

Saudi Arabia Expands ‘White Road’ Project to Cool Pilgrimage Routes in Mecca

Monday 26 May, 2025

Mecca

Eng. Saleh Al-Jasser, the Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics Services and Chairman of the Roads General Authority, launched the cooled pedestrian walkway project in Mecca, which will enhance accessibility services for individuals with disabilities.

According to the Roads General Authority, the cooled roads initiative has expanded by 82%, building on its initial success since its launch in 2023. More than 84,000 square metres of roads in Arafat have now been paved using locally sourced recycled materials designed to reduce heat absorption from sunlight. These materials lower surface temperatures by approximately 12°C and reflect 30–40% more sunlight during the morning hours, helping to mitigate urban heat islands and providing a more comfortable environment for pilgrims while reducing energy consumption and air pollution.

Furthermore, the growth of flexible rubber roads increased by 33%. These surfaces aim to soften asphalt in pedestrian areas, offering particular advantages to older adults. The newly laid section extends from Namira Mosque to Arafat Train Station, raising the overall flexible pavement area to 16,000 square meters. Research conducted by the Road Research Centre has validated the improved comfort and safety of this advanced rubberised asphalt.

The new initiatives feature a green corridor project along the adaptable route, featuring trees planted over 1,200 meters from Namira Mosque to the train station. To enhance air quality and comfort for pilgrims, air-cooling mist systems and water fountains have been installed in collaboration with the Abdulrahman Fakieh Charitable Foundation.

Furthermore, the Minister has introduced an accessibility initiative aimed at supporting individuals with disabilities. This initiative features a 4,000-metre pedestrian path that leads to Mount Arafat, built with cooled paving materials designed to minimise vibrations and enhance mobility for users and their companions.

The Roads General Authority, the national regulator of Saudi Arabia’s Road sector, aims to elevate the quality of roads to rank sixth globally by 2030 and reduce road fatalities to fewer than five per 100,000 people. Saudi Arabia currently boasts the world’s leading intercity road connectivity, with a total network exceeding 73,000 kilometers. For further inquiries, please contact: Media@rga.gov.sa.

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