

BEYOND THE RITUALS 7 historical sites to visit during Hajj

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For many pilgrims, Hajj and Umrah are more than just a series of rituals; they represent a journey through the very heart of Islamic history. Stepping onto the same sands where the Prophet (PBUH) and his companions once walked brings a sense of closeness. Beyond the essential rites, visiting these sacred landmarks allows pilgrims to reflect on the early days of Islam and the sacrifices made for the faith.

IN AND AROUND MAKKAH

1. The Kaaba and Masjid al-Haram (Makkah)

The focal point of every Muslim's prayer, the Kaaba, is the holiest site in Islam. Surrounding it is the Masjid al-Haram, a place of immense peace. Every corner of this mosque holds historical significance, from the Station of Ibrahim to the well of Zamzam.

How to get there:



Jabal al-Nour

Most pilgrims stay in hotels within walking distance. For those further away, free shuttle buses or taxis are available. It typically takes 5-20 minutes to reach on foot or by bus, depending on your hotel location.

2. Cave Hira (Jabal al-Nour)

Located atop the Mountain of Light (Jabal al-Nour), the Cave Hira is where the Prophet (PBUH) received the first revelation of the Quran from the Angel Jibril. Though the climb is steep, the chance to stand where the message of Islam began is a powerful experience.

How to get there: Located about 4km from Masjid al-Haram, you can take a 15-minute taxi to the mountain's base. From there, it is a steep 1-to-2-hour hike to the top. It is best to visit at dawn or dusk to avoid the intense heat.

3. Cave Thawr

This cave holds a central place in the story of the Hijrah



Jabal al-Rahmah

(migration). It is where the Prophet (PBUH) and his companion, Abu Bakr (RA), sought refuge from their pursuers for three days. It remains a symbol of divine protection and trust in Allah.

How to get there: Situated roughly 4km south of the Grand Mosque. A 15-minute taxi ride will bring you to the foot of the hill, followed by a 1.5-to-2-hour climb to reach the cave.

4. Mount Arafat and Jabal al-Rahmah

Arafat is the heart of the Hajj pilgrimage. Standing on the Mount of Mercy (Jabal al-Rahmah), where the Prophet (PBUH) delivered his Final Sermon, is a moment of profound reflection and repentance for



Al-Masjid an-Nabawi

millions of pilgrims.

How to get there: Located about 20km from central Makkah. It is a 30-to-40-minute drive via taxi or bus. During the Hajj season, the Al Mashaer Al Mugaddassah Metro is also an option.

5. Al-Masjid an-Nabawi

The Prophet's Mosque in Madinah is the second-holiest site and serves as the final resting place of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The serene atmosphere and the opportunity to visit the Rawdah—described as a garden from the gardens of Paradise—make this an essential stop for every pilgrim.

6. Masjid Quba

Located on the outskirts of Madinah, Masjid Quba is the first mosque ever built in Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) himself helped lay its foundations. It is highly recommended to visit and pray here, as a prayer in Masjid Quba is said to be equivalent to performing an Umrah.

How to get there: It is located about 3km from Al-Masjid an-Nabawi. You can take a 10-minute taxi or a 45-minute walk following the Sunnah. Tour buses are also frequently available.

7. Mount Uhud

This site marks the location of the famous Battle of Uhud. Visiting the martyrs' cemetery at the foot of the mountain serves as a poignant reminder of the early struggles faced by the Muslim community and the steadfastness of the Prophet's companions.

How to get there: Situated about 5km north of the Prophet's Mosque. A taxi or public bus will get you there in approximately 15 minutes from the city centre.

Exploring these historical sites provides a deeper context for the pilgrimage. As you prepare for your journey, including these landmarks in your itinerary ensures a more comprehensive and meaningful experience. May your pilgrimage be both spiritually fulfilling and well-organised, leaving you with memories that last a lifetime.



The Kaaba



Cave Thawr



Masjid Quba



Mount Uhud

Secure savings for HAJJ PILGRIMS

Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC, the country's pioneer Shariah-compliant institution, is dedicated to making the spiritual journey of Hajj organised for all. Under Managing Director Md. Altaf Hossain, the bank merges Islamic values with digital innovation. He aims to empower believers through structured savings and seamless government integration, ensuring every pilgrim travels with financial peace of mind.

The Daily Star (TDS): What distinguishes your Hajj savings

TDS: How does your CellFin app assist pilgrims with their savings goals?

MAH: While we don't have a specific "round-up" feature, our CellFin app provides "Standing Instructions" and "Auto Pay" for automated micro-savings. Customers can open and manage accounts entirely online. A unique feature is CellFin ECHO, our voice-based AI assistant, which helps users monitor savings progress in real-time. This combination of automation and accessibility ensures a disciplined path toward reaching pilgrimage funding targets.

TDS: What specific benefits does the Hajj Prepaid Card provide?

MAH: The card requires no separate bank account and has no issuance or closure fees. It is usable at POS terminals and ATMs across Saudi Arabia. For transparency, cardholders can link it to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' "Labbayik" app to check balances. It is a cost-effective, secure tool designed specifically for the unique financial needs of a pilgrim during their stay.

TDS: How do you balance long-term savings for youth with immediate needs?

MAH: Our tenure flexibility—up to 25 years—is key. Younger customers can start with manageable monthly amounts over two decades. Conversely, those wanting to perform Hajj sooner can opt for shorter tenures with higher contributions. We provide a customized roadmap based on estimated Hajj costs to ensure every customer reaches their goal within their preferred timeframe.

Interview conducted by Tagabun Taharim Titun



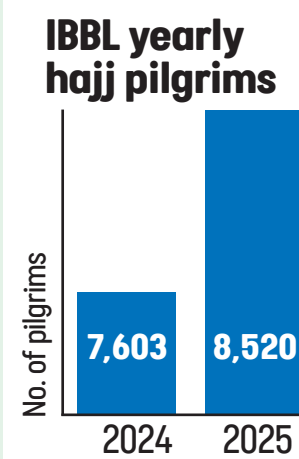
MD. ALTAF HOSSAIN
Managing Director
(Current charge)
Islami Bank
Bangladesh PLC

“Our voice-based AI assistant guides pilgrims by monitoring savings progress in real-time, ensuring they stay on track for Hajj.”



হজ যাত্রায় নিরাপদ লেনদেনের বিশ্বস্ত সঙ্গী এমডিবি প্লিপেইড কার্ড

- তাত্ক্ষণিক ডেলিভারি নিত কোনো ইস্যু ফ্রী ছাড়া
- এসএমএস ও ইমেইল নোটিফিকেশন সুবিধা
- ATM, POS ও ই-কমার্স প্ল্যাটফর্মে অধিক গ্রহণযোগ্য
- নিরাপদ ও সুরক্ষিত লেনদেন হজযাত্রা চলাকালীন সময়জুড়ে
- মিডল্যান্ড অনলাইনে সেলফ রেজিস্ট্রেশনের সুবিধা
- মুদ্রা রূপান্তর ছাড়াই টাকা ব্যয় করুন (পাসপোর্ট এনডোর্সমেন্ট আবশ্যিক)



products in this competitive market?

Md. Altaf Hossain (MAH): Our cornerstone is the Mudaraba Hajj Savings Account, offering flexible installments over one to twenty-five years. What distinguishes us is our seamless integration with the government's e-Hajj system for direct registration fee payments. We also offer a specialised Hajj Prepaid Card, allowing pilgrims to carry up to USD 1,200 in Saudi Riyals securely.

