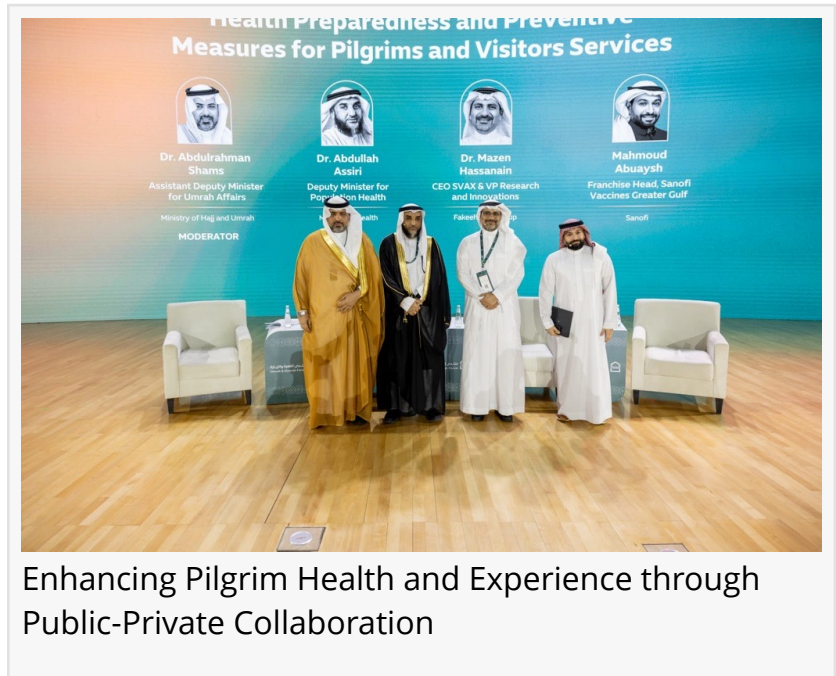


Himaya Makes Its Mark at the Umrah and Ziyarah Forum 2026, Bringing Health to Heart of the Pilgrim Experience

Among thousands of voices shaping the future of the world's most sacred journey, Sanofi and Arabio introduced a health agenda that had never before.

MADINAH, SAUDI ARABIA, May 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Umrah and Ziyarah Forum 2026, which was held in Madinah, landmark convened more than 29,000 visitors from 165 countries[1], representing the full breadth of the Umrah ecosystem from travel operators and hospitality groups to health authorities to industry leaders. As Saudi Arabia advances its Vision 2030 ambition to welcome thirty million Umrah performers annually,[2] this gathering reflects a sector transforming at pace.



Enhancing Pilgrim Health and Experience through Public-Private Collaboration

Sanofi and Arabio were among the very few healthcare voices in that space. Through the first public showcase of the Himaya initiative and a dedicated panel session on pilgrim health preparedness, they placed health on the agenda of an industry conversation and made the case that, in a gathering of this scale, protecting pilgrims is not a medical footnote. It is a pillar of the entire pilgrim experience.

The panel session, titled "Health Preparedness and Preventive Measures for Pilgrims and Visitor Services," brought together health and industry leaders united by a shared conviction. As Umrah grows in scale and ambition, the responsibility to protect every pilgrim must grow with it. With more than eight million unique Umrah performers recorded in the first quarter of 2025 alone,[3] Umrah is a year-round, continuous movement of people from over 180 countries converging in the world's most sacred spaces. The discussion centred on meningococcal meningitis as a well-understood, preventable disease in mass gathering environments,[4] and on the significant opportunity that comes from aligning health, regulatory, and technical entities across the pilgrim journey.

The panel discussions revolved around the need for effective measures to prevent disease transmission in Umrah and confirmed a path toward implementing meningococcal vaccination for Umrah performers, the conversation at the Forum moved from scientific theory to operational reality. Vaccination is not merely a formality. It is the first essential act of preparation for every pilgrim.

Dr Abdulla Assiri, Deputy Minister for Population Health at the Ministry of Health, said: "Hajj and Umrah pilgrims are a priority for the Ministry of Health. Through comprehensive health guidance and the Himaya initiative, delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, we are working to raise awareness, keep pilgrims informed of the latest health requirements, and encourage early vaccination to support a safer and healthier pilgrimage."

"At Sanofi, we are proud to bring the Himaya initiative to the Umrah and Ziyarah Forum demonstrating our long-standing commitment to the Kingdom and the health of every pilgrim" said Baptiste De Clarens, General Manager Vaccines at Sanofi Greater Gulf. "Through our strong collaboration with Arabio and health authorities in the Kingdom, we are defining a new standard of care for pilgrims. Aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, this initiative is a meaningful step toward a future that ensures proactive protection is an accessible, natural part of every pilgrim's preparation, safeguarding not just the individual journey, but the communities they return to."

"Delivering on the promise of public health at this massive scale requires total coordination across the entire pilgrim and medical ecosystem," said Rehan Ahmed, Acting CEO at Arabio." By aligning our operational strengths with Sanofi and the health authorities in the Kingdom, we are working to ensure the meningitis vaccine is accessible, understood, and embraced by HCPs and internal pilgrims as an essential part of the journey they have been preparing for. Our shared goal is to remove health barriers so pilgrims can focus entirely on their spiritual journey."

Himaya, which translates to protection in Arabic, aims to make vaccination against meningitis, flu and COVID as natural as packing Ihram or gathering prayers for loved ones at home. A vaccinated pilgrim is a protected pilgrim, and a gift to everyone around them.

The journey of a lifetime deserves to begin with protection. Pilgrims are invited to book their meningitis vaccination through the Sehhaty App, available on iOS and Android, at least ten days before travel. One appointment secures five years of protection, ensuring the journey is completed safely for you and your family

About the Himaya Initiative Himaya is a public health initiative established through a collaboration between Sanofi, Arabio, and health authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Its purpose is to partner with health authorities and work closely to establish the recommendation for meningitis, flu and COVID vaccines to protect people during mass gatherings such as Umrah. The initiative is aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 health agenda and the Kingdom's

ambition to lead global standards in mass gathering medicine and local vaccine manufacturing.

About Sanofi: Sanofi is an R&D driven, AI-powered biopharma company committed to improving people's lives and delivering compelling growth. We apply our deep understanding of the immune system to invent medicines and vaccines that treat and protect millions of people around the world, with an innovative pipeline that could benefit millions more. Our team is guided by one purpose: we chase the miracles of science to improve people's lives; this inspires us to drive progress and deliver positive impact for our people and the communities we serve, by addressing the most urgent healthcare, environmental, and societal challenges of our time.

About Arabio: Arab Company for Pharmaceutical Products ("Arabio") is one of the region's pioneering biopharmaceutical companies, specializing in vaccines and biopharmaceutical products. Established in 2005 and headquartered in Riyadh, with a manufacturing facility in Makkah, Arabio has built strategic partnerships with leading global and regional vaccine and biopharmaceutical companies to support equitable access to vaccines across Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and North Africa. The company has maintained a leading market position for many years, supplying more than 10 vaccines included in the Kingdom's national immunization program, and is a closed joint stock company registered in Saudi Arabia.

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