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Pilgrims

M'SIA TO SHARE HAJ ADMIN SKILLS WITH OTHERS

KUALA LUMPUR, May 2 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will share her experience in the management of Muslim pilgrims with the rest of the Muslim world, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said today.

He said the experience derived by the Pilgrims Management and Fund Board (Tabung Haji) would be made available to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) at its meeting this year, to be attended by Islamic Affairs Ministers.

The venue for the OIC meeting is yet to be fixed.

The sharing of such experiences would cover two vital aspects, namely the pilgrim management as a whole and the economic activities related to the pilgrim funds, he told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah International Airport in Subang here, on his return from Mecca.

Hamid and Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Mohamed Ali Rustam were among the first few pilgrims who returned early from the holy land today, at the head of the first batch of pilgrims, scheduled to arrive on May 5.

The Saudi Arabian government, Hamid said, with their high praise for Malaysia's efficient management of the pilgrims, wanted her divest her experience to other Islamic nations, especially in maintaining discipline among the pilgrims while performing the haj.

Malaysia was also praised for its firm stand on the Bosnia-Herzegovina issue, and the moves it had initiated in inspiring the international community to denounce and combat atrocities in the Balkan state.

The Saudis had lauded Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his inspiring speech, in championing for the world Muslim dignity, delivered at the Oxford University during his recent visit to Britain, he said.

While in Mecca, Hamid who represented the world pilgrims at a special reception at the royal court in Mina, also delivered a speech which attracted wide media publicity.

On the pilgrim quota, Hamid said Malaysia had not requested for an increase in the quota, as Malaysia was sympathetic with the Saudi government which had to manage about two million pilgrims a year, during the haj season.

Like any other nation, Malaysia was applying the formula of 0.1 per cent of the population in deciding the number of pilgrims annually.

Tabung Haji, he said, would continue to accord priority to those going on the pilgrimage for the first time, excepting those performing the haj to fulfill a vow, like taking the aged, or those whose pilgrimage had been impaired in the previous trip.

Some 20,000 pilgrims performed the haj this year, of whom about 100 performed the haj for the second time. -- BERNAMA

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