

Security measures beefed up for haj pilgrims, says Najib
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak advised the pilgrims for this year's haj to comply with the additional security measures that are expected to be implemented by the government of Saudi Arabia.

He said following the violent incidents at the Nabawi Mosque in Madinah last Ramadan, the Saudi Arabian government had beefed up security measures, particularly towards the pilgrims.

"I was told that the Saudi government will impose some additional security measures including 10-finger biometric system.

"The women are required to wear a bracelet with safety chip," he said in his speech at the sending-off ceremony of the Malaysian pilgrims to the Holy Land at the Tabung Haji Complex in Kelana Jaya today.

The prime minister said the pilgrims would also have to pass security scanners at hotels' entrances and would be given safety briefings by Tabung Haji personnel in Saudi Arabia.

Najib said the measures were inevitable to ensure the safety of the pilgrims.

"Lately there are many countries that become the target of terrorist attacks. So let us all pray for the wellbeing of the country and safety while in the Holy Land," he said.

The prime minister also urged the pilgrims to uphold the country's image and good name.

He said the Saudi king, whether the past or present, often praised the attitude and discipline of Malaysian pilgrims.

Najib hoped that Malaysian pilgrims would learn a lesson from the pilgrimage which gather millions of Muslims from various countries.

Najib said the mass gathering taught Muslims to be patient, tolerant and loving regardless of skin colour, language, customs and culture.

"These good traits can prevent Muslims from getting any problems and finding the best way out," he said.

He also hoped that Muslims in Malaysia would continue to unite without taking into account any differences that might divide the unity of the people and the harmonious multi-racial society in the country.

At the event, Najib sent off the second batch of 450 pilgrims to the Holy Land.

Also present were his wife Rosmah Mansor, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department
Jamil Khir Baharom, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ashraf Wajdi
Dusuki, Saudi Arabian ambassador to Malaysia Fahad Abdullah Al-Rashid and Lembaga
Tabung Haji chairperson Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim.

- *Bernamea*

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