

## **Najib tees off with Obama in Hawaii**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak managed to sneak some time on the golf course this Christmas eve with none other than United States President Barack Obama.

Najib is currently in Hawaii on his own vacation, reports The Washington Post yesterday, quoting the White House.

"Turns out Najib was in town on his own getaway," the daily reported.

Checks on flight tracker website FlightRadar24 showed that the official jet, registration number 9M-NAA, arrived in Honolulu from Kuala Lumpur on Dec 20.

Najib was reported to have visited flood victims in his home state of Pahang on that day.

On Dec 20, about 19,000 were displaced by floods on the east coast with figures worsening to 60,000 as at yesterday.

Najib has been reported to take year-end vacations previously.

Yesterday, the prime minister brushed shoulders with Obama's aides Joe Paulsen and Mike Brush, both of whom golfed with Obama and Najib as part of the 'First Foursome' on the course at the Marine Corps base at Kanehoe Bay.

Obama is known not to mix business and pleasure on the golf course, said Washington Post, with his vacation in Hawaii mostly spent on playing golf with his same circle of friends

However, it is not unprecedented for Obama to do a golf summit with a world leader, having played with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key in Hawaii last year.

It is likely that the US president had established better working relationship with Najib, having made the first visit by a sitting US president to Malaysia in 50 years.

Earlier this month, US Vice President Joe Biden and US ambassador to Malaysia Joseph Y Yun expressed their concern over Najib's use of Sedition Act against political dissidents.

Najib courted backlash when he used the official jet for a family holiday in Perth on National Day 2011.

In 2007, then premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was severely criticised for opening a nasi kandar restaurant in Australia at a time when disastrous floods hit Johor.

DPM told to intensify efforts

Meanwhile, Najib said the government will ensure that all efforts are made to assist all victims who are facing the floods this year.

Najib said he had contacted and discussed with Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, as chairman of the National Disaster Management Committee, to intensify efforts to assist the flood victims especially those living in areas badly affected by the floods.

"I have asked the deputy prime minister to enhance operations to deliver aid in the form of food due to the difficulty to reach certain areas affected by the floods," Bernama reported Najib as saying in a statement released today.

The prime minister said he had been informed that among the main causes for the difficulty in evacuating the flood victims and delivering food supplies to certain areas were due to the very high water level and strong current that posed a danger to vehicles and rescue boats.

In addition, there were evacuation centres that had also been flooded.

Najib said he had also been informed that efforts to send aid by helicopters were also affected due to the bad weather which made it difficult for the aircraft to fly.

He added that there were also situations where the helicopters could not land to drop the supplies as there were no suitable locations near the evacuation centres.

However, Najib said he was confident that the rescue teams comprising various government agencies and volunteers were working hard to provide the best aid including finding ways to reach evacuation centres to deliver the aid.

More than 90,000 victims are reported to be staying at the temporary evacuation centres following the floods that were hitting Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Perak, Perlis and the latest, Kedah.