

New Haj policy: Govt likely to increase Haj expenditures by Rs40,000

Islamabad: The new Haj Policy would be announced in third week of current month after getting approval from the federal cabinet, said official sources of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony here on Wednesday. Talking to APP, the sources said Draft Haj Policy, prepared in consultation with all stakeholders, has almost been finalized and likely to be presented before the federal cabinet by second week of January.

The applications for securing berth in Government Haj Scheme would be invited from the general public by last week of January 2019. This year over 184,210 Pakistanis would perform Haj, the source said adding that keeping in view increase in dollar-rupee parity ratio, Haj expenditures of government scheme are likely to increase from Rs40,000 to Rs50,000.

According to Haj agreement inked between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia last year, the immigration and other formalities of 35,000 intending Hujjaj from Sindh will be completed at Karachi airport. The ministry was contemplating to retain the quota for government and private Haj operators by 60:40 respectively, source said adding that the ministry has proposed open sky policy for airlines to transport Hujjaj to Saudi Arabia.

The Haj dues of the applicants would be kept in Sharia Complaint remunerative accounts. Pakistanis will be given E-visas. Immigration of intending pilgrims would be conducted in Sindh at Karachi airport. Food facilities for pilgrims would be improved further. Hujjaj, who performed Haj during last seven to ten years could be banned from submitting applications. Pilgrims of over 75 years of age could be exempted from participating in Haj balloting.

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