

PIA to raise Umra and Haj fares

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LAHORE - PIA is going to increase its fares for Umra and Haj pilgrims in coming June and during Hajj operation this year, sources in the national flag carrier said here on Tuesday.

It is to remind that PIA has already increased Rs 6,300 for its fare of Umra from May 1, 2008 which was implemented from May 16, while a further raise of Rs 4000 to 5000 was expected in June next month, an official of PIA seeking anonymity said.

To a question that fare between India and Jeddah was lesser than that of Pakistan and Jeddah despite that fact that distance with India was more than the latter, the spokesman of PIA said that two factors matter here, first fuel prices in India were less than that of Pakistan and secondly Indian currency is more valuable than that of Pakistan.

About the 100 per cent increase

in Hajj fare this year as compared to last year, he said that no doubt the fuel prices this year have increased almost 100 per cent but even then PIA would not increase the fare with that ratio.

He said that last year fuel price was \$70 per barrel while now it has touched to about \$125 per barrel. He said that Hajj fare could be from Rs 60,000 to 65,000 per passenger. The sources in the airline disclosed that PIA could raise the Hajj fare even more than this as the airline management has taken decision that the airline would not bear any further loss as it was already facing severe losses.

They said that Hajj operation this year would be carried out on no profit no loss basis.

Meanwhile, leader of Jamaat-i-Islami and former MNA Dr. Fareed Ahmad Piracha has protested over the PIA decision of increasing Umra and Haj fares.