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**2018  
PACKAGES**

**HAJJ &  
UMRAH**

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. All passports and payments must be in our office latest six (6) weeks before your departure date for Umrah and the end of May 2018 for Hajj

2. All payments are to be made into the designated banks as shown below in favour of COMEREL TRAVELS AND TOURS LTD. Our staffers do not collect cash, please.

3. Ascertain that all the information in your international passport is correct, with at least 6 months validity by your departure date and without any hindering documents for your trip like an Israeli visa or stamp. Also, avoid traveling with anything having Jewish inscriptions on them.

4. Please do not pay into any of our accounts until you have been cleared to proceed. This is in our mutual interest.

5. Please complete all payments before all travel documents are presented to you. Under no circumstance will a pilgrim get travel documents without complete payments.

6. COMEREL reserves the right to refuse service to a paying pilgrim if the pilgrim behaves in a manner that is adjudged rude and uncivil towards other pilgrims and COMEREL's staff.

7. COMEREL reserves the right to increase the price of its package if a situation warrants it. Where this happens, you will be notified.

8. Please ensure that you use your COMEREL Pilgrim ID Card accordingly.

9. Please ensure that you get an official COMEREL receipt for every payment you make.

10. All children and infants must have separate international passports.

A	FirstBank	? ACCT	2007608856
B	Sterling Bank	? ACCT	0012404170
		\$ ACCT	0012404187
C	GTBank	? ACCT	0023246167
		\$ ACCT	0023246174
D	ZENITH BANK	? ACCT	1011008104

11. All rooms are double occupancy by default. Any additional occupancy will be based on availability and an extra bed may be smaller than the original two beds, which will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

12. Pilgrims must notify our doctor of any unusual or militating medical conditions. This is to help you in case of emergencies.

13. Please avoid using the chain lock on the inside part of your room doors when alone. When you are sharing a room, it is not allowed for whatever reason.

14. All children must be accompanied by either a parent or a guardian.

15. Parents and guardians are primarily responsible for maintaining discipline and order among their children/wards. Comerel will not be responsible for the movements of any child outside the itinerary of the package. Exceptions to this will be discussed and agreed upon by both parties.

16. Hajj dates are flexible, as they depend on moon sighting. They are not exact. Any date in Dhul Hijjah can differ by a day both ways. The dates used for the itinerary are therefore subject to moon sighting.

17. The Saudi Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs issued a new directive on 14th December 2017 forbidding taking photographs and recording videos within the two holy mosques in Madeenah and Makkah respectively. This also includes their roofs. In the light of this, kindly keep your camera phones and cameras away. These items may be impounded by the security operatives guarding the mosques.

### ACCOUNT DETAILS

ALL PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN FAVOUR OF COMEREL TRAVELS AND TOURS LTD. WE DO NOT ACCEPT CHEQUES OR CASH. DO NOT PAY INTO THESE ACCOUNTS UNTIL WE HAVE CLEARED YOU PLEASE.

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## CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS



Following the Award of Excellence our company received from the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) the 2016 Hajj season, we felt inspired to do more and the result was the sterling performance during the 2017 Hajj season.

You cannot but tremble with trepidation and profound gratitude to Allah for the kind of commendation our pilgrims have showered on us. They are why we are constantly striving to improve and innovate. The end users of our services, who pay perhaps the highest amount in the industry to us testify that their money was well spent. There is no better testimony, Alhamdulillah.

We have continued the undying tradition of innovation this year with the introduction of a unified package

for Hajj and Umrah in Ramadan as well as Nigerian cuisine in Makkah. The industry we are operating within is fluid and ever-changing. We are adapting to the changes fast. It is often not the lack of resources or skills that makes businesses collapse but the reluctance to adapt and change in the wake of a changing world. There is more to come from us and we can only urge you to keep your fingers crossed.

**- Arc. Umaru Usman Karaye  
Chairman**

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# MD'S WORDS



In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, Most Merciful. As usual, all thanks belong to Allah, The Owner of Success. For the first

time, we have a unified package for Hajj. We have also reverted to a unified brochure for both Hajj and Umrah packages.

The Umrah and Hajj industry is undergoing some major changes which affect how we do things. The Hajj Ministry in Saudi Arabia wants to improve the service to all pilgrims and it realizes that one of the ways to achieve this is to get early information on the number of pilgrims to expect.

That information comes from the Hajj Ministries of various countries or their equivalent worldwide. Nigeria is included and the necessary adjustments are being made. The National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) has reduced the time given to all pilgrims to be registered for Hajj. Whether you travel through the State Pilgrims Welfare Board arrangements or travel through private tour operators like Comerel, the bar has been set higher. All arrangements must be concluded by March 2018 at the latest.

This implies that the timetable for our own processes has also been hastened. It is definitely going to be new and strange to people who are used to making last minute arrangements, however, it is the best way to improve the quality of service in the industry.

Concerning the unified package for Hajj, we have named it Premium Package. We had two packages for several years: the VIP Package and the VIP Premium Package. The difference between both packages was not immediately obvious. The main difference was the hotel in Makkah and the class of tents in Minaa. Subscribers to both packages enjoyed the same hotels in Madeenah (and sometimes got upgraded to the same hotels in Makkah) and they used exactly the same tents at 'Arafah. This has often led to mild protests from the VIP Premium package pilgrims who did not see much justification for the difference in prices.

This year, we have a breakthrough with the hotel provider in Makkah; for the first time, a Nigerian tour

operator will be given access to the kitchens of a five-star hotel to prepare Nigerian meals for our pilgrims in Makkah!

Since the inception of our company's VIP Hajj and Umrah operations, the one sore point in our five-star service has always been the unfamiliar food served our pilgrims in Makkah. No five-star hotel of high repute was ready to allow Nigerian meals in its kitchens until this year. In addition to the Mid-Eastern and Far-Eastern cuisine usually available, pilgrims from Black Africa and Asia were usually zoned to the very large dining halls which meant a large crowd and oftentimes, insufficient food of the variety our pilgrims could manage to eat. Some end up buying another meal in the same hotel where they paid for full board! These unpleasant state of affairs is about to end.

We have listened to the feedback of our customers and we have secured the best of services. The new Premium Package will highlight the best any company in Africa can offer its pilgrims. We shall retain the excellent services of Madinah Oberoi Hotel in Madeenah. In Makkah, we shall use AlMarwah Rayhaan Hotel. Like the previous hotels to which our pilgrims are accustomed, the AlMarwah Rayhaan Hotel is within the Clock Tower Complex, situating it within the Haram area. It has perhaps the best view of the Ka'bah and the guests of Allah will have a restaurant to themselves for all meals (breakfast and dinner) as well as the Nigerian dishes many crave after we leave Madeenah.

This time around, due to the directives from the Saudi Hajj Ministry I mentioned earlier, what you pay for our Hajj package will not be dictated by the room option alone. The time you pay now matters. Those who pay early will pay less than those who pay later. This encourages the early birds. Tents in Minaa will be the same A Plus ones, which we have been renowned for using. The payment time will also affect the population per tent this time. As such, the earlier you pay, the lesser the number of pilgrims per room.

These changes are necessary and they are informed by the new realities in our industry. We pray Allah will enrich your purses and accept our worship. Hoping to serve you soonest.

On a final note, kindly take your time to read the feedback pages in this brochure. They are critical to understanding the Comerel psyche and our commitment to excellence and the highest standards attainable. The sky is not the limit for us, it is the starting block.

Abubakr Siddeeq Muhammad  
MD/CEO



## THE UMRAH PACKAGES 2018

### 7-NIGHT ALL-SEASON PACKAGES

This year, we have flexible 7-day packages for you. Our traditional all seasons packages are from 1st January to 30th April. Within this period, you can choose 7 days to visit Madeenah and perform Umrah in Makkah. You have a total five hotels to choose from in Madeenah and six hotels in Makkah. They are either 4-Star or 5-Star hotels.

In Madeenah you have three nights to stay and in Makkah, 4 nights. These 7-day packages are ideal for people who have very limited time within which to perform their Umrah before returning home. The quality of the hotels is not in doubt. We are confident you will find a period and option which suits you.

### RAMADAN PACKAGE

Just as we have done with Hajj, there is only one package option for Umrah called the Umrah Ramadan Premium Package. The only difference will be in Room Options. You have the option of single, double, triple and quadruple occupancy rooms. The hotels are the same as for Hajj, which means during both iftaar and suhur, there will be Nigerian dishes on the menu. Both the Madeenah and Makkah hotels are within the Haram, giving you the much needed time to focus on only the ibaadah which is your primary goal in the Holy Land.



### FOUR-STAR OPTIONS

#### Madeenah Hotels (choose one)

1. Saja Al Madinah
2. Leader Al Muna Kareem Madinah

#### Makkah Hotels (choose one)

1. Ayyad Makkah Makarem
2. Al Saraya Iman



### FOUR-STAR COST IMPLICATIONS (ALL PRICES EXCLUDE TICKETS)

SINGLE OCCUPANCY	\$2,000
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY	\$1,100 PER PERSON
TRIPLE OCCUPANCY	\$1,100 PER PERSON
QUAD OCCUPANCY	\$900 PER PERSON



### WHAT YOU GET

- Three (3) nights in Madeenah hotel of choice (BED AND BREAKFAST)
- Four (4) nights in Makkah hotel of choice (BED AND BREAKFAST)
- Umrah Visa
- Transport

NOTE: Those who already have tickets must give us a copy of their ticket to update the Saudi Ministry of Hajj on the pilgrim's itinerary





### FIVE-STAR OPTIONS

#### Madeenah Hotels (choose one)

1. Dar Al Iman Intercontinental (no quad rooms)
2. Grand Mecure

#### Makkah Hotels (choose one)

1. Dar Al Tawhid Intercontinental
2. Raffles
3. Royal Clock Tower Makkah Fairmont
4. M? venpick



### FIVE-STAR COST IMPLICATIONS (ALL PRICES EXCLUDE TICKETS)

SINGLE OCCUPANCY	\$ 3,300
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY	\$1,800 PER PERSON
TRIPLE OCCUPANCY	\$1,500 PER PERSON
QUAD OCCUPANCY	\$1,300 PER PERSON



### WHAT YOU GET

- Three (3) nights in Madeenah hotel of choice (BED AND BREAKFAST)
- Four (4) nights in Makkah hotel of choice (BED AND BREAKFAST)
- Umrah Visa
- Transport

NOTE: Those who already have tickets must give us a copy of their ticket to update the Saudi Ministry of Hajj on the pilgrim's itinerary





**UMRAH RAMADAN PREMIUM PACKAGE OPTIONS**

<b>Madeenah Hotel</b>	<b>Makkah Hotel</b>
Madina Oberoi Hotel, Madeenah	Al Marwa Rayhaan by Rotana, Makkah

## INTRODUCING AL MARWA RAYHAAN BY ROTANA HOTEL, MAKKAH

If you have been a regular at Comerel or you have had cause to peruse our yearly Hajj and Umrah brochures, you will notice something very different about this year's package brochure. To begin with, there is only one brochure for the year. Secondly, there is only one package option, which means there is only one hotel in both Madeenah and Makkah. The transport and tents are all the same. The difference in prices only comes from the rooming options and the time you pay.

We have changed the Makkah hotel from the famous Fairmont Clock Tower Hotel to another within the same complex. It is one of the hotels owned by the prestigious Rotana Group, the Al Marwa Rayhaan Hotel. It is one of the few hotels in the Clock Tower building and the one with by far the best view of the Ka'bah. It is the only five-star hotel in the entire King Abdul Azeed Endowment Complex with a terrace restaurant which gives you direct access to the sights and sounds of the Ka'bah without any wall or screen.

Al Marwa Rayhaan hotel is also the first hotel to accept our proposal to cook Nigerian meals in their restaurant like the Madinah Oberoi in Madeenah. It is the reason we shall be having Nigerian dishes in a hotel in Makkah during Hajj for the first time ever! It has more Ka'bah View rooms than any other hotel and it is as comfortable as the rest. We strongly believe you will love it.



**UMRAH RAMADAN PREMIUM PACKAGE COST IMPLICATIONS (ALL PRICES EXCLUDE TICKETS)**

SINGLE OCCUPANCY	\$ 17,500
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY	\$ 9,900 PER PERSON
TRIPLE OCCUPANCY	\$ 8,700 PER PERSON
QUAD OCCUPANCY	\$ 8,200 PER PERSON

**TICKET DEPOSIT**  
**First Class: ₦3m, Business Class: ₦1.9m Economy: ₦600,000**



**WHAT YOU GET**  
 Four (4) nights in Oberoi Madinah Hotel, Madeenah (BED, IFTAR AND SAHUR)  
 Last 10 days of Ramadan in Al Marwa Rayhaan by Rotana Hotel, Makkah (BED, IFTAR AND SAHUR)  
 Umrah Visa  
 VIP Transport  
 Free Hajj and Umrah Rites book



**ITINERARY FOR THE 2018 RAMADAN UMRAH (LAST 14 DAYS)**

<b>TAKE OFF DAY</b>	30TH MAY 2018
<b>DAY 1 TO DAY 4</b>	MADEENAH
<b>DAY 5 TO DAY 14</b>	MAKKAH
<b>RETURN DAY</b>	JEDDAH – ABUJA
	31ST MAY – 4TH JUNE 4TH JUNE - 15TH JUNE 15TH JUNE



## ITINERARY FOR HAJJ 2018

### TAKE OFF DAY 12TH AUGUST

Unless there are no flights, we will depart for Madeenah on this day.

### DAY 1 TO DAY 4 MADEENAH 13TH- 16TH AUGUST

Our arrival day in Madeenah. You will be given oral polio vaccine and another antibiotic at the point of entry; please accept them. Typically, after immigration formalities, international passports are to be submitted to the appropriate officials. The patience Hajj demands starts here.

Usually, we distribute the hotel room keys in the bus en route the hotel. This means you merely label your luggage with your room number and give to the concierge at the hotel and it shall be brought to your room. You can then proceed to your room without the hassles of checking in. The meal times and prayer times will be given to you in the welcome bulletin. The COMEREL prayer mat on your bed is a souvenir. Please rest well and get ready for

Ziyaarah and visits to the other places of interest the following day or the next. Also, ensure that you get your ihram cloths if you have none.

When to check out and where to place your luggage will be discussed in the bulletins.

The journey to Makkah will be by air via Jeddah. You should be prepared to wear your ihram from the hotel and to make your intention for Umrah immediately after take-off. At that point, you begin to chant the talbiyyah (see handbook given to you for details).

All luggage will proceed to Makkah by road ahead of the group. After reaching Jeddah airport, you will be transferred to VIP buses which will convey you to Makkah by road. There are checkpoints on the road; they are compulsory stops, please bear with the situation patiently.

### DAY 4 TO DAY 8

### MAKKAH 16TH- 20TH AUGUST

The hotel keys to your Makkah rooms will be distributed on the way to Makkah from Jeddah unless something unforeseen happens. The talbiyyah continues until you sight the haram. There is usually a lot of chaos on this day and you should prepare your mind for it. The traffic situation may mean you will disembark from the bus some distance to the Haram and trek to the hotel. If things go as planned, however, we will deliver you to the hotel basement from where you label your luggage with your room number, ensure it is picked up and then you proceed to your room. The luggage will be brought to your room, supervised by our staff.

You will get the times of prayer and information about meal times and feeding area from our bulletin.

You can take a shower and then head to the mosque to perform Umrah. After Umrah, you will remove your ihram

clothing and take a shower. Take advantage of being in the Haram to get to the mosque early, say all your prayers in the mosque and amass as many good deeds as possible. Treat people kindly, give to the poor and control your anger and tongue.

Await our instructions via bulletins to pack in readiness for the movement to Minaa on the 8th day of the month of Hajj, the day of Tarwiyah. Typically, we distribute small bags which should carry only the essentials you need for the trip. A good rule of the thumb is to carry an extra ihram and medications (if any) as well as telephone chargers and any valuable you have in your bag in the hotel (money, jewellery and electronic gadgets)

### DAY 8 (TARWIYAH)

### MINAA 20TH AUGUST

On this day, we head out early. This means you should take your bath and prepare for the ihram early. The intention for Hajj is said aloud from your hotel room. Please





proceed to the designated take-off point and board the buses when requested to. Breakfast is usually eaten at Minaa. Please eat well, rest well and do as much remembrance of Allah as you can. Avoid idle talk as much as possible and keep in mind what brought you. Also, keep the hope of Allah's reward fresh in your mind and make it the sole motivation for each good deed you contemplate or do.

**DAY 9**

**ARAFAH  
21ST AUGUST**

Early in the morning, we will head out for 'Arafah. Breakfast will be served there, insha Allah. Please read up what is expected of you at 'Arafah from the booklet we have given you for the purpose. Please listen to the sermons and use your time wisely. Sleep if you have to but do not forget to concentrate your efforts on prayers and similar devotions after the combined prayers of zuhr and 'asr.

We will tell you which bus to board if you will be staying at Muzdalifah till dawn or proceeding by midnight.

Just before sunset, we will board our buses and load food for the stay at Muzdalifah. At sunset, we will proceed to Muzdalifah.

**DAY 10**

**MUZDALIFAH - MAKKAH - MINAA  
22ND AUGUST**

Muzdalifah is an open place. There are no demarcations and no clear-cut boundaries for people. This leaves a lot of room for chaos. We will strive to get a good spot for our pilgrims and spread our carpets. We will pray Maghrib and 'Ishaa combined and eat dinner. The main task here to rest and prepare for the next morning.

Avoid separating from the group on the way to Makkah. If things go as planned, we might be lucky to reach Makkah before the Eid prayers. Pray and perform the tawaaf and sa'y (please see your booklet for details). Please return to your hotel and await the bus to convey you back to Minaa. At this point, you do not need to be in ihram any further. Upon reaching Minaa, please endeavour to stone the Jamratul 'Aqabah and return to your tent with the group. Please avoid separating from the

group.

**DAY 11-12**

**MINAA  
23RD-24TH AUGUST**

In Minaa, please keep remembering Allah, listening to sermons, reading the Quran and generally amassing good deeds. Avoid fights and altercations. Please be patient.

On the day we leave for Makkah again, we will trek to the tunnels leading to the area known as 'Aziziyah where all buses must wait to pick their pilgrims.

**DAY 13-14**

**MAKKAH  
25TH-26TH AUGUST**

The days in Makkah will be spent judiciously. Please remain patient and steadfast in performing your acts of worship. On the day of departure, please do your farewell tawaaf and prepare to leave. If you have used the hotel's services or consumed any extra items from the mini fridge in your room, kindly settle the bill to reduce the delay we encounter

trying to get pilgrims to settle their bills at the last minute.

May Allah accept our worship.

**RETURN DATE**

**JEDDAH  
26TH AUGUST**

The airport here is not too friendly and we may have to endure a long wait standing in a queue. Please be patient. Please remember the luggage allowance on your ticket. Try not to exceed it or prepare to pay for it in advance.

DETAILS OF DAILY MOVEMENTS ARE OFTEN SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGES, THEREFORE, THEY WILL BE CONTAINED IN OUR DAILY BULLETINS.



### HAJJ PREMIUM PACKAGE WHAT YOU GET

- Three (3) nights in Oberoi Madinah Hotel, Madeenah
- Ten (10) nights in Al Marwa Rayhaan by Rotana Hotel, Makkah
- A Plus Tent in Minaa and 'Arafah
- Hadyi (sacrificial ram)
- Hajj Visa
- VIP Transport
- Local Flight to Jeddah (Makkah) from Madeenah
- Free customised Hajj and Umrah Rites book
- Economy Class return ticket on any of Emirates, Egypt Air or Ethiopian Airline (to be determined by availability at the time of payment)
- Free 5-litre ZamZam upon return (must be redeemed within a month of return. If not redeemed within the period, it is forfeited)



### SPECIAL NOTICE

Due to the new developments in the Hajj and Umrah industry, our prices are no longer static. They are determined by both the room option and period of payment. Please read carefully the prices and the valid dates to pay them below. For those paying in instalments, all payments must be concluded within the period chosen to qualify as payment for that period. For example, if you pay part of your package fee in January and plan to complete it in February, your payment will be for the February period and thus higher. The number of pilgrims per tent is also determined by when you pay. The tents of those who made the earliest payments will have a fewer number of pilgrims in them. PLEASE TAKE NOTE!





**HAJJ PREMIUM PACKAGE OPTIONS  
(ALL PRICES INCLUDE ECONOMY CLASS TICKET)**

<b>1. SINGLE OCCUPANCY</b>	\$ 23,400	[payable up to 31st January 2018]
(PRICE PER PERSON IN A ROOM)	\$ 24,300	[payable up to 28th February 2018]
	\$ 26,100	[payable from 1st March 2018]
<b>2. DOUBLE OCCUPANCY</b>	\$ 16,200	[payable up to 31st January 2018]
(PRICE PER PERSON IN A ROOM)	\$ 16,800	[payable up to 28th February 2018]
	\$ 18,100	[payable from 1st March 2018]
<b>3. TRIPLE OCCUPANCY</b>	\$ 14,700	[payable up to 31st January 2018]
(PRICE PER PERSON IN A ROOM)	\$ 15,300	[payable up to 28th February 2018]
	\$ 16,400	[payable from 1st March 2018]
<b>4. QUAD OCCUPANCY</b>	\$ 13,900	[payable up to 31st January 2018]
(PRICE PER PERSON IN A ROOM)	\$ 14,400	[payable up to 28th February 2018]
	\$ 15,500	[payable from 1st March 2018]



MEMORIES FROM THE  
**HAJJ INDUCTION  
 COURSE 2017**  
 AND  
 THE DAY  
**COMEREL**  
 HONoured ITS LOYAL  
 CUSTOMERS AND STAFF























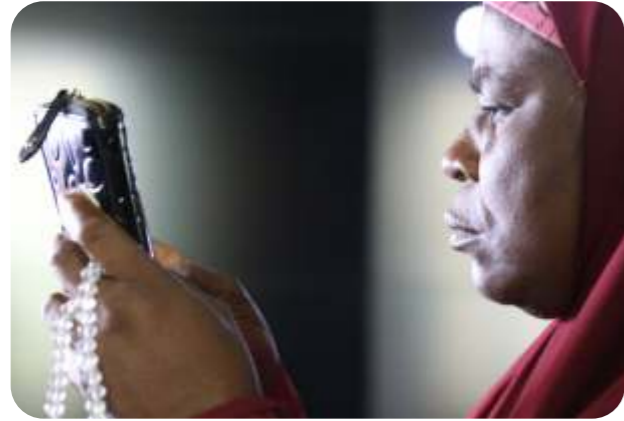






























HONOURABLE  
ABDULMUMIN  
JIBRIN

WHY COMEREL?

I got to know about Comerel because I have had a personal relationship with the MD of the company but also

importantly, because I got some feedback from a couple of friends that were part of some previous operations that Comerel embarked upon.

I know the MD and of course, he is a man of integrity so I was very confident that what you see or what you hear is what you would get. Secondly, of course, I have spoken to a couple of people who have subscribed to the Comerel package in the past and who have confirmed to me that Comerel is perhaps the best in the industry at the moment.

VALUE FOR MONEY

I have said this repeatedly that perfection belongs to only God. Nobody is perfect but I am saying this with every sense of sincerity and honesty as well as conviction based on what I have seen on this trip, that convincingly, all the promises that Comerel made were fulfilled. Everything that we were told we would experience in terms of flights, hotel accommodation, tents in 'Arafah and Minaa and others turned out be as promised. Again, perfection belongs to God; nobody is perfect but when you draw a comparison with the reality on ground, and what is obtained from other operators, if you want to be fair, you will be able to say Comerel has done well and they have fulfilled their side of the contract.

LOGISTICS ARRANGEMENTS AND FEEDING

This might not be the opinion of everyone but personally, I believe the logistics and the operations were fair. We were never left without being informed of what was going to happen and at every stage, you had somebody to speak to. Their lines are always open; nobody switches off his line. They communicate to us effectively. For instance, I personally find it so impressive that when we arrived Madeenah, right at the airport, we had the keys to our rooms, so that by the time we got to the hotel, you did not have to go to the counter. For someone like me that has travelled all over the world, I know that you would spend a few minutes, no matter how fast the system may be, at the reception desk of hotels before you get into your room but we got our keys right from the airport. The same thing was repeated when we came from Madeenah to Makkah; by the time we landed in Jeddah, at the airport, they handed us our room keys! This are the kind of arrangements you see all over in Comerel.

The meals were regular, of course, and for the Nigerian dishes, that is on of the few areas I think they really need to make some improvements. I personally think that we can do better in terms of the quality of the Nigerian food that were served. However, generally, that notwithstanding, I think everything went on well.

PERFORMANCE RATING

Although I think that is not necessary, but if you insist, if I am going to take away some based on the areas where I have issues, I will score them 92 %



B A W U R O  
MODIBBO SALEH

WHY COMEREL?

I have been an old customer of Comerel. If I can remember, I think I started my Hajj and Umrah exercise with

Comerel as far back as 2005. Since then, any time I have the opportunity of going for either my Hajj or Umrah, it is always Comerel that I follow. I have seen their performance and I have observed the way they progress each year they conduct this exercise and so many people who used to follow them along with me have made up their minds that if not Comerel, they are not ready to follow any other tour operator. This is done out of the experience we have had with Comerel over this long period of time.

LOGISTICS

It is one of the most organised that I have witnessed over the years that I have been following Comerel. I was one of the pilgrims who followed Comerel right from the Abuja National Mosque. The timing they gave us was excellent. When I got to the National Mosque, I met all the Comerel staff and their vehicle ready. They took us from the National Mosque to the airport; they booked local flights for us to Lagos, since Emirates was not operating from Abuja (at the time); we took local flight from Abuja airport, to Murtala Mohammed Airport, Ikeja. At the airport there, they organised transport for us to take us from the Murtala Mohammed

Airport 2 to the International Airport. At the International Airport, they organised us as a group. We had a very very easy check-in exercise at the Emirates counter courtesy of the Comerel staff. And by the time we got to Dubai, everything was arranged for us. For those who proceeded to Madeenah, they got their boarding passes immediately. For those who had to stay in Dubai for up to six hours or more, they were given their hotel accommodation and their transit visa to Dubai easily. I was among those who proceeded to Madeenah immediately we arrived Dubai. When we got to Madeenah, we passed through the immigration formalities, which is normal. We passed through customs formalities and by the time we exited the airport, we met the ground staff of Comerel waiting for us. They took our passports and luggage and guided us into their already arranged buses to our hotel. It looks as if everything was put on ground and nothing fails, but that is what comerel is known for. That is the standard comerel is known for. Those of us who knew him (the Managing Director) over the years were not surprised but those who followed Comerel for the first time this year, I was with them and the comments they were passing, the remarks they were making were very very wonderful. I am not surprised that the Hajj Commission checked through all the names of tour operators in country and rated Comerel as the best tour operator. It is not just like that; the company had been building itself over the years and I think they have reached a standard that everybody who passes through Comerel will look back and be grateful to God for giving him the opportunity to have the means of paying through Comerel travels and going with comerel.

**FEEDING ARRANGEMENTS**

It is like home away from home. Any Comerel customer that passes through Madeenah by the time he gets to Makkah, the first comment he will tell you is that he has really missed the food given to him in Madeenah. That one is a very unique and excellent service and I wish Comerel will find a way of repeating the same feat while we are in Makkah. If there is any way that can be done, that will be very wonderful and excellent, because that is the only challenge Comerel customers face while on Hajj; it is the feeding arrangement in Makkah, which is not within the control of Makkah. However, if that can be arranged like what they give us in Madeenah, that will be very very wonderful.

**MINAA AND ARAFAH ARRANGEMENTS**

The Minaa tents were excellent and well laid. Of course, you know it is an A Plus Tent (Safaa Tents). One observation I have for this year is that a lot of A Plus tent pilgrims were having unlimited access to comerel tents and facilities, especially our feeding. That area has to be looked into by Comerel. That is the only observation I have in this Hajj exercise. Over time, he used to control our feeding and facilities but this year, it was like every A Plus tent pilgrim will claim rights that Comerel facility is also their facility, so that area has to be looked into. However, the exercise was well done and well conducted.

**AREAS TO IMPROVE UPON APART FROM MINAA?**

Another area I want Comerel to take note of is our exit from Arafat to Muzdalifah. Even though this year it is not the fault of Comerel staff and the drivers, we found ourselves going round and round for most part of the night before we finally got to

our settlement point. I think we should be able to organise it in such a way that we will map out our exit route and our holding point ahead of time. The drivers should be told where we are supposed to have a stopover in Muzdalifah right from the first day so that by the time we are exiting Arafat, we will not be in doubt as to where to park, stay or hold on before the exit from Muzdalifah to Makkah or Minaa as the case may be. This is an area I also want us to look into.

**PERFORMANCE RATING**

I always do not want to rate comerel in terms of percentage because I may be tempted to give them 100%. And you know 100% means they are perfect and perfection is not an attribute of a human being. However, sincerely speaking, they have done excellently well. They did very well in all the areas that they are supposed to be rated within their own capacity, they have done excellently well. Other areas that are not within their control, they have also gone ahead to ensure that it is a smooth exercise. If you insist, I will give them 95%. That 5% I kept it aside for them to have a room for improvement. That is my rating.



GAMBO ILYASU

**WHY COMEREL FOR HAJJ?**

We have been using Comerel for some time now. About ten years now, if I remember correctly, and I

have always argued that if I have to come for Hajj or Umrah for that matter, if I cannot afford the price of Comerel, then I can as well forget about the trip. My reasons are very simple: If you are looking for comfort and convenience, Comerel is the place to be. A lot of people have this misconception about Comerel that the package is a bit expensive and so on, but to me, I feel one is getting value for his money. For instance, no same complaint is made twice to Comerel.

Once you lodge a complaint to Comerel or may be you draw their attention to certain lapses, I can bet you that you will never experience the same lapse again.

Another thing about Comerel is that in most cases, at the end of every activity or if there is a new activity that is introduced, they want to have a feel of the customers; how did it go? I will give you a few examples: when Comerel started experimenting with flying from Madeenah to Makkah, one of the challenges the passengers faced was this issue of carrying the luggage. Immediately we complained to Comerel, of course, the following year, the luggage was sent ahead of the customers, which gave a lot of relief to us

especially the men in the state of ihraam who had to carry luggage here and there before. There are so many other similar issues that once they came up and you call the attention of Comerel to them, they would resolve them immediately. Even this present trip, for instance. Immediately we came into Makkah, we felt the room we were given in Fairmont was not comfortable enough and we drew the attention of Comerel to it; believe me, we did not spend a night in that same room. We were given a better room. So, in my own opinion, Comerel, as far as Umrah and Hajj packages are concerned, is one company to beat.

I am not surprised that the Hajj Commission has deemed it fit to recognise Comerel and award them the Best Private Tour Operator in last year's Hajj. Of course, typical of Comerel, being awarded by National Hajj Commission, they also extended that recognition to some of us. Some of us received awards from Comerel during the last Hajj Induction Course, which I think is also another plus to Comerel. As far as I am concerned, Comerel is the company that I will use any time either for myself or my family for Hajj or Umrah.

Another reason why Comerel is the company to beat is that the staff of Comerel, come rain, come shine, they are always with the customers. Unlike some tour operators; as soon as you land in Jeddah or Madeenah, it would appear as if the contract is over. For Comerel, the staff are always in touch with the customers and I think this is very good. In a nutshell, I will use Comerel any time, any day.

HER EXCELLENCY HADIZA MUHAMMAD ABUBAKAR

WHY COMEREL?

A friend of mine performed Hajj with Comerel in 2013 and she told me of her experience. So in 2014 when I was going to Hajj, I decided to go with Comerel. I had a good outing with them and here I am again in 2017. That is to say I was quite happy and satisfied with their performance. So, I am doing it again.

MOVEMENT OF PILGRIMS

I must say the movements were well planned and organised and the staff coordinated the activities, so in my opinion, they did very well. It was smooth from Abuja to Lagos; Lagos to Dubai; Dubai to Madeenah; Madeenah to Makkah and Makkah up to Minaa and 'Arafah. Everything went on fine despite the challenges. Obviously moving such a big crowd in this kind of situation where other pilgrims were also competing for space and attention was a serious challenge but all the same they were able to live up to expectation and everything went on fine.

FEEDING

The food was also OK. For instance, in Madeenah, Comerel tried to provide local cuisine. When I say local cuisine, I mean that they went out of their way to provide Nigerian food. *Masa* was there, *tuwon shinkafa*, pounded yam, everything was there. They went out their way to provide so that they will make pilgrims feel at home. In Makkah, the food was also good. In 'Arafah, they also tried; the food was available, the quantity was sufficient and they had a lot of variety so it was also very well prepared and I think everyone was

satisfied with the arrangement; the feeding was good.

Honestly I must say that everything that was within the powers of Comerel, they did it efficiently. And issues that were beyond their control, they explained, they apologised, they communicated very well so there was efficient and effective communication but of course, in everything one does, there is always room for improvement. So my only take on this is to first of all appreciate and congratulate Comerel for keeping up the standards and for giving good service delivery. I think if you ask a lot of people they would say they have received good returns on their investment. Of course, we know that this is a rigorous exercise and millions of people are involved. It is not an excursion, it is not a vacation; it is a religious obligation with a lot of challenges because of the number of people that are involved. Given the situation we found ourselves and given the situation Comerel found itself, I think they have done commendably well. I can only say they should keep up the standard and the good work.

One thing I have observed; as I said, I was a pilgrim with Comerel in 2014, I have seen tremendous improvement. For instance the last time I travelled with Comerel, the movement from Madeenah to Makkah was by road. It was several hours on buses but this time, they have improved. They convey all the pilgrims by air. That is a good improvement. I was looking out and I was happy to see that for me who came in 2014 and this is 2017, there have been positive changes and positive developments. It is as if Comerel has a listening ear. They listen to comments and suggestions from their clients and they use those comments and

suggestions to improve. I am happy with what I have seen and I think I will do it again.

COMEREL STANDARDS

I will say that Comerel has no competition, in my opinion. And for that reason, if I am to rate them on a scale of 1 to 10, I would give them a 9. You have to give room for improvement and challenges, otherwise, I will even score them 100%. I think they have done very well and I would say that they should keep improving because a very good business strategy is for one to keep innovating and to keep bringing new ideas so that your competitors don't catch up with you. My advice to Comerel is that they should keep innovating and bringing in new ideas so that they will make pilgrims more comfortable. Just like the name which I believe means Comfort Efficiency and Reliability, they have really done very well. I can see that they are focused on service delivery and on the satisfaction of their customers and that is the right steps in the right direction.

COMEREL EFFICIENCY

One area in which Comerel has succeeded is the efficiency with which it moves its pilgrims. Despite such a large number and we know the challenges associated with moving a large group of people; people of diverse backgrounds have come together for the same purpose of performing Hajj but we all come with different expectations. To be able to carry us along as one is quite an achievement. It is not easy. Like I said earlier, it is not a vacation where you allow people to roam about and do whatever they feel like doing. Hajj has certain rites that have to be observed at particular times, so doing things at the right time together couldn't have been easy. So I think I need to appreciate their

level of coordination, their level of efficiency. I was telling a friend of mine, when I was speaking to one of the staff on the day we were leaving Minaa and he told me he was on his way to Jeddah to sort out accommodation issues. They had an advance party. They had an advance party to Minaa too to see the the accommodation, do the necessary final checks before moving their pilgrims there. That shows their level of commitment and efficiency because ordinarily, we would wait until we all arrive and be surprised at what we meet there. They had the focus to go ahead of the pilgrims to go and see what is available, to go and see the arrangements on ground and ensure that they sort out all their issues before they move the pilgrims. It is a commendable achievement.



MOMODU MUSA JOOF

**WHY COMEREL?**

I am a Gambian living in Nigeria. This is God's design. I thought that I was not ready for Hajj this year. I was waiting to go back to

Gambia on holidays next year to prepare myself for Hajj. The holy land of Makkah is God's destination that you can only attend to when you are called by God. As it came, whether I was ready or not, it turned out that I had to go from Nigeria when my chairman, Alhaji Umaru Mutallab informed me that he was on his way and if I was ready, I should come with him. It was so designed that he (his family) has always travelled with Comerel Travels and Tours.

This is a journey of a lifetime which you don't choose to venture into unless you are invited by Allah to come to His Holy Land. As a tour operator, I have found that so far, I will concur with the award given to Comerel as the best tour operator for 2016. Going by the Hajj briefing (induction course) which they have started today, I strongly believe they still stand a chance to win the 2017 award based on their organisation, the attention they give to their customers, their passengers and their pilgrims as well as the quality of facilitators they started with today. The resource people they have invited as part of their team are very well informed and are very patient and methodical in the way they have been transmitting information as if we are already there at the end of the first day.

This is only the first day and my first attendance but if I were to rate them today, on a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate them between 8 and 9. I am yet to see what tomorrow holds but the promise is that they have more to discuss tomorrow and more to get from their facilitation. Insha Allah, we will be attending. May Allah strengthen us and ease the task of Hajj for all pilgrims and I would say that so far I am impressed with their organisation and I pray that may Almighty Allah continue to bless the company to grow from strength to strength and continue to serve the Ummah in their best interest.

You go all out to satisfy your customers. Satisfy one and you get him to talk to others. That is to say so far I am delighted and I will not hesitate to recommend anyone to come with them. We are not yet there, but they are guiding us as if we are there already. I am quite ready and open to give you feedback as we go along.

**AT MINAA**

I thought it was too late for me to make the Hajj trip this year. However, when my chairman, Alhaji Umaru Mutallab told me Comerel could do it, I thought it was a big challenge for Comerel but got visas for me and my wife as well as tickets successfully, and we are on board now. If you ask about my impression, I would rather say that maybe those who have been here before on other packages could better compare. However, I am saying that with nothing to compare with, I have discussed with fellow Gambians who have visited me in the hotels and with Nigerians who are on other packages too. If I were to rate Comerel, I wouldn't give them less than A minus. If I cannot give them A, I would give them A minus.

**THE HAJJ TEAM**

The team is very vigilant and they are very caring and very concerned. Since we started, we have been moving like a family. From the briefing (induction course) in Abuja which they gave, after that briefing, it was as if you were already in Makkah for several years. The resource people they brought on board to discuss all the rights and obligation of Hajj are very experienced and humble people who are with us all the way and at all times.

**AIPORT MOVEMENT IN NIGERIA**

If I have any 'but', it was the airport in Lagos. I don't blame it on the operator but on our late interest in coming on board. That is to say, if I travel on Turkish Airline from Lagos and not from Abuja, that is a lot of inconvenience as I would have to board another flight to Abuja.

That part was due to the late we made for them to get me a seat. Yes, Lagos airport was very chaotic but all along, they had their staff on the ground ready for assistance. So we thank God it was very smooth.

**ARRIVAL IN JEDDAH (TURKISH AIRLINE FLIGHT)**

When we arrived at the airport in Jeddah, their staff were not on the ground but they contacted me and I was speaking to them until when the vehicle arrived to pick me and my wife alone. It was perfectly an executive reception and I went straight to my hotel.

**M A D E E N A H A N D M A K K A H ACCOMMODATION**

The hotel we stayed in Madeenah is one of the best in that you just come out of your

hotel and you are in the mosque. it is the closest to the mosque. you just get out of the back door of the hotel and you are almost there already. I thought they could not have repeated that in Makkah but in Makkah too, if you are lazy, you may decide to pray from your room because live activities from the Ka'bah can be seen from your window; it was a perfect arrangement.

**MINAA ARRANGEMENTS**

Logistically, when you think of food, I found myself serving food in Minaa. The food was open to everybody; there was no control. People from outside our tents were coming to fetch food and yet, we did not complain because we had more than enough. It became a form or sadaqah (alms giving) but it was not controlled. After sitting outside the tent at midnight, I reported to Comerel officials that those who did not bear Comerel tags were coming to carry food into different tents. the emphasis is to say there has been absolutely adequate provision of food so far.

Alhamdulillah, we had some challenges with electricity in some of the rooms. However, that is also not in their hands. They can only be very vocal and very firm to cry out loud to the (service) providers which they have been doing gently but which we are trying to get them to be more forceful since some other tents do not have the problem. You can imagine that these are days when everybody on Hajj is out here for the jamaraat, there is no one in Makkah, Madeenah and elsewhere. When the demand is that high, and they are able to come up this much, then I say I will never hesitate in recommending anybody to travel with them. I thank Allah,

The Almighty, subhaanahu wa ta'aalaa, Who has chosen a career for me and I came on Comerel's package. I also thank my chairman, who encouraged me to come on board with them. Not only that, he chose to stay with me in all the tents and chose to sleep next to me all along. My wife also stayed with his wife. That is to say he has given me and my wife a sense of belonging to his family.

VALUE FOR MONEY

I quite agree that it is justified to say they provide comfort, efficiency and reliability. I think they deserve it and it is a name that is not merely chosen but very much practically proven name. May it be with God that they continue to grow.

PERFORMANCE RATING

If I am not allowed to give them A Plus, I will not give them anything less than A Minus. I will rate them very highly. The staff are highly disciplined, patient and very professional. I wonder how many years they must have been doing this. You feel very much at home with them and you feel they are really running a family and not a commercial venture.



M U Y I W A  
OLAGUNJU

WHY COMEREL?

I chose Comerel because it came highly recommended by my mother and some family friends. I did some research and I was pleased with what I saw on their website. I believe I also spoke to brother Ibrahim and he came across as very helpful and knowledgeable.

EXPECTATIONS

I am going in, expecting to be uncomfortable because we are doing it for Allah, and I'm going in hoping to see the best of my Muslim brothers and sisters and hoping to better myself as a Muslim.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

I think I was actually quite sceptical because whomever I spoke to was not sure about the dates so it was a bit frustrating because I needed to book time off work and I didn't have the dates but as things came together, it was very helpful.

INDUCTION COURSE

I think it was actually very good. I thought it was well run, and it is easy enough to read books but you don't get the extras like the history behind why certain things are done in a certain way or why people do things the way they do them. It is a good way of affirming how things should be done properly and just solidifies everything and

makes you actually think, "Yes, I am going for Hajj", and this is a trip of a lifetime. I think even if only three people attend the induction course, it was worth doing because it makes such a big difference. I know we have not had the practicals yet but it is certainly the first induction course where it is not just theoretical, where you actually get to see it in practice and I think that is a good thing.

PRE-DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENT RATING

I would rate it 8 out of 10. For the remaining 2, it is because I think it would have been handy to have the handbook today (induction course day) so that if we are going to make notes, we could add them in the book. Also, they should have let us know that there would be vaccination at the induction course. If I had known, I would not have had one before attending.

EXPECTATIONS IN SAUDIA

I hope that it would be a spiritual experience and I hope that with the sound of things (because there is a good structure on ground) that all I would be worried about would be my taqwa and wudu rather than the practical aspects of trying to get to the haram and get back because I am hoping Comerel is going to handle that.

MOVEMENT LOGISTICS

I met up with the group in Lagos and the movement was well organised, well-coordinated. The transfer between the cities of Madeenah to Jeddah, Jeddah to Makkah, Makkah to Minaa and Minaa to 'Arafat has been really smooth. I didn't really have to worry about when and how we were getting to places, it was really just

about my ibaadah and making sure I did what I had to do for my Hajj.

FEEDING

The general consensus was that it was of a high standard and particularly very good in Madeenah. In Makkah it was alright. Unfortunately, I know Comerel had nothing to do with the feeding in Minaa, it has been a bit of a hit and miss. That could be improved but again, this is a little beyond Comerel, I think.

AREAS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT

I shouldn't talk about improvement without giving credit where credit is due. You have done a fantastic job; the team has been very supportive, they have been enthusiastic, they have been quite motivating and throughout the whole period they have been very cheerful and easy to deal with.

In terms of improvement, we had a few issues with communication in terms of just some minor adjustments that weren't fed back in time for us to make preparations for them. That could probably be adjusted a little.

Another area that I think they probably could work on is for first timers. I sort of got the feeling that they were a little in the lurch and I can understand why because most people want to pray at their own pace but for first-timers, it is a little difficult if you don't have anyone to sort of give you direction.

PERFORMANCE RATING

I saw a video before I came along on this

Hajj trip and I believe that the sister rated Comerel 95%, I will give it 98% and that is a definite improvement. I think you have delivered on everything. You have been punctual, easy-going; you really have made the Hajj trip about my 'ibaadah, I didn't have to worry about anything else. Overall, I would give Comerel a rating of 98%. In Medicine we have some thing that is called the gold standard, where everything is measured against the gold standard. That is the perfect way of dealing with things. I hope insha Allah, Comerel becomes the standard that Hajj packages are measured against in the future.



RAKIYA ILYASU GAMBO

**INDUCTION COURSE**

I don't joke with attendance of my induction because at any time I learn a different thing. Induction is like education; you can never learn everything in one day. So every year, you have new information. Like today, I have learnt more again. Like the situation where you can even do your nafilah for sa'y. I never knew that it can be done; although it is not a sunnah, but you can do it. You are seeking Allah's pleasure, you can do that. So, alhamdulillah, we learn day by day, so knowledge is never in short supply when you come for this type of activity (induction course).

Alhamdulillah, the Induction course was

beautiful. In fact, a novice, who has never read anything about Hajj, with what we learnt in the two days will have 60% of what he or she is supposed to do. For us (old-timers) it is like a renewal of what we already know and like I mentioned, knowledge is never lost. No matter what you were taught yesterday, if you are returning today, you will gain a new thing. The induction course is perfect. And with the beautiful meals that top it up, I think everyone will want to attend the induction course.

The induction course is a serious event. There is nothing picnic about it. What we are going for is between you and Allah (SWT), so whatever information comes to you, there is nothing picnic about that. They are all information that are very vital to the success of that activity; so I do not think it is a picnic.

We have been told to take care of the spiritual aspect of the trip and not discuss Nigerian politics and so on; no, it is spiritual journey and we should take it that way so that we can achieve the best. We do not know whether we are going to be around next year to perform it and perhaps it is the last opportunity Allah will give us. Even if death does not take you, so many other things can take away your attention. Therefore, whatever time you have, use it to the best of your ability so that Allah will know that you have done it from the bottom of your heart and the best is what you have done.

**ADVICE TO FIRST-TIMERS**  
First-timers should concentrate on virtually all the information given. Hajj is not what you just do everyday. It is once in

a year; once in a lifetime. So you have to be around from the beginning to the end because every information you are given is very very vital. There are a lot of things you think you know but you don't really know them. Like a lot of things people get to know are bid'ah (blameworthy innovations in creed and worship). Like carrying water to do your tawaaf. There is nothing like that, but someone will tell you that it is very good to take Zam Zam water and do tawaaf with it. Especially as a first-timer, you are told so many things but when you come and hear with your own ears, you will know how to do the right thing at the right time.

**WHY I RECOMMEND COMEREL**  
Yes, I recommend Comerel to my friends because their total package takes care of the Hujajj from Nigeria here to the Holy Land and back. Comerel will give you the comfort you need to do the right thing. The Hajj build up is hectic but in a situation where you know that the vehicle is waiting for you at the right time will calm you down and give you the confidence that you will not be lagging behind. Comerel have tried to be very effective in their activities such that whatever you are doing, they give you the opportunity to attain maximum benefit from it and maximum reward for it. What you do not know, they will tell you. And they will tell you the right time to do the right thing.

At times, there are multiple version of when to do certain activities. Comerel will take a position which will make you feel that you have not missed out on it. Therefore, when a tour operator gives you the best you know that once you give your money to them, you can go and sleep; they will do the right thing at the right time. So you have no fear that maybe when you

reach Minaa you will not see your tour operator again or there are some tour operators, immediately you enter Saudi Arabia, they disappear; you don't even know where your hotel is. Minaa is another ball game entirely. However, with Comerel, you know that you have paid for the services and those services will be rendered to you. It is like you are procuring their services and they will give you what you have paid for.

**ADVICE TO THOSE WHO ARE YET TO PATRONISE COMEREL**

There are those who think the money is too much. I say when you are procuring the services of a company that is giving you first class opportunities to do the best, it doesn't come cheap. I travelled with State pilgrims for years and I can tell you the difference. You know some private tour operators don't tell their customers the whole truth. We see people, who when we tell them Comerel is good, they say it is too expensive and they go and patronise a different tour operator. At the end of the day, when we are going to Minaa, they start looking for Comerel to buy space in Minaa because their tour operator did not procure the Minaa tents for them. At the end, they pay so much that doesn't really befit what they paid for. If you have to pay one tour operator and you still have to pay to another one for the services, it does not work out. Why not pay for a complete package knowing you are going to get everything you were told you would get?

**AREAS WHICH SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED**

Like those of us who paid for the services long ago, who are just getting their documents some days to the trip; for me it doesn't really keep me good. I had the confidence that the documents would

come but I would have preferred that they came at least a week to my departure so that whatever preparations I wanted to make at home, I would have done. However, in a situation where 48 hours to your flight you are not sure whether your papers are ready does not make one feel happy. My only consolation was that I knew that even if it was a few hours to my trip, I would get my documents but I think that area needs to be strengthened. Let our documents come out before time so that as we have started planning ahead of time, let the documents be ready ahead of time.

**MADEENAH**

We have been taking the Comerel package for more than ten years now. We have always taken Comerel as a family such that any time we find flaws with Comerel we tell them and they are able to correct it. Alhamdulillah, this year, the pilgrims took off from various points but we all landed in Madeenah. The reception at Madeenah was beautiful. Comerel staff were there to receive us. They were there to oversee our passage through Customs and Immigration procedures during the arrival. And alhamdulillah, the activities at the airport were very seamless for some of us. Right from the airport, we were given the keys to our rooms which was very impressive. From the airport, we were taken to the hotel. We went right into our rooms and the Hajj activities started from the Madeenah angle. While in Madeenah, we had what can be call a near-home experience. The feeding was quite good. We had a dedicated restaurant where Nigerian foods were served. You could see foods like masa, miyan taushe, eba was there, amala, wheatmeal, semolina, with ogbono soup, okra soup, egusi and our

own homemade Nigerian jollof rice, which is very popular in the world. I think the Comerel team has really tried to give comfort to its pilgrims.

Like I said, anywhere we found lapses, the officials were called and they tried to rectify them immediately.

**FLIGHT TO JEDDAH**

By the end of our four-day stay in Madeenah, we moved to Jeddah through the Madeenah airport. The interesting thing there was that our luggage was collected about 12 hours before our departure; so our luggage was on ground before our arrival in Makkah, which eased movement for us because if you have to carry your luggage from Madeenah to the airport, land at the Jeddah airport, and start carrying the luggage in Makkah, I think it would be very tiring especially for the men who were in their ihraam for the Umrah. I think that aspect suited the movement of the men most especially. It also made our movement seamless because we just carried our hand luggage and boarded the flight to Jeddah.

**JEDDAH TO MAKKAH BY ROAD**

From Jeddah, things were also made easy. The buses were waiting for us, the guides were there on ground. We moved from the terminal of the local airport straight to our buses and we all know that during Hajj, movement by bus is not always easy. We had the check points and all the country's military or Hajj officials who had to do their duty and which Comerel has no power over that. Alhamdulillah, at the end of the day, we arrived Makkah safely and we took our luggage and our keys were shared to us too even before we reach the hotel. We moved in. As usual, we were informed that

Makkah would not be like Madeenah because in Makkah, they could not get a dedicated restaurant for us, which meant we had to join the crowd. Whatever they were eating, we had to eat. There was nothing special there; that was beyond the power of Comerel. We pray that as we go farther, they will be able to have a hotel that will serve their pilgrims much better.

As of now, Comerel is trying but they need to work harder so that any complaint should be looked into immediately and it shouldn't repeat itself again. We know they are human like us, but once in a while, there are issues that should not come up at all; they should have foreseen them and nipped them in the bud. However, like I said, we are human beings and we are prone to one fault or the other. The good thing is that Comerel is able to be there at all times for you to lay your complaint to them immediately and they react and take action.

**PERFORMANCE RATING**

Actually, rating Comerel is quite simple. If out of 10 things you expect from them they are able to deliver 8, I think they have tried. And that is an A. For a student to score A in an exam, that is an excellent result. The truth is that Comerel is always ready to give comfort to their pilgrims by showing efficiency in their activities, which makes us rely on them. Comerel is actually very reliable. I can always recommend them any time, any day, to anybody who wishes to take their package because when you procure their services you can be very sure that you can go and sleep. When the time comes, they will knock on your door and deliver your package to you. Comerel is an excellent tour operator and I believe that was why the National Hajj Commission awarded them the best private tour

operator for the 2016 Hajj year. I pray that Comerel will continue to do much better and get more passengers so that they can have the feel of really giving service to more Nigerians.



YAHAYA MOMOH

**WHY COMEREL?**

Comerel is well known for helping people fulfil this very cardinal act of 'ibaadah, which is Hajj. For someone like me with my busy work schedule, I

wanted a reliable package that could deliver me to the holy land, where I could perform my Hajj rites within two weeks; that was what I wanted. And for me, I wasn't expecting a picnic, I just wanted reliable service that would enable me do this seamlessly with minimum interruption and within two weeks. And alhamdulillah, I got that. Today, I am almost done with my Hajj rites, insha Allah, and I can see that everybody is almost done.

I got to know about Comerel through friends who have used their services and who told me I could rely on it. I also came across your advert on television because the company advertises a lot during Ramadan. So here today, I have experienced the service and I am almost done with the rites and hopefully, I will be back home in two weeks because that was what I wanted. Not a picnic but a reliable service which would take me back home in



MUYIWA OLAGUNJU

WHY COMEREL?

I chose Comerel because it came highly recommended by my mother and some family friends. I did some research and I was pleased with what I saw on their website. I believe I also spoke to brother Ibrahim and he came across as very helpful and knowledgeable.

EXPECTATIONS

I am going in, expecting to be uncomfortable because we are doing it for Allah, and I'm going in hoping to see the best of my Muslim brothers and sisters and hoping to better myself as a Muslim.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

I think I was actually quite sceptical because whomever I spoke to was not sure about the dates so it was a bit frustrating because I needed to book time off work and I didn't have the dates but as things came together, it was very helpful.

INDUCTION COURSE

I think it was actually very good. I thought it was well run, and it is easy enough to read books but you don't get the extras like the history behind why certain things are done in a certain way or why people do things the way they do them. It is a good way of affirming how things should be done properly and just solidifies everything and makes you actually think, "Yes, I am going for Hajj", and this is a trip of a lifetime. I think even if only three people attend the induction course, it was worth doing because it makes such a big difference. I know we have not had the practicals yet but it is certainly the first induction course where it is not just theoretical, where you

actually get to see it in practice and I think that is a good thing.

PRE-DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENT RATING

I would rate it 8 out of 10. For the remaining 2, it is because I think it would have been handy to have the handbook today (induction course day) so that if we are going to make notes, we could add them in the book. Also, they should have let us know that there would be vaccination at the induction course. If I had known, I would not have had one before attending.

EXPECTATIONS IN SAUDIA

I hope that it would be a spiritual experience and I hope that with the sound of things (because there is a good structure on ground) that all I would be worried about would be my taqwa and wudu rather than the practical aspects of trying to get to the haram and get back because I am hoping Comerel is going to handle that.

MOVEMENT LOGISTICS

I met up with the group in Lagos and the movement was well organised, well-coordinated. The transfer between the cities of Madeenah to Jeddah, Jeddah to Makkah, Makkah to Minaa and Minaa to 'Arafat has been really smooth. I didn't really have to worry about when and how we were getting to places, it was really just about my ibaadah and making sure I did what I had to do for my Hajj.

FEEDING

The general consensus was that it was of a high standard and particularly very good in Madeenah. In Makkah it was alright.

FATIMA NUHU GIDADO

WHY COMEREL?

I learnt about Comerel Travels and Tours from a mutual friend and I also like their page on Facebook and I have been following them on Facebook. From the experience I heard from my friend, who travelled with Comerel a couple of years ago and was highly impressed with their services, I decided to give it a try and alhamdulillah, I am highly impressed.

PROMISES FULFILLED

All the services that were promised were fulfilled because I have travelled with tour operators in the past, let me say that Comerel is the best.

STAFF CONDUCT AND MOVEMENT LOGISTICS

One thing I will say about Comerel staffers is that if there is going to be any glitch, they are always prompt in informing the pilgrims. They are always giving us information as we go along. Since from Lagos to every place we have been, we have been informed of what would happen. If it doesn't happen as planned, they always apologise and explain why things did not happen as planned.

Alhamdulillah, everything went well. I was really impressed with the logistics, especially the movement from Madeenah to Makkah where we were transported by air from Madeenah to Jeddah and then from Jeddah, transported by bus to Makkah. It saved us from a lot of stress because there is a lot of stress travelling from Madeenah to Makkah by road; I have experienced that before. I am happy that Comerel has introduced this flight from

Madeenah to Jeddah so that it would ease pilgrims' stress. I am very happy with that move.

FEEDING ARRANGEMENTS

We left our African food back at home and Comerel made it their duty to make us not forget about our home delicacies. We were served Nigerian food and alhamdulillah, we were happy.



KOFO OLAGUNJU

I am here sitting at Arafah, doing the obligatory Hajj, the year is 2017. I came to Hajj with Comerel. Comerel is essentially Comfort, Reliability and Reliability. They

have been able to provide and do a lot more than that. Usually, during addini (religious rites) you are not supposed to talk about the money, tun da dukka ibadah ne (since it is all about worship). You are not supposed to talk about how much you spent but alhamdulillah, I was able to afford a Comerel package and I have not regretted it. When you see what other people are doing you will definitely know cewa (that) Comerel is a five-star company. Insha Allah, they will continue to improve and do bigger and greater things.



UMARU USMAN KARAYE

THE NAHCON AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

For every industry, usually, there is a regulator.

Therefore, we as a Hajj operator, for NAHCON to recognise us for high quality and consistency in our services, we are highly elated, we are very happy and we are really encouraged to really do more. Of course, we have a short-term, medium-term and long-term plan, and therefore, this recognition has guided us and encouraged us to show that what we are doing is in the right direction. We are very thankful for that.

THE VISION AND DREAM OF COMEREL

We are still far away from the dream, but I can see we are already in the right direction, as I said earlier. Any business you start will have challenges. So far, we have been able to identify almost all the challenges, we are just solving them or tackling them or confronting them one after the other and we are in the best position to say that we have all the necessary support from the pilgrims, from Nigerians who are intending and those who have already been to Hajj. We believe that we have been able to convince everybody that we are on the right way and that we are really ready to do it. We are competent and we are improving our capacity, therefore, it is just a matter of time to reach our dream.

STAYING AT THE TOP

Reaching a target may not be as easy as maintaining that kind of position. Therefore, we are now in a tight situation, but by the grace of God, we will continue to do our best to maintain that position. Of course, you and I know that all our competitors look up to us; we always set the pace. We are always innovative, it is only after we introduce a new thing that our competitors pick and follow it, therefore I am sure we are going to continue with that. We are open-minded, all our pilgrims always give us feedback and immediately we get such feedback, we sit down and strategise and ensure we improve our service and that is the way to go about it and by the grace of God, we will continue to improve.

Things are not static; they are always dynamic and in fact, this year, we realised that we need to expand our scope of services and we are going to introduce it as soon as possible, because we realise that we need to be comprehensive and we didn't think of this before some years back but now we realise this. Of course with the advent of technology, there are a lot of things that appear that you didn't think of then. And of course you know these services; especially Hajj operations, every year, you go to Saudi Arabia, you see new things coming out, new regulations, policies and so on. It means we have to be flexible and be ready to adjust so that you get the best out of it. And that is how we do it. We are not static.

WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE STAFF

I want to tell our staff that they should tighten their belts we are just starting and there is a lot of opportunities. As I said

earlier, there a lot of areas we have discovered that we need to cover even though the Hajj operation looks like it has a cap that you cannot expand beyond such a limit but I can see the light on the other side of the tunnel. Of course, with the Federal Government of Nigeria having a rethink about the operation, it looks like there will be new laws that may open some opportunities for us. There are other areas within the periphery of this, therefore our staff should be happy that as soon as we finalise our strategies, we will sit down and discuss with them and they will be happy with that.

A WORD TO THE INTENDING PILGRIMS

We surprise them almost every year. there are a couple of things we do not want to tell them now until they get there so that they will see it as a surprise. I am sure they will be happy with it. Every year, we bring something new that will add value to what they paid for, and I am sure they will not be disappointed, insha Allah.



HONOURABLE DANBURAM ABUBAKAR NUHU

I thank Almighty Allah for giving me the chance to be part of the pilgrims this year. And to have

observed the rites of Hajj so far. Alhamdulillah, things have been OK. Let me say to you that the tent arrangement has been very good. Especially if you look at the tent arrangement in 'Arafah. The way they arranged it this year, I think they have done some improvement in terms of allocating the tents to those of us who have been a part of this company or who are using the company for Hajj. What I think they need to do in terms of improvement is in the area of the tent allocation. Right from Makkah, I thought that they should have handed out a sort of allocation list, so that when we arrived here (Minaa) we did not need to wait for a longer period for the tents to be shared or for the allocation to be done and perhaps share the list in accordance with the tents since they know the tent numbers. As soon as we are here in Minaa, we would just go straight to our tents and enter our tents.

Also the keys; sometimes when you come there are delays like when one of the staff locks up a tent and has left. I don't know whether there was no communication between the staff that was in Minaa and those who followed us right from Makkah to Minaa. That communication gap needs to be closed. Once we arrive, they should know we are here so that we do not need

to come here standing outside. The weather is not too friendly for people to be waiting outside for the keys. they need to improve in that area.

They also need to improve in the area of the food (in Minaa). Sometimes we have infiltration of our tents by other pilgrims who have used the services of other tour operators and who are also staying in Minaa. The area allocated to Comerel needs to be more secure, ensuring it is really for Comerel pilgrims. We have raised that issue and I think they need to improve on that. They also need to see if they can separate between the male and female sections. If they can do that, I think it will help a lot.

For Arafah, they have done well. The only which I have observed is the toilet, which also needs to be more secure. If those toilets were dedicated to Comerel's pilgrims, then they need to be secured for only Comerel pilgrims. A situation where they allowed other tour operators' pilgrims to also have a way of infiltrating into those toilets and thereby causing inconvenience to those who should be using it. I think this is an area they need to work on.

So far, so good in terms of the transportation. Right from Makkah up to Minaa and from Minaa to Arafah and Muzdalifah and back to Makkah, they have done well. I am especially happy with the improvement in the way food was shared at Muzdalifah. They should keep up. If they can on it, they should and it is good that they do so. Only that they should find a way of ensuring that we do not waste time in locating a place to stay in Muzdalifah. That affects most of us in terms of timing, but we finally reached Muzdalifah.

AMINA BAYI

WHY COMEREL?

The reputation! Actually, I think a lot of people, the first thing that you get from them when you ask about the best travel agency to go with, they always say, "Comerel", so that's why we are here today.

The only research I made was asking people around, you know, what their experiences were and so far, all (were) positive reviews. That is why I am here to see if that is the case.

PRE-DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENTS VS EXPECTATIONS

Hopefully, it should. I think I will personally go in with a sort of very critical eye, this time because of the fact that Comerel has a very good reputation. So, for me, the threshold for Comerel will be much higher than any regular tour operator. I am waiting to see and be impressed like people have always talked about.

INDUCTION COURSE

It is part of what they do and interestingly, this is my very first Hajj, so I really need to know how all the rites are being performed according to Sunnah and then, of course, the schedule that Comerel put in place; we need to know that as well. And this is also me assessing, like I said before how they operate in terms of giving the best services to the pilgrims.

PRE-DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENTS

On a scale of 1 to 10, I would give it so far, I guess, a 9 because I don't have anything else and, of course, I don't want to give it a 10, but so far, I think so far, so good. Everything has gone very smoothly from the time of enquiries to payment and just

interaction with the staff. They have been kind and courteous and very efficient. They are so professional. So, yes, I'll give a 9. Hopefully at the end, if everything goes well, inshaa Allah, when everything goes well, then I think I will give them a 10.

EXPECTATIONS IN SAUDIA

I hope to see efficiency. I am a very time-conscious person, so I want everything to go as scheduled, bearing in mind, of course, that there are externalities because we are going to Saudi Arabia and their government have their own schedule. I expect to see my money's worth, to be honest, because this is not cheap. However, if I am able to see all of those things and be able to perform all the Hajj rites and fulfil the Hajj, then maa shaa Allah, alhamdulillah.

FEARS

If, for example, you pay for a particular package and that package tells you that you are going to get something and then you go there and it is not there or not up to your standard, you know, that is a fear. That is just one side and then two years ago, I guess, there was that tragedy that happened and I want to know the steps that Comerel has taken to protect its pilgrims. So those are my fears but insha Allah, we hope that nothing like that happens again. Other than that, I have been on Umrah so I understand crowd control and all those things. I have that at the back of my mind that those things may happen and of course, I will excuse Comerel for all those things that may happen outside of their (control).



MUNIR IBRAHIM LAWAL

WHY COMEREL EACH YEAR?

Anything that is good is what Comerel goes for. I think in Nigeria for now, there is no company for

Hajj and Umrah operations like Comerel and I don't think there will be because Comerel is always open to changes, new ideas, developments based on their assessment of situations from the questionnaire from the pilgrims. So each year they improve the quality of the services provided. So what else do I need?

NUMBER OF SUPPORTING STAFF REQUIRED

What I said and which I still observe with changes is that the attention of the supporting staff should be purely on the pilgrims because most of them have performed Hajj several times. I believe they are doing that. At a time I remarked that due to a large number of pilgrims, some pilgrims did not get enough information. Whether all Comerel staffers participate in the Hajj exercise or not, the objectives and the targets of Comerel will still be met. Let me give an example. About two years ago, Comerel began to ration the number of staffers who travel for Umrah and Hajj operations. Instead of a particular staffer going each year. That has not disrupted the activities of Comerel and that has not reduced the services provided by Comerel. What I am saying, in essence, is

that whether certain staffers go or not, Comerel will still be able to function very well.

I don't know whether it is the kind of system the company has put in place; because if you have a system on the ground, whether the people operating the system are there or not, the system will flow. This is what I'm saying. Comerel has devised a method, they have a system on the ground now; whether all the staff participate in the Umrah or Hajj functions or not, they will still deliver to the highest and maximum capacity for which they are known.

#### THE INDUCTION COURSE

At any Induction course with Comerel, you will find one or two new things to learn based their past experiences. They have new information based on the data gathered from the pilgrims. They will still have one or two new things to add to the existing services they provide or for which they are known. Always every year, I advise people, whether you have been following them every year or not still participate in the induction course, you will still learn new things from them.

#### ANY REGRETS USING THE SERVICES OF COMEREL?

I have no regrets so far with Comerel. I have told you Comerel is my family, the water I drink, the tea I drink every time, the meal I put in my stomach. I am even finding it very difficult to relate to some of my relatives who are also tour operators because I have been following Comerel, I cannot even change my mind for once. Like this year's exercise; the price is high because of the dollar exchange rate, and I

had made some deposits which under normal circumstances was sufficient to pays for my Hajj trip. When I saw their final price, it was higher and I was tempted to patronise other companies. However, I looked at it and said, "No, the services those companies would offer might not or would not even be up to the standard of the Comerel services I had become used to". I called the MD/CEO and spoke with the staff. The words of encouragement they all gave me will not make me change my mind at all. That is the kind of company you need. service to the customer is highly guaranteed. they don't say because you are their customer they want to throw you out. At the time I could not complete my payment and I wanted to opt out, they said, no, even if I did not have enough money to complete the payment I should follow them and they would not drop me. You can see the encouragement. Whereas, I was looking for an excuse to follow my brothers and sister companies whose services are cheaper; I was looking for the easy way out (Laughs). Alhamdulillah, I am still here. I'm telling you Comerel is my house, it is my life. I want everybody to help the company to achieve their aims and aspirations because even if the government can look into the affairs of Comerel and other Hajj tour operators, they might find that there is little for the Hajj Commission to do again. These individuals can do it. We are talking of privatisation; these are the people going into private businesses and we should be able to encourage them, not just the power sector alone. Let the government encourage these people in the airlifting services and other aspects too. They need it.

#### RECENT AWARD OF EXCELLENCE GIVEN TO COMEREL BY NAHCON

I see it in two ways. One on the part of the government, which selected the best candidate and secondly, it is the expectation of anyone who has been travelling with Comerel that there cannot be any award given to any company without Comerel being part and parcel of such an award from the Federal Government because they have performed creditably well, if you have been to Saudi Arabia during the Umrah or Hajj season, you could see how well they portray the image of Nigeria from even their slogan: Proudly Nigerian. So this is the kind of thing we want to see, not someone trafficking in illicit drugs in Saudi Arabia or South Africa; soiling the image of the country. This is a company that has given Nigeria a good image outside. I think they should be commended beyond this award; they should recommend this company or the individual behind it for National Honours because they have given a very good image to the country. I think the Award of Excellence is a welcome development.

#### IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICES

I have told you that every year, Comerel has new ideas. The quality of their services is not stagnant, it is improving. That is why we see changes in their operations. I think it is a very nice company and I hope in the nearest future, they will sell the shares of the company to the public so that so many people can buy.

I wouldn't mind being a subscriber. It is a nice company. I invest where it matters most.

#### CONSTANT FEEDBACK

Let me be very sincere with you: if you have any organisation that reviews and monitors the quality of the services it delivers, that company is bound to progress. So far, so good, Comerel has been waxing stronger. It is my prayer that the company will reach greater heights. Like I said in my first interview in Abuja, I would like to buy the shares of the company. Without mincing words, Nigeria has economic challenges presently due to the (high)exchange rate (of the US dollar to a naira) and this accounts for the lower number of pilgrims they are serving this year. However, despite that, they have not performed below expectation.

#### STAFF

I do not know where the staffers were employed. They are capable hands. Even when their pilgrims make unpleasant comments, you see them smile and go about their activities and services. They put their pilgrims first. In terms of management, I do not think Comerel lacks the managerial skills to handle Hajj and Umrah. I would like them to venture into other tours and services because I am very sure the company will grow to that height.

#### MOVEMENT OF PILGRIMS

Concerning the movement of the pilgrims, so far, so good, it was still OK, if not for Emirates, which had stopped coming to Abuja that accounted for the slight hitches in the movement from Abuja to Lagos by air. I am very optimistic that by the time Emirates returns to Abuja, the little hitches currently encountered will be a thing of the past. Even with this (flying to Lagos to board the Emirates flight), there was no hitch because it has been programmed. If you were scheduled to fly on the 20th, 21st or 22nd, except you are there late....so far

so good.

The only thing I want to advise is on the pilgrims' payments for the Hajj and Umrah services. I think Comerel has to adjust their timing of payment. They have to reschedule or have a device (such that) if they want to have VIP Premium Package, they should have VIP Premium and if they want VIP Package, they should have VIP. The payment issue is making their logistics a kind of problem because if a pilgrim is to travel on the 22nd and is making payment on the 20th of that month, I think it is going to be very cumbersome for the company to ascertain and make sure their logistics are intact. They should look for means to make ensure that at least 4 to 5 months before the Umrah or Hajj exercise, those who pay early are given incentives. They should attach incentives to early payment so that the majority of those who want to travel with them will be able to pay on time. I think that aspect has to be looked into seriously. So that their competitors in the market, who are trying to copy what Comerel is doing will still be welcome and Comerel will still be ahead of them because of these peer reviews.

Secondly, on the issue of housing in Madeenah and Makkah: In Madeenah, I don't think there is any problem. Oberoi is beautiful, the services, housing, feeding, transportation is still at its best. However, in Makkah where they don't have control over the hotel management; since these are five-star hotels and the kind of pilgrims these hotels accommodate, they might not be able to listen to Comerel's needs of satisfying their pilgrims. They have to look into this. It is either they look for a particular hotel where all their pilgrims will be kept, irrespective of whether VIP premium package or VIP, so that their pilgrims are stationed in a particular place.

Whoever wants to upgrade to a higher hotel, he should be given the chance. However, that should be an arrangement between the pilgrim and Comerel but putting their pilgrims under the same roof, I think, will be better than scattering them here and there. The issue of Movenpick and Fairmont is a clear test of what I am talking about. In the past, we have been enjoying Fairmont and Movenpick (hotels) but as things are going, it seems they have to change their tactics regarding these two hotels. The issue of Movenpick and Fairmont has to be looked into critically. If they can find another hotel that will be soft on the needs of the pilgrims, I think the management (of Comerel) should give it consideration properly.

Thirdly, I will advise the management, probably in conjunction with other tour operators to make a kind of representation to the government. This is because a few years ago, the government gave some money to the aviation sector to bail them out of their problems. Some reputable tour operators can subscribe to such a thing so that it will assist them in making advanced payments to airline companies. In case the pilgrims are unable to pay on time, if they have deposits with them (the airlines) it will enable them to break even in their businesses. We all know the (lending) rates of banks presently. Going through banks, they (tour operators) might not be able to break even. However, if the government can give them a kind of leeway into how they can go into this kind of thing, I think it will help them to solve some of their financial difficulties. They have to talk to the National Hajj Commission and see how this thing can be done

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2. Where any default is proven to be the fault of our staff, the extent of our liability is refund of the principal sum paid to us less a 10% ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGE.
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6. COMEREL reserves the right to alter its travel dates and check in dates where it deems such an action to be in the best interest of the pilgrims. This shall be done with prior notification.
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17. Do not pay into our accounts until we have cleared you. Please contact us before making a payment.
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19. Failure to read these terms and conditions is not an excuse to demand a refund. Please take time to read it and our agreement.
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