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## PILGRIMAGE

# Dr M 'belittling efforts of foundation'

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**PEKAN:** Pilgrims who were sponsored by Malaysia Development Berhad Foundation (IMDB Foundation) to perform the haj said they were disheartened by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement, which claimed that their pilgrimage would not be *mabrur* (pure).

At-Taqwa Mosque imam Azhar Mat Nawi said the former prime minister seemed to have belittled their pilgrimage, which was sponsored by the Prime Minister-IMDB Foundation Special Haj Programme.

"Our departure to the holy land of Mecca to perform haj was due to Allah's will because not everyone has the opportunity to do so.

"It was special because we were sponsored because of our contribution to society and religion," said the 43-year-old who performed his haj in 2012.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had made noble efforts to help the less fortunate fulfil the fifth pillar of Islam.

Pekan chairman of village heads' association Abdul Kadir Bakar, 67, said no one had the right to determine the *mabrur* of one's pilgrimage.

"Like Perak mufti Tan Sri Harussani Zakaria said, we should not judge one's pilgrimage. It is best to leave it to Allah."

Kadir, who performed the haj in 2011, said he



Pekan Umno religious bureau chief Datuk Ariffin Daud (second from left) and sponsored pilgrims reading the 'BH' report on Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks, in Kuantan yesterday. PIC BY MUHAMMAD ASYRAF SAWAL

was thankful that his pilgrimage was smooth.

Prime Minister-IMDB Foundation Special Haj Programme coordinator Mohd Zulkifli Mohamed, 61, said Dr Mahathir's statement ridiculed the efforts of the foundation to help the less fortunate to perform haj.

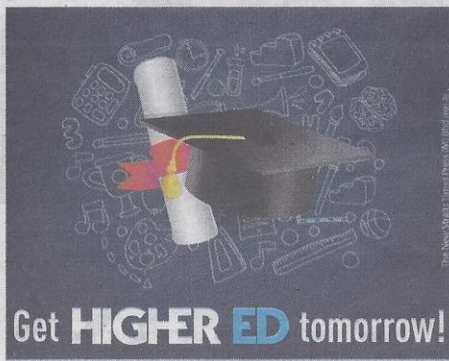
"I remember clearly the happiness on the faces of the pilgrims.

"Some of them were really poor while others did not have a Tabung Haji account.

"I am saddened that Dr Mahathir is belittling the government's efforts."

Kampung Ketapang Hilir Village Development and Security Committee chairman Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman, 59, said the programme gave an opportunity to the less fortunate to perform haj.

Since 2011, IMDB Foundation has sponsored more than 2,000 committee members from mosques to perform haj.



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