

Prominent indian scholar reported missing in Mecca stampede

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Mina: A prominent Indian Islamic scholar, who was in Mina to perform Haj, has been reported missing since the deadly stampede broke out, the worst incident in 25 years to strike the annual pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia that had claimed the lives of at least 45 Indians.

Mufti Mohammed Farooq, who is in his mid 60s, has been missing after the stampede which killed at least 769 pilgrims from different countries, the Arab News reported.

Mr Farooq, a senior religious scholar, is a prolific writer and had authored over 50 books on a range of subjects, including Hadith and Fiqh, in Urdu and Hindi, it said. "He has been missing for several days and his family in India and many of his students and well-wishers from across the world, including in South Africa, the UK, Canada and the US, are extremely worried and anxious about his well being," said Mufti Javed Iqbal, imam of a mosque in Birmingham, UK.

Mr Farooq is the founder and principal of Jamia Mahmoodia in Meerut and which has been running for over 25 years and has over 700 students on its roll.

"We are fervently praying for his safe return and calling on anyone who may know of where he is to contact the following Saudi number at the earliest 0500150039," he added.

The stampede broke out during Haj after two massive lines of pilgrims converged with each other from different directions at an intersection close to the five-storey Jamarat Bridge in Mina for symbolic stoning of the devil.

Hundreds of pilgrims, including those from Pakistan and Iran, are still missing.

- PTI