

Saudi authorities must ensure safety

We are shocked and deeply saddened by the news of a big crane collapsing near Mecca's Grand Mosque killing more than a hundred people and injuring hundreds more. This is at a time when millions are gathering in the Holy City of Mecca, Saudi Arabia to perform the fifth pillar of Islam - the Hajj (Pilgrimage)

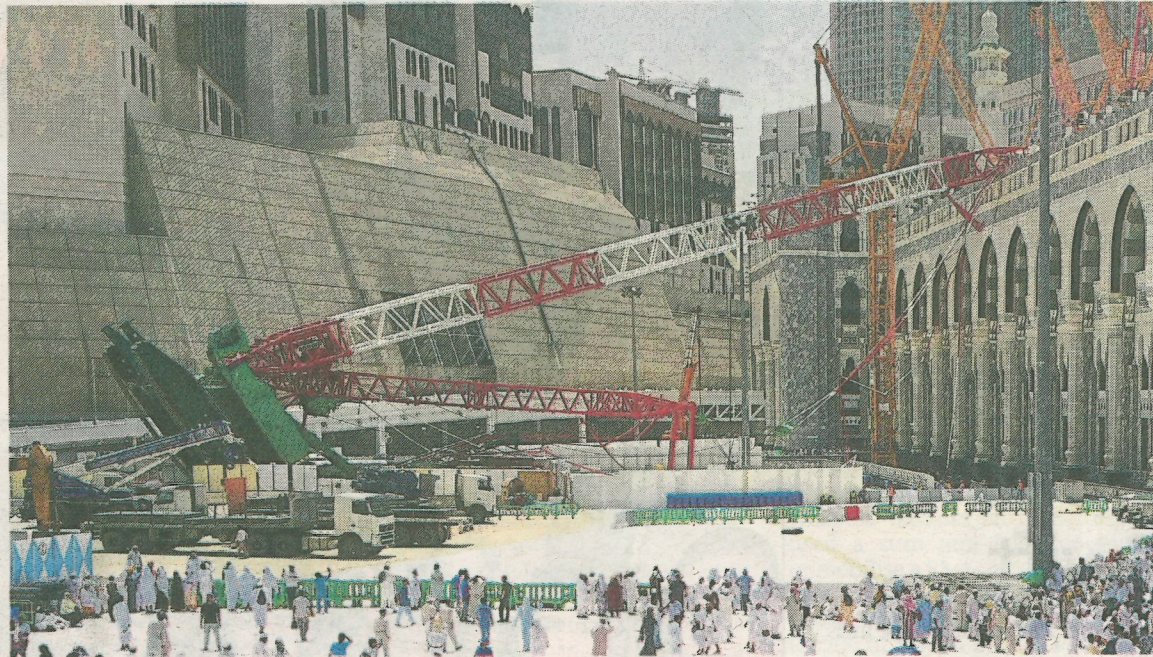
Images mostly posted by social media users show a grisly scene, with police and onlookers attending to victims on the polished mosque floors.

Saudi Arabia's civil defence authority gave an update on the rising casualty numbers on its official Twitter account as ambulances whisked the wounded to hospitals.

As of early Saturday, it said those injured in the disaster numbered at 238. According to Tabung Haji, the main agency which handles the arrangement for Malaysian pilgrims to the Holy City, only a few Malaysians suffered injuries with no fatalities being reported.

Question are being asked by many, especially the pilgrims families back home, on the priority given to safety by the Saudi authorities for all the pilgrims in the Holy City and its surrounding areas.

As we aware, the Saudi government is in the midst of enlarging the area near the Grand Mosque



in order to create a more comfortable space for the convenience of future pilgrims which has seen a sharp increase in numbers from year to year.

Though this is understandable, it is also crucial that the Saudi authorities think about the safety of the huge number of people who are now gathering to perform the

pilgrimage.

They should have stopped all the construction work and removed all the construction materials and equipment which could be of risk or hazardous to the pilgrims.

The crane should not have been there in the first place.

With the uncertain weather pat-

tern in the Arab Peninsular like strong winds and heavy rain, any potentially dangerous item should have been taken away to ensure the safety of the pilgrims.

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