

Number of Indians dead in Mecca crane collapse goes up to 11

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Jeddah: Nine more Indians were today confirmed dead in Friday's Grand Mosque crane collapse in Mecca in addition to two reported dead earlier. The incident, which occurred ahead of the annual Haj pilgrimage, has claimed 115 lives so far.

Working with relatives of missing persons, and Private Tour Operators our officials have unfortunately confirmed that an additional 9 Indian pilgrims have died in the tragic accident, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Vikas Swarup said in New Delhi.

While our officials on the ground in Mecca continue to provide assistance to the injured Indians, Saudi authorities permitted the opening of the mortuary for identification of deceased pilgrims on Sunday, the 13th evening, he said.

The mission is extending all necessary help to the families in order to complete formalities in Mecca, he added. Yesterday, two Indian women pilgrims who died were identified as Moniza Ahmed from West Bengal and Muameena Ismail from Kerala.

The additional nine people who died were today identified as Mohd Hanif, Tabassum, Hassan Kharaj, Zafar Sheikh, Zakira Begum, Mohammed Abdul Khadar, Fatima Begum, Shameem Bano and Khader Bee.

With more Indians confirmed dead in Mecca, the new toll following the crash of a huge red crane into a part of the Grand Mosque filled with worshippers on Friday has gone up to 115, less than two weeks before the annual pilgrimage.

Among the injured are three each from Maharashtra, Telangana, UP and MP, two each from Delhi and West Bengal, and one each from Punjab, Bihar and Assam. Thousands of pilgrims, including hundreds of Indians, have already arrived in Mecca for Haj. Saudi authorities have ordered a probe into the incident.

- PTI