

Karachi Edition

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Dual air fares

Time sought to respond to court query

By our correspondent

Karachi

The Pakistan International Airline's (PIA) counsel sought time before the Sindh High Court (SHC) to file comments on a court query regarding dual air fares being charged from Pakistani pilgrims to Makkah. The court has asked the PIA to clarify why different air fares are being charged from pilgrims going to Saudi Arabia through govt and private channels respectively.

During the hearing of petitions of Hajj operators against a reduction in their quota by the ministry of religious affairs, the court's attention was drawn regarding dual airfare being charged from pilgrims to Saudi Arabia by PIA and Saudi Airlines through private and government channels.

The petitioner's counsel sub-

mitted that PIA and Saudi Airlines are charging Rs103,000 from pilgrims going from Karachi to Jeddah through private operators, while, on the other hand, citizens who are going through govt channels are being charged Rs60,000 without giving any reason.

Arguing on the petitions, Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Nazar Akbar submitted that there was no discrimination among the Hajj operators as all operators are bound to follow the Hajj policy that was approved by the cabinet for the year 2009. He said that the Hajj policy was made within the ambit of the Constitution and powers given to the legislature. He said that all Hajj operators were asked to deposit cash guarantees instead of bank guarantees for Hajj quota. The court adjourned the hearing of the petition for August 26.