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## **Haj Pilgrimage 2026: First Batch of Indian Pilgrims to Depart on April 18**

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The Haj pilgrimage from India for the year 2026 is set to commence on **April 18, 2026**, with the first batch of pilgrims scheduled to depart for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from various embarkation points across the country. A total of 1,75,025 pilgrims are expected to undertake this pious pilgrimage of Haj.



The Hon'ble Minister of Minority Affairs, **Sh. Kiren Rijiju**, has extended his best wishes to all pilgrims and reiterated the Government's commitment to ensuring a smooth, safe, and comfortable Haj experience. He highlighted that the Ministry has undertaken several new initiatives this year to further enhance the quality of services for pilgrims.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs, as the nodal Ministry for Haj, has made comprehensive arrangements in coordination with the Haj Committee of India, other Central Ministries, State Governments, and Saudi authorities. These efforts are aimed at ensuring seamless logistics and improved on-ground facilitation for pilgrims.



Key new initiatives introduced for Haj 2026 include enhanced digital facilitation through the Haj Suvidha App, deployment of Haj Suvidha Smart Wristbands for pilgrims to locate missing pilgrims and assistance, and the introduction of a short-duration Haj option of around 20 days for the first time, providing greater flexibility to pilgrims. The Government of India has also ensured enhanced insurance coverage of approximately Rs. 6,25,000 per pilgrim, strengthening financial and health security during the pilgrimage. Further, around 60,000 pilgrims shall avail the facility of high-speed train connectivity between Makkah and Madinah, ensuring faster, safer, and more comfortable inter-city travel. In addition, measures such as strengthened real-time monitoring and grievance redressal mechanisms, improved medical screening and healthcare support, and better coordination for accommodation and transport services in Saudi Arabia have been put in place. Hotel style accommodations at Makkah have been hired this time for providing better services to the pilgrims for Haj 2026. Special emphasis has also been placed on streamlining embarkation processes at airports to ensure hassle-free departures.

The Haj operations shall be conducted through 17 embarkation points across the country, ensuring regional accessibility and efficient logistics. These include major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Srinagar, and others.

The Government of India accords the highest priority to the welfare and well-being of Haj pilgrims. Close coordination with Saudi authorities has been maintained to ensure efficient arrangements throughout the pilgrimage period.

Pilgrims are advised to adhere to all guidelines and instructions issued by the authorities, including health and travel advisories, to ensure a safe and spiritually fulfilling Haj.

Shri Kiren Rijiju extends his heartfelt wishes to all 1,75,025 pilgrims undertaking the sacred Haj journey.

**AK/MR**

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