

**Expansion of the Makkah Mosque**



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Makkah, Ramadan 26 1436 AH, July 13, 2015, SPA — The Saudi Third Expansion of the Grand Mosque, which was launched by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is considered an extension of the previous historical expansions first initiated by late founder King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman and completed by late kings: Saud and Faisal, followed by the expansion of the eastern parks which have been implemented during the era of late King Khalid, followed by the expansion of the mosque from the western side during the reign of late King Fahd, followed by the Massaa (circumambulation passage) expansion which took place during the era of late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and then the grand expansion ordered by late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and will be completed during the current era of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

**Current expansion project**

In 2007, the mosque commenced a fourth extension project which is estimated to last until 2020. King Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz planned to increase the mosque's capacity to 2 million; although the King died in 2015, his successor, King Salman, is likely to continue renovations.[5][26] In 2016 it was estimated that Great Mosque had cost 100 billion dollars.

A view of the ongoing construction in the mataaf and the temporary structure for tawaf surrounding the Kaabah in August 2014

Northern expansion of the mosque began in August 2011 and was expected to be completed in one and a half years. The area of the mosque will be expanded from the current 356,000 m2 (3,830,000 sq ft) to 400,000 m2 (4,300,000 sq ft). A new gate named after King Abdullah will be built together with two new minarets, bringing their total to eleven. The cost of the project is $10.6 billion and after completion the mosque will house over 2.5 million worshipers. The Mataaf (the circumambulation areas around the Kaaba) will also see expansion and all closed spaces will be air conditioned. The King Abdullah Expansion Project will cover an area of 456,000 sq. meters will accommodate an additional 1.2 million faithful. Courtyards of the mosque’s new expansion can hold more than 250,000 worshipers. The project is being implemented by the Saudi Binladin Group.

On 11 September 2015, at least 111 people died and 394 were injured when a crane collapsed onto the mosque.

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A report, issued by the Ministry of Finance, explained that the third grand expansion of the Makkah-based holy mosque includes major components: the holy mosque’s main expansion building, the Massaa expansion which has already been opened and the expansion of the circumambulation path, the external parks, flyovers, stairs, complex of central services building, services tunnel, security buildings, the hospital, pedestrian-use tunnels, transportation stations, bridges leading to the mosque, first ring road surrounding the holy mosque area, and the infrastructure which includes power stations, water reservoirs and flood drainage system.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques has dedicated five major projects as follows: the holy mosque’s main expansion building, the external parks, pedestrian-use tunnels, central services building and first ring road. A number of projects will remain: they are the Mataf (circumambulation) with its appliances and affiliates, the stairs, the security buildings, the hospital, a total facility that will bring the capacity of the grand mosque to 1,850,000 worshippers.

The report said the total building area amounts to 1,470,000 sq.m., the area of the expansions will reach 320,00 sq.m. to accommodate 300,000 worshippers while the area of the premises amounts to 175,000 sq.m. to make room for 280,000 worshippers.

The bridges and flyovers’ area amounts to 45,000 sq.m. to carry 50,000 worshippers, the area of the services building is 550,000 sq.m. which will accommodate 310,000 worshippers. The area of the eastern stairs will be 263,000 sq. m. that is enough for 150,000 worshippers.

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The Masaa area was increased by 57,000 sq.m. to accommodate 70,000 worshippers, with the capacity of the mosque increasing from 44,000 person/hour at the circumambulation path to 118,000 person/hour.

The Mataf area was increased by 60,000 sq.m. to accommodate 90,000 worshippers where the total capacity of the Grand Mosque after completion of all projects will accommodate 1,850,000 worshippers.

The report highlighted that this expansion is considered the largest expansion in history where the latest construction and modern systems techniques are used.

The report pointed out the tunnels, where the length of pedestrian and emergency tunnels are 5,313 linear meters, tunnels of electricity and services are 1,922 linear meters and tunnels of sewage with diameter of 2800 mm are 4,643 linear meters.

The report pointed out that the project contains advanced electro mechanical systems, including sound systems with a total of headphones with 4,524 headset in addition to systems of fire alarm and hygiene.

Requirements of the radio and television are provided through rooms and areas for installation of the equipments, cameras and antennas in addition to provision of new radio and TV studio at the services building with 44 cameras. There will be new control cameras where some of the cameras will use ‘IR illuminator’ system in order to operate in cases of emergency with total number of cameras (6,635 cameras).

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The report highlighted the security buildings where there will be four security buildings with accommodation of more than 18,000 personnel.

The Mataf before the expansion received 50,000 person/hour and 188,000 worshipers with area of 150,000 sq.m.

After the expansion, the Mataf will receive 107,000 person/hour and 278,000 worshippers with area of 210,000 sq.m.

The report points out that the first ring road consists of surface roads, bridges and tunnels (existing and new).

The project includes a construction of water treatment line with diameter 1,000 mm and a length of about 30 km to feed the central services complex.

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Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Launches Five Projects within Third Saudi Expansion for the Grand Mosque

Makkah, Ramadan 25, 1436, Jul 12, 2015, SPA — Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud launched at Al-Safa Palace today evening five projects within the Third Saudi Expansion for the Grand Mosque in Makkah, including expansion building, squares, tunnels, services building and first ring road.

At the outset of the ceremony, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques was briefed on a model of the entire expansion project of the Grand Mosque and photos containing elements and components of the expansion project.

At the outset of the ceremony, verses of the Holy Quran Then, Dr. Abdurrahman bin Abdulaziz Al-Sudais, President General of the Grand Mosque and the Prophet’s Mosques, delivered a speech in which he expressed thanks to and appreciation of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for his care and keenness of the two holy mosques.

‘This historic expansion include 1,470,000 square meters. The Grand Mosque accommodates more than 1,600,000 worshipers with 78 gates at the ground floor surrounding the expansion building,’ Al-Sudais said.

He stressed that these historic achievements will have great and positive impact to highlight pioneering role of this blessed country and its Islamic message in spreading security, moderation, peace, love, tolerance, dialogue, harmony and convenience.

Then, Dr. Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Al-Assaf, Minister of Finance, delivered a speech in which he expressed thanks to and appreciation of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for his care and keenness of the two holy mosques.

He pointed out that the Third Saudi Expansion came as an extension of the previous historic expansions.

Al-Assaf added that the expansion projects included expansion building, Masaa and Mataaf expansions, external squares, tunnels, services building, hospital, transportation stations, bridges to the Grand Mosque, infrastructure and first ring road.

He stressed that the figures and statistics indicate to greatness of this achievement aiming to provide comfortable and tranquility for the worshipers.

Al-Assaf added that the main building of the expansion project consists of six floors for praying, 680 electric escalators and 24 elevators for the people with special needs and 21,000 toilets and places of ablution.

The ceremony was attended by Prince Faisal bin Turki bin Abdullah; Prince Khalid Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz, Advisor to the Custodian of the Two holy Mosques and Governor of Makkah Region; Prince Abdul-Illah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques; Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; Prince Khalid bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques; Prince Miteb bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Minister of National Guard; Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, President of General Commission for Tourism and National Heritage; Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior; Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al Al-Sheikh, Grand Mufti of the Kingdom and President of Senior Ulema Commission and Religious Research Administration and Ifta and a number of princes, ministers; heads of diplomatic missions of the Arab and Islamic countries and the Islamic organizations and senior military and civil officials.