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Haj-Praise

M'SIA PRAISES SAUDI GOVT ON HAJ FACILITIES

MECCA, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has praised the Saudi government for providing adequate facilities to enable some 2.5 million pilgrims to perform the haj in the Holy Land.

This was conveyed by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin, during his call on Saudi Haj Minister Iyad Amin Abdullah Madani here yesterday.

Tabung Haji Chairman Datuk Zainol Mahmood and the agency's chief executive Mohd Bakke Salleh were also present at the meeting.

Speaking to Malaysian reporters at the Tabung Haji office here today, Abdul Hamid said the Haj Minister commended Tabung Haji for its smooth and systematic handling of Malaysian haj pilgrims apart from being able to resolve problems which cropped out.

Abdul Hamid said the Saudi government viewed Tabung Haji as a model haj agency for its management of Malaysian haj pilgrims and had called on other Muslim nations to adopt the agency's approaches in handling haj pilgrims.

At the meeting, the Saudi minister urged Tabung Haji to address shortcomings in the handling of umrah packages as well as tours of holy sites in Saudi Arabia currently operated by Malaysian travel agents.

Abdul Hamid said Tabung Haji would study the issue before coming out with the solutions which would be submitted to the Cabinet for its nod.

He said the Malaysian pilgrims board had no plans to take over the umrah packages from the travel agents but would monitor their operations continuously.

Abdul Hamid advised Malaysians not to view the umrah packages as a form of tourism programme but to focus more on religious obligations.

At the meeting, Abdul Hamid conveyed the message of thanks and appreciation from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Saudi Crown Prince Al Malik Fahd Ibni Abdul Aziz for Saudi government's cooperation and assistance given to Malaysian pilgrims.

-- BERNAMA

OS MFZ ZUL