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Pakistan to Open Hajj 2026 Applications Starting August 4

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The Ministry of Religious Affairs has officially announced that applications for the Hajj 2026 scheme will open on August 4, following formal approval of the new policy by the federal cabinet. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, confirmed the development and shared key details of the updated policy during a press briefing.

Under the new policy, Pakistan's total Hajj quota for 2026 is set at 179,210 pilgrims. Of this number, 119,210 slots have been allocated to the government scheme, while the remaining

60,000 are designated for private Hajj operators. The distribution results in an approximate 66.5 percent share for the government and 33.5 percent for the private sector, subject to final confirmation by Saudi authorities.

The government scheme offers two travel packages. The longer package includes a stay of 38 to 42 days, while the shorter package ranges from 20 to 25 days. The estimated cost for both packages falls between Rs1.15 million and Rs1.25 million. Applicants are required to submit payments in two installments. For the longer package, the first installment is Rs500,000, and for the shorter package, it is Rs550,000. Payments must be deposited at designated banks beginning August 4.

To be eligible, applicants must hold a valid Pakistani passport with an expiration date extending beyond November 26, 2026. Children under the age of 12 are not eligible to apply. Additionally, all pilgrims must be fully vaccinated with vaccines approved by Saudi health authorities.

The “Road to Makkah” initiative will continue to be offered at Islamabad and Karachi airports. Overseas Pakistanis will be permitted to remit Hajj dues to designated bank accounts approved by the ministry. Pilgrims are required to make payments for animal sacrifices through the official Saudi portal to ensure compliance with religious and regulatory standards.

Private Hajj operators, including Dependent Hajj Companies (DHCs), will be closely regulated. These companies are required to sign formal agreements with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and follow strict operational and financial protocols. Real-time monitoring will be implemented to reduce errors such as double bookings and to improve overall service quality.

To further ensure transparency, a third-party audit mechanism will review the performance of both government and private sector operations. Technical oversight will be maintained by the Punjab Information Technology Board, while the National Information Technology Board (NITB) will support implementation through the Ministry of IT.

Other components of the Hajj 2026 policy include the continued deployment of emergency teams, the mandatory Hajj Guardian Scheme for compensation, and comprehensive training for all pilgrims. A digital complaint system will be active, and the Pak Hajj App will provide real-time support throughout the pilgrimage.

Minister Yousaf stated that the updated policy is designed to enhance transparency, governance, and the spiritual experience of pilgrims by utilizing digital tools and strengthened coordination among departments.