

HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA

(Statutory body of Ministry of External Affairs)

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Sub: Health Requirement for pilgrims of Haj 1435 (H) – 2014.

As per the norms of relevant Saudi Authorities the health requirements to be met by Haj pilgrims are as follows:-

- i) Meningococcal Meningitis:** Every Haj and Umra pilgrims or anyone who is proceeding to the areas of Haj for seasonal work, is required to present a certificate containing that he has been vaccinated against this disease (before his arrival in Saudi Arabia by a period of not less than 10 days and not more than 3 years) as a condition for obtaining visas for Haj, Umra or seasonal work. The health authority in the country from where the pilgrims are coming should make sure that the dose of *Tetra Vaccine (ACYW135)* has been given to them.
- ii) Seasonal Influenza:** The Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia recommends that every Haj and Umra pilgrims should be given *Seasonal Influenza Vaccine*, especially those who are suffering from chronic diseases (heart diseases, kidney diseases, respiratory diseases, nerve diseases, diabetes) and patients of congenital and acquired HIV and metabolic diseases as well as pregnant women, children of less than (5) years and excessively obese people.
- iii) Health Education:** The health authorities in the countries from where Haj pilgrims are coming should educate their Haj pilgrims about the infectious diseases, their types, their symptoms, ways of their communication, their repercussions and the methods of prevention from these diseases.
- iv) Food items:** Those arriving in Saudi Arabia, including Haj and Umra pilgrims, are not allowed to bring items in their luggage unless the food items are securely canned or can be easily opened for screening, and in quantities which are enough for travelers by road for using it during their travel only.
- v) Special measures for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV):** The Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia recommends that all those who are coming this year for Haj and Umra and they are suffering from heart diseases, kidney diseases, respiratory diseases and diabetes, HIV Congenital and acquired. Oncological diseases, pregnant women and children, should postpone the performance of Haj and Umra this year, for safety reasons.

The Ministry also recommends to adhere to the following health guidelines in order to check the spread of MERS-CoV and other respiratory diseases:

- a) Use tissue paper / handkerchief when coughing or sneezing and dispose it off in the dustbin.
- b) Avoid contact with eyes, nose and mouth by hands as much as possible.
- c) Avoid direct contact with people suffering from fever with respiratory symptoms such as cold and cough etc. and sharing their personal effects.
- d) Wear masks at congested places.
- e) Maintain personal cleanliness.

vi) **International Outbreak Response:** In case of health emergency causing international concern or eruption of diseases which are subject to international health regulations in any country from where Haj or Umra pilgrims are coming, the Health Authorities in Saudi Arabia may take additional precautionary measures for those who are coming from these countries in coordination with the World Health Organization at that time, in order to avoid the spread of infection among Haj & Umra pilgrims or its communication to their countries.”

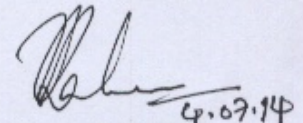
2. The travel advice from World Health Organization (WHO) on MERS-CoV incorporates, inter alia, the following:-

Guidelines for the prevention, detection and management of imported cases of MERS.

- a) Visitors to KSA with pre-existing major medical conditions (e.g. chronic disease such as diabetes, chronic lung disease, immunodeficiency) can increase the likelihood of illness including MERS infection during travel. They should consult a health care provider before travelling to review the risk and assess whether travelling to KSA is advisable.
- b) Hands should be washed often with soap and water.
- c) Undercooked meat or food prepared under unsanitary conditions to be avoided.
- d) Fruits and vegetable be properly washed before eating.
- e) Unnecessary contact with farm, domestic and wild animals is avoided.
- f) Mouth and nose should be covered with a tissue while coughing or sneezing.
- g) If the returning person develops signature acute respiratory illness with fever and cough during the two weeks after their return, they should seek medical attention and immediately notify the local health authority for further treatment in India.

3. The instructions relating to training, documentation (HAT Card), medical screening etc. have already been circulated through the Guidelines for Haj-2014, Haj Guide for Haj-2014 and letter No.HC-19/50/2014/3853 dated 27.02.2014.

4. It is requested that the pilgrims may be sensitized to strict compliance of all these instructions / guidelines.



(Ataur Rahman)
Chief Executive Officer.

CC to:-

1. The Executive Officer / Secretary, All State / Union Territory Haj Committees.
2. Computer Section, Haj Committee of India.
3. The Chairman & All Members, Haj Committee of India for kind information.