

Press release regarding signing of annual Haj-2017 agreement between India and Saudi Arabia at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia:

Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), 11 Jan, 2017: Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs (Independent Charge) and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi today said Saudi Arabia has increased annual Haj quota of India by 34,500.

The decision was taken during signing of annual Haj agreement between India and Saudi Arabia by Shri Naqvi and Haj & Umrah Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia His Excellency Dr Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benten at Jeddah today.

Shri Naqvi said that it is a matter of pleasure that Saudi Arabia has increased India's Haj quota by 34,500. It is the biggest increase after 1988 in the quota of Haj pilgrims from India. About 99,903 people went to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia for Haj from 21 embarkation points across India through Haj Committee of India during Haj 2016. Apart from this, about 36,000 Haj pilgrims had proceeded for Haj through the Private Tour Operators.

The agreement for Haj-2017 was signed at Saudi Arabia Ministry of Haj & Umrah at Jeddah.

Shri Naqvi said that his meeting with His Excellency Dr Mohammad Saleh Benten was very fruitful as constructive discussion was held on whole gamut of issues related to the Indian Haj pilgrims and Haj pilgrimage. The issues included Haj quota from India, transport and accommodation facilities for pilgrims and their safety.

Shri Naqvi, on behalf of the people and Government of India, extended gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Excellency Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdul Aziz al Saud, for his keen personal interest and initiative in organising a successful Haj-2016.

Shri Naqvi said that we are confident that under the dynamic and visionary leadership of His Excellency Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdul Aziz al Saud, the excellent relationship between India and Saudi Arabia will be further strengthened and reach new heights.

Shri Naqvi said that India and Saudi Arabia share the ideals of global peace, progress and prosperity. We are tied together with strong civilizational, cultural, economic and political links. The regular visits by the leaders and senior-level officials of the two nations have further strengthened the relationship between the two nations. The visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Saudi Arabia during April last year added new dimensions to our vibrant relationship.

Shri Naqvi said that Haj pilgrimage is one of the strongest pillars of India-Saudi Arabia ties.

Shri Naqvi said that it is heartening to see improvements in services offered to pilgrims which indicates the firm commitment of the Government of Saudi Arabia to strive for the welfare and betterment of pilgrims. Shri Naqvi said that we would like to express our sincere assurances and commitment to work together to ensure a safe, comfortable and smooth Haj experience to our Hajis in the forthcoming Haj-2017.

Haj application process has already started in India from 2nd January 2017. The last date for submitting applications is 24th January 2017.

Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that it is for the first time that Haj application process in India has been made digital/online.

Shri Naqvi said that on 2nd January, 2017, “Haj Committee of India Mobile App” has been launched. The Government of India has been encouraging online applications for Haj-2017 so that people can get an opportunity for the pilgrimage with complete transparency and comfort.

Shri Naqvi said that in last December, a new website of Haj was launched. The website is in Hindi, Urdu and English languages which will provide all the necessary information regarding Haj. Shri Naqvi said that the website is very useful for those who are applying for Haj online. The website gives detailed information regarding Indian Government’s Ministry of Minority Affairs; Haj Department; Haj pilgrimage; Rules and Regulations on Haj; Haj Committee of India and Private Tour Operators. The website also has “Do’s and Don’ts” during Haj pilgrimage and also a film informing about various aspects of the pilgrimage.