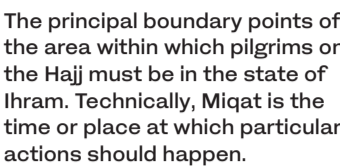


Cover photo, Ziyad Alarfaj





Pilgrims started streaming into Mina since Saturday to spend Sunday in the vast tent city.



FAST FACTS

The pilgrims will retrace the noble tradition of Prophet Muhammad and spend the Tarwiyah Day on Sunday in Mina.

In Mina, the pilgrims will make final preparations for the Standing (wuqoof) at Arafat on Monday, which marks the climax of the annual pilgrimage.

A Hajj security man takes care of a child. Security forces have been deployed around the clock to deal with all emergency cases. SPA

A HEIGHTENED EXPERIENCE

# All eyes on Mina as Hajj begins today

Government fully prepared as 2 million pilgrims head for the holy sites

**Arab News Jeddah**  
Around 2 million pilgrims arrived in the Holy Land from outside and inside the Kingdom in preparation to set out from Makkah for Mina.

They will retrace the noble tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and spend the Tarwiyah Day on Sunday in Mina. Here they will make final preparations for the Standing (Wuquf) at Arafat, which marks the climax of the annual pilgrimage, on Monday.

To be able to serve the pilgrims and enable them to perform Hajj rituals with ease and comfort, the government and private sectors concerned with Hajj and pilgrim affairs intensify their preparations, under the direct supervision of Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, adviser to King Salman, the governor of Makkah region and chairman of the Central Hajj Committee, and followed up by his deputy, Prince Abdullah bin Bandar.

The Ministry of Health will provide intensive and continuous health services supported by skillful human cadres and state-of-the-art medical technologies, in order to provide the best health services for pilgrims. The Ministry of Health has employed a total of 29,495 physicians, pharmacists, nurses and technicians to provide extensive health care to the pilgrims.

According to the ministry, its manpower during the Hajj consists of 780 consultants in various medical specializations, 1,248 specialists; 2,718 general practitioners; 1,428 pharmacists; 3,553 nurses; 1,173 technicians and lab specialists; 198 specialists in nutrition; 5,587 administrators; 165 engineers; and 1,491 ambulance drivers.

The General Presidency of the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque will operate and maintain all technical devices and systems of lighting, air-conditioning and ventilation, sound and control systems, cameras, communication devices and electrical stairs, buildings and libraries in the Two Holy Mosques.

Air-conditioning has been installed in the basement and ground floor

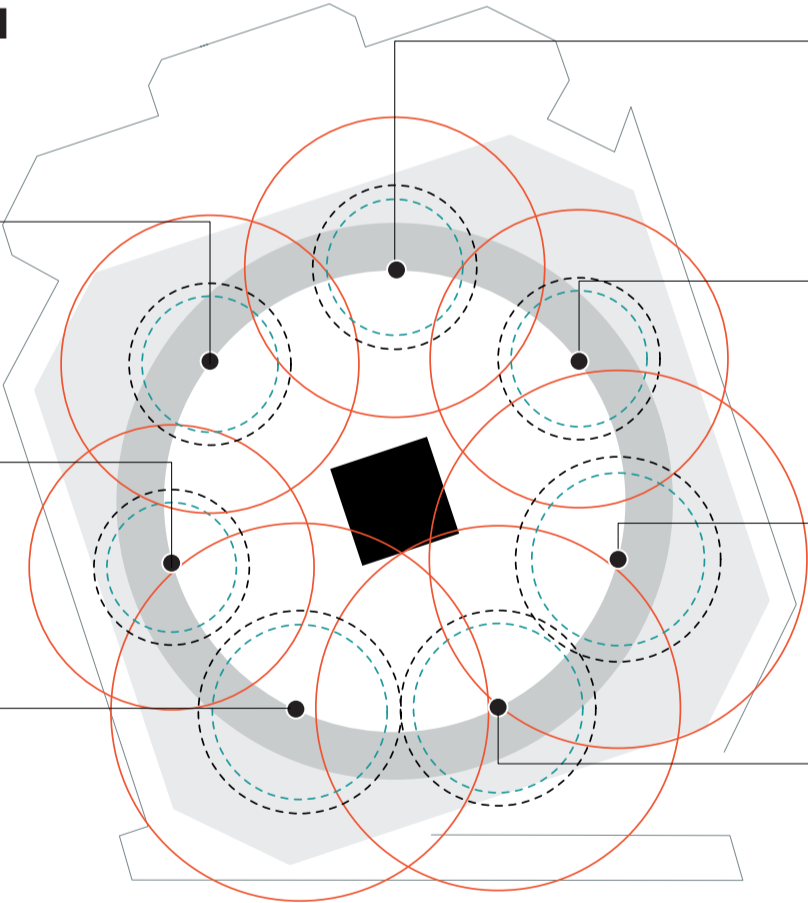
## YEARLY FOREIGN PILGRIMS TO MAKKAH

**2015**  
**1,384,941**  
Male 750,564  
Female 634,377

**2016**  
**1,325,372**  
Male 723,805  
Female 601,567

**2017**  
**1,752,014**  
Male 940,369  
Female 811,645

Source: arabnews, www.spa.gov.sa, Wikipedia



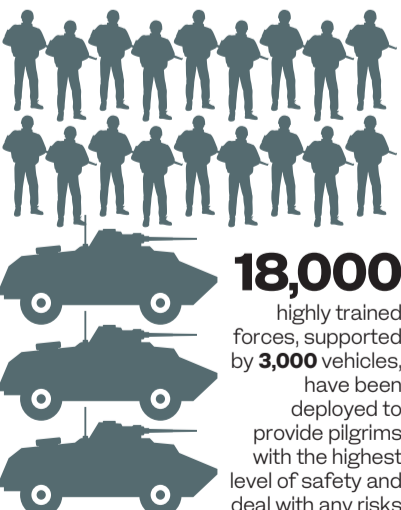
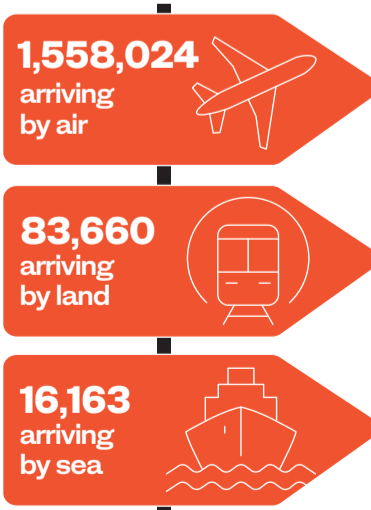
**2014**  
**1,389,053**  
Male 758,039  
Female 631,014

**2013**  
**1,379,531**  
Male 752,424  
Female 627,107

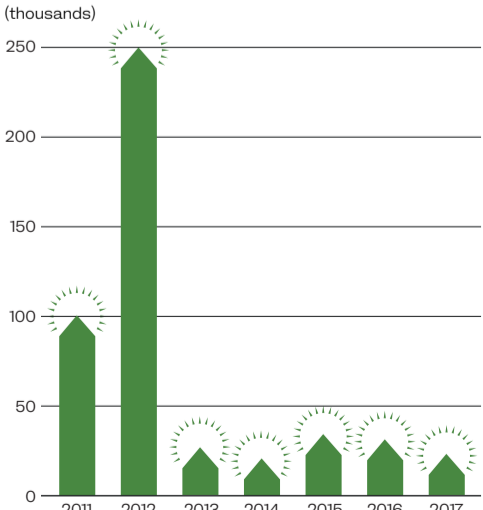
**2012**  
**1,752,932**  
Male 951,806  
Female 801,126

**2011**  
**1,684,876**  
Male 906,188  
Female 778,688

### Pilgrims coming from abroad



### Domestic pilgrims



**2,352,122**  
Total pilgrims in 2017

**1,752,014**  
Foreign pilgrims in 2017

**600,108**  
Domestic pilgrims in 2017

and many other areas. Thousands of fans have been installed in the Two Holy Mosques and their yards.

The area around the Two Holy Mosques has been equipped with more than 8,441 toilets, as well as more than 6,000 ablution units. All power supply lines have been pre-

pared to make sure there is power 24/7.

More than 10,000 male and female employees will be available to follow up on work and monitor it during Ramadan, in addition to a large number of cleaners.

Among the services also provided

by the Presidency are translation of Friday sermons into 10 languages, organization of various scientific programs, and competitions.

A total of 210 doors in the Grand Mosque and 100 doors in the Prophet's Mosque have been prepared, as well as 28 escalators in the Grand

Mosque and four escalators in the Prophet's Mosque. There are 38 doors for people with special needs and seven for women.

The Saudi Red Crescent deployed 127 emergency centers, 361 ambulances, 20 motorbikes, and more than 1,861 people to work in the rang-

es of Makkah and Madinah.

There will be 22 operational hospitals in Madinah and the holy sites, 15 temporary emergency centers, supported with more than 87 ambulances and 653 paramedics.

The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs mobilized its human and mechanical capabilities to enable pilgrims to perform their duties in a safe and healthy environment by employing more than 26,000 individuals and 717 mechanisms to implement the hygiene plan in Makkah and the holy sites, as well as specialized field teams to control 33,069 food facilities in Makkah.

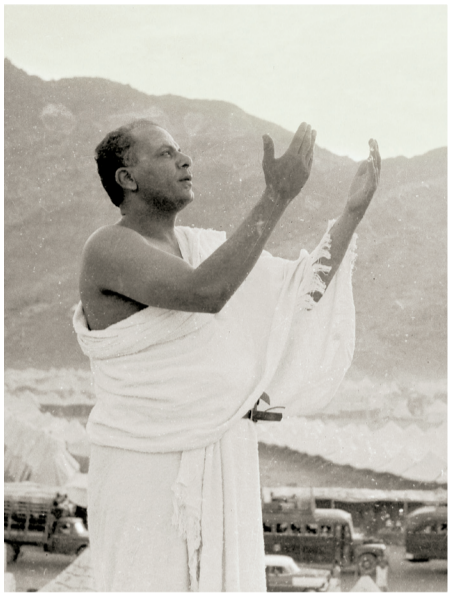
Civil defense teams will be deployed around the clock to deal with all emergency cases, where the injuries will be transferred using stretchers and wheelchairs to several medical evacuation sites inside and outside the mosque.

These teams will also be carrying out extraction and rescue operations inside the Holy Mosque and the surrounding area, in addition to providing urgent first aid, and transferring critical cases to the nearest hospitals and health centers, in coordination with the Red Crescent teams around the Holy Mosque. The Hajj security forces leaderships announced their readiness to maintain the security and safety of pilgrims during the pilgrimage season.

The General Command of the Air General Security is supported by all the security services and various government sectors.

In preparation for the Hajj season, the Saudi General Security Aviation Command announced that it has started implementing the first phase of its security plan to ensure the safety of pilgrims in the Kingdom. The aviation command will commence security operations over the holy sites, where special helicopters will monitor the activities surrounding the Hajj season this year. The planes are stationed in the designated locations in Makkah and Madinah from various bases to carry out the tasks assigned to them, namely traffic and security, logistical support for other security bodies, humanitarian services and the monitoring of pilgrims not following the rules.

Hajj through history



Comparing a pilgrim's Hajj journey in the past with today, the hardships have been greatly reduced as the advancements of the Saudi government in technology, logistics, hospitality, and security have considerably eased the burdens on pilgrims and their families.



MANY CHANGES, BUT TRADITIONS REMAIN

A 1,400-year spiritual odyssey

Abdulaziz Alaquil Jeddah

The annual Muslim pilgrimage of Hajj is an Islamic practice more than 1,400 years old that holds an incomparable spiritual value for Muslims when performed during their lifetime.

It is one of the five pillars of Islam, and a journey that every Muslim must embark on at least once in their lifetime (so long as they are financially and physically able). It is a physically taxing five-day voyage that begins in Makkah, and has pilgrims trekking more than 50 kilometers by foot. Comparing a pilgrim's Hajj journey in the past with today, the hardships have been greatly reduced as the advancements of the Saudi government in technology, logistics, hospitality, and security have considerably eased the burdens on pilgrims and their families.

Rocky road for pilgrims

Before the Saudi state was founded and the current monarchy formed, the Arabian Peninsula consisted of many small tribes and sheikdom-governed territories. This frequently led to constant states of chaos and instability within the region, and often the most prone to this violence were often defenseless Hajj pilgrims making their way through unfamiliar territories. At the turn of the 19th century, the security conditions en route to Makkah were unforgiving. When pilgrim began their Hajj journey, most had full knowledge that they were indeed risking their very lives while leaving worried families behind, putting their faith to the ultimate test.

Nomadic Bedouin tribes would often attack convoys, pillaging vital food and supplies. Those who resisted would often pay the ultimate price. Others would be left with insufficient supplies to stay properly hydrated. The unforgiving weather conditions would naturally claim



additional casualties.

The beginning of the 20th century saw additional advancements in transit methods with the Hejaz Railway opening in 1908, running from Damascus to Madinah.

The railway was built on the order of the Ottoman Empire, financed by Deutsche Bank, and strongly supported by the then-German Empire. Seemingly from one Hajj season to the next, a pilgrim's journey

to Makkah was now drastically reduced from weeks by steamboat to only four days by train.

King ushers in era of security

By the late 1920s King Abdul Aziz, Saudi Arabia's founder-to-be, was consolidating his power having overrun most of the central Arabian Peninsula. After capturing the holy city of Makkah in 1925 from Sharif Hussein, he ended more than 700 years of Hashemite rule. Prominent figures from Makkah, Madinah, and Jeddah now acknowledged King Abdul Aziz as the King of Hejaz. Najd was soon elevated to a monarchy as well in 1927, and for the next five years King Abdul Aziz ran a dual Kingdom of Hejaz and Najd, operating them as separate territories but both firmly under his control. In 1929, King Abdul Aziz would formally unite Hejaz and Najd into what we now recognize as the



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 1932.

Not long after that, oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1938 by American geologists working for the Standard Oil Company partnered with Saudi officials. King Abdul Aziz's tremendous influence over the region had increased exponentially. Rather than use this tremendous power to conquer additional territories, King Abdul Aziz used this heavy influence to promote peace and stability across his newfound Kingdom, forcing Bedouins to abandon inter-tribal conflicts that frequently involved Hajj pilgrims. For King Abdul Aziz, establishing the safety and security of Hajj

pilgrims was of paramount importance.

Modern transportation in the form of aircraft effectively began after World War II, with the Kingdom establishing the Arabian Transport Company in 1946 and the Bakhshab Transport Company in 1948. Although the first official air

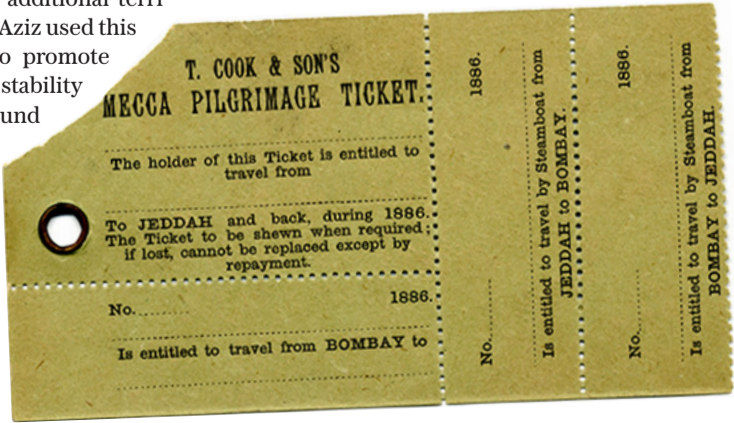
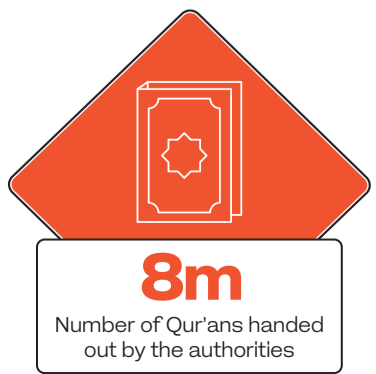
transit contract for Hajj pilgrims was established between the Saudi government and Misr Airlines of Egypt in 1937, the airline frequently experienced engine trouble that disrupted the transport flow of pilgrims. This, coinciding with the impending WWII from 1939 to 1945, had Hajj pilgrim numbers decrease greatly. Once the war ended, though, traveling by plane proved highly effective for the pilgrims. By 1950, the use of camels as a means of transport during Hajj virtually ended.

Comfort, guidance for all

Today's Hajj pilgrimage, in many ways, bears little resemblance to its early 20th-century counterpart. Aircraft have, for the most part, replaced sea and rail travel, and in doing so, have transformed Hajj from a months-long multi-site journey into a much more rapid, safe, and fairly direct voyage to Makkah.

Today, the Makkah Metro is expected to shuttle more than 350,000 pilgrims from Mina to Arafat and back to Mina. That is more than two million pilgrims every day. There are electronic maps equipped with multiple languages to accommodate the diversity of pilgrims, and water supply has improved considerably, as well as waste management, with more than 36,000 restrooms readily available. Thousands of government security officials, emergency services, and volunteers constantly guide pilgrims at every stage of their journey.

New medical equipment is regularly updated to adapt to the wide range of illnesses and changing environmental factors. Free medical care is provided with more than 100 ICU ambulances, each equipped with a physician, a nurse, and the latest technology on board.



A Hajj steamboat ticket voucher used in the late 1800s.

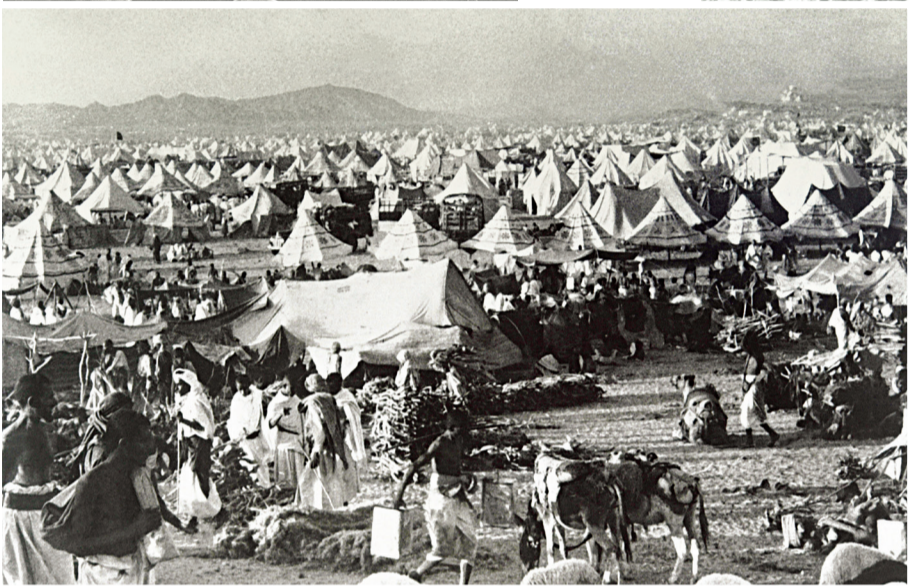
# Hajj2018



**Islamic faith**  
Pilgrims praying and performing sacrifices before leaving for Makkah in 1907. File photo



**Rituals of Hajj**  
Three Muslim women who have braved the hardships and rigors of the pilgrimage stand praying before Jabal Al-Rahmah in Makkah in 1964. Getty Images



## FAMOUSHAJJ



**Pilgrimage**  
King Faisal, center, and King Fahd pray at the Grand Mosque in Makkah in 1967. File photo

**Ali in Makkah**  
Flanked by fellow pilgrims, Muhammad Ali, former heavyweight boxing champion of the world, prays inside the holy mosque in Makkah. File photo



**Lifetime experience**  
Former Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto touches the 'Black Stone' during his pilgrimage on June 12, 1972. AFP

### VISION 2030

## Exhibition showcases expansions of Prophet's Mosque

Arab News Jeddah

An exhibition in Madinah, organized by the General Presidency of the Prophet's Mosque, is showcasing the mosque's expansions since its establishment by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

"The exhibition, in the southern part of the mosque, highlights its expansions throughout history with 50 paintings, photographs, presentations, models and documentaries in Arabic and English," said Faez Al-Faez, the exhibition's director.

"The exhibition also includes copies of manuscripts, a model of the Prophet's ring, photos of his letters and 200-year-old Qur'ans," he added.

"The exhibition includes the most important books about Madinah, and a hall where visitors are shown a 20-minute video about the stages during which the mosque witnessed expansions since the prophet's era," Al-Faez said.

"The Prophet Muhammad was the first to expand the mosque in 628, followed by Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattab in 638. The mosque was



Those wishing to see the exhibition must send a request confirming the date of the visit, which can be from Sunday to Thursday. SPA

later expanded in the years 651, 710, 778, 782, 1483, 1849 and 1861," he added.

"During the Saudi era, the mosque witnessed a great expansion during the reign of King Abdul Aziz in 1953," Al-Faez said.

"The expansions and development projects continued until King Salman ordered the completion of the expansion of the eastern and western sides in 2015," he added.

"King Salman's interest in this matter reflects the attention and keenness of the kings of Saudi Arabia to serve the visitors of Madinah, especially those visiting the Prophet's Mosque, which holds a special place

in the hearts of all Muslims," Al-Faez said.

"The mosque's ongoing expansion is in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which aims to provide as many pilgrims as possible with the opportunity to easily perform their rituals," he added.

Those wishing to see the exhibition must send a request confirming the date of the visit, which can be from Sunday to Thursday.

Visitors praised the details of the mosque's construction and expansions, and commended the Kingdom's constant efforts since the reign of its founder King Abdul Aziz to take care of and expand the mosque.

### COMMITMENT

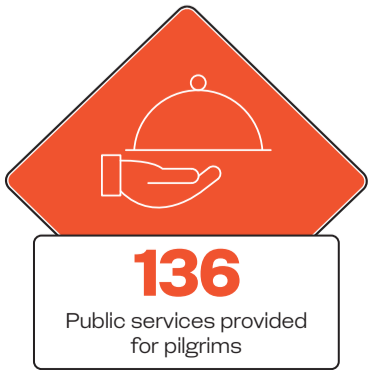
## Hajj pilgrims get clean bill of health

Arab News Jeddah

Pilgrims at this year's Hajj have been given a clean bill of health by Saudi authorities who confirmed on Saturday that no cases of epidemic or quarantine disease have been reported.

The Ministry of Health said that 1,647,351 pilgrims were provided with preventive services through health outlets from the first of the month of Dul Qadah until Saturday.

The general rate of commitment



**136**  
Public services provided for pilgrims

among the pilgrims to take preventive vaccines stood at about 80 percent for meningitis, 96.3 percent for yellow fever and 87.5 percent for polio, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, the ministry also provided emergency services in Makkah and Madinah hospitals to 280,773 pilgrims, bringing to 17,820 the number of visits to clinics, while medical centers treated 246,156 outpatients.

The number of cases hospitalized was 1,651, with nine births recorded.

*An exclusive escape in the heart of Jeddah*

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THE MESSAGE

# A journey to Hajj that changed Islam in America

Hussam Al-Mayman Makkah

Malcolm X was an American Muslim minister and human rights activist. To his admirers he was a courageous advocate for the rights of blacks, a man who indicted white America in the harshest terms for its crimes against black Americans. But his detractors accused him of preaching racism and violence.

He has been called one of the greatest and most influential African Americans in history. Malcolm was a member of the Nation of Islam, an African American politico-religious movement founded by Wallace D. Fard Muhammad in the 1930s. Their goals were to improve the spiritual, mental, social, and economic conditions of African Americans in the US. Critics have described the organization as black supremacist.

Malcolm formally left the organization and made a Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah, where he was profoundly affected by the lack of racial discord among orthodox Muslims. He returned to America as Al-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz and founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which advocated black identity and held that racism, not the white race, was the greatest foe of the African American. Malcolm's new



Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this ancient Holy Land.

Malcolm X  
Founder, Organization of Afro-American Unity

A rare picture of Malcolm X meeting with then Crown Prince Faisal Al-Saud in Jeddah in April, 1964.

spent the night duplicating while staying there. He sent a copy to his wife and his older sister Ella. He also asked for a copy to be sent to the press in the US.

He also wrote: "During the past 11 days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept on the same rug — while praying to the same God — with fellow Muslims." He ends his letter: "Never have I been so highly honored. Never have I been made to feel more humble and unworthy."

He signed his name with his new title Al-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. "Al-Hajj" is a title given to those who performed the pilgrimage.

When Malcolm first arrived at Jeddah Airport, he noticed that the people there were pilgrims from Ghana, Indonesia, Japan and Russia. He then explained in his biography: "I don't believe that motion picture cameras ever have filmed a human spectacle more colorful than my eyes took in." He concluded "Chinese, Indonesians, Afghans. Many, not yet changed into the Ihram garb, still wore their international dresses. It was like pages out of the National Geographic magazine."

On Feb. 21, 1965, one week after his home was firebombed, Malcolm X was shot dead by Nation of Islam members while speaking at a rally of his organization in New York City.

movement steadily gained followers, and his more moderate philosophy became increasingly influential in the civil rights movement, especially among the leaders of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating

## DECODER

Al-Hajj is a title given to those who performed the pilgrimage.

Committee. This organization was founded after Malcolm's awakening from his pilgrimage to Makkah.

"Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is

practiced by people of all colors and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Mohammad and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures," Malcolm X wrote in his letter from Makkah, a letter that he

## LIVING MIRACLE

# Zamzam that transformed Makkah's arid landscape

Ameera Abid Jeddah

The use of holy water is seen in many religions and ethnicities. Christians and Sikhs often use their versions of holy water to bring luck to the household or protect it against evil.

Muslims, too, have their own very special holy water called "Zamzam." This is found in a 30-meter-deep well in the basement of the Holy Mosque about 20 meters east of the Kaaba. The water is believed to possess healing qualities and is treated with respect by all Muslims.

The well originated when Hagar, the mother of Ismail, son of Prophet Abraham, desperately searched for water in the lonely dunes of Makkah, under the scorching sun. She ran between the two hillocks of Safa and Marwa before the infant Ismail scraped the earth, and from his feet burst out a flow of water.

The name originates from "Zome zome," which means "Stop flowing," a phrase Hagar used repeatedly to stop the water.

The scraping of Ismail's feet not only produced the water, it also



The old rails and bucket of the Zamzam well preserved in a museum.

restored life on the land of Makkah. As Zamzam was discovered, many wells were dug around the area, but most of them either became dry or were buried under the sand because of tribal wars.

One of the most recognized wells around the Kaaba was the Al-Ajoul well Qusai bin Kilab in the pre-Islamic era. When the prophet came to Makkah he performed the purification ritual with the water from this well.

## Zamzam today

Zamzam is stationed throughout the holy mosques, including cold and hot water dispensing containers and fountains for the visitors. A bottling plant and public distribution center has also been established right outside the mosque for those who wish to carry it home.

Zamzam well, except for a few periods when it became dry or buried in sand, has been in use for about 400 years. The Zamzam well pumps 11-19 liters of water every second.

The Saudi Geological Survey has set up a Zamzam studies and research center which is responsible for keeping the water clean and suitable for consumption.

Electric pumps are used to draw water from the well. Every week water samples are collected from the Zamzam well and various dispensers. In addition, Zamzam water is filtered through a series of sand filters and cartridge filters and then sterilized by ultraviolet radiation at these treatment plants.



**Kaaba set to don a new cover** On the 8th day of the month of Dul Hijjah every year, the elegant 52 gilded parts of the Kiswa are removed. Earlier, the lower part of Kiswa (Kaaba cloth) was raised and the exposed area has been covered with a white cotton cloth of about 2 meters across the four sides. The official ceremony for the change of Kiswa, 2018, will take place during dawn prayer of the ninth day of the month, corresponding to Aug. 20.

AFF

## HAJJ FOR ALL

# Special services to aid pilgrims with special needs

Hussam Al-Mayman Makkah

The General Presidency for the Two Holy Mosques has begun services to aid pilgrims with special needs during this year's Hajj season. Among these services is a small talking watch for the visually impaired. These watches tell the time and prayer times via audio alerts.

Other services provided by the Presidency's special needs department are allocated entrances to ease

access to prayers. These are gates 63 and 68, which were built during the expansion period of the late King Fahd.

There are also specialized paths for pilgrims with disabilities in mobility and the visually impaired with their own dedicated entrances.

Other provisions include a pen that serves as a Qur'an reader for the visually impaired and elderly, and a service for holding and carrying copies of the Qur'an for those who

are unable to hold them.

Another service is the distribution of canes for the blind and visually impaired to help guide their path while walking.

A device that assists in Tayamom (dry ablution) is also available.

The special needs unit will also distribute booklets on how to perform Umrah and Hajj, along with guides who can show guests how to pray and explain important rituals to be performed.

The journey begins

A security officer guides pilgrims in Mina on Sunday. The Hajj began on 8th of Dul Hijjah with millions of pilgrims participating in the annual pilgrimage this year.

AN photo by Bashir Saleh



HAJJ THROUGH HISTORY

SEEKING GOD'S BLESSING

Pilgrims perform Hajj rituals in Makkah in 1948. Hajj holds an incomparable spiritual value for Muslims when performed during their lifetime. AFP



SPIRITUAL JOURNEY Hajj pilgrims descend a ferry after arriving in the Kingdom. National Geographic

NOBLE CAUSE

Hajj Ministry forks out on 'happy meals' for pilgrims

Production process ensures a wide range of tastes that suit all cultures

Mohammed Al-Kinani Jeddah

Saudi Arabia's Hajj Ministry has put health at the top of its menu with plans to supply more than 2.3 million hygienic meals to pilgrims.

The ready-made, sterilized meals come in a range of flavors and will be provided to 15 percent of the pilgrims as part of the ministry's health and safety program for pilgrims.

Hajj Minister Mohammed Salih Bentin told Arab News that the ministry has signed contracts with several suppliers to produce safe and clean prepared meals for pilgrims.

"The door is open for all competent companies to invest in this big project. It is no secret that we are in talks with Saudi Airlines Catering to take part in this service. We want the pilgrims to enjoy as high-quality food as that offered to passengers on our national carrier," he said.

"From this year South Asian Hajj offices will start to distribute sterilized meals to 15 percent of the pilgrims. In almost two years' time, all pilgrims will enjoy similar meals during their Hajj days."

Bentin said the move is in line with the Saudi government's wish to ensure safe food sources for pilgrims.

The minister said that the Kingdom's leadership told all ministries to work toward making the pilgrims feel not only satisfied but also happy.

Project Supervisor Dr. Bassam H. Mashat said the Kingdom will supply pilgrims with the safest possible food during their pilgrimage.

Mashat, an associate professor at the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Institute for Hajj and Umrah Research, said that they want the pilgrims to enjoy as high-quality food as that offered to passengers on our national carrier. "Taj Food factory is the first ready-



The Kingdom aims to ensure that pilgrims enjoy a high-quality food during the Hajj. Supplied

to-eat food factory of its kind in the Kingdom. The plant, located in Jeddah, is designed to meet the requirements of Food Safety Management System, a risk management system that identifies, evaluates and controls hazards related to food safety," he said.

A prototype plant had been installed in Makkah, the company's headquarters, where quality tests were conducted to ensure the highest level of production.

The factory is over 9,000 square meters in size and can house up to nine production lines.

"These production lines can produce more than 12 million meals per year. The pool of talents comprises Saudi-trained teams and experts from Malaysia, who have been cooperating to establish this factory, which meets global standards for food safety in both the Good Manufacturing Practice and the International Organization for

Standardization," Mashat said.

Prepackaged meals are ideal for pilgrims in regard to cooking quality, storage and even transporting from one place to another.

"They can also be a good food solution for factories, schools and universities," he said.

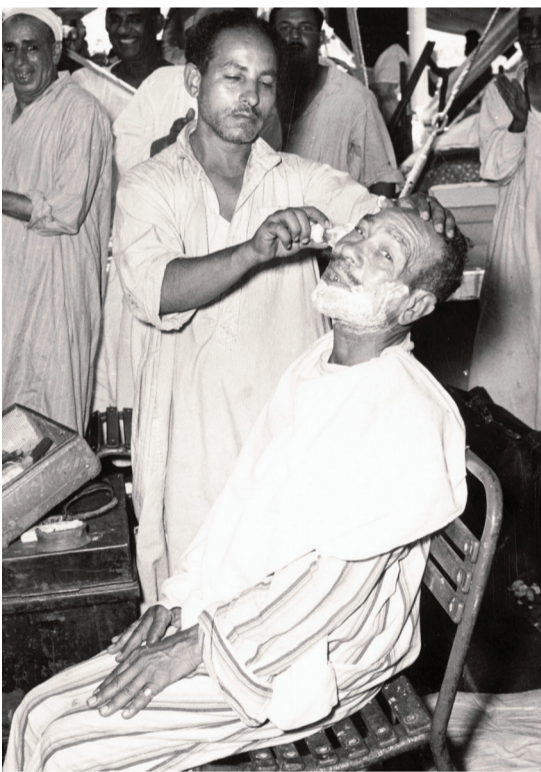
A variety of meals is produced, each served in heavy-duty sealed pouches

or trays. "The production process ensures a clean and easy-to-prepare range of tastes that suit all cultures," he said. Saudi team members worked with international manufacturers to set up the food production operation.

"In 2015, machines were selected and ordered for the first production line from specialized factories in South Korea, Japan and China. In 2017, testing and commissioning for the first production line was conducted successfully. Production started at the beginning of 2018," Mashat said.

The ministry's initiative has a number of benefits, including reducing fires in the holy places caused by pilgrims' camp kitchens, cutting the risk of food poisoning and greatly lowering water use in camp kitchens.

Prepackaged meals also reduce waste generated by camp kitchens by up to 20 percent, with 765 tons of waste generated.



PREPARATIONS An Egyptian making a pilgrimage to Makkah has a quick shave on board ship in 1957. Getty Images



LIFETIME EXPERIENCE A painting by Leon-Auguste-Adolphe shows a caravan of pilgrims going to Makkah. Getty Images



HAJJ RITUAL A general view of an encampment during the Hajj in 1957. Getty Images



At least 160 technicians and experts were involved in the changing of the cover of the Holy Kaaba on Monday. SPA

HISTORIC RITUAL

# Holy Kaaba wears new Kiswa

Ceremony replacing the covering took place on Monday after dawn prayer

Lojien Ben Gasseem Makkah

**The Holy Kaaba donned a new Kiswa — a famous black cloth that covers the holiest shrine toward which Muslims face in prayer — on Monday morning after the dawn prayer.**

The ceremony that involved at least 160 technicians and manufacturers was held under the supervision of Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, the chief of the General Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques.

The Kiswa is changed every year on the ninth day of Dul Hijjah following a tradition of the General Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques.

“After the dawn prayer on the ninth day of the month of Dul Hijjah, the old Kiswa of the Kaaba is replaced by the new one, embellished by gold-plated thread illustrating verses from the Holy Qur’an,” said Ahmad bin Mohammed Al-Mansouri, director-general of the King Abdul Aziz Complex for the Kaaba.

Al-Mansouri said the new Kiswa is 658-square-meter long and is made of 670 kilograms of pure silk. For embroidery, 120 kilograms of gold thread and 100 kilograms of silver thread were used.

The Kaaba cover was manufactured at King Abdul Aziz Complex for Holy Kaaba Kiswa, which has more than 200 Saudi employees qualified and trained in the industry, added Al-Mansouri. The complex also contains the largest sewing machine in the world with a length of 16 meters.

Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais delivered a speech praising the leadership of the country for putting the service of the Holy Kaaba, the holy sites and the pilgrims at the top of its priorities.

### Background

Each year Muslims from all over the world wait for the ninth day of Dul Hijjah to witness the process of replacing the cover of the Kaaba with a new one. The members of the General Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques and the Kiswa Factory of



Technicians sew the Kiswa to wrap the Holy Kaaba. SPA

the Holy Kaaba take down the old Kiswa and replace it with a new one made of pure silk.

### Dimensions

The Kiswa's fabric is produced in the form of large pieces, each 10 centimeters wide and 14 meters long. Each side of the Kaaba is constructed individually according to the width of each side.

The pieces are connected while maintaining the design, and then lined with cotton cloth (the same width and length), and sewn.

Due to the weight of the curtain of the Kaaba's door, the curtain is directly attached to the wall of the Kaaba. Before changing the Kiswa, a committee of specialists in the factory review and install the embroidered pieces.

### Kiswa Factory

The Kiswa Factory producing the covering for the Kaaba is keen on

hiring skilled workers in all sections. This factory was built when King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud issued order to establish a separate house for the manufacturing of the Kaaba cloth in 1927.

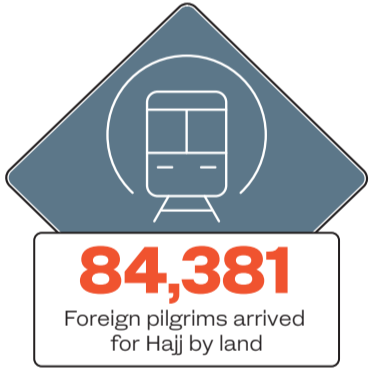
The factory was renovated and modernized in 1976 in Umm Al-Joud in Makkah and equipped with latest machines for preparing the fabric. Even though the factory has high-tech machines for the fabric, they retained the method of manual production because of its high artistic value.

The factory continues to keep pace with the development, and preserve the ancient handmade heritage to produce the best Kiswa each year.

The cost of the Kiswa is approximately SR22 million (\$5.8 million).

### FASTFACT

**The Kiswa was replaced with a new cover under the supervision of Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, the chief of the General Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques.**



### Natural silk

The fabric is made of pure natural silk, which is dyed in black. Its height is 14 meters. The upper third of the belt is 95 centimeters wide and 47 meters long, and consists of 16 pieces surrounded as a square shape of Islamic patterns or motifs.

The belt contains Qur'anic verses, each in a separate frame, and in the spaces between, in the shape of crescent, praise to and the names of Allah can be found. The belt is embossed with embroidery covered with a gold plated silver cord, which surrounds the whole Kaaba.

The cover includes a curtain of Kaaba's door. Called a burqa, or

### DECODER

**The new Kiswa is 658-square-meters long and is made of 670 kilograms of pure silk. For embroidery, 120 kilograms of gold thread and 100 kilograms of silver thread were used.**

veil, the curtain is made of silk, and is six-and-a-half-meters high and three-and-a-half-meters wide, with Qur'anic verses decorated with Islamic motifs that are embossed and covered with gold-plated silver thread. This special thread comes from Germany.

The Kiswa consists of five pieces of cloth, each covering the Kaaba on four sides and the fifth is the burqa. All these pieces are connected to each other.

### Stages

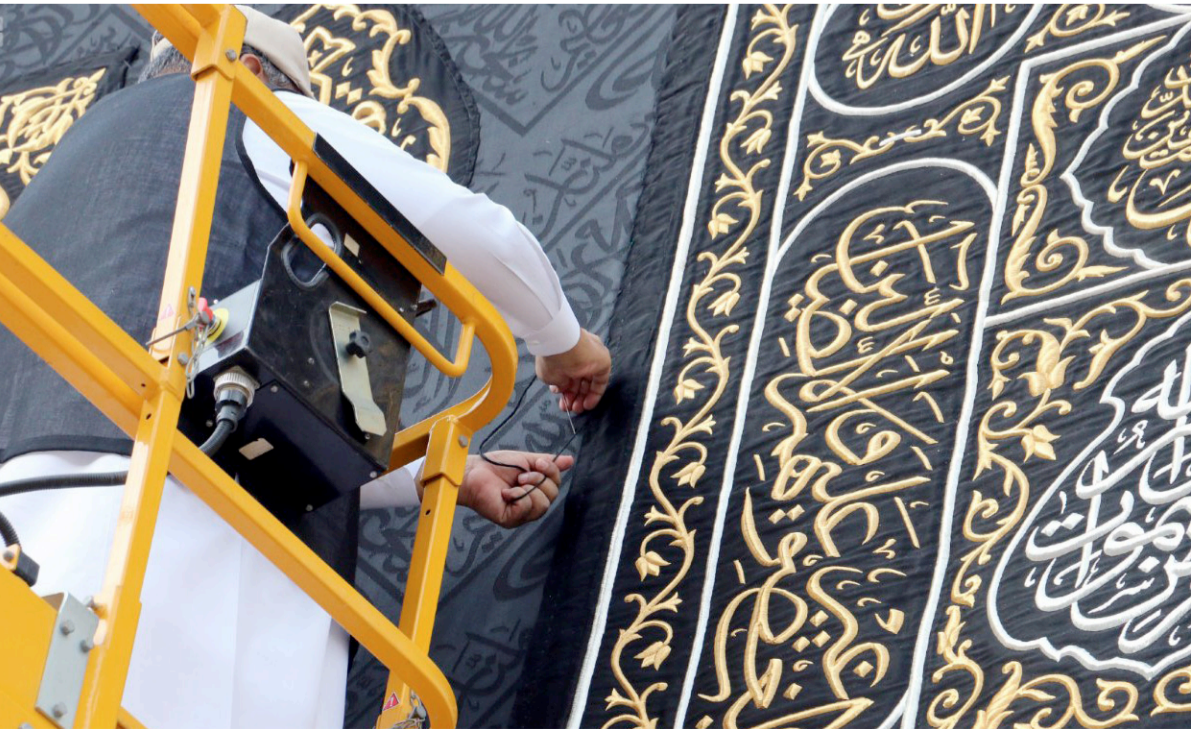
The Kiswa Factory goes through several stages: The first is dyeing, in which imported raw silk is dyed in black, red or green.

The second stage is the fabric, in which the dyed fabric is converted into either silk cloth to be printed and then embroidered on the belt or curtain, or converted to the jacquard fabric.

The third phase is printing, where all the lines and patterns in the belt or curtain are printed on the cloth in the manner of wire screen in preparation for embroidery. And finally the collecting stage, in which the jacquard fabric is attached to each other to form the four sides of the Kiswa and then attaching it to the belt and the curtain, in preparation for its installation above the Kaaba.

These stages are carried out in all sections of the factory, which include manual weaving, automatic weaving, printing, flags, curtain and dyeing and construction of the belt. More than 200 qualified employees work in the factory who are considered the greatest calligraphers and artists in the Muslim world.

The factory creates the external and internal Kiswa, as well as flags and pieces that the country gives to important figures.



# Hajj2018

## Seeking Allah's blessing

After spending the night in the valley of Mina, the pilgrims reach Arafat, some 20 kilometers (12 miles) east of Makkah. Bottom: Around 4,500 scouts are taking part in different activities to facilitate pilgrims during Hajj this year.

SPA photos



**MEMORABLE MOMENTS**  
An elderly pilgrim heads to Arafat.

## HAJJ THROUGH HISTORY



**EMOTIONS** Egyptian President Mohammed Naguib kisses a Kaaba relic during Hajj in Makkah. Getty Images



**RELIGIOUS FERVOR**  
Pilgrims wait to board a ship, the Mendoza, prior to their journey to Makkah. Every year, millions of people around the world travel to the Kingdom to perform Hajj, which is meant to be done at least once in the lifetime of a Muslim. Getty Images

## FIFTH PILLAR OF ISLAM

A painting depicts pilgrims traveling to Makkah for the annual pilgrimage. Getty Images



**HAJJ RITUAL** Pilgrims pelt stones at Jamrat. Getty Images



**SEEKING GOD'S MERCY**  
A woman offers prayers on a mat during the Hajj in 1955. Getty Images

## HAJJ DREAM

# ‘It’s the thought of Makkah that keeps me alive’

Paulo Coelho’s novel highlights merchant’s powerful narrative about the pilgrimage

Arab News Jeddah

One of the famous books that refers to the Islamic pillar of Hajj is “The Alchemist,” a novel by the Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho that has been translated into more than 80 languages and sold more than 30 million copies.

The novel highlights the Hajj dream when a young shepherd, Santiago, working for a crystal shop owner tells his employer about his desire to visit the pyramids, which leaves the latter asking why the young boy was so determined about to see the pyramids. “You’ve never had dreams of travel,” the shepherd boy tells the shop owner in Tangier, the Moroccan city that used to be a part of Al-Andalus until 1062. The crystal merchant had never thought of traveling, except for Hajj

— traveling to Makkah had long been his dream and only thought. However, the merchant explains to the boy that he lives by the book of Qur’an, and that Islam has five pillars which are mandatory for Muslims to fulfill. After explaining the first four pillars, the merchant suddenly stops with tears in his eyes. So the boy asks him about the fifth obligation. The merchant answers: “Two days ago, you said that I had never dreamed of travel. The fifth obligation of every Muslim is a pilgrimage. We are obligated at least once in our lives to visit the holy city of Makkah. “When I was young, all I wanted to do was to put together enough money to start this shop. I thought someday I’d be rich, and could visit Makkah.” The merchant refers to those who pass by his shop on their way to Makkah, and to those pilgrims who

have performed Hajj and are proudly showing that off on their house doors. However, when Santiago asks the merchant why he never made the trip and fulfilled his dream, he answers that if he did, he would no longer have anything to live for. “Because it’s the thought of Makkah that keeps me alive. “I’ve already imagined a thousand times crossing the desert, arriving at the Plaza of the Sacred Stone, the



seventh time I walk around it before allowing myself to touch it. I’ve already imagined the people who would be at my side, and those in front of me.” Meanwhile, the merchant’s business grows after he agrees to Santiago’s suggestion to sell tea. The tea becomes popular in the town and the merchant hires more staff. As a result of the shop’s success, Santiago also becomes rich and decides that it is time for him to leave. One day he wakes early and tells the merchant about his decision to leave and buy a large flock of sheep. Santiago encourages the merchant to travel to Makkah. However, the merchant believes that he will not go to Makkah because it is “maktub,” which means “it is written,” as his destiny. Coelho has a Guinness World Record for the most translated book by any living author.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

# Child nurseries a first for Hajj

Arab News Jeddah

Children’s nurseries will be available to Hajj pilgrims for the first time following the launch of a nursery service inside Makkah and Madinah. The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in cooperation with the Ministry of Education launched the nursery service to provide a safe and educational environment for children under the supervision of qualified staff. Nurseries will also offer shelter from large crowds and limit children’s exposure to illness or potential

accidents in the holy sites. Pilgrims can perform their rituals in peace, knowing their children are in good hands, a ministry spokesman said. Worshipers with children can register for the service during their completion of the Hajj permit application via the ministry’s electronic services. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Development, and Tatweer Co. for Educational Services are also involved in the initiative. Children are received during Hajj season starting from the seventh of

the month of Dhu Al-Hijja until the 13th. They are divided according to their age groups. Five languages are available to teach children: Arabic, English, French, Malay and Turkish. The Ministry of Education has completed preparation stages of its health and educational program to host children from the age of one month to six years in seasonal kindergartens. The opening of nurseries and kindergartens is subject to licensing by the ministry representing the Agency of Private Education.



# Behind the security uniform ... a kind word and a helping hand

Hussam Al-Mayman Mina

**Their mission is the safety and security of every pilgrim — but safety and security take many forms.**

Which is why the Saudi security forces on duty at the Hajj this year could be seen carrying out a raft

of tasks, from helping the disabled, pushing wheelchairs and providing directions to anyone who was lost, to comforting children and spraying cool water over pilgrims' heads as temperatures soared past 40 C. And as if that weren't enough, they also oversaw the birth of nine babies. Mohammed Al-Shaidi, from Hafar Al-Batin, who is with the emergency

services, told Arab News it was a privilege to assist guests during their pilgrimage. Another worker, Khalid Al-Majrashi, said that his 70-strong team of volunteers had come from Jazan to help the pilgrims. Jameela, a pilgrim from Indonesia who was performing the ritual with her family, was thankful for the help

of the special emergency forces as they helped to transport her mother via wheelchair to the first-aid center in Mina after she twisted her ankle. Owais, from Pakistan, said there was nothing better for fighting off the heat than to be sprayed by water while walking among thousands of pilgrims during a hot August day performing his Hajj ritual.

"I am truly thankful for all the efforts that I have witnessed by all the service men and women from the Kingdom," he said. Nabeela, from Senegal, said she had heard about the services provided during Hajj, but had never realized how many men, women and facilities were provided. "When you come to Makkah you fully appreciate

what Saudi Arabia does for Muslims around the world," she said. Bilal, 32, from England, who was performing his second Hajj, said he was very impressed at the expansion of Makkah. "The last time I was here, I was 15 years old and came with my family; to me, Makkah and the holy sites seem like a new and different place."



**Friendly faces**

Offering directions to the lost (right, below left) and help to the young (left, below right) were just two of the roles carried out by Saudi security forces and volunteers as worshippers' welfare took top priority. Many pilgrims

voiced their thanks. "I am truly thankful for all the efforts I have witnessed," said one Pakistani. Medical teams were especially vigilant, with 9,000 pilgrims receiving emergency aid from Mina hospital in just four days.



# Hajj2018

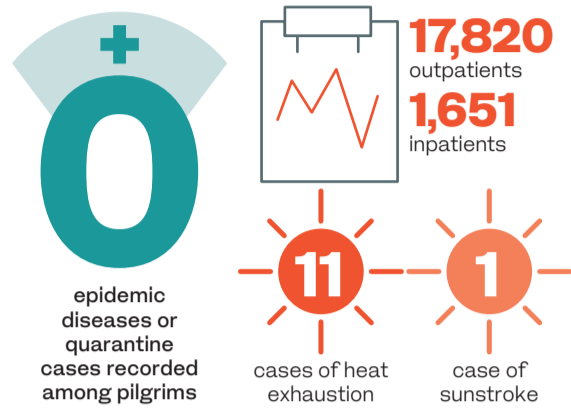


**Feeling the heat**  
Soaring temperatures proved a major challenge for security forces and medical volunteers keeping a watchful eye on pilgrims' welfare. Helpers were quick to offer wheelchair assistance to the elderly (top), while a cooling water spray helped worshippers ward off the heat (above), with many

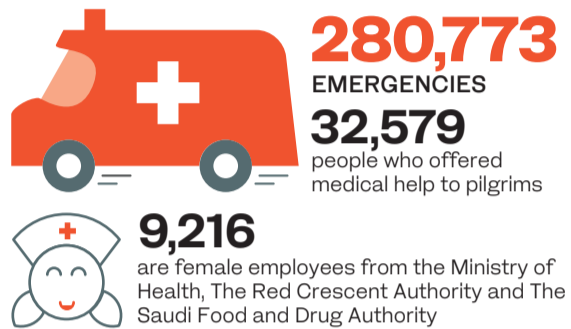
expressing their gratitude. Meanwhile, Arab News umbrellas (right), distributed for the Hajj, provided an eye-catching way to keep the sun at bay. Security staff efforts were a major success — only 11 pilgrims were forced to seek treatment for heat exhaustion.



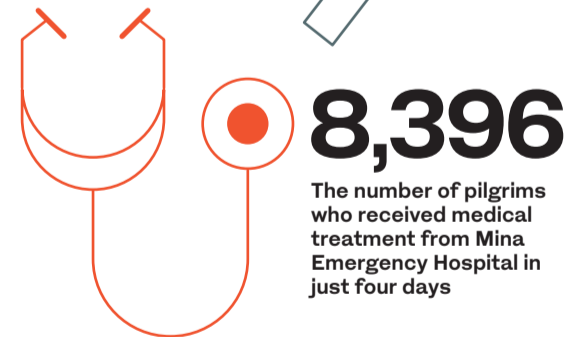
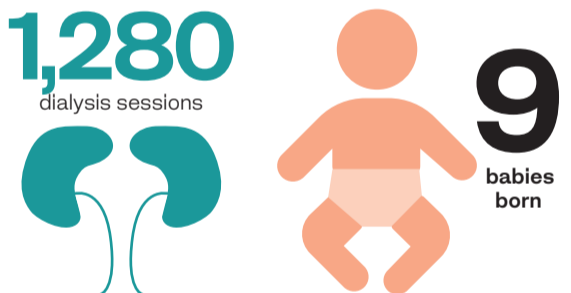
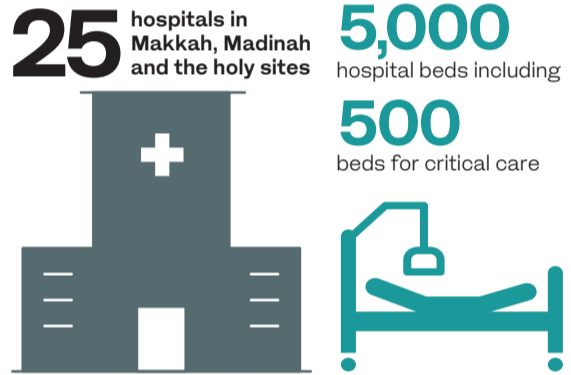
## EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT DURING HAJJ IN NUMBERS



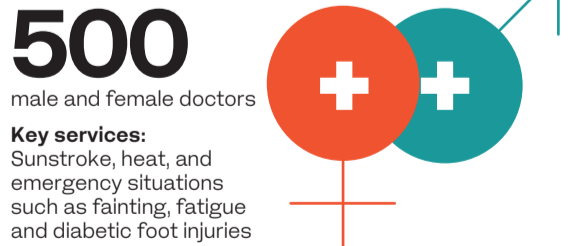
### Emergency services



### Emergency treatment



### Medical Volunteers



### Supervision and follow-up



### Medical personnel

