

Secular Usurpers of the Haramain and the Muslim Lands have Made Hajj an Expensive Capitalist Commodity

News:

Bangladesh is struggling to meet its Hajj quota as the local currency continues to lose its value and skyrocketing airfares this season are making the journey impossible for many hopeful pilgrims. This year, 127,000 Bangladeshi pilgrims can participate in the Hajj, a spiritual journey and one of the five pillars of Islam. The quota was agreed upon by the governments of Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh earlier this year. The Hajj registration opened on Feb. 8, but so far only 32,000 people have applied as of Wednesday. Authorities say the situation is unprecedented ([Arab News](#), 01 March 2023).

Comment:

The cost of Hajj package has increased by almost 30% in one year reaching to BDT 683018. Although it is said that the main reason for this increase is the depreciation of the currency, but the difference in the exchange is 17%. Meaning, there must be a greater reason than exchange rate. It is seen that a Hajji has to pay more than three times the normal passenger for their Hajj flights. From this the two government owned airlines of the two countries will earn additional Tk 17.52 billion from the Hajj passengers of Bangladesh (if the quota is fulfilled). The Saudi government collects money from every Hajji for their stay at Mina, Arafah, Muzdalifah which is called Muallim Fees. This year the fee has reached to BDT 160630 which is 162% higher than that of last year. From each Hajji Bangladesh government's VAT income alone will be more than BDT 89,000, As such, the Bangladesh government's total income only from VAT from Hajjis will be around Tk 11.32 billion. So it is clear that the governments of both countries have set up the Hajjis as a means of maximizing their income.

As Allah (swt) says ﴿وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ﴾ **“Call ‘all’ people to the pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel from every distant path”** [Surah Al-Hajj 27], so it is the duty of the rulers of Muslims and the custodians of the holy places to do their best to make these journeys and Ibadah of the guests of Allah (swt) easy and affordable. But it is no surprise seeing these secular capitalist governments abandoning this duty by taking this as another opportunity of maximizing their earnings. As secularism disconnects the reward and punishment of hereafter from the happenings of this world, its governments also cannot entertain the Hajjis for spiritual values only. To them the spiritual drives of Muslims is just a utility they could capitalize well by increasing the price of the services based on expected soaring demand at post COVID Hajj. Clearly secularism has made them blind in thinking that they can even take over the Baitullah, Masjid al Nababi, Mina-Arafah-Muzdalifa for maximizing their profits as if these are just tourist places and the guests of Allah- honorable Hajjis are just mere tourists of pleasure trip!

On the other hand while Khulafaa' (Caliphs) were the custodian of the holy mosques (Haramain), they were mostly fearful to Allah about the Hajjis, and would make the holy journey as smooth and affordable as possible. One such notable initiative was 'Darb Jubaidah'. It was implemented by the Abbasid Caliph Harun ar-Rashid and named after his wife. It was a highly modernized highway that stretched from Mecca to Kufa-Baghdad in Iraq. It established a communication system that connected the holy masjids to Africa and China. They built many resting places across the highway to facilitate free food, water and accommodation for travellers. All were maintained round the year for the honour of Hajjis. These routes and services eventually greatly increased the number of Hajjis. Naturally, massive economic development was also achieved in the Muslim world around this highway. This 'Darb Jubaidah' was so impactful and historical that even UNESCO could not but declare it as World Heritage. Another such project was the 'Hijaz Railway' of the Ottoman Caliph Abdul Hamid which was supposed to bring the Hajjis from Istanbul to Mecca in just five days. However, British conspiracy interrupted its completion. May Allah (swt) liberate the two holy mosques from these shameless secular usurper rulers to the hands of the true guardian of the Ummah – the Khilafah Rashidah (righteous Caliphate) - to restore its sanctity!

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