Haj Policy, 2023

1. Division of Haj Seats between Haj Committee of India (HCoI) and Haj Group Organizers (HGOs).

The Government of India (GoI) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) sign the Haj Agreement every year, in which the number of Haj seats allocated to India is incorporated. Out of the total number of quota allocated to the Government of India (GoI), 80% will be allocated to the HCoI and the remaining 20% will be allocated to HGOs.

2. Once in a lifetime, Haj through HCoI

Those who have performed Haj earlier through HCoI will not be eligible to apply.

In the case of "Mehram" for lady pilgrims and of companions accompanying pilgrims over 70 years of age, repeaters will be allowed on payment of additional charges as applicable from time to time.

A lady pilgrim and 70+ pilgrims utilizing the service of a repeater as "Mehram" must give a solemn declaration and undertaking to the effect that no first time "Mehram" is available in the family. The 70+ pilgrim also must give a similar solemn declaration and undertaking in support of his/her accompanying pilgrim.

3. Availability of Haj Application Forms (HAFs)

The Haj Application Forms (HAFs) can be obtained from the State/Union Territory Haj Committee free of cost or can be downloaded from the website of the Haj Committee of India at hajcommittee.gov.in or through the Android Mobile App "HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA" available on play store. Photocopies can also be used.

4. Eligibility for Haj.

As per general Saudi guidelines on eligibility to perform Haj or Umrah, Haj pilgrim should be fit in various aspects: financial, physical, behavioral, and mental. As such, any Muslim citizen of India can apply for Haj pilgrimage except:

(a) Persons not in possession of machine-readable, valid Indian international passports as per HCoI guidelines

(b) Ban on Repeaters: A person who has performed Haj earlier in his life through HCoI except for permitted categories of Mehrams and

those accompanying a 70+ pilgrim on the basis of an appropriate solemn declaration and undertaking.

(c) Any person found to have furnished false information shall not be allowed to proceed for Haj. In such cases, he/she will be disqualified at any stage and de-boarded even at the embarkation point. The entire amount deposited by him/her shall also be forfeited. Besides, he/she may be prosecuted for making an incorrect/ false declaration. These restrictions will also apply for concealing the fact of having performed Haj earlier as well as for Haj-e-Badal pilgrims.

(d) Those with severe medical conditions such as terminal cancers, advanced cardiac, respiratory, liver, or kidney diseases; infectious tuberculosis disease, or senility.

(e) Ladies not accompanied by Sharia Mehram, except ladies covered at Sr.No.5.

(f) Ladies in the advanced stage of pregnancy: In the case of pregnant women in the advanced stages of pregnancy, international flying standards will be followed.

(g) Any person against whom a court order prohibiting travel abroad exists.

(h) Consent of parents / legal guardian is mandatory for undertaking Haj by any applicant below the age of 18 years

5. Ladies travelling without their Mehrams

Ladies above 45 years of age, who wish to go for Haj but do not have a male Mehram and their school of thought (Maslak) permits are allowed to travel in groups of 4 or more ladies.

Subject to the terms of KSA, single ladies may also apply, and HCoI may form a grouping with the ladies who applied under the category. Consulate General of India, Jeddah will also facilitate separate living arrangements for women traveling alone for the Pilgrimage.

6. **Cover Size**

The size of the Cover shall be minimum 1 (one) and Maximum 4 (four) Adults + 2 (two) Infants. (If the number of family members exceeds four, applications should be made in more than one cover).

Notes:

(i) 'Infants' are those applicants who would have completed 2 years of age by the date of arrival of the last return Haj charter flight, which will be specified by HCoI. Infant travel is not free of cost and they will be charged 10% of the full airfare (decided

by Ministry of Civil Aviation), which will be communicated in due course.

(ii) An Applicant above 2 years of age will be charged as an adult pilgrim and full amount of airfare and Haj Amount has to be paid by them accordingly.

7. Composition of Cover –only Family Members & Near relatives

A maximum number of Four (4) applicants comprising the family members or near relatives can apply in a single cover. The head of the cover shall be responsible for payment for the persons included in the cover. Under no circumstances, persons other than family and near relatives should be included in the cover. It is in the interest of pilgrims to ensure that only family members having blood relation or near relatives are included in the cover. The accommodation status in respect of all pilgrims under one cover should be the same. In no case a cover shall be split. In case a few pilgrims under one cover intend to prepone/postpone the date of flight it would not be permitted. The pilgrims of the Cover will travel together and stay together. If the head of cover himself cancels his application for Haj pilgrimage, he should indicate the name of another person from amongst the male Members of such cover, as the head of the particular cover. If a male applicant, who is Mehram of the female applicant of cover, cancels his application for Haj pilgrimage, he must indicate the name of the other applicant from among the male Members of the cover as "Mehram" along with his relation with the female applicant(s) of that cover. Otherwise application(s) of the female applicant(s) shall also be treated as cancelled. Change of Mehram is allowed only in specific cases on account of death/medical grounds.

8.Solemn declaration and undertaking for applicants above 70 years of age

The applications received in 70+ age category are given top priority allocation of seats for that State/UT. However, in case more Haj applications are received in 70+ age category than the allotted quota for state/ UT, a draw of lots will be conducted among the 70+ age category applicants as explained in point 11 of the policy. This is to enable and facilitate assured seats to elderly and aged senior citizens desirous of performing Haj pilgrimage. Applicants in 70+ age category shall submit a solemn declaration and undertaking in the prescribed format. If the solemn declaration and undertaking is not enclosed or found incomplete or not in the format given, the Haj application shall be summarily rejected.

9. Solemn declaration and undertaking for General Category

In view of the "once in a life time Haj through HCoI" policy, all general category pilgrims shall submit a solemn declaration and undertaking in the given format. Solemn declaration and undertaking should be in English only. If the solemn declaration and undertaking is not enclosed or found incomplete or not in the format given, Haj Application shall be summarily rejected.

10. Order of Priority

While allotting seats of each state, the order of priority will be:

1) **70+ Category** (Age 70+ applicant alongwith companion).
2) **Ladies travelling without their Mehrams**
3) General Category;

11. 70+ age Applicant

In view of the hardships faced by the single 70+ pilgrims in KSA during Haj, HCOI has decided that companion is a must for 70+ pilgrims and no 70+ pilgrim will be registered as alone member under reserved category. The pilgrims of 70 years and above will be registered under Reserved Category, subject to the following conditions:

(a) Applicant who completes 70 years or more as on the specified date.

(b) One companion is a must for 70+ pilgrims and no 70+ pilgrim alone will be registered under reserved category.

(c) Only one companion is allowed who should be immediate relative namely Husband / Wife / Brother / Sister / Son/ Daughter / Son-in-law / Daughter-in- law, Grandson / Grand Daughter and Nephew / Niece. No other relation will be allowed to travel as companion. Neither the 70+ pilgrim nor the companion will be allowed to travel alone.

(d) If husband and wife are travelling in a cover under reserved category, and both are above 70 years of age, they will be allowed two companions, who will be blood relation of the pilgrims.

12. Distribution of Quota

The pilgrim quota for HCoI should be 80% of the total Haj Quota of India. The following procedure for allocations will be followed by HCoI :

Stage - I.

Out of the total number of quota allocated to India in the agreement

between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of India, 80% must be allocated to the HCoI and the remaining 20% should be allocated to HGOs.

Stage - II.

Out of the total seats allocated to HCoI under Stage-I, **quota for KuH in the ratio of one KuH for three hundred pilgrims and quota for deputing an officer of the Director level from each State/ Union Territory shall be subtracted from the overall Haj quota**. The remaining seats shall be distributed across all the States and Union Territories in proportion to their Muslim population.

Stage – III

The distribution of the different States and Union Territories quota shall proceed as in the current policy through qurrah (draw of lots). In case there are surplus seats generated by under-utilized quotas of States. The seats shall be distributed as provided in Stages IV and V.

Stage – IV

The surplus seats shall first be utilized for providing upto 500 seats for Mehram. If seats are still available after this, the UT of Jammu and Kashmir will be allocated up to 2,000 seats as a special measure. The remaining surplus seats will be used for groups of ladies without Mehram and distributed among the States and Union Territories that received 500 or fewer Haj Application Forms (HAF) but were unable to accommodate all applicants, in ascending order of the number of applicants.

For the States/ Union Territories where there is a marginal increase in the number of applications by up to 5%, a quota restricted to 500 seats shall be provided.

Stage – V

The remainder of the surplus seats after Stage IV (if any) shall be allocated to the States and Union Territories in proportion to the number of applications received.

13. Qurrah.

Qurrah refers to computerized draw of lots. In the States/Union Territories where the number of Haj Applications received exceeds their quota, pilgrims shall be selected provisionally by Qurrah conducted on the Covers. The Qurrah shall be conducted by the respective SHC on the Integrative Haj Pilgrims Management System

(IHPMS) software which is maintained on the server of HCoI. The date and other details of Qurrah shall be publicized through media by the SHC concerned. Immediately after Qurrah, the SHC concerned shall widely publicize the list of selected pilgrims in local media and shall also intimate the provisionally selected pilgrims of their selection.

14. Principles of Qurrah (Draw of Lots)

The order of priority for confirming the seats in a state is as follows:

1) 70+ age category; 2) General Category.

(a) If the applications under the 70+ age category are more than the quota of the State/UT, then the qurrah (draw of lots) will be conducted within the 70+ age category as per the conditions given below.

(i) Pilgrims in the 70+ category will be given first priority for allocation of seats. After the 70+ category has been exhausted, the qurrah (draw of lots) will be held State-wise/UT wise among the general category applicants for the remaining seats.

(ii) If the number of applications for the 70+ category exceeds the quota, quota allocation within the 70+ category will be done through State-wise/UT wise qurrah(draw of lots). A waitinglist as 70+ age Waiting List will be prepared for those applicants under 70+ category who could not get seats under qurrah (draw of lots). Another waiting list, as General Waiting List (GWL) will also be prepared by conducting qurrah (draw of lots) among those applicants who applied under the general category but could not get a confirmed seat.

(b) If the applications in the 70+ age category are less than the quota, after allotting seats to the 70+ age category, qurrah will be conducted among the general category for the remaining quota. A GWL will also be prepared for those applicants who applied under general category but could not get a confirmed seat under the state-wise /UT wise qurrah.

(c) In case there are two waiting lists, viz. 70+ WL and GWL, the applicants from the 70+ WL will be given confirmed status first, followed by the GWL against any future available seats.

If the applications under 70+ age category are equal to the quota of a particular State, the entire quota will be utilized for 70+ WL

categories and all other general category applications will be put under GWL drawn on the basis of qurrah (draw of lots).

15. Government Quota.

The entire Government discretionary quota stands cancelled from Haj 2023 onwards and will be merged into the general pool for the benefit of the common citizens.

16. General Wait List

A separate Qurrah (draw of lots) of non-selected covers shall be held State- wise/UT-wise in the State/ UT that receives Haj applications in excess of its quota to allocate a wait list number to all such covers. The confirmation of seats with respect to wait-listed pilgrims shall be communicated by the respective State Haj Committee/UT Haj Committee as and when a vacancy arises due to the cancellation of the journey by the selected pilgrims. If the selected pilgrim wants to cancel the journey for any reason, he should submit a cancellation letter to the concerned State Haj Committee /UT Haj Committee. The State Haj Committee/UT Haj Committee should mark the cancellation and select the wait listed pilgrim as per serial number on the basis of the first cancelled seat for the first wait-listed applicant. The order of the waiting list will be strictly followed without any deviation. Once marked, cancellation cannot be revoked for any reason. The wait-listed pilgrims should remain in contact with the HCoI, State Haj Committee/UT Haj Committee about the current status of their seat confirmation.

17. Rules of Cancellations and Refunds

Only cancellations on the grounds of death or serious ailment of the person concerned will be allowed. In case of cancellation on any other ground, specific penalties will be imposed as per guidelines and amendments thereto by HCoI.

The HCoI shall make arrangement for refund of amount deposited by applicant preferably within a period of a month.

18. Payments by pilgrims

All provisionally selected pilgrims will be allotted a unique bank reference number, which must be quoted compulsorily for depositing advance and balance Haj amounts in the State Bank of India through the core banking system.

19. Cancellation

If the selected pilgrim wants to cancel the journey for any reason, he should submit a cancellation letter to the concerned State Haj Committee/UT Haj Committee. If the applicant fails to submit either a passport or payment or both within the due date, the selection of the pilgrim will be summarily cancelled.

20. Accommodation

As per Saudi Regulations, accommodation has to be arranged for the pilgrims in advance through the Consulate General of India, Jeddah. **The Saudi regulations stipulate that the space entitlement per pilgrim in Makkah accommodation is 4 square meters while in Madinah it is as per the unit's capacity license (Tashnif/Tashrih) issued by Saudi authorities. In Makkah, there is a uniform category of accommodation. The commute between the accommodation (outside Markazia) and the holy site in Makkah is through bus facility**.

In Madinah, accommodations in Markazia area would be preferably hired for accommodating pilgrims subject to its availability.

Pilgrims who want and are entitled to stay in Rubat will be allowed to stay in Rubat, subject to KSA norms, and no charges for their accommodation will be levied by HCoI, or if charges are levied, they will be refunded to those pilgrims who use Rubat facility.

21. Qurrah for accommodation

The allotment of accommodations will depend on the availability of units in a particular category. In case there are more applications for a particular category than the units available, allotment shall be made through Qurrah.

22. Medical Screening and Fitness Certificate for every Applicant

A medical check-up report for the pilgrims is mandatory. In order to ensure that only healthy pilgrims proceed for Haj, a two-step medical screening has been introduced one at the application stage (on the reverse of the Haj application) and another of the selected pilgrims at the embarkation stage. Every applicant should fill out the medical history, get examined, and obtain a Medical Screening and Fitness Certificate from a registered medical practitioner, preferably an allopathic / government doctor, on the reverse of his/her Haj Application.

The Health Certificate to be issued to the pilgrims by Medical Officer shall have information related to mandatory vaccinations and vaccination of CoVID-19. The digital medical health certificate will be issued to selected Haj pilgrim in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

23. Health and Training (HAT) Card for Selected Pilgrims only

Every selected pilgrim shall obtain a Health and Training (HAT) Card and Haj Guide from the State Haj Committee/Union Territory Haj Committee upon submission of a passport and pay-in-slip for the advance Haj amount.

24. Vaccination Certificate: Inoculation of Meningitis /Quadruple Inoculation

All selected pilgrims (more than 2 years of age) are required to possess a certificate of inoculation with a single dose of the cerebrospinal meningitis vaccine. Pilgrims, therefore, must get themselves inoculated against meningitis and obtain a vaccination certificate on the Health and Training (HAT) Card before proceeding to the Embarkation Point. The certificate should be signed by the district health officer. Incomplete and bogus certificates shall not be entertained. Arrangements are made every year at the Haj House for inoculation and the issue of the certificate to individual pilgrims after they have been examined by the Medical Officer. Similarly, the State Haj Committee/UT Haj Committee and District Administration make such arrangements for the inoculation of the pilgrims in the irrespective States/UTs throughout the country.

The HCoI, in coordination with the State Haj Committee, will ensure that the pilgrim gets dosages of all required vaccines as per medical protocol. The Ministry of Minority Affairs, in collaboration with MoHFW, will ensure timely availability of all vaccines for Haj pilgrims.

A contingent of medical personnel will be deputed in collaboration with MoHFW, to Saudi Arabia to cater to medical needs of Haj pilgrims.

25. Oral Polio Vaccination

It is mandatory to give oral polio vaccine to all pilgrims six weeks before the start of the Haj journey and obtain the oral polio vaccine certificate from the concerned health authorities on the Health and Training (HAT) Card. They will be given another dose of oral polio vaccine at the time of their disembarkation in the Kingdom.

25-A. RTPCR Test of Pilgrims

The pilgrims may be allowed to get health verification and a RTPCR test from their district health units. The test shall be preferably done through Government Laboratories including facilities available in Government of India Hospitals, Hospitals of Railways, ESIC hospitals etc.

26. Embarkation Points (EPs)

The pilgrims will be given a choice between the embarkation point of the area and the nearest economical embarkation point as per the difference in air travel costs from the previous year. This arrangement can be suitably modified by MoMA in subsequent years, if the need arises with the approval of competent authority. The details of nearest EPs is as under:

1. Srinagar
2. Ranchi
3. Gaya
4. Guwahati
5. Indore
6. Bhopal
7. Mangalore
8. Goa
9. Aurangabad
10. Varanasi
11. Jaipur
12. Nagpur
13. Delhi
14. Mumbai
15. Kolkata
16. Bangalore
17. Hyderabad
18. Cochin
19. Chennai
20. Ahmadabad
21. Lucknow
22. Kannur
23. Vijayawada
24. Agartala
25. Calicut

In case of number of passengers travelling from an EP goes above or below the economic operation of the air charter services, MoMA

reserves the right to reallocate the passengers to any other EP in the interest of smooth air charter operations and air safety protocols.

In addition to 25 EPs, MoMA may also consider the requests for inclusion of other Airports as EPs with the approval of competent authority and subject to approval of Ministries such as Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation and also authorities of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

MoMA in coordination with Ministry of Civil Aviation must ensure that selection of Airlines for Haj operations is done through a transparent process as per GFR.

27. Duration of Stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The duration of stay of pilgrims may be up to 30 to 40 days and may vary as per schedule provided by the airlines and approved by General Authority of Civil Aviation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Accommodation units in Makkah Mukarramah are hired for the entire Haj season. Buildings are not hired on daily rental basis. The rate charged is for the entire Haj season irrespective of the duration of stay. Hence all pilgrims are charged uniformly. Therefore, no pilgrim is entitled for any refund based on the duration of stay.

28. In Case of Death

In case of death, due to natural causes or accident during the Haj period, burial rituals may be performed as per prevailing practice in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The original Death Certificate is directly, sent to the next of kin of a deceased pilgrim by the Consulate General of India (CGI), Jeddah, after the completion of Haj season.

29. Adahi (Qurbani)

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is the only body authorized by the Government of KSA to perform Qurbani for Haj pilgrims. Pilgrims should not fall prey to fraudsters in the name of Qurbani. Adahi through IDB will be arranged by HCoI for the covers who opt for it (all pilgrims of a cover have to opt together). Once exercised, the option cannot be revoked. The Adahi (Qurbani) coupons will be optional.

The HCoI will issue advisory in format of do & don't for pilgrims which will also have information about Adahi coupon (how does it look, colour, features etc).

30. Legal Status of the Pilgrim

The HCoI, constituted under the Act of Parliament (No.35 of 2002) renders service to pilgrims without any consideration. HCoI works on a "no profit, no loss" basis. It collects the exact amount from pilgrims required for payment of various facilities and services to the concerned agencies. Nothing extra is being charged from the pilgrims except the Miscellaneous dues towards Administrative Expenses including dues of the State/UT Haj Committees as provided in the Guidelines. HCoI, as such, does not come under the purview of **the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.** The pilgrims, therefore, cannot claim any compensation against HCoI under the Consumer Protection Act or under any other law for the time being in force for any deficiency in the service rendered and/or any act of commission and/or omission beyond the control of HCoI.

31. Khadim-ul-Hujjaj (KuH)

Ministry of Minority Affairs sets apart seats to send KuH from all States/ UTs to help and assist the Consulate General of India in Jeddah in looking after the welfare of Indian Haj pilgrims in an organized manner. The KuH should be government servants (selected by the SHC/UTHCs as per the norms laid down by the MoMA) approved by the MoMA.

To optimize the facilitation of assistance to pilgrims, the CGI, Jeddah may hire locals in KSA and women Khadims from existing Indian diaspora.

32. State Coordinators

All States/UTs will be allowed to send an officer at Director level in the State/UT service and an officer of State/UTs respective Haj Committee, for looking after Haj pilgrims of respective State/UT.

The officers deputed by the State will be work under the administrative control of CGI, Jeddah.

The CGI, Jeddah may also hire the services of locals and from Indian diaspora on need basis for administrative management during Haj core period. This arrangement will enable the CGI, Jeddah to have an administrative setup for Haj manage without diverting the addition resources to KSA.

33. Persons with Special needs

(i) The persons with benchmark disability/disabilities who cannot travel alone, as certified by the medical authorities, applying for Haj must be accompanied by an able-bodied person during all stages of the Haj journey.

(ii) He/ She should be the blood relative of such a person.

Assistance to Divyangjan and elderly pilgrims will be provided by the Indian Haj Mission on a need basis.

The Supreme Court of India, in its April 16, 2013 judgment, barred all courts and authorities from interfering with the Haj process.