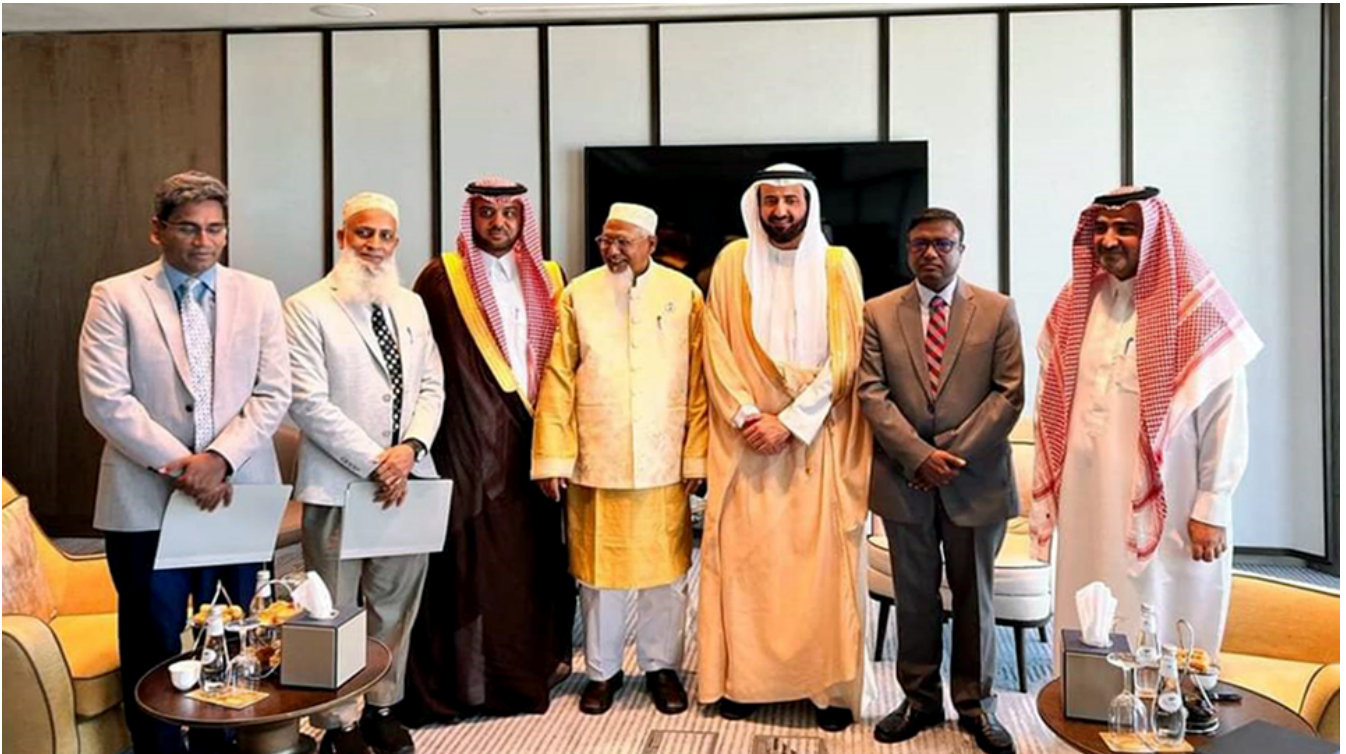


127,198 BD pilgrims to perform Hajj in 2023

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: The government of Bangladesh signed an agreement with the Saudi Arabian counterpart on Hajj in Jeddah on January 9. With this, 127,198 Bangladeshis will be able to perform the biggest Muslim pilgrimage of the world in 2023.

Earlier, a three-member team that including Matiul Islam, Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, President of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh, led by Faridul Haque Khan, State Minister for Religious Affairs, left for Saudi Arabia on January 7.

The Bangladeshi State Minister for Religious Affairs and Saudi Hajj and Umrah Affairs Minister Dr Tawfiq bin Al Rabiah signed the agreement on the behalf of their respective countries.

Following the new move, the Saudi government will allow 127,198 Bangladeshis to perform Hajj in 2023, considering its population and the

improved Covid-19 situation.

Of them, 15,000 will perform Hajj under government management and 112,198 under private management, said Mohammad Anowar Hossain, Senior Public Relations Officer of the Religious Affairs Ministry.

Also, Bangladesh will request Saudi Arabia to lift the embargo that restricts people over 65 from performing Hajj, he further said.

On November 13, 2022, Bangladesh and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed a bilateral document on the Route to Mecca, which will ease visits of Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrims to the kingdom.

Under Route to Mecca service agreement, pilgrims will be able to complete their immigration in Dhaka prior to their departure to Saudi Arabia.

According to the ministry, 127,000 people from Bangladesh performed Hajj in 2019 while the Saudi government increased the quota for Bangladeshi pilgrims by 10,000 in 2020. However, Hajj was not held in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Only 60,000 people from Bangladesh were allowed to perform Hajj in 2022 as the Saudi government halved the quotas for pilgrims from different countries.

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