

Scaled down Hajj takes place in Mecca

30th July, 2020



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The annual Hajj is set to take place in the sacred city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The pilgrimage is one of the most important events in the Muslim calendar. It lasts approximately 5 to 6 days and is a mandatory religious

duty for Muslims. Hajj must be carried out at least once in the lifetime of all adult Muslims. However, they must be physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey and must be able to support their family during their absence. This year's Hajj has been greatly scaled down because precautionary measures for coronavirus have been put in place. The pandemic has meant the postponement of numerous events, causing considerable disappointment for pilgrims.

The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced last month that it was severely limiting the number of pilgrims allowed to enter the holy site this year. Officials said the measures were to avoid any further outbreaks of COVID-19 and contain the risks of infection. Many Muslim-majority countries around the world have cancelled pilgrimages to Mecca. The result is that Mecca will see only a tiny fraction of the two million pilgrims it usually receives during Hajj. This year, places will be restricted to a few thousand Saudi Arabian citizens. Twenty-two-time pilgrim Wafa Shaheen said: "I was not upset by the Hajj news this year as I know there are plenty of ways to take advantage of this precious spiritual time."

Sources: arabnews.com / thenational.ae / gulfnews.com / wikipedia.org

Writing

Everyone should go on a pilgrimage once in their life. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

annual / Hajj / sacred / Mecca / pilgrimage / religious / duty / journey / pandemic / holy / site / officials / measures / outbreak / infection / fraction / precious / spiritual

True / False

- a) Hajj can last for up to six days. T / F
- b) All adult Muslims should attend Hajj at least once in their lives. T / F
- c) A Muslim must be in good physical and financial health to attend Hajj. T / F
- d) Very few Muslims are disappointed that events have been postponed. T / F
- e) The Ministry of Hajj announced the limiting of numbers in April. T / F
- f) Many Muslim-majority countries are going ahead with their pilgrimages. T / F
- g) Only a limited number of Saudi citizens will be attending this year's Hajj. T / F
- h) A twenty-two-time pilgrim will attend her twenty-third Hajj this year. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. sacred | a. embarking on |
| 2. mandatory | b. part |
| 3. undertaking | c. restricting |
| 4. precautionary | d. deferral |
| 5. postponement | e. exploit |
| 6. limiting | f. compulsory |
| 7. contain | g. valuable |
| 8. fraction | h. preventative |
| 9. take advantage of | i. restrain |
| 10. precious | j. holy |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about Hajj?
- b) What do you know about Mecca?
- c) What are the most important events in your religion's calendar?
- d) What mandatory religious duties are there in your religion?
- e) What kind of pilgrimage would you like to go on?
- f) What precautions have you taken regarding coronavirus?
- g) Have you ever been disappointed because something was postponed?
- h) How important is religion to you?

Phrase Match

1. the sacred
 2. one of the most important events
 3. a mandatory religious
 4. they must be physically
 5. the postponement of numerous
 6. it was severely limiting
 7. avoid any further outbreaks
 8. only a tiny fraction
 9. I know there are plenty
 10. take
- a. of the two million
 - b. duty for Muslims
 - c. the number of pilgrims
 - d. events
 - e. advantage of this
 - f. city of Mecca
 - g. of ways
 - h. of COVID-19
 - i. in the Muslim calendar
 - j. and financially capable

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What holy sites have you visited?
- c) How do you feel when you enter a place of worship?
- d) What can authorities do to lower the risks of infection?
- e) What happens at Mecca during Hajj?
- f) Would you like to visit Saudi Arabia?
- g) How do you take advantage of precious spiritual time?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the pilgrims?

Spelling

1. The iggemarpi is one of the most important events
2. a ytmdaoran religious duty
3. elapacb of undertaking the journey
4. aetanriupcyro measures
5. the eopetmposntn of numerous events
6. causing oesedcrbilna disappointment
7. it was rvlseeye limiting
8. meraessu were to avoid any further outbreaks
9. contain the risks of iofcneitn
10. see only a tiny critafno
11. cretteirsd to a few thousand
12. oruisepc spiritual time

Answers – Synonym Match

1. j	2. f	3. a	4. h	5. d
6. c	7. i	8. b	9. e	10. g

Role Play

Role A – World Peace

You think world peace is the greatest thing to pray for. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): good health, love or a COVID-19 vaccine.

Role B – Good Health

You think good health is the greatest thing to pray for. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): world peace, love or a COVID-19 vaccine.

Role C – Love

You think love is the greatest thing to pray for. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): good health, world peace or a COVID-19 vaccine.

Role D – A COVID-19 Vaccine

You think a COVID-19 vaccine is the greatest thing to pray for. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): good health, love or world peace.

Speaking – Prayer

Rank these with your partner. Put the best important things to pray for at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- World peace
- Your family
- Good health
- Wealth
- A COVID-19 vaccine
- The poor and sick
- Salvation
- Love

Answers – True False

a T	b T	c T	d F	e F	f F	g T	h F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.