

**No reduction in Haj expenses, says minister**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Dr Noorul Haq Qadri Sunday said that there would be no reduction in Haj expenses as he was satisfied with the decision of abolishing of subsidy on Haj.

He expressed these views during his talks in programme 'Geo Parliament.' He said that it was his opinion that subsidy on Haj should be abolished phase-wise and that subsidy should be given which was given last year and it should be cut slightly next year. He said that tradition of giving subsidy should be abolished in next three to four years.

Dr Noorul Haq Qadri said Saudi Arabia wanted all the countries to gradually transfer Haj arrangements to the private sector over the next three to four years, which would make performing the religious obligation more expensive.

The countries would have to concede the Saudi demand for privatising the Haj, he said. He said Saudi Arabia had already increased the expenditures for Haj pilgrims. He said his ministry had presented a summary for Haj subsidy in the cabinet, but there could be no consensus among the cabinet members because of the economic woes.

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