

**DPM: M'sia keen to learn disaster management from Japan**  
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Malaysia is interested to learn from Japan, its experiences and know-how in managing natural disasters and reducing the risks of such calamities, says Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

In this regard, he said the government would be sending a team headed by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim and National Disaster Management Agency (NaDMA) director-general Zaitun Ab Samad to learn from the experience of the Miyagi Prefecture in managing the tsunami disaster in the area.

"The experience is important as Malaysia has just formed NaDMA to act as a centre to handle national disasters and Miyagi Prefecture has offered our officers to be placed in Sendai (Japan) for a specific period to gather experience.

"In my view, this is a good offer we should take up as we do not know when disaster will strike," Zahid, who is also home minister, told Malaysian journalists after attending a briefing on efforts to rehabilitate and reconstruct the Miyagi Prefecture presented by Sendai vice-governor, Masahiro Wako.

Zahid, who is on a five-day visit to Japan since yesterday, said the offer would give Malaysia a good opportunity to raise its preparedness to face any natural disaster.

In 2011, Miyagi Prefecture was hit by an earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale and a huge tsunami resulted in the loss of lives as well as the destruction of infrastructure, including a nuclear power plant.

The Miyagi Prefecture also had the expertise and experience to manage tsunami victims, including relocating residents or rebuilding affected areas badly damaged in the disaster.

Zahid, who is the chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Disasters, said there were three elements Malaysia should learn from the Miyagi Prefecture.

Firstly, holistic long-term planning to avoid severe damages such as wave breakers, as well as deepening rivers at the upstream and the river mouth.

Secondly, long-term planning to house flood victims to avoid high cost while giving comfort to the victims.

Thirdly, the restructuring of disaster victims' employment income as found from the disaster.

Today, on the second day of his visit, Zahid took the high-speed train, Shinkansen, from Tokyo to Sendai located in Miyagi Prefecture.

During the journey, he was given a briefing on the high-speed train technology by Shinkansen operator, East Japan Railway Company.

He also visited the Hiyoriyama Memorial Monument in Natori and saw the effects of tsunami and efforts to rebuild the area.

The incident which caused losses amounting to US\$83 billion, took the lives of 15,894 people while 2,569 residents are still reported missing.

The World Bank estimated US\$235 billion was needed to rebuild the prefecture.

Zahid also spent time with Malaysian students studying in Tohoku University in Sendai.

- *Bernama*