

PRESS RELEASE

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(HAJJ CELL)

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Reduction in Hajj 2013 Quota

The India – Saudi Arabia Bilateral Agreement on Hajj 2013 was signed on March 16, 2013 in Jeddah. This Agreement specified the Hajj 2013 Quota for India at 170,025 seats comprising 125,025 seats for pilgrims facilitated by Hajj Committee of India (HCOI), Mumbai and 45,000 for pilgrims through Private Tour Operators (PTOs).

2. The Embassy of Saudi Arabia, New Delhi informed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on June 05, 2013 that the Saudi authorities had imposed a 50% reduction in the Hajj 2013 quota on local (Saudi) applicants and 20% on all foreign Hajj pilgrims to facilitate the infra-structure work being carried out around the "Haram Sharif" and to keep the area safe and secure for the pilgrims.

3. MEA took up the matter with the authorities in Saudi Arabia and conveyed its concern on the 20% reduction in our quota from 1,70,025 seats to 1,36,020 seats and sought a reconsideration of the decision. On June 21, 2013, Government of Saudi Arabia formally conveyed its inability to accede to our request.

4. In this regard, it may be noted, (i) the Hajj 2013 pilgrims of HCOI have already been selected and partial payments received from them, (ii) work in respect of arranging their accommodation and air transport is in advanced stages, (iii) Most Hajj 2013 HCOI pilgrims (123,511) are first timers since, from Hajj 2013, Hajj through HCOI is restricted to "only once in a life time" as against the earlier "once in 5 years". The eligible Hajj 2013 PTOs, however, are yet to be announced.

5. Keeping in view the above, it has been decided to effect the 20% reduction (34,005 seats) for Hajj 2013 by the Saudi Government out of the existing quota (45,000) of PTOs. Cancellations by HCOI pilgrims till date will be transferred to the eligible Hajj 2013 PTOs, to the extent possible.
