



*Jehlum Post News / Srinagar/ August 12, 2015/ In order to facilitate Haj pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir upon their arrival in Saudi Arabia, Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Wednesday issued directions for deputation of Secretary Revenue to Medina Munawarah, to personally oversee the arrangements made by the State Haj Committee. Apart from day-to-day coordination, the Revenue Secretary, who is also the Administrative Secretary for Haj & Auqaf, will liaise with Haj Committee of India and Saudi Government to ensure hassle-free customs and immigration clearance of the Hajis and fool-proof arrangements made for proper boarding and lodging in the holy cities of Makkah Sharief*

*and Medina Munawarah. Mufti Sayeed gave this direction while chairing a high-level meeting to finalize arrangements for Haj-2015. Minister for Horticulture & Hajj & Auqaf, A. R. Veeri, Chief Secretary, Iqbal Khandey, DGP, K. Rajendra, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, B. B. Vyas, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Asgar Samoon and Secretary Revenue, Mohammad Afzal Bhat attended the meeting. Laying stress on making appropriate arrangements at Medina Munawarah, the Chief Minister, who is also the Chairperson of State Haj Committee, said it will be the responsibility of the Revenue Secretary to ensure that Haj pilgrims do not face any problem after they touchdown at the airport. He said the arrangements made for pilgrims in the Holy Land are as important as the arrangements made here. "Majority of the pilgrims are performing Haj-e-Baitullah for the first time. Their proper handholding till they complete the holy pilgrimage is the responsibility of the Government," he observed. □*

*Asking the administration to take care of Jammu-based pilgrims, who are scheduled to arrive in Srinagar a day ahead of their flights, Mufti Sayeed tasked the respective Deputy Commissioners and IGP Traffic for their hassle-free transportation to Haj House at Bemina. He was informed that the Haj Committee has a Contingency Plan in place for those pilgrims who are not able to reach Srinagar on scheduled date. The Chief Minister stressed upon proper training of Haj pilgrims, in particular on taking adequate number of Ahrams, proper identification and baggage standardization. He called upon the Haj & Auqaf Minister to ensure that Hajis do not face any difficulty during check-in and customs clearance as well as disbursement of foreign exchange. The first Haj flight from Srinagar to Medina Munawarah is scheduled to take off from Srinagar International Airport at 9.00 am on August 17. As many as 6684 Haj pilgrims will board direct Srinagar-Medina Air India flights with the last scheduled to fly on August 31. This time, the pilgrims will travel from Medina to Makkah Sharief in bullet trains, which will only be a 90-minute journey.*

*While briefing the Chief Minister about the arrangements made by State Haj Committee, Minister for Haj & Auqaf said elaborate arrangements have been made for security, transportation, boarding and lodging of pilgrims. Arrangements for additional accommodation through JKTDC have also been made, in case need arises. "All concerned HoDs will visit Haj House on August 15 to see that proper arrangements are in place," he stated. It was given out in the meeting that the Government has requested the Haj Committee of India to board Hajis in*

*a cluster of hotels at one place from next year, enabling the administration to take collective care. A team of Health Officers along with ambulance and uninterrupted power and water supply at Haj House has been ordered. A fire tender and a back-up DG set have also been deployed to meet any exigency. The Station Officer, Srinagar Airport, informed the Chief Minister that Air India Bus, which has a capacity to accommodate 340 passengers, has successfully undertaken trial run. A 'Special Haj Terminal' at the Airport has been established with facilities of final immigration checks, x-ray screening and offering of nimaz. Air India will also provide catering with pure drinking water facility to the Hajjis. Iso present in the meeting were Secretary to Chief Minister, M. H. Malik, IGP, Kashmir Zone, SJM Gillani, IGP, Traffic, J. P. Singh, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Farooq Ahmad Lone, Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, Mir Altaf, Executive Officer, State Haj Committee, Fayaz Ahmad Lone, Chief Engineer PHE, Director Health, Commissioner, SMC, Station Director, Srinagar International Airport and SSPs of Srinagar, Security, Traffic and AHJ, besides several other senior officers.*