

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Prince Elegushi outlines Hajj preparations, accommodation, feeding, airlifting amid rising temperatures



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## Historic milestone as first Hajj flight departs from Owerri

- It's testament to Nigeria's unity, faith, collective progress — VP Shettima
- Hails Uzodinma for fostering religious tolerance
- As 315 pilgrims from Imo, Abia, Bayelsa depart for Madinah

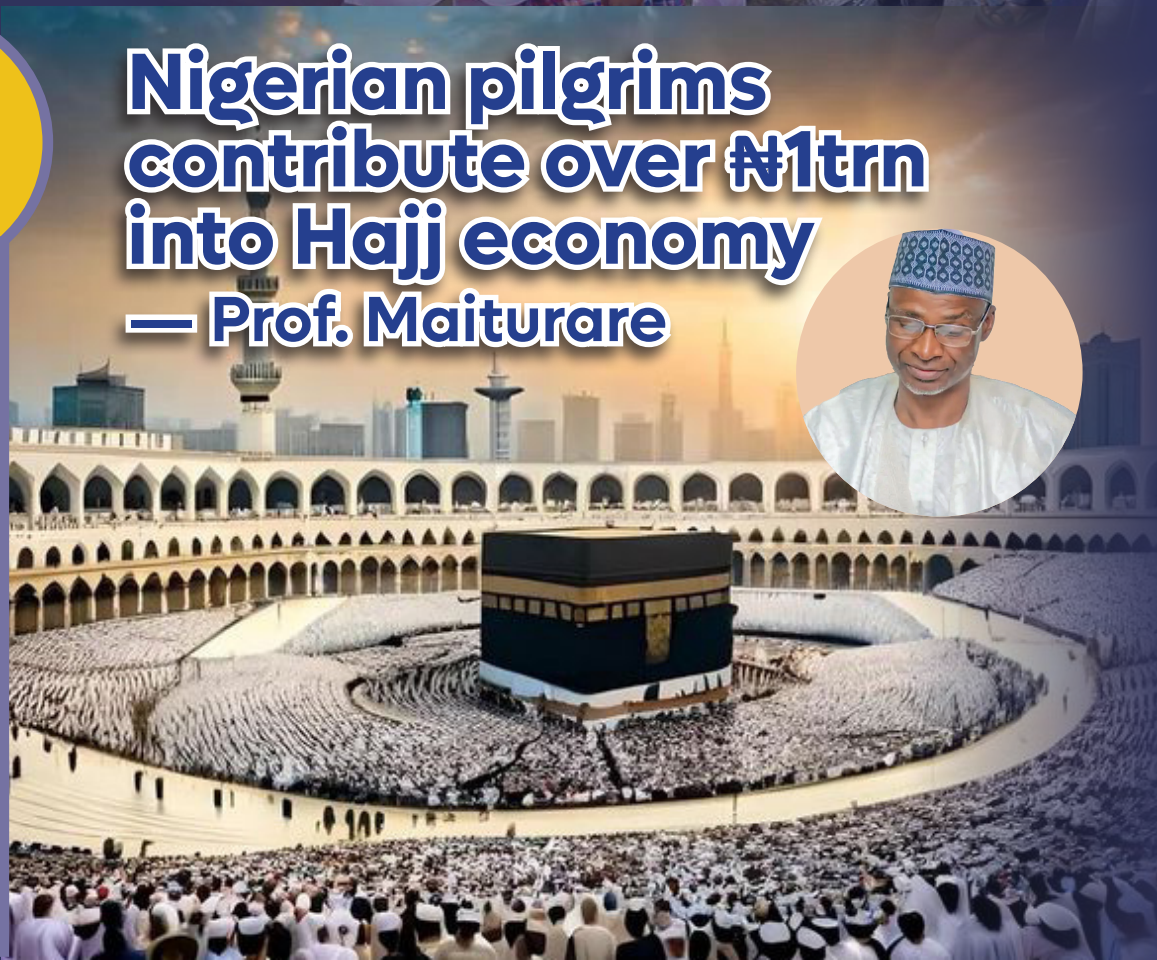


Jaiz Bank calls for harnessing Islamic Finance to boost Nigeria's Hajj Savings, investment opportunities

### The Paradox of Rising Costs and Falling Numbers

### Hajj and the hidden power of Ihram

## Nigerian pilgrims contribute over ₦1trn into Hajj economy — Prof. Maiturare







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## Ihram: Entering the Sacred State

The pilgrim should observe the Sunnahs of ihram, namely doing ghusl, applying perfume and praying. Then he should enter ihram after he finishes the prayer or after boarding his means of transportation.

### 1 Garments

Men should wear two white, unstitched cloths (Izar and Rida), while women wear any modest clothing covering the entire body except the face and hands.

### 2 Ghusl

When the pilgrim approaches Makkah, he should do ghusl before entering if possible, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did ghusl before entering Makkah. (Narrated by Muslim, 1259) or Wudu (ablution) and ensure nails are trimmed and hair is cut if necessary.

### 3 Prohibitions

Avoid cutting hair or nails, using perfumes, hunting, marital relations, and engaging in arguments or foul language.

Entering Ihram signifies a shift from daily life to a sacred journey, emphasizing spiritual purification and closeness to Allah.

📞 @nigeriahajj.com



## Arrival to Ka'aba

Upon arrival in Mecca, pilgrims perform Tawaf, circling the Kaaba seven times counter-clockwise.

### Preparation

- Ensure you are in a state of Wudu (ablution).
- Men should expose their right shoulder.
- Men jog during the first three circles.

### Starting Point

- Begin at the corner of the Kaaba where the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad) is located.
- Raise hands towards the Black Stone and recite *Bismillahi Allahu Akbar*.

### Circumambulation

- Walk counter-clockwise around the Kaaba seven times.
- Recite prayers, supplications, and verses from the Quran.
- From the Ruqnu Yaan to Hajar al Aswad, recite "*Rabbabba atina fidduniya, hasanatan wafii akhirati hasanatan waqina azabannar*".

### Muqam Ibrahim and Zamzam

- Pilgrims perform two units of prayer (*Rak'ahs*, *Surah Kafirun* in first *raka'ah* and *surah Al-Iklas* in second) behind the Maqam Ibrahim and drink Zamzam water after Tawaf (Men cover the right shoulder)

Tawaf is a deeply spiritual and physically engaging part of the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage, embodying the essence of worship and devotion in Islam.

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## Intentions (Niyyah): Declaring Your Pilgrimage

Niyyah is the formal intention to perform Hajj, signifying dedication and commitment. Pilgrims recite the Talbiyah, declaring their presence and devotion to Allah.

### Recitation

1. If he is doing **Tamattu'**, he should say, "Labbayk Allahumma bi 'Umrah (Here I am, O Allah, for 'Umrah)."
2. If he is doing **Qiran**, he should say, "Labbayk Allahumma bi Hajjah wa 'Umrah (Here I am, O Allah, for Hajj and 'Umrah)."
3. If he is doing **Ifrad**, he should say, "Labbayk Allahumma Hajjan (Here I am, O Allah, for Hajj)."

Then he should say, "*Allaahumma hadhihi hijjah la riyaa fiha wa la sum'ah*" (O Allah, this is a pilgrimage in which there is no showing off or seeking reputation)."

### Significance

The intention marks the start of the pilgrimage, shifting focus from daily life to a sacred journey towards spiritual closeness to Allah.

Pilgrims recite the Talbiyah: "*Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik, Labbaik La Shareeka Laka Labbaik. Innal-Hamda Wan-Ni'mata Laka Wal-Mulk, La Shareeka Laka.*" ("Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Verily all praise, grace, and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner.")

Making the intention is an essential first step, setting the tone for the rest of the pilgrimage.

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## Sa'i: Walking Between Safa and Marwah

Following Tawaf, pilgrims perform Sa'i, walking seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwah, commemorating Hagar's search for water for her son Ishmael.

### Start at Safa

1. Begin the walk at Safa, facing the Kaaba and making supplications.

### Walk to Marwah

2. Walk towards Marwah, increasing pace between the marked green lights, if possible (men only).

### Repeat Seven Times

3. Alternate between Safa and Marwah, completing seven circuits (which ends at Marwa).

Sa'i embodies perseverance, trust in Allah, and the search for divine blessings, reinforcing faith and dependence on God's mercy.

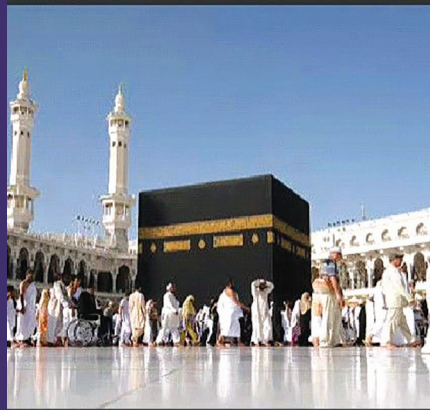
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# Hajj Financing: The Path Forward

Nigeria's Hajj sector stands at a pivotal moment. Another success story of the Hajj Institute of Nigeria, the Convener of the 2025 National Hajj Stakeholders Summit in collaboration with its parent body, the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria, NAH-CON is the assemblage of experts who charted the way forward for a sustainable Hajj financing in the country. The event held recently in Abuja would remain a watershed in seeking a pathway to genuine financing model.

The rising costs, declining pilgrim numbers, and systemic inefficiencies demand bold reforms rooted in innovation, transparency, and inclusiveness. Embracing digital transformation, strategic Islamic finance, long-term savings, and early planning can redefine Nigeria's pilgrimage management—making Hajj more affordable, accessible, and sustainable.

This transformation requires political will, modern policies, stra-



tegic partnerships, and a collective commitment to Islamic principles of justice and trust. Nigeria's unique leadership position and institutional capabilities give it the opportunity to pioneer reforms that could serve as models across Africa and beyond.

As Nigeria navigates this historic crossroads, it must prioritize the sacred and socio-economic imperatives of the Hajj journey. A future where Hajj is managed with transparency, efficiency, and foresight is not just desirable—it is achievable. The nation's faith, economy, and global standing all stand to benefit from a well-crafted, sustainable Hajj financing model.

This is our focus in this edition, just as we also examine other areas of preparation, in full, expectant mode, for a successful and acceptable Hajj for all our pilgrims.



# The Paradox of Rising Costs and Falling Numbers

**T**HE statistics are startling. In 2023, approximately 95,000 Nigerians traveled for Hajj with an average fare of about ₦2.9 million, contributing significantly to Nigeria's economy. Yet, by 2024, despite a decrease to roughly 51,477 pilgrims, costs doubled, with the fare soaring to an average of ₦6.8 million, culminating in total expenditures over ₦350 billion. This trend underscores a paradox: as demand diminishes, costs escalate, burdened by inflation, currency fluctuation, and inefficient funding models.

The situation worsens with projections of over ₦420 billion in costs for 2025, fueled by high cost of air-lifting, accommodation expenses, and operational costs. The inverse relationship between the number of pilgrims and total expenditure reflects systemic flaws—more pilgrims don't necessarily equate to more affordable or accessible Hajj.

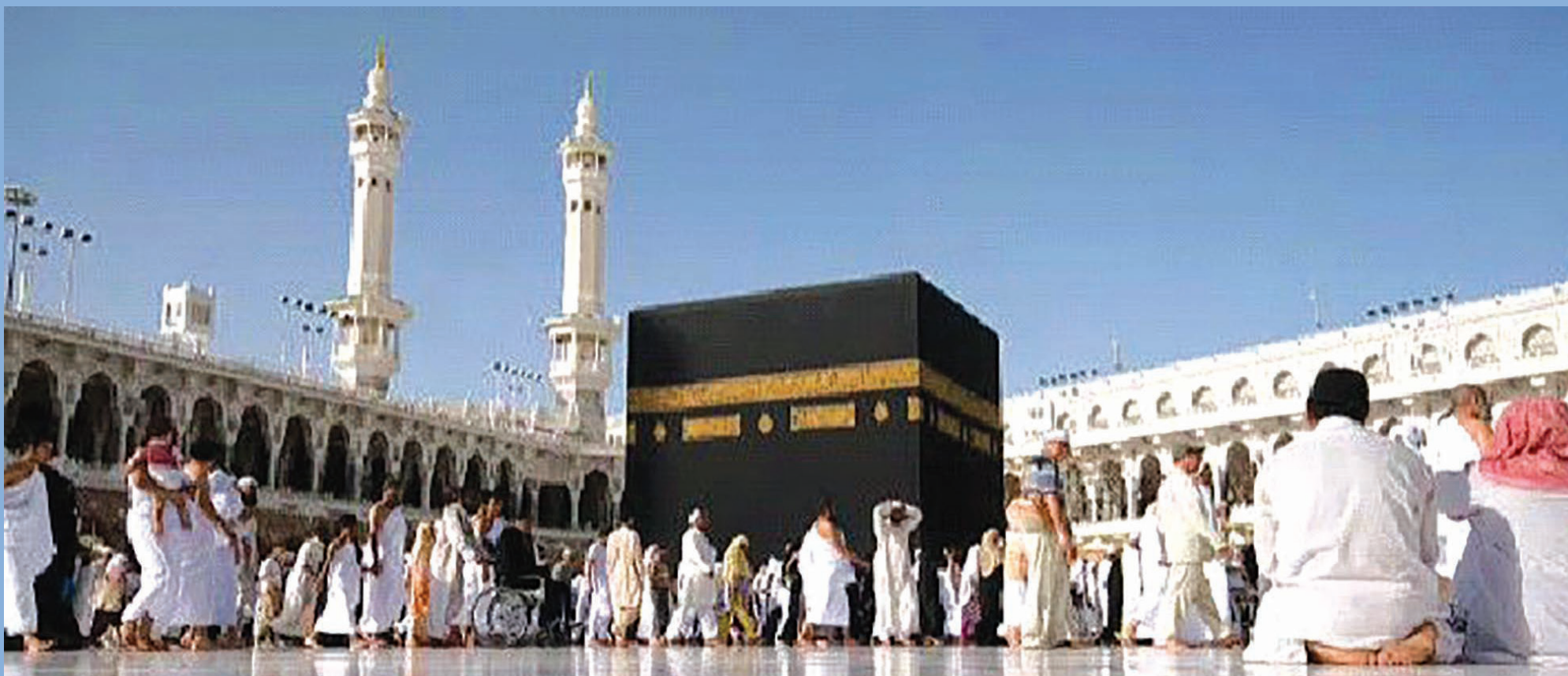
## Why Is Nigeria Falling Behind?

One fundamental issue is Nigeria's outdated approach to Hajj financing, which heavily relies on short-term, reactive schemes. Most intending pilgrims start saving just six months before Hajj, often selling assets or borrowing, leading to financial hardship. The current Hajj Savings Scheme, which collects roughly ₦9.8 billion annually—only about 3% of Nigeria's yearly expenditure—illustrates the underdeveloped capacity of Nigeria's long-term savings infrastructure. With merely 27,000 accounts opened for an estimated Muslim population of 20-30 million, the scope for growth remains vast.

Contrast this with Malaysia's Tabung Haji, boasting over 9 million contributors and holding deposits worth approximately ₦28 trillion. Malaysian investments in halal industries, real estate, and Islamic finance generate significant returns, funding Hajj subsidies and keeping costs manageable. These countries exemplify how strategic, long-term financial planning combined with investment can make Hajj accessible and sustainable.

## Lessons from Saudi Arabia: Digital Transformation and Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia's reforms, especially under Vision 2030, provide a blueprint for Nigeria's modernization efforts. Digital platforms like Nusuk, streamlined visa procedures, electronic payments, and data-driven operations have greatly enhanced Saudi's Hajj management. This digital



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*Nigeria needs to emulate these successful strategies by adopting digital platforms, ensuring data security, and fostering partnerships with fintech companies. These technological advancements can reduce operational costs, improve service delivery, and boost efficiency*

transparency, reduces fraud, and accelerates services, consequently lowering costs. As Maiturare underscores, “The future of Hajj administration lies in innovation, accountability, and private-sector collaboration—no more ad hoc arrangements or outdated financial practices.”

Nigeria needs to emulate these successful strategies by adopting digital platforms, ensuring data security, and fostering partnerships with fintech companies. These technological advancements can reduce operational costs, improve service delivery, and boost efficiency.

## Sustainable Financing: A Call for Innovation

The core challenge remains: how to finance Hajj in a manner that is just, transparent, and sustainable. This, Maiturare calls for integrating global best practices and adapting them to Nigeria's context. Countries like

Malaysia and Malaysia have created resilient systems based on long-term savings, early bookings, and strategic investments. Nigeria should encourage pilgrims to develop a culture of long-term Hajj savings—similar to how Malaysians contribute regularly—thus spreading costs over years instead of speculative, last-minute contributions.

Moreover, leveraging Islamic finance instruments—such as sukuk, waqf, and Islamic development bank guarantees—can facilitate early financing arrangements. Strategic collaborations with financial institutions like Jaiz Bank, which champions Islamic banking principles, are vital. Abdulkarim, Jaiz Bank's Executive Director, advocates shifting from reactive short-term savings to strategic investment models, emphasizing that Nigeria's actual Hajj expenditure far exceeds current savings, leaving a significant gap. Filling this gap can enable Nigeria to negotiate better deals with service providers, secure

early reservations, and even lower costs overall.

## Government's Role: Policy, Regulation, and Leadership

The Nigerian government, through NAHCON and other agencies, has a crucial role in creating an enabling environment. Policies that promote transparency, monitor and regulate costs, and provide incentives for long-term savings are essential. Introducing incentives for early deposits, providing guarantees for investments, and fostering partnerships with private and international financial institutions can stimulate a more sustainable system.

Furthermore, Nigeria's pioneering status—being the only country with a dedicated Hajj summit and Hajj institute dedicated to training and research—positions it uniquely to lead reform. Utilising these institutional advantages, Nigeria can develop a

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*Pilgrims place great faith and financial sacrifice in this spiritual journey, and Nigeria must develop systems rooted in justice*

comprehensive policy framework that encourages innovation, ensures accountability, and fosters inclusiveness for all Muslim-centered financial initiatives.

## Broader Impacts on National Development

Transforming Nigeria's Hajj financing system can have far-reaching socio-economic impacts. It can create a robust Islamic finance ecosystem, generate employment, stimulate real estate and hospitality sectors, and promote financial inclusion, especially for underserved communities. Furthermore, managing Hajj more efficiently aligns with Nigeria's broader development goals of economic diversification and financial sector reform.

Effective Hajj financing models also serve as prototypes for other sectors—such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure—where long-term planning, strategic investments, and digital transformation can catalyze growth.

## Ensuring Ethical and Moral Responsibility

A core element that underpins this reform must be the sacred duty to serve pilgrims fairly and ethically. Maiturare emphasizes that Hajj is a sacred trust. Pilgrims place great faith and financial sacrifice in this spiritual journey, and Nigeria must develop systems rooted in justice, transparency, and trustworthiness. Only then can Nigeria uphold the sanctity of Hajj and fulfill Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) guidance that each leader has a responsibility to their flock.



***“Nigeria must adopt a more efficient, transparent, and inclusive model for financing Hajj, aligning with global trends.”***

Abuja — The Rector of the Hajj Institute of Nigeria (HIN), Professor Mohammed Nosirudeen Maiturare, delivered the opening address at the 2nd National Hajj Stakeholders’ Summit held at NICON Luxury Hotel, Abuja. In his speech, he expressed profound gratitude to Allah (SWT), welcomed distinguished guests, scholars, government officials, and industry stakeholders, and outlined the critical agenda for the future of Nigerian Hajj management.

Maiturare emphasised Nigeria’s unique position, stating, “Nigeria is the only country in the world that organises a national ‘Hajj Summit’ by this name. If you doubt that, I invite you to ask ChatGPT.” He further highlighted Nigeria’s pioneering role on the continent, noting, “Furthermore, Nigeria is also the only African country to have established a full-fledged institution dedicated to training, research, and capacity building in Hajj and Umrah affairs—the Hajj Institute of Nigeria.”

He described these milestones as deliberate efforts by the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAH-

# Nigerian pilgrims contribute over N1trillion into Hajj economy since 2023 to date

— PROF. MOHAMMED MAITURARE

***\*N275 billion in 2023; N350billion in 2024; over N420 billion in 2025 Hajj \*Calls for Sustainable Financing***



•Alhassan Abdulkarim

CON) to reframe Nigeria’s Hajj management from perennial challenges to models of sustainable excellence.

“This year’s summit is especially timely,” Maiturare declared. “We are at a historic crossroads, where the financial demands and administrative complexity of Hajj are rising sharply amid global inflation, currency volatility, and shifting economic realities.” The chosen theme, “Sustainable Hajj Financing,” is therefore both appropriate and urgent.

Maiturare presented compelling statistics: “In 2023, over 95,000 Nigerian pilgrims paid an average Hajj fare of about N2.9 million, contributing an estimated N275 billion into the Hajj economy. Last year, despite government interventions, the number dropped to roughly 51,477 pil-

grims, with fares soaring to an average of N6.8 million, pushing total costs beyond N350 billion. This year, we are expecting more than 50,000 pilgrims, with an estimated total cost of over N420 billion, based on a median fare of N8,457,685.59.”

He pointed out the paradox: “As the number of pilgrims decreases, the total expenditure continues

to rise sharply. This inverse relationship underscores the urgent need to harness this growing financial pool for broader benefits—pilgrims, the Ummah, and national development.” He stressed that Nigeria must adopt a more efficient, transparent, and inclusive model for financing Hajj, aligning with global trends.

Drawing a comparative example, Maiturare highlighted Saudi Arabia’s reforms under Vision 2030, which include “digitised and streamlined operations—platforms like ‘Nusuk,’ digital visa systems, e-payments, and fintech integrations.”\*\* He declared, “The future of Hajj administration lies in innovation, accountability, and private sector collabora-



tion—no more ad hoc arrangements or outdated financial practices.”

He also emphasized the sacred duty owed to pilgrims: “Hajj is a sacred trust, and as Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, ‘Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock.’ We owe it to our pilgrims to develop a system that is just, trustworthy, and sustainable.”

The summit, he said, aims to explore alternative financing options,

including those successful in other Muslim-majority countries, and adapt them to Nigeria’s context. “We want to build a resilient, self-sustaining Hajj financing architecture that benefits future generations.”

Maiturare expressed appreciation to NAHCON’s leadership for their support, as well as to Jaiz Bank Plc for their sponsorship and commitment. He prayed, “May Allah (SWT) reward them abundantly.”

## Jaiz Bank calls for harnessing Islamic Finance to boost Nigeria’s Hajj Savings, investment opportunities

*Says: Nigeria spends over N300billion on Hajj yearly*

Nigeria is contemplating innovative, sustainable Hajj financing mechanisms inspired by successful global practices, including Malaysia and Turkey, according to Alhassan Abdulkarim, Executive Director of Jaiz Bank Plc.

The Jaiz Bank boss advocates shifting from a reactive, short-term approach to a strategic, long-term savings and investment culture rooted in global best practices.

In his address at the 2nd National Hajj Stakeholders’ Summit held in Abuja recently, Abdulkarim emphasized the enormous financial burden Nigeria bears annually for Hajj pilgrimage, noting that the country allocates about 90,000 slots each year and spends over N300 billion on Hajj-related expenses. However, he highlighted the gap in funding collection and system inefficiencies.

“But the question is: how is this money generated? This enormous sum begins to accumulate only about six

months before the Hajj season. Often, intending pilgrims sell properties, deplete their bank accounts, or gather money from family savings. Unfortunately, there is no established culture of long-term savings for Hajj.

“Currently, we collect roughly N9.8 billion annually through the Hajj Savings Scheme, which is only about 3% of Nigeria’s yearly expenditure,” he stated. “And only 27,000 accounts have been opened for an eligible Muslim population of 20 to 30 million. This shows a huge potential for growth if we develop a more strategic, long-term savings culture.”

He pointed out that the existing scheme largely relies on short-term savings, starting just six months before Hajj, which limits investment opportunities and the scheme’s ability to generate substantial funds and returns. Abdulkarim contrasted this with Malaysia’s approach, where over 9 million active subscribers contribute to Tabung Haji, generating deposits worth approximately N28 trillion. Malaysia’s investments in halal ventures, real estate, and Islamic finance yield hundreds of billions of naira annually, funding their Hajj subsidies.

“We need to foster a culture of long-term savings among Nigerians, encouraging them to think beyond the immediate, and trust the system,” Abdulkarim stressed.

He further emphasized that Nigeria’s current savings, accounting for just N2 billion at any given time, greatly lag behind the country’s actual Hajj expenditure, which



***The future of Hajj administration lies in innovation, accountability, and private sector collaboration—no more ad hoc arrangements or outdated financial practices.***



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surpasses ₦400 billion annually. The potential for better investment and return is significant.

International best practices reveal that early planning and structured financial arrangements, such as guarantees, hotel reservations, and airline bookings, significantly reduce costs. Countries like Malaysia secure accommodations months ahead, often securing discounts of up to 50%, and return to Saudi Arabia immediately after Hajj to plan for subsequent years.

"Early planning and strategic financial partnerships are the secrets of affordable Hajj for these countries," Abdulkarim explained. "Nigeria needs to adopt this model of structured, long-term planning to make Hajj more affordable and accessible."

He called for strategic collaborations, including leveraging Islamic development finance institutions like the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), which extend guarantees and facilitate early arrangements. Such initiatives could help Nigeria develop a more sustainable, investment-driven Hajj funding model, ultimately reducing costs and expanding access for millions of Nigerian Muslims.

Full text of his speech:

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah.

I would like to speak by providing some perspective regarding sustainable Hajj financing, particularly the Hajj Savings Scheme.

To begin, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with over 200 million people of which we believe nearly half are Muslims. We also have one of the highest Hajj allocations in the world, averaging about 90,000 slots annually. At approximately 60% utilisation of this allocation, Nigeria spends over ₦300 billion on Hajj every year. But the question is: how is this money generated?

This enormous sum begins to accumulate only about six months before the Hajj season. Often, intending pilgrims sell properties, deplete their bank accounts, or gather money from family savings. Unfortunately, there is no established culture of long-term savings

for Hajj.

Let me speak briefly about the Hajj Savings Scheme that Jaiz Bank manages on behalf of the National Hajj Commission. From 2021, up to the end of last year's Hajj, we have only been able to collect about ₦49 billion in total over five years. That's roughly ₦9.8 billion per year, merely 3% of the total annual Hajj expenditure.

Even more striking, with an estimated 20 to 30 million Nigerian Muslims eligible for Hajj, only 27,000 Hajj savings accounts have been opened in five years. That's a staggering gap.

To compound this challenge, account opening and collection is usually suspended during the active Hajj season. Once Hajj concludes, we reopen the portal maybe two or three months later. This means that for almost six months, there's little or no collection, resulting in an average account balance of just ₦2 billion at any given time. Compare that to the actual annual Hajj expenditure, which now exceeds ₦400 billion. Clearly, there is a significant gap and opportunity.

Now, let's look at successful models. The keynote speaker has already referenced Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey. To illustrate: in Malaysia, two years ago, all pilgrims received a 25% subsidy from Tabung Haji. That is, if Hajj cost \$5,000, the individual only paid \$3,500—the remainder came from profit generated through their savings.

What we currently run in Nigeria is not a true savings scheme. A proper savings model is one that builds wealth steadily over a medium or long term. In contrast, our scheme largely starts building up six months before Hajj, a short-term model with minimal investment opportunity.

How do we change this?

First, we must instill a culture of saving among Muslims in Nigeria. Many do not believe they can plan for Hajj in 5, 10, or 15 years. We must encourage them to think long-term and trust the system.

Again, let's go back to Malaysia. Though I don't have their exact population figure, by the end of

2024, over 9 million active subscribers were contributing to Tabung Haji. These are people still on the queue, not those who have already performed Hajj. Their collective deposit was equivalent to ₦28 trillion. For comparison, our deposits here amount to just ₦2 billion.

As for returns, Malaysia generates hundreds of billions of naira in profit annually. These returns fund their subsidy model. They are able to achieve this because their funds are invested in halal ventures, real estate, commodity trading, Islamic money markets, exports and so on.

In contrast, our savings remain short-term, limiting investment opportunities and returns. Over five years, our total profit was just over ₦1 billion, a drop in the ocean compared to what is possible.

To improve, we must:

1. Foster long-term savings culture.
2. Allow investment in naira-backed and dollar-yielding instruments to hedge against forex volatility.
3. Leverage strategic international partnerships.

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), through its Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD), assists countries in booking accommodations and other logistics. Countries like Malaysia return to Saudi Arabia immediately after Hajj, during Muharram, to secure hotels for the next year. IsDB offers guarantees and even provides advance payments, allowing for up to 50% discounts.

They extend similar arrangements to airlines. This early planning and structured finance is why Hajj is more affordable for them. For Nigeria, we often begin planning just three to six months before departure—when prices have peaked. That must change.

Finally, we must renew our Iman (faith) and believe that Hajj is possible for every Muslim—with patience, planning, and proper financial tools. Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah. Thank you very much.

### EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

## Prince Elegushi outlines Hajj preparations, accommodation, feeding airlifting amid rising temperatures

By Fatima Saka

There are two sides to this issue. Some pilgrims go for worship, while others may have different intentions. May Allah guide us all. If a pilgrim's intentions are good, they will experience blessings; if not, they might face troubles. It's important for our pilgrims to be good ambassadors of Nigeria.

Anyone who refuses to obey laws and takes prohibited items will only blame themselves. Remember, that country isn't Nigeria. Language barriers and local laws are serious; misunderstandings can be costly. If authorities discover prohibited items, especially drugs, the consequences can be severe—up to losing your head.

It's best to obey the law. Some pilgrims might be innocent, but if they take items from others unknowingly—like gadgets or gifts—they risk getting into trouble. Someone might approach them with a gift for their children in Saudi schools, but the item could be prohibited. Innocent pilgrims might not know, and taking such items can lead to serious consequences.

The authorities won't listen to excuses, as they tend to assume we're lying. It's better not to accept anything from strangers. Education on these issues is ongoing through state and local government initiatives. May Allah guide us all.

Prince Anofu Elegushi, the Commissioner in charge of Operations at the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), shares insights into the preparations and challenges surrounding this year's Hajj pilgrimage. With concerns over rising temperatures in Saudi Arabia, the high cost of fares, and issues related to health and security, Prince Elegushi discusses how the commission is ensuring the safety, welfare, and smooth conduct of the pilgrimage. He also offers guidance for pilgrims on adhering to laws and maintaining Nigeria's reputation as a law-abiding nation during this spiritually significant journey.

The temperature in Saudi Arabia is predicted to be higher than last year's Hajj. Drawing lessons from last year's heatstroke incidents, which caused the deaths of many pilgrims, how prepared is the Medical Team to handle sensitization, prevention, and management of heat-related cases?

Well, there's little we can do to control the weather, and it's not even our country. The best approach is to continue providing adequate education to pilgrims on how to manage the hot weather. We do this through the Enlightenment Department. Additionally, we have a sufficient number of medical personnel on the National Medical Team to handle health issues.

Enlightenment—especially about health precautions—is our best defense. Since it's not our country, we can't influence the weather, so we focus on educating pilgrims to heed medical advice. However, some people won't listen; they'll say they paid their money and are entitled to go anywhere regardless of the intense weather. Unfortunately, you can't force them to follow health directives. Those who refuse advice regarding heatstroke risk serious health consequences—or worse.

**How many members are there in the National Medical Team, and how many clinics are you planning to set up for the pilgrims' medical needs?**

That isn't under my responsibility. I don't have the figures. The Commissioner of Planning, Research, Statistics, Information and Library Services, PRISLS, Prof Abubakar Yagawal handles that. It's best to consult with him to get accurate information.

**Are you promising that there will be local meals for pilgrims in Madinah?**

Yes, indeed. We have been providing good meals in Madinah, and this year, there will be no compromise on the quality or availability.

**How long will the pilgrims spend in Madinah?**

Each group will spend four days in Madinah. After that, they will proceed to Makkah.

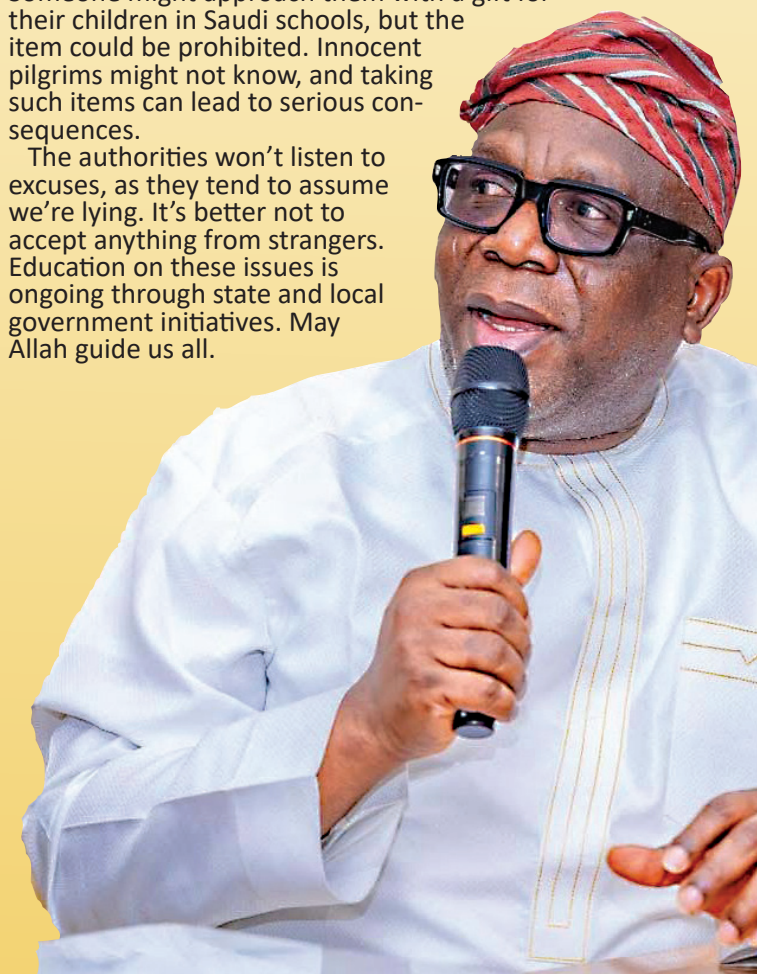
**Despite all the efforts by the Commission, why do Hajj fares remain high?**

The main factor is the exchange rate. Airfares are dollar-based, and since the Naira's value fluctuates, the fare—which is around \$4,000—is largely determined by the dollar exchange rate. There's little we can do about that.

**How prepared are you in terms of accommodation, transportation, and the Masha'ir services?**

We are well-prepared. Accommodation has been secured for all pilgrims in both Madinah and Makkah. We have also secured spaces in the Masha'ir for Muna and Arafat. Transportation logistics are in place, and the airlifting will commence on May 9. We expect to complete the pilgrimage airlift to Makkah via Madinah by May 24.

**What advice would you give regarding prohibited items and Nigeria's image as a law-abiding nation?**





## Faces at the 2nd National Hajj Stakeholders Summit held in Abuja





# Historic milestone as first Hajj flight departs from Owerri

A milestone celebrated with grandeur and deep national pride. The event, held at Sam Mbakwe Cargo Airport, signifies Nigeria's unwavering commitment to making the sacred pilgrimage accessible, dignified, and inclusive for all its citizens.

Vice President Kashim Shettima, the keynote speaker, seized the moment to underscore the significance of this achievement. With heartfelt pride, he declared: "It is with great honour and a profound sense of national pride that I stand here today at this groundbreaking occasion—the first official Hajj flight launching from Owerri. This is more than a logistical milestone; it's a testament to Nigeria's unity, faith, and collective progress."

He emphasized the event's symbolic importance, saying, "This flight is a powerful reminder that Nigeria's strength lies in its diversity and harmony. It challenges misconceptions and proves that our religious plurality is a source of unity rather than division. Today, Nigeria's religious tapestry is shining brightly for the world to see."

The Vice President lauded Governor Uzodinma for his leadership in fostering religious tolerance and supporting this historic stride.

•It's testament to Nigeria's unity, faith, collective progress — VP Shettima

•Hails Uzodinma for fostering religious tolerance

•As 315 pilgrims from Imo, Abia, Bayelsa depart for Madinah

nor Hope Uzodinma for his leadership in fostering religious tolerance and supporting this historic stride. "I commend His Excellency Governor Uzodinma for creating an environment of inclusion and peace, making today's event possible. His leadership exemplifies the unity we cherish as a nation," he affirmed.

Addressing the gathering of government officials, religious leaders, and pilgrims, Shettima praised the efforts of the Nigeria Hajj Commission (NAHCON). "Our collective efforts, driven by dedication and vision, have



culminated in this remarkable milestone. Nigeria's Hajj operations are now more accessible, affordable, and structured for comfort and safety," he stated.

Turning to the achievements of NAHCON, the Chairman, Professor Abdullahi Saleh Usman, expressed immense pride and gratitude. "Since

taking office just eight months ago, my team has worked tirelessly to transform Nigeria's Hajj operations," he said. "Today's inaugural flight from Owerri is a historic achievement, especially as it is the first time such a flight departs from this vibrant eastern city, symbolizing our commitment to inclusiveness and progress."

He highlighted the key milestones achieved under his leadership: "We have secured Tent A Plus accommodations near Jamarat for VIP pilgrims—the first in Nigerian Hajj history—and managed to stabilize the cost of Hajj amidst global inflation and economic challenge."

Continues on page 18



# Hajj financing system is best for Nigeria

— Prof Maiturare, Rector, HIN

•Says: Intending pilgrims saving on ad hoc basis is unsustainable

Prof Muhammed Nasirudeen Maiturare is the Rector of Hajj Institute of Nigeria, he spoke to KaabaNews on the impact of the just held National Hajj Stakeholders Summit held in Abuja as well as the preparations for the 2025 hajj.

What impact and effect would this summit bring to the Hajj industry in Nigeria?

It is going to be a catalyst for a major transformation in how Hajj is financed in Nigeria. It is aimed at establishing a sustainable financing system that will ensure Hajj in Nigeria is not funded on an ad hoc basis but on a yearly basis, as is currently being done. The old approach is very inefficient and leads to delays in arrangements and preparations for Hajj.

How has the last summit impacted the overall management of Hajj and Umrah in the past year?

The success recorded in terms of the timely airlift of pilgrims and their prompt return can partly be attributed to the last summit, where stakeholders were convened, and several issues were discussed. Emphasis was placed on partnerships and collaborations, and we all reached a consensus on the need for all stakeholders to work together and synergize to ensure effective and efficient Hajj operations. To a large extent, we thank Allah that this cooperation endured throughout the entire Hajj season last year. This positive outcome also inspired the theme of this year's Hajj

summit. One major issue discussed was financing; after the fare was announced last year, there was a significant development—fluctuations in the exchange rate of the naira against the dollar prompted government intervention. It became clear that this system could not be sustained. Nigeria needs to develop a resilient and sustainable model for financing Hajj—one that ensures pilgrims are not financed on an ad hoc basis but through mobilized funds, similar to other countries that have developed Hajj financing systems that benefit not only pilgrims but also support national development.

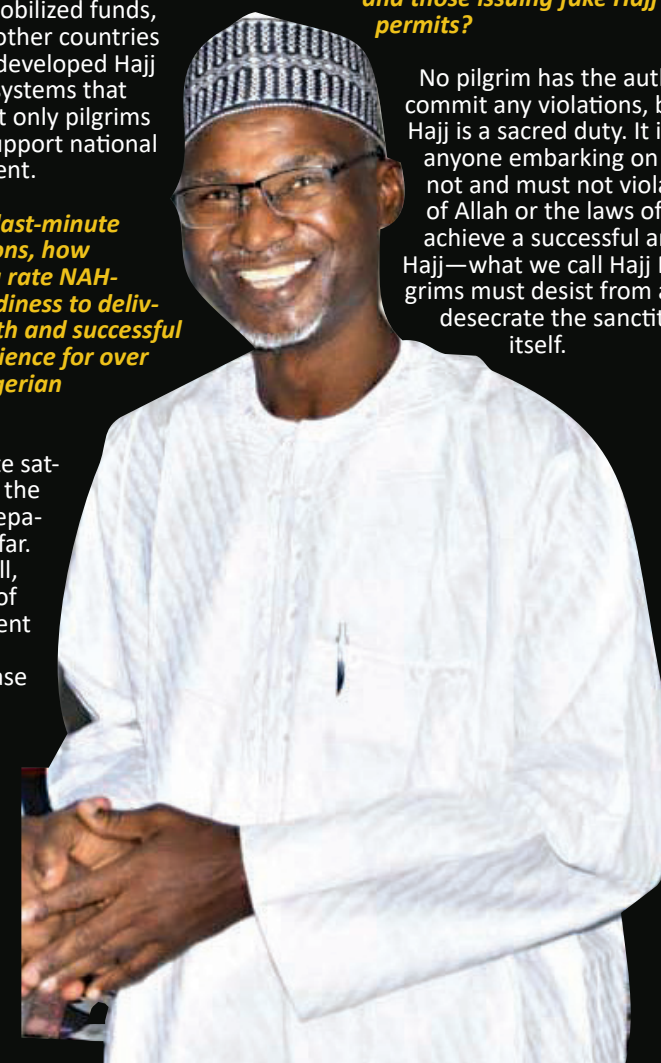
Barring last-minute preparations, how would you rate NAHCON's readiness to deliver a smooth and successful Hajj experience for over 53,000 Nigerian pilgrims?

I am quite satisfied with the level of preparations so far. If you recall, the office of the President issued a press release affirming that all operators are fully prepared to ensure the success of this year's Hajj operations. I believe, to a large extent,

that this is accurate. Many milestone achievements in terms of physical preparatory activities have already been accomplished, and now a date has been set for the inaugural airlift.

The Saudi Arabian authorities recently issued a warning, vowing to punish those without Hajj permits. What advice do you have for all defaulters and those issuing fake Hajj visas and permits?

No pilgrim has the authority to commit any violations, because Hajj is a sacred duty. It is clear that anyone embarking on Hajj should not and must not violate any laws of Allah or the laws of the land. To achieve a successful and accepted Hajj—what we call Hajj Mabrur—pilgrims must desist from any acts that desecrate the sanctity of Hajj itself.



“

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Last year, one of the dents in the Hajj operation conducted by Mallam Jalal Arabi was the poor handling of Tent A in the Masha'ir. The facilities are meant for the elite, top government officials, dignitaries, and eminent personalities, and of course, people with deep pockets. Many of them are decision-makers, and so, it was easy to deal with Arabi, who also had a barrage of criticisms far greater than any of his predecessors.

This year, the new chairman, Prof. Abdullahi Usman, has approached every stage of the Hajj preparations, including Tent A, with vigor, resilience, and determination to record the best Hajj experience ever. Great ambition, you would say. Two weeks before the inaugural flight, Zuhair Bin Abdul Hamid Sadayo, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rawaf Mina Company, announced that Nigeria has secured exclusive accommodations for its pilgrims in the prestigious Tent A+ area in Mina. This groundbreaking development marks a significant milestone in the comfort and convenience offered to Nigerian VIP pilgrims during their sacred journey.

Sadayo explained that the newly constructed facility features 2,800 bed spaces, specifically designed to enhance the experience of VIP pilgrims. "This is the first time Nigerian pilgrims will be booked in the Tent A+ area," he stated, emphasizing that the building has never been occupied before. "This exceptional location is not just a step up from the traditional Tent A; it represents a new standard for Hajj accommodations."

A video preview of the Tent A+ VIP section reveals a modern and spacious Mina camp located just a stone's throw away from the Jamarat buildings, where pilgrims perform critical rituals during the Hajj. The strategic location of the camp aims to provide easy access to pivotal sites, making the pilgrimage experience more streamlined and less stressful for congregants. This new development signifies a leap in the quality of services for Nigerian pilgrims put in place by the NAHCON team.

### Understanding Tent A

Tent A+ is set to redefine the con-

## Luxurious VIP's Hajj vs resilience, sacrifice of an ordinary pilgrim

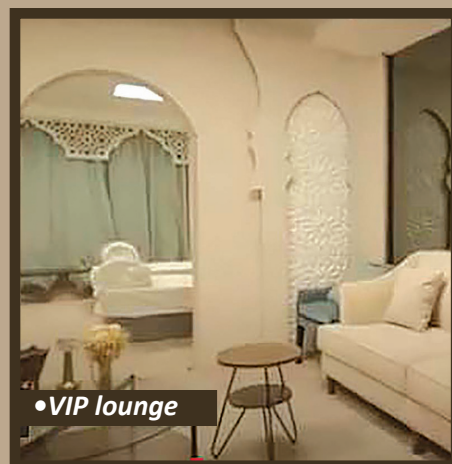
•Cost of Tent A, 5-Star hotels for the rich



•VIP beddings



•VIP relaxation area



•VIP lounge

cept of accommodation for eminent personalities during the core Hajj rites. Located near the Jamarat buildings, it is strategically positioned to provide easy access to key sites essential for performing the pilgrimage rites. What distinguish Tent A+ from other accommodations is its first-class modern facilities aimed not only at providing comfort but also at elevating it to the next level during these essential facets of the Hajj rites.

### Facilities and Amenities

Tent A+ is not merely a sleeping space; it is equipped with an array of superior facilities poised to cater to the needs of VIP pilgrims. High-quality

wares cater to the need for maximum comfort during the demanding pilgrimage, including air conditioning, which is essential during the scorching temperatures of Saudi Arabia. Private restrooms—a significant upgrade from traditional tents where no fewer than 10 pilgrims will queue to use the restroom for an average time of 15 minutes each—will enhance hygiene and privacy.

Dining services will provide access to meals on-site, offering local and international cuisine, simplifying dining logistics, and ensuring that pilgrims can enjoy a variety of nourishing food without leaving the area. 24/7 security and support services will provide reassurance to guests,



•VIP pavillion



•VIP Muna

with round-the-clock security personnel and support staff available to assist with any need.

These amenities ensure that pilgrims can focus wholly on their spiritual journey, without the usual burdens of distractions associated with accommodations.

### Cost Considerations

Securing a spot in this luxury tent does not come cheap. However, it is reasonable to expect that it will come at a premium compared to traditional tents. According to investigations, each Tent A pilgrim pays no less than N18-20 million for the three to four days of rites in the Masha'ir. That whopping sum could pay the entire Hajj bills of two Nigerians yearning for Hajj.

This cost does not include the expenses of five-star hotels in Makkah

and Madinah before and after the Masha'ir. It was also gathered that a five-star hotel in Makkah costs over SR 70,000 for a maximum of 10 days, while accommodations in Madinah for between four to five days cost SR 25,000. This shows that an average VIP spends over SR 95,000, equivalent to N40 million in local currency, for accommodation throughout the Hajj exercise.

However, it is crucial to consider that while costs may be higher, no amount is too much to procure the comfort needed for deeper spiritual engagement. For many VIP pilgrims, particularly government officials, dignitaries, and influential community leaders, Tent A is a must for a dignified pilgrimage.

### The Contrast

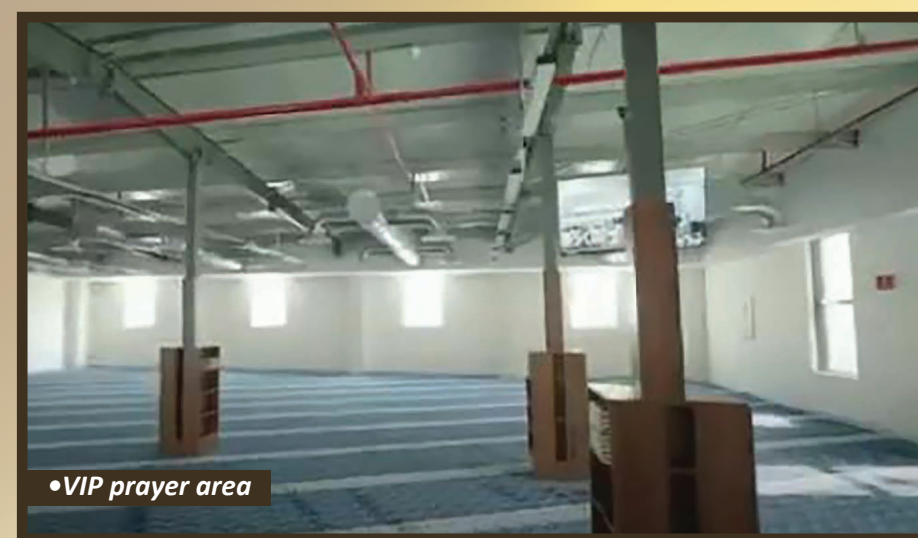
The introduction of Tent A+ for VIP pilgrims provides an exceptional ac-

commodation option that promises an elevated Hajj experience. However, this comes at a cost that starkly contrasts with the more economical, yet basic, options available for ordinary pilgrims. While VIP accommodations cater to a select group with luxurious provisions aimed at enhancing their comfort during this spiritually significant journey, ordinary accommodations services are essential for the vast majority of pilgrims fulfilling their religious obligations on a lower budget.

In stark contrast, the total cost for ordinary pilgrims for the entire 35 days of accommodation services in both Makkah and Madinah is only (SR3000 and 1,056 respectively) SR 4,056, approximately N1,731,013 in local currency.

Additionally, the same services at the Masha'ir cost another SR 4,040 totaling SR8,100 during the entire exercise. In local currency, it is well over N3.28million

As the two groups prepare to embark on their pilgrimage, it is crucial to acknowledge the diverse experiences they will face. Fostering an environment that upholds the sanctity of the Hajj and accommodates the needs of all pilgrims, regardless of status, is essential for preserving the unity and collective spirit of this profound religious observance. Balancing luxury with accessibility will ensure that every pilgrim can seek spiritual fulfillment in Mecca and Medina, knowing that their needs are valued and respected.



•VIP prayer area



## Historic milestone as first Hajj flight departs from Owerri

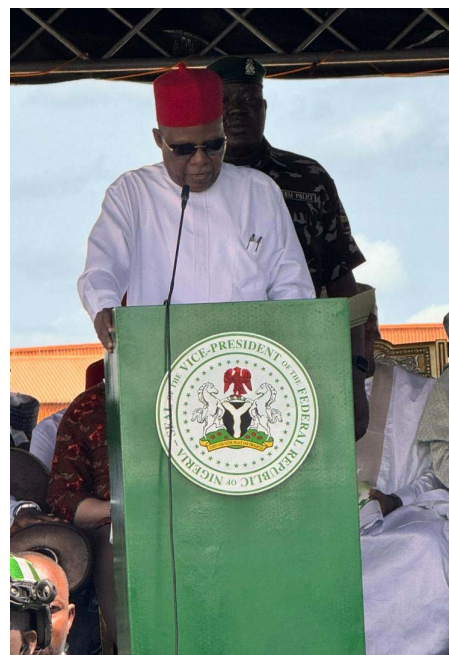
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es, easing the burden on our pilgrims.” Further emphasizing their proactive planning, the Chairman revealed improvements in health and safety protocols: “Given the extrem conditions in Saudi Arabia, we have engaged more officials for offshore duties to ensure the well-being of our pilgrims and staff. Our goal is to provide them with comfort and security throughout their spiritual journey.”

He expressed heartfelt appreciation to Nigeria’s leadership for their support, acknowledging: “Special thanks go to President Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Vice President Kashim Shettima for their unwavering backing, especially in securing financial support and the necessary resources vital for this success.”

As the pilgrims prepare to embark on their sacred journey, NAHCON’s Chairman urged them to carry Nigeria’s dignity and unity into the Holy Land: “Represent Nigeria well—obey your officials, follow guidelines, pray for our nation’s peace and progress, and keep your hearts open to Allah’s blessings.” In closing, the Vice President reaffirmed Nigeria’s dedication to unity and religious harmony, emphasizing that today’s historic flight is a beacon of inclusion and hope. “This event demonstrates that Nigeria stands strongest when every citizen, regardless of region or faith, is respected and cherished. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering peace, understanding, and brotherhood across all communities.”

Also, His Eminence the Sultan of Soko-



to declared that the ceremony holding in Owerri is a big statement—that there are people who still believe in the unity of this country. He acknowledged how firm and tall Senator Hope Uzodimma stood to host this event. He added that the important message this event holds is that religion is an individual affair but uniting ourselves is a truth we must all face together. He commended the Governor for the religious harmony he is enabling. The ceremony marks the beginning of the 2025 Hajj airlift operation, which NAHCON aims to complete within two weeks. The pilgrims boarded the Air Peace aircraft immediately after the ceremony.



## Flynas trains Nigerian staff for 2025 Hajj

Flynas, a Saudi-designated Nigerian Hajj air carrier, has trained over 100 Nigerian staff nationwide in preparation for the 2025 Hajj airlift.

The training aimed to refresh staff knowledge and ensure a smooth 2025 Hajj operation, according to the airline.

This is contained in a statement on Wednesday by Flynas Secretary and Information Officer, Umma Salama Tanko.

The National Hajj Commission of Nigeria will begin the inaugural airlift on May 9.

Tanko said participants included station managers, flight dispatchers, duty officers, boarding officers, ticketing officers, ICT, administrative and financial officers.

She said the workshop was held in Kaduna as part of Flynas’ annual refresher programme for its staff.

Alh. Umar Kaila, Managing Director of First Planet Travels and Flynas General Sales Agent in Nigeria, said the training is conducted before every Hajj operation.

Represented by Mr Abubakar Muhammed, the firm’s Administration Manager, Kaila said staff will soon return to their respective stations to begin the Hajj airlift.

“We take staff training seriously. Over 100 employees gathered in Kaduna to prepare for a seamless 2025 Hajj operation, as we’ve done for a decade.

“Flynas treats Nigerian pilgrims as



• Almohanna, CEO, Flynas

kings, offering world-class service since launching operations in Nigeria in 2014,” Kaila said.

He urged staff to use the training to stay informed and improve their service to Nigerian pilgrims.

“Training and retraining are key to Flynas’ success in Nigeria over the past ten years.

“Do not relent in maintaining our global reputation for excellence, professionalism, and dedication,” he said.

Mr Nuruddeen Abdallah of Bibty Media Ltd. addressed participants on effective communication with pilgrims for a successful Hajj.

Abdallah noted that Flynas had flown over 162,024 Nigerian pilgrims to Saudi Arabia over ten years without any issues.

For 2025, the airline will transport 12,506 pilgrims from FCT, Kebbi, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Sokoto, and Zamfara

## Nusuk card to be color-coded for easy identification

• We’re ready to serve Nigerian pilgrims — Mashariq Dhahabiyya  
• Engages former NAHCON staff, Aliyu Tanko

By Suwaiba Ahmed, Madinah

The CEO of Mashariq Dhahabiyya, the service provider engaged by NAHCON to facilitate essential services for Nigerian pilgrims, Umar Mansur Fadhl Abu-Yazan, announced that the company is fully prepared to serve during the 2025 Hajj. He also revealed that the Nusuk Cards—permitting pilgrims access to all ritual sites—are ready and color-coded for easy identification.

This announcement was made Wednesday during a meeting with one of the service providers contracted to serve Nigerian pilgrims. Abu-Yazan told the Madina Coordinator, Alhaji Abdulqadir Oloyi, and



his team that his company is committed to easing the entire 2025 Hajj operation for Nigerian pilgrims. “We are fully ready to start receiving the guests of Allah, and everything has been put in place for a smooth operation,” he assured.

The Madina Coordinator, Alhaji Oloyi, explained that the visit was part of an ongoing fact-finding mission to assess the preparedness of all service providers for the upcoming Hajj. He requested further information regarding the Nusuk cards, which grant pilgrims access to Raudha. In response, Abu-Yazan confirmed that the Nusuk cards for all Nigerian pilgrims under Mashariq Dhahabiyya are ready. However, he emphasized that they require early notification of the pilgrims’ manifest as they depart for Saudi Arabia.

Abu-Yazan also urged the Madina NAHCON team to educate pilgrims on the significance of the color-coded Nusuk cards for easy bus identification from Madina to Miqat. The team was shown around the facilities designated for the safekeeping of pilgrims’ pass-

ports, ensuring proper management and security.

Among the Mashariq Dhahabiyya officials present was Dr. Aliyu Tanko, a former Coordinator of the Hajj Saving Scheme, who is now engaged with the company.

Meanwhile, the Madina Coordinator, Alhaji Abdulqadir Oloyi, and his team later visited Ekram Aldyf, the second contracted company assigned to serve Nigerian pilgrims. The purpose was to verify their level of preparedness for the forthcoming Hajj. During the discussions, both parties explored modalities for effective collaboration, including passport management and transportation logistics to ensure smooth movement of pilgrims from arrival points.

The group manager of Ekram Aldyf, Muataz Dausy, and his deputy, Marwan Khudairy, called on the Madina team to assist in sorting pilgrims from the international crowd upon arrival, to prevent reoccurrences of past challenges. Both companies expressed appreciation for NAHCON’s efforts during last year’s Hajj and appealed for continued support to ensure success this year.



# The sacred sites for Ziyara in Madinah, Makkah

As millions of devout Muslims flock to the holy cities of Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Madinah Al-Munawara for Hajj and Umrah this year, they seek more than just spiritual enlightenment. They yearn to immerse themselves in the history and culture of these ancient cities, which have welcomed pilgrims for centuries.

Beyond the well-known landmarks like Jannat Ul Mua'lla, the Cave of Hira, and Mount Arafat, lies a treasure trove of historical sites and archaeological museums waiting to be explored. The Hira Cultural District in Makkah, nestled beside the renowned Jabal Al-Nour, offers a distinctive fusion of cultural, historical, and engaging encounters. Spanning 67,000 square meters, this district takes pilgrims on an immersive journey through time, allowing them to connect with the vibrant history of Makkah.

## A Glimpse into the Past

The historic site of Hudaibiyah, where Proph-

et Muhammad signed the crucial treaty of Hudaibiyah, stands as a testament to the city's rich heritage. The Zubaida Canal, built over a thousand years ago by Queen Zubaida, continues to supply water to pilgrims visiting Makkah. Mount Abu Qubais, where a miraculous event involving the moon occurred, serves as a reminder of divine intervention in Makkah's scenery.

## The Life of the Prophet

The Assalaamu Aleyka Ayyuhan Nabiyyu Museum in Makkah offers a unique insight into the life of Prophet Muhammad, showing-

casing clothing from his era and artifacts that bring his story to life. With the collaborative effort of over 150 scholars, the museum ensures authenticity in religious and archaeological details, creating a comprehensive portrayal of the Prophet's life and legacy.

## Guiding Pilgrims on a Spiritual Journey

Private tour guides like Ahmed Khan and Aman Javaid have dedicated their lives to introducing pilgrims to the holy city's lesser-known treasures. "Pilgrims are always thrilled and grateful when we visit sites where the legacy of Prophet Muhammad and the rich heritage of Islam resonate with each step," Ahmed Khan shares. Aman Javaid emphasizes the importance of providing accurate information about the sites, taking pilgrims to lesser-known places like the Cave of Thawr, where Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr sought refuge during their migration to Madinah.

## Madinah: A City Steeped in History

Madinah, the second holiest city in Islam, is home to historic mosques dating back to the time of Prophet Muhammad. Masjid Al-Qiblatain, with its traditional design and renowned twin mihrabs, stands out as a significant place for prayers. The city offers a spiritually enriching experience, allowing pilgrims to pay their respects at renowned mosques and historical sites.

## Preserving Heritage and Tradition

The Makkah Al-Mukarramah Library, located at the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad, serves as a hub for knowledge and research, housing over 350,000 rare books and manuscripts. The King Abdulaziz Complex for Kiswa showcases the artistry of silk knitting and embroidery, preserving a centuries-old craft.

As pilgrims conclude their journey, they carry with them a deeper understanding of Islam's rich heritage and the significance of these holy cities. The experience of visiting these sites is a testament to the enduring legacy of Prophet Muhammad and the importance of preserving cultural and historical heritage.

## The Significance of Ziyarah

Ziyarah, or visiting historical sites and mosques, is an integral part of the Hajj and Umrah experience. It allows pilgrims to connect with the past, deepen their understanding of Islam, and pay their respects to the Prophet and his companions. By exploring these sites, pilgrims can gain a profound appreciation for the cultural and historical significance of Makkah and Madinah, making their spiritual journey even more meaningful.

With additional sources from Har-aramin sharifain, Arabnews

## Places for ziyarah in Madinah Qiblatain

Masjid Qiblatain gained its name on having two qibla (This is the place the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was praying at when the direction of prayer (Qibla) was changed from Al Quds (Jerusalem) to Makkah. The first direction was towards Jerusalem (al Qudus), and in the second year of migration, a verse from the Holy Quran was revealed, ordering the change of the direction of Qibla towards Masjid AlHaram in Makkah. The Prophet immediately changed the direction of Qibla towards Masjid Al Haram. The Mosque was renovated at the time of Umar bin Abdul Aziz, then renovated again during the time of Sultan Alkanoni in 950 A.H. It was later renewed during the reign of King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz in 1415 A.H.

Qiblatain



## Masjid Quba

Masjid Quba was the first Masjid to be built in Islam. The virtue of Masjid Quba is mentioned in the following Quranic verse in Surah Taubah: "...certainly a masjid founded on piety from the very first day is more deserving that you should stand in it..." [9:108] The Prophet built Quba mosque and offered prayers in it after he had migrated to Madinah.

It was also said that the Prophet used to visit Quba Mosque every Saturday, sometimes riding on his camel and sometimes on walking to offer two rakah. He was reported to have said: "Whoever goes out to offer two rakah in this mosque will have reward equal to that of Umra."

Narated by Al-Trim-idhi



Masjid Quba

## The Site of the Battle of Badr

Badr, a town located about 130 km from Madinah, is known as the place where the first battle between the pagans of Makkah and Muslims took place. This remorseful incident occurred on 17 Ramadan 2nd Hijri.

According to records, about 313 Muslims defeated an army of 1,300 pagans in this battle. Surprisingly, the Muslim warriors were not well-trained for war, nor had the equipment. The miracle was that the Prophet's army had only two horses and 70 camels, yet they defeated over 1,300 trained army.

## Masjid Shaikhan

Masjid al-Shaikain is named after the two hills that stands next to it. It is also known as Masjid al-Dar'a and Masjid al-Bada'i

This where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) paraded his army on the way to the Battle of (s.a.w) Uhud. Those whom he considered too young or not strong enough to stand the battle were also dismissed here. This took place on 14th Sha'ban 3 AH (625 CE). The entire preparations for the battle were made here.

During this period, all the Muslim inhabitants of Madinah were called here including the women and elderly. The Prophet (s.a.w) planned the battle, inspected the troops and selected those to participate. Several tender-aged boys had come out with the army with the zeal to fight for Islam but the Prophet ordered them back.



Shaikhan



## Masjid Suqyaa

**M**asjid Suqyaa is located inside the Anbariya train station, and marks the area where Muslims gathered before departing for the Battle of Badr. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) performed ablution and offered prayer. Then, he supplicated for the dwellers of Madina and paraded his forces.



• Suqyaa

## Masjid Jumuah

This is where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) performed the first Friday congregational prayer in Madina



• Masjid Jumuah

## Al-Baqiya

Al-Baqi' is the principal cemetery of the people of Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. Of all of the historic places in Madinah, it is the closest to Al-Masjid An-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque). It is located opposite the southeastern section of the wall of the masjid. Among the notable Muslims interred there are the Mothers of the Believers (the Prophet's wives), with the exclusion of Khadijah and Maymunah (may Allah be pleased with them all). Also buried there are the Prophet's daughters, the Prophet's son Ibrahim, the Prophet's uncle 'Abbas, the Prophet's aunt Safiyyah, and the Prophet's grandson Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all). Recently, some contiguous property was added to it to increase the land area available for burials.

PIX: Al-Baqiya



## Birthplace of the Prophet

The Birthplace of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is near the vicinity of Masjid Al Haram. The Saudi Government has turned this place into a library. It has been taken over quite a few times by renowned Islamic figures and rules. And, it used to be a mosque before getting converted into a library. This is among the must-visit Ziyarah places in Makkah. After any of your prayers at the Masjid Al-Haram, get to the Maktab Makkah, where the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) is situated.



## Museum Madinah

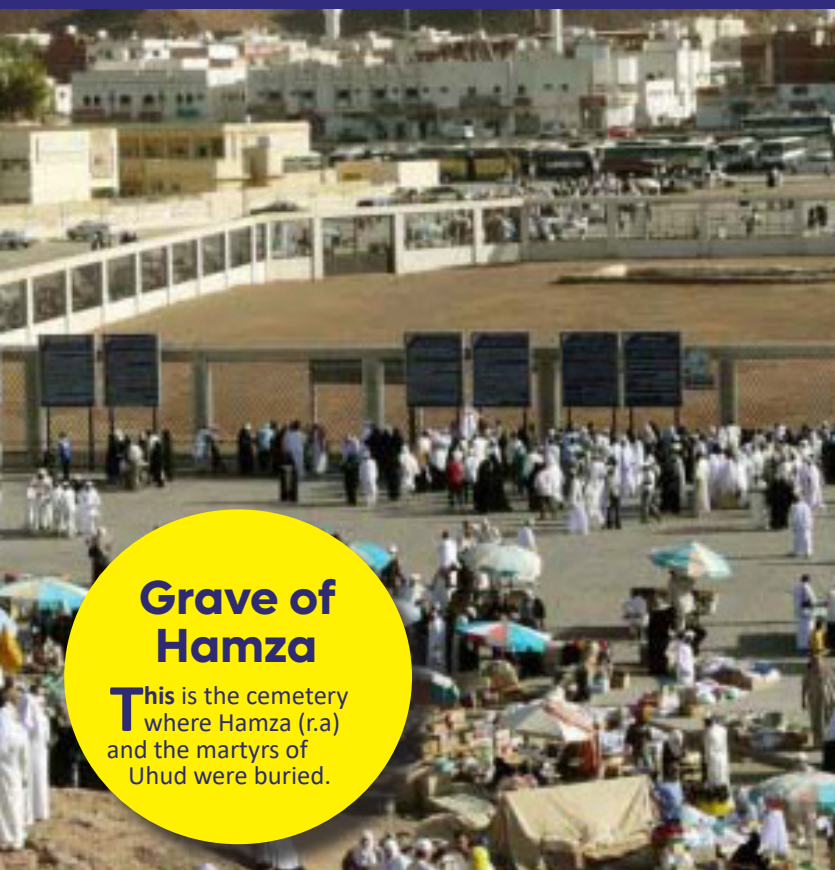
The Prophet's Mosque Expansion Project Museum is located opposite Al Masjid An Nabawi and adjacent to The International Fair and Museum of the Prophet's Biography and Islamic Civilization. The Museum documents the historic expansions of Al Masjid An Nabawi throughout the ages and contains several historic artefacts. But hey! You got to pay about SR200 to gain access into the complex.

Pix: Museum Madinah



## Grave of Hamza

**T**his is the cemetery where Hamza (r.a) and the martyrs of Uhud were buried.



## Mariyah Qibtiah

Mariyah Qibtiah was gifted to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who bore him a son, Ibrahim, who passed away in his infancy. This area, now a graveyard, marks where Mariyah Qibtiah live, and where Ibrahim also died.

• Mariyah Qibtiah



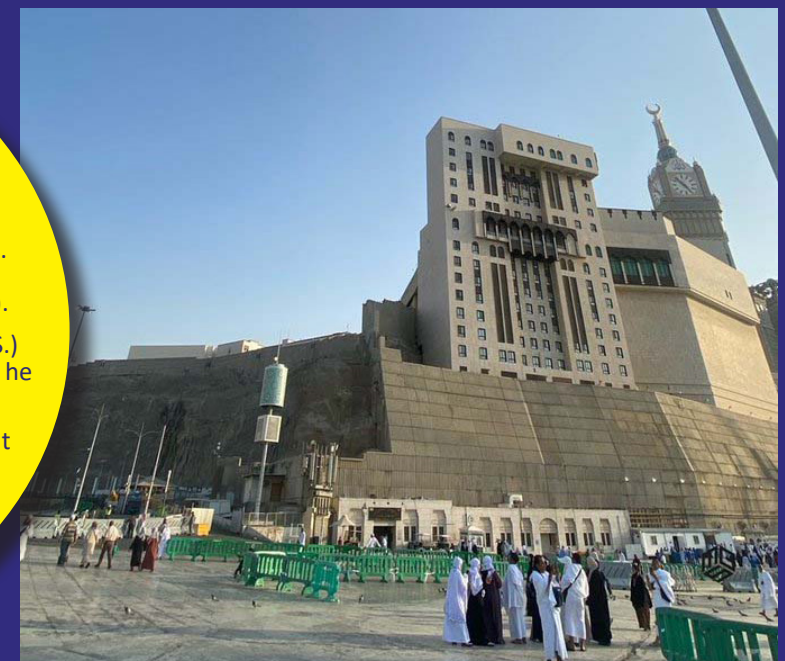
## Mount Abu Qubays

Mount Abu Qubays is also close to Al-Haram Mosque. This mountain is known as the place on which the beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) displayed the miracle of splitting the moon. It saved the Hajar al Aswad during the flood which destroyed everything in the era of Prophet Nuh (AS).

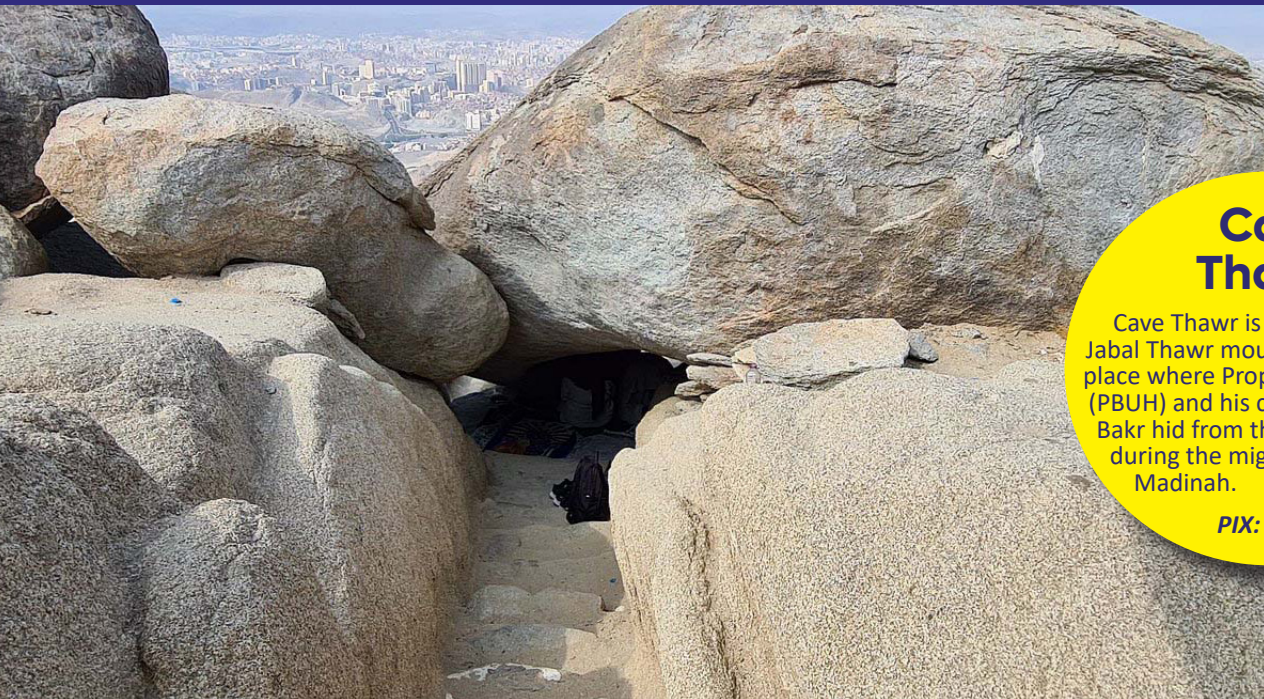
According to Al-Tabari, the first Prophet Adam (A.S.) died at the foot of Mount Aby Qubays. It is believed he was rested there.

Also known that Hajjaj Bin Yousaf fired a catapult from the top of the mountain onto the Kabba in 691 CE. Abdullah bin Zubair was killed during this battle.

PIX: Qubays







### Cave Thawr

Cave Thawr is located in the Jabal Thawr mountain. It was the place where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companion Abu Bakr hid from the Quraysh during the migration to Madinah.

PIX: Cave

### Al Kiswah Factory

The factory is famous for making a special curtain which we see around the Kabba. Historically, and according to scholars, it was the grandfather of the Prophet (PBUH) (Abdul Muttalib) who first placed the cloth on the Kabba building. It is called the Kiswah. Over the centuries, the fabrics and colors of the cloth have changed and evolved.

The Kiswah factory is within a 15-minute drive from the Masjid Al-Haram. It is adjacent to the Museum, known as the exhibition of the two Haram buildings.

PIX: Kiswah Factory



### Masjid Al Nimra

Masjid Al Nimra is located on the plains of Arafat. It is known as the place where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivered his last sermon. On the Day of Arafat (9th of Dhul Hijjah), pilgrims travel from Mina to Arafat. After arriving in Arafat, pilgrims gather at Masjid Nimra where the Imam delivers a sermon.

PIX: Masjid





RC 1396045

## SILVER PACKAGE

FOR HAJJ 1446 A.H (2025)

With TENT A:

**\$10,000**

(Naira Equivalent)

With TENT D:

**\$7,400**

(Naira Equivalent)

**SILVER PACKAGE HOTEL:**

- Nada Al Ajyad Hotel Makkah (4 in a room)
- Oudest Hotel Madina (4 in a room)

**FREE**

- Zam Zam Water
- Travel Pack

**Return Economy Class Ticket**

**DEPARTURE DATE:** 28th May, 2025

**ARRIVAL DATE:** 11th June, 2025




**OTHER FEATURES:**

- Hajj Visa
- Qurbani/Ram Slaughtering
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## VIP GOLD PACKAGE

FOR HAJJ 1446 A.H (2025)

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**DEPARTURE DATE:** 28th May, 2025

**ARRIVAL DATE:** 11th June, 2025




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In the pure embrace of white, we find ourselves standing on the threshold of eternity, clad in a shroud that echoes the silent veil of the grave. This simple, unstitched garment is more than cloth—it is a gentle reminder of life's fleeting nature, a humble cloth that whispers the reality that one day, we shall all return to our Creator. In its simplicity lies a profound truth: that beneath the adornments of worldly wealth and status, our souls are equal, trembling before the divine judgment. As the fabric wraps around us, it beckons the soul to detach from the illusions of permanence, and to prepare for that inevitable return to Allah—our true home.

Wearing Ihram signifies more than mere attire; it signifies surrender—an act of submission to divine commands that fortifies our discipline and reinvigorates our spiritual essence. It strips away the distractions of daily life, elevating the heart above the cares of the material world. As we step into this sacred uniform, worldly pleasures and conflicts dissolve into insignificance, leaving only the serenity of divine proximity. The sacred whiteness becomes a canvas for the soul to purify itself, to rid the conscience of greed, pride, and vanity; guiding us towards a humble awareness that true richness resides in the spirit's nearness to Allah. In this act of renunciation, we cast off distinctions of wealth and status, standing shoulder to shoulder with every believer, united by a shared purpose—striving for humility, brotherhood, and eternal submission to the One who alone holds the sovereignty of all hearts.

### Hajj, Journey of a lifetime

This time, as millions of Muslims from around the world prepare to embark on a spiritual journey of a lifetime, the pilgrimage to Makkah is a profound experience that transcends the physical realm, offering unaccountable and unseen gains that only the faithful can perceive. As Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Holy Qur'an, "And whoever honors the symbols of Allah, indeed, it is from the piety of the hearts." (Qur'an 22:32)

Hajj is a journey of self-discovery,

where pilgrims are forced to confront their own limitations and weaknesses. By donning the Ihram, a simple, two-piece garment that strips away worldly distinctions, pilgrims are reminded of their servitude and inferiority before the Almighty. As they traverse the sacred terrain, they worship, pray, supplicate, and the pelt pebbles at the devil, symbolizing the rejection of worldly temptations in a unique manner while in Ihram.

## Hajj and the hidden power of Ihram

This Ihram is more than just a garment; it is a symbol of humility and modesty. By wearing the same attire, pilgrims are reminded that they are equal before Allah (S.W.T.), regardless of their social status or worldly possessions.

The governors and his messengers, the Kings and his servants, the leaders and follows, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, all in the same manner chanting the same Talbiya, in the worship of Allah. No doubt, hajj is a sample of the day of reckoning, and it has been called the smaller gathering of sort.

Again, as pilgrims circumambulate the Holy Ka'aba and traverse between the hills of Safa and Marwa, they are reminded of the chaos and confusion that will ensue on that great Day.

### The Benefits

Hajj offers numerous benefits, including the cleansing of sins, spiritual rejuvenation, and a deeper understanding of one's servitude before Allah (S.W.T.). By performing the rituals, pilgrims are reminded of the importance of humility, modesty, and obedience.

As the Holy Qur'an says, "And when We have made a covenant with you, and raised above you the Mount, saying: 'Hold fast what We have given you and hearken.' They said: 'We have heard and disobeyed.' And they were made to drink from the calf in their hearts for their disbelief." (Qur'an 2:93)

The secrets of Hajj are multifaceted and profound, offering a wealth of spiritual benefits to those who undertake the pilgrimage. As we reflect on the significance of Hajj, we are reminded of the importance of spiritual purification, humility, and obedience. May Allah (S.W.T.) guide us on this journey and grant us the blessings of Hajj.

At this juncture, pilgrims are reminded of the importance of carrying the spirit of Hajj into their daily lives. It is not about making expensive gold tooth, or the journey is not just about performing rituals; it is about cultivating a deeper sense of humility, modesty, and obedience. As we return to our daily lives, may we strive to embody the values of Hajj, and may we become better servants of Allah (s.w.t.) in the process.

## DO YOU KNOW?

There are five basic hidden secrets about Ihram

1. The simple white garment has a similar concept of burial shroud attire, reminding Muslims about the temporary nature of life and returning to Allah one day.
2. Ihram involves strict adherence to the divine rules, submission to Allah's commands and reinforcing discipline in the daily routine.
3. It allows Muslims to have their overall focus on spiritual serenity by avoiding worldly concerns, attractions or conflicts between one another.
4. As you don into white, simple, unstitched garment, you completely deprive yourself of the luxuries of the world. The entire focus is shifted from worldly possessions to spiritual growth.
5. It keeps you away from financial and social differences, making all pilgrims stand on equal terms before Allah. This fosters the sign of brotherhood and humility.

## Step-by-step Guide on Umrah and Hajj At-Tamattu

By Sheikh Kifah Mustapha

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

For those performing Hajj Tamattu like Nigerians, the following rituals are the basics:

For Umrah: assuming for Tamattu you will be arriving to Makkah before the eighth of Dhul-Hijjah, hence you have to:

- Enter the status of Ihram for Umrah from the Miqat.
- Do tawaf around the Kabah seven times.
- Do sa'i between Safa and Marwah seven times.
- Cut hair.

You would have finished your Umrah and can exit the state of ihram for Umrah, then wait for the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah and from your place in Makkah you should do the following:

- 8 Dhul-Hijjah: Enter the state of ihram again for Hajj.
- 8 Dhul-Hijjah: Head toward Mina to sleep.
- 9 Dhul-Hijjah: Depart from Mina toward

Arafah.

- 9 Dhul-Hijjah: Stay in Arafah till after Maghrib.
- 9 Dhul-Hijjah: Depart after Maghrib toward Muzdalifah.
- 9/10 Dhul-Hijjah: Pray Maghrib and Isha combining prayer and shortening it in Muzdalifah. Pick up pebbles and sleep in Muzdalifah. "Elderly can leave after midnight".
- 10 Dhul-Hijjah: Depart from Muzdalifah back to Mina and:
- Throw 7 pebbles at Jamra Kubra,
- Cut hair.



- Slaughter Hadi (Qurbani). (Usually done by paying money to someone else to do it.)
- Back to Makkah perform tawaf and sa'i (ifadah).
- 10 Dhul-Hijjah: Back to tents to sleep in Mina.
- 11 Dhul-Hijjah: Throw pebbles 21 at Jamarat (7 at each). Also sleep in Mina.
- 12 Dhul-Hijjah: Throw pebbles 21 at Jamarat (7 at each). Also sleep in Mina.
- 13 Dhul-Hijjah: Choice of ending Hajj (ta'ajjul) or stay one more night with another 21 pebbles and sleeping in Mina.
- Back to Makkah performing Tawaf Al-Wada' (-farewell tawaf).

## Pillars of Hajj

Compiled by Zikrullah Balogun

- There are ten compulsory acts for Hajj al-Tamattu: Ihram in Makkah, better from Masjid ul-Haram; or better still at Maqame Ibrahim or Hajra Ismail with intention and Talbiya as mentioned above and leaving Makkah for Muna and Passing the night at Muna.
- Wukuf at Arafaat from morning till sun set on 9th Zilhajj.
- Staying the night at Muzdalifa (Mash'ar) till fajr or sunrise on 10th zilhajj.
- Throwing of pebbles (stones) at Jamara al-Aqaba on the day of 10th Zilhajj between sunrise and sunset.
- Sacrifice of animal on the day of 10th Zilhajj at Mina (same day)
- Taqseer or Halaq (clipping hairs or shaving the head) after stoning of Jamara al-Aqaba and offering of sacrifice after which were all previously prohibited acts in the state of Ihram are now permitted except for three things namely sex, perfume and hunting.
- Continuation of throwing of pebbles at Jamarat for each night spent in Mina starting with Jamara al-Ula, Jamara al-Wusta and lastly Jamara al-Aqaba on 10th Zilhajj at Jamarat
- Tawaf of Hajj as done in Umrah
- Sa'ay as done before during Umrah, after which all prohibited act are permitted.
- Passing of both the 11th and the 12th nights of Zilhajj in Mina, and in some circumstances the passing of the 13th night and completion of throwing of pebbles

at Jamarat for each night spent in Mina starting with Jamara al-Ula, Jamara al-Wusta and lastly Jamara al-Aqaba.

### Prohibited acts while in the state of Ihram

As soon as one has adorned the ihram cloth and chanting the Talbiya, twenty-five acts become prohibited.

- Hunting in the Haram even if it is an ant.
- Sexual intercourse.
- Kissing of women.
- Touching one's spouse with lust.
- Looking at women with lust and fondling.
- Masturbation.
- Engaging in marriage activities likewise, to be a witness and to testify it.
- Perfumes.
- Sewn dresses for men.
- Anointment of eyes with collyrium and application of henna, ointment, cream.
- Shoes and socks for men
- Lying, boasting and abusing.
- Swearing.
- Killing insects.
- Ornaments.
- Looking on the mirror.
- Removing hairs.
- Shade for men.
- Covering of face for women.
- Blood-letting.
- Tooth extraction.
- Weapons.
- Covering of head for men.
- Eating garlic or emitting undesired smell and odour.



**P**erforming Hajj is one of the most sacred acts in Islam, and every Muslim strives to fulfill it in accordance with Islamic guidelines. One aspect that often raises questions among pilgrims is the appropriateness of restoring or enhancing dental aesthetics—particularly installing gold or silver teeth—during the pilgrimage. The cost of gold crowns can range from 1,800 to 3,000 SAR in Riyadh, Madinah, Jeddah or Makkah and may vary based on the expertise of the dentist and the complexity of the procedure.

To address this concern, scholars have provided clear directives based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, emphasizing the importance of observing proper conduct during such holy acts.

A prominent Islamic scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Saalih Al Munajjid was once asked about the ruling on filing teeth, which is often related to cosmetic dental procedures. In response, he clarified, "If filing the teeth is done for the purpose of increasing and enhancing beauty, then it is haram; if it is done to treat a medical problem or to remove a fault, such as a tooth that is longer than the other teeth, then it is permissible." This distinction highlights that any dental modification aimed purely at beautification, especially during Hajj, falls under the category of forbidden acts, as it involves altering the creation of Allah. This is reinforced by the hadith against changing Allah's creation, as the scholar cited, "May Allah curse the one who does tattoos and the one who has a tattoo done, the one who plucks eyebrows and the one who has her eyebrows plucked, and those who file teeth for the purpose of beautification, changing the creation of Allah." (Sahih Bukhari, 5943; Sahih Muslim, 2125).

Again, An-Nawawi elaborated on this ruling, stating, "What is meant by 'those who file teeth' is those who file the four front teeth; that is done for old women

## Implanting gold or silver teeth during Hajj

By Zhikrullah Balogun



and those approaching old age, to make them appear younger and more beautiful. When a woman gets old, her teeth become bigger, so they file the teeth to make them appear more youthful and attractive, as the small gap between the teeth is typical for younger girls." He pointed out that this act is "haram both for the one who does it and the one who has it done to her," because it constitutes a change in Allah's creation and an act of deceit. Importantly, he clarified that "if a woman needs that to treat a problem or fault in the tooth, then there is nothing wrong with that." This indicates that the prohibition is specifically tied to beautification motives, not medical necessity.

In practical terms, installing gold or silver teeth during Hajj falls into the category of beautification or altering the natural state of the body for aesthetic reasons. Based on the scholarly consensus cited, doing so purely for adornment or to enhance appearance is considered haram, especially during a sacred act like Hajj, where maintaining purity and sincerity is paramount. Therefore, pilgrims especially men, are advised to avoid procedures like implanting gold or silver teeth to ensure their actions align with Islamic teachings.

In conclusion, scholars agree that changing the creation of Allah for beautification, including installing gold or silver teeth, is forbidden unless it is for medical treatment or to correct a genuine fault. During Hajj, where the focus is on worship and obedience, pilgrims should prioritize their spiritual state, avoiding cosmetic modifications that involve altering Allah's creation. As one scholar softly remarks, "The essence of Hajj is purity, humility, and submission—things that should guide every action, including how we treat our bodies."

## LEMU IMAM CONFERENCE: Islamic scholars weigh in on egg donation and youth engagement

*\*Create youth councils within mosques, Dr Shuaib tells Imams  
Imams need to change methods that reflect current realities — Dr Jamiu*

**D**istinguished Islamic scholars and religious leaders in Lagos and neighbouring states converged at Lekki for the annual Imams Conference organised by Lekki Muslim Ummah (LEMU). Under the banner "Imams, the Youths and the Law," the conference revealed a shared concern: the controversial practice of egg donation among female students and the growing disconnect between faith leaders and burgeoning youth population, in the face of the pressing need for reform and renewed understanding in Islamic leadership.

The event brought together prominent Islamic scholars, including Professor Abdurraheem Adeleke of Dean, Faculty of Law, Lagos State University (LASU); Dr. Abdullahi Shuaib, Lead Consultant at AS & Associates; Alhaji



Oyinlomo Danmole, President of the Lagos Muslim Community and chairman of the conference; Shaykh Shakirullah Obale, Barrister Iskil Lawal, also tapping from the wealth of knowledge of the host Imam, Dr Ridwan Jamiu among others.

Egg Donation among females: A contentious issue

Professor Adeleke ignited a moral debate with his stance on reproductive donations. "Egg and sperm donation are not permissible in Islam," he stated firmly. "What is allowed under the Shariah is blood donation, because blood can replenish itself—donating blood to save lives." He warned of the moral implications of egg donation,

particularly among young female students motivated by financial gains.

"When someone donates an egg, they attempt to create a lineage outside the bounds of marriage, which violates Islamic principles of lineage and inheritance," Prof. Adeleke explained.

Alhaji Oyinlo-

mo Danmole, President of the Lagos Muslim Community and chairman of the conference, echoed Prof. Adeleke's sentiments, citing the Oxford vs. Oxford case.

Empowering Youth through Mosque Reform  
Delivering his presentation on the topic: "Imam and the Youth: Urgent Need for a synergy, Dr. Abdullah Shuaib made a compelling case for creating youth councils within mosques nationwide. "Many Imams still speak in formal, classical Arabic or traditional expressions that young people may not fully understand or relate to," Dr. Shuaib noted. He advocated for involving youths in sermon planning, mosque activities, and decision-making processes to bridge the gap between traditional mosque practices and the needs of modern youth.

"When young people feel they have ownership and voice in their community, they develop a sense of accountability and enthusiasm for service," Dr. Shuaib said. "This is how we rebuild trust and relevance in our mosques."

Imams need to change methods that reflect current realities — Dr Jamiu  
Dr. Ridwan Jamiu, Chief Imam of Lekki, emphasized the need for continuous learning and adaptation, adding that Imams need to innovate in their approach.

"This conference is essentially a train-the-trainers programme. Imams must update their knowledge and preaching methods—reflecting current realities—without compromising Islamic principles. If we fail to do so, our da'wah will be ineffective or even cause harm."

Dr. Jamiu urged Imams to innovate in their approach, focusing on issues that resonate with youths, such as mental health and online ethics. "We expect that our Imams will be better informed about certain things. They need to understand that the world is evolving. The Imams need to change their methods – not into haram – but into methods that reflect the current realities, so the youths can be carried along. "If da'wah is not well passed, it will not serve its purpose. In fact, it may even bring a negative impact on society," he noted.





## Death of great scholar: Tribute to Shaykh Abdur-Rashid Hadiyyatullah!

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All perfect praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. May His peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon all his family and companions.

Dear brothers and sisters! The president of the Supreme Council for Shariah in Nigeria (SCSN), Shaykh Abdur-Rashid Hadiyyatullah, passed away on Monday, 28th April, 2025. He died after a brief illness in his home town, Iwo, Osun State, and he was 83.

Respected servants of Allah! Shaykh Hadiyyatullah was born in Iwo, a prominent town in Osun State known for its deep Islamic knowledge and heritage. He was widely respected for his tireless advocacy for the implementation of Shari'ah law within constitutional frameworks, as well as his unwavering commitment to interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence among Nigeria's diverse religious communities.

The Shaykh attended the famous Arabic Institute of Nigeria, Elekuro, Ibadan (Ma'ahad al-Arabi) as his launching pad to the world of Islamic education and research before tasting the delicious puddings of the University of Madinah where he read Shari'ah. Thereafter, he proceeded to the University of Ibadan where he did his masters degree.

He has served as chairman of the Pilgrims Board of Osun State. He was also the Director of the Sheikh Ibn Baz Shariah College of Nigeria until his death. He was the first chairman of the Concerned Yoruba Muslim Scholars of Nigeria.

Dear brothers and sisters! Allah Almighty says:

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return. Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.'" [Surah Al-Baqarah 155-157]

It is indeed the eternal fact of life that the Creator, the life-giving and the death-giving, from time to time,

By Imam Murtadha Gusau



gives us some fear, hunger, and a lack of money, lives, and fruits, in the hope that we reap his rewards and the good tidings he reserved to the patient.

Many respected honourable scholars and great jurists have indeed passed away during the past few months and years, and as soon as our tears begin to dry up, and our hearts begin to calm down from grief over the separation of those great ones, we mourn again the departure of other great scholars, may Allah have mercy on them all, ameen.

Here we are today bidding farewell to another eminent scholar who spent over eighty years of his blessed life, educating generations, guiding nations, guiding those who seek, giving ifta to those who ask, and reconciling between the warring parties. He was never apprehensive of misfortunes, never tired of reconciling one another, and he never got tired of bringing the two sides closer together.

Twenty five years have passed since I first met our great Shaykh. He was always smiling, eloquent, deep in thought, great in contemplation, loving the Arabic language, advocating the unity of Muslims, keen on reunification, and devoted in his endeavour to unify the voice of the Ummah. I testify that in all the sessions of the Academy in which he participated, he was always insistent, and reminded us of the need to take refuge in the rich heritage of the Ummah, and the importance of holding onto the abundant intellectual heritage in order to be acquainted with its treasures, and to make the most of it when trying to manage the

calamities and developments of contemporary life. I also bear witness that he was a believer in innovation and disciplined ijihad that is open to the age. Above all, he was constantly asking about the conditions of Islam and Muslims across the globe, and on every occasion I met with him, I noticed his great interest in the affairs of Muslims.

As he has responded to the inevitable call of our Lord, and today he joined a group of people, scholars and jurists, whom he loved and they loved him, we raise the palms of humility to the Honourable Lord that he accepts him among the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, the righteous, and those are good companions. We also pray to the One and Only Allah to have mercy on our deceased, the bereaved of knowledge and chivalry, and inspire us, his family, students, and admirers patience, solace, and contentment with what the Most Merciful has decreed.

Finally, our dear Shaykh, our great teacher, and teacher of generations, your Academy, of which you were one of its pillars, presents – on behalf of its members, experts, and affiliates – their deepest condolences to your family, to the people of the Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN), to the people of Iwo, to the people of the Osun State and Nigeria, and to the whole Muslim Ummah. We pray to the Almighty to have mercy on you, pardon you, forgive you, and unite us with you on the Day of Judgement in the abode of bliss, in a seat of truth with a powerful Lord.

We all belong to Allah and to Him we shall return!

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation; may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet Muhammad in the highest company of Angels, bless him and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him correctly and sincerely until the establishment of the Hour.

*Murtadha Muhammad Gusau is the Chief Imam of Nagazi-Uvete Jumu'ah and the late Alhaji Abdur-Rahman Okene's Mosques, Okene, Kogi State, Nigeria. He can be reached via: gusauimam@gmail.com or +2348038289761.*



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