

Saudi Arabia resumes Umrah after six-month hiatus

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Dhaka: Saudi Arabian authorities on October 4 reopened the Muslim holy places for Umrah pilgrimage after a six-month hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Following coronavirus protocols, the first batch of Umrah pilgrims arrived in the wee hours of October 4, said the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in a statement.

Saudis and foreign residents of the kingdom will be allowed to perform Umrah, or the minor pilgrimage, at the Grand Mosque at a 30 per cent capacity or 6,000 people per day as of October 4.

Earlier, according to reports, the barricade placed around the Kaaba and the holy Black Stone will remain in its place and visitors will be prevented from touching them as part of the COVID-19 measures.

Masjid al-Haram, where the Kaaba is located, will be disinfected 10 times a day, and quarantine rooms are already prepared for visitors showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Moreover, both local and international worshippers coming for Umrah and worship will be accepted as of November 1, while both Masjid al-Haram and Al-Masjid al-Nabawi will be opened for worship at full capacity by taking COVID-19 protective measures.

Due to the pandemic, the Hajj pilgrimage this year was limited to those living in Saudi Arabia, and pilgrims from abroad were not accepted.

Umrah is the Islamic pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca that Muslims can undertake at any time of the year.