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Pakistan Cuts Private Hajj Quota by 50% for 2026

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— Categories: Economics



On July 31, 2025, Pakistan's federal cabinet approved the Hajj Policy 2026, maintaining the nation's Hajj quota at 179,210 pilgrims while slashing the private scheme allocation by 50% to 60,000. The government scheme, covering 119,210 pilgrims, will dominate with a cost range of Rs1.15 million to Rs1.25 million, with applications opening August 4, as announced by Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousuf, per Geo.tv.

The policy, designed to enhance oversight, allocates 66.52% of the quota to the government scheme, leaving 33.48% for private operators, a sharp reduction from previous years, according to photonews.com.pk. Yousuf explained that the cut addresses past inefficiencies, as private operators failed to utilize their 2025 quota due to payment

and registration delays, per Arab News. Applications for the government scheme will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis via the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony's (MoRA) portal, closing once the quota is filled. Pilgrims must deposit Rs500,000 initially, with total costs pending final agreements, as noted by Business Recorder.

The policy introduces full digitization, including real-time tracking, digital wristbands, and mobile apps, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology (MoIT). It also enforces stricter accountability for private operators, requiring them to accommodate 2025's affected pilgrims at last year's rates, per Geo.tv. Yousuf highlighted transparent grievance redressal and third-party monitoring for both schemes, ensuring fairness. The "Road to Makkah" facility will operate at Islamabad and Karachi airports, and Saudi-approved vaccinations are mandatory, with no children under 12 allowed, according to Radio Pakistan.

Public sentiment on X, as seen in posts by @TOKCityOfLights, reflects approval of the government's increased control. The policy prioritizes efficiency and pilgrim welfare, addressing past mismanagement while reinforcing Pakistan's commitment to a streamlined Hajj process.