 47 per cent females. 47,023 Haj pilgrims will go through Private Tour Operators. Besides, for the first time Muslim women from India will also go to Haj without "Mehram" (male companion). A total of 1308 women have applied to go for Haj without "Mehram" and all of these women have been exempted from lottery system and allowed to proceed to Haj.

A total of 6700 pilgrims will go from Ahmedabad, 350 from Aurangabad, 5550 from Bengaluru, 254 from Bhopal, 11,700 from Cochin, 4000 from Chennai, 19,000 from Delhi, 5140 from Gaya, 450 from Goa, 2950 from Guwahati, 7600 from Hyderabad, 5500 from Jaipur, 11,610 from Kolkata, 14,500 from Lucknow, 430 from Mangalore, 14,200 from Mumbai, 2800 from Nagpur, 2100 from Ranchi, 8950 from Srinagar and 3250 from Varanasi.

In 2017, a total of Rs 1030 crore was paid to airlines for air fare for 1,24,852 Haj pilgrims. Whereas, in 2018, a total of Rs 973 crore will be paid to airlines for 1,28,002 Haj pilgrims. It means, Rs 57 crore less will be paid to airlines this year even after ending the Haj subsidy.

The Centre's Modi Government's commitment to transparency and strict directives given to the airlines to check unreasonable increase in fares has ensured that Haj 2018 air fares have been come down significantly this year.

Shri Naqvi said in the training camp that making the Haj process completely online/ digital has helped to make the entire Haj process transparent and pro-pilgrims.

Minister said that Saudi Arabia has given green signal for India's decision to reviving the option of sending Haj pilgrims through sea route also and officials from both the countries are in discussion on all the necessary formalities and technicalities so that Haj pilgrimage through sea route can be started in the coming years.

He also said that for the first time, choice of embarkation points has been given to Haj pilgrims which has received overwhelming response.

In this training camp, 623 “Khadim-ul-Hujjaj” from all the states participated. Officials from Haj Committee of India, Bruhan Mumbai Mahanagar Palika, Disaster Management agencies and doctors informed them in detail, all the process related to Haj including accommodation, transport, health and safety of Haj pilgrims at Makkah-Madina. For the first time, Female Haj Assistants will be deployed to monitor various facilities for women Haj pilgrims.

Consul General of India at Jeddah, Mohammad Nur Rehman Sheikh, Haj Committee of India Chairman Chaudhary Mehboob Ali Qaiser, Members of Haj Committee of India and other officials were also present on the occasion.

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