

Saudi agrees to carry Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrims by sea

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Dhaka: The Saudi government has approved Bangladesh's proposal to transport Hajj pilgrims via the sea route for performing Hajj.

The Saudi government gave the nod during a bilateral meeting between Religious Affairs Adviser KM Khalid Hossain and Tawfiq Fawzan Al-Rabiah, the Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah at Jeddah on Sunday (Oct 6), the Ministry of Religious Affairs said this in a press release.

During the meeting, Khalid Hossain placed the proposal to the Saudi Hajj and Umrah Ministry and the Saudi ministry confirmed the approval to the Bangladesh proposal, said the press release.

Dr Tawfiq Fawzan Al Rabiah said that the Saudi government has no objection in hosting Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrims travelling by sea.

However, the Saudi officials said discussions with port authorities are necessary and the Bangladesh government needs to finalise the decision

by consulting with shipping companies.

Bangladesh government is considering sending 2000 to 3000 pilgrims by sea on experimental basis this year.

The Saudi minister assured the adviser of upgrading biometric system for pilgrims.

He also assured the religious affairs adviser of issuance of Munazzim (multiple entry) visas for Hajj agency owners or their representatives.

Besides, the Saudi minister also assured the religious affairs adviser of taking necessary measures regarding the lost luggage of Bangladeshi pilgrims in 2023 and 2024 under the 'Route to Makkah' programme.

This year, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has set a minimum quota of 2000 pilgrims per agency.

The meeting was attended by several high-ranking officials, including the Deputy Minister for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Hajj, Hassan Al Manakhera, and Director General Badr Al Selami from SA government while representatives from the Bangladesh Embassy and Consulate in Riyadh and Jeddah were also present, including religious affairs secretary MA Hamid Jamaddar, Additional Secretary of the Hajj Division Motiul Islam, Charge d'Affaires Brigadier Rakibullah, and Hajj Consul Muhammad Aslam Uddin.

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