

'ACTIVE BODY NEEDED'

STAY HEALTHY, PM TELLS PILGRIMS

'Follow guidelines given by Tabung Haji, Health Ministry'

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PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has advised haj pilgrims to take care of their health while performing the fifth pillar of Islam.

Dr Mahathir urged pilgrims to follow health and dietary guidelines recommended by Tabung Haji (TH) and the Health Ministry to ensure they are able to perform their religious duties properly.

"The haj is a worship that requires physical and emotional strengths. During the pilgrimage season, millions of Muslims from all over the world will gather in the Holy Land. It will be crowded and the weather will be hot.

"All of you will go back and forth to Masjidil Haram, apart from performing the *tawaf saie*, the stoning ritual and other *sunat* prayers. For this, a healthy and active body is needed."

The *tawaf* is an act of circling the Kaabah seven times counter-clockwise. For *saie*, one has to walk seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwah, located adjacent to the Kaabah.

Dr Mahathir said this at a sending-off ceremony for 483 pilgrims, who left for Jeddah yesterday afternoon.

Present were Minister in the



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is greeted by pilgrim Mohd Mokhtar Mohd Petah, 85, at a sending-off ceremony for 483 pilgrims in Sepang yesterday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa, Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali and Saudi Arabian ambassador to Malaysia, Hussein Saeed Qattan.

Dr Mahathir said the haj rituals required pilgrims to be patient, tolerant and caring.

He called upon them to pray for the continued peace and prosperity of the country, adding that it was only through peace that

Malaysians could worship without any worry or fear.

"I advise pilgrims to use this opportunity to be Allah's guest as best as possible. Avoid wasting time on things that don't matter."

He congratulated TH for its commitment and efforts towards providing better services to pilgrims.

"I hope TH will continue to be committed and move forward with efforts to improve its level of

services, both in terms of pilgrimage, savings and investment, so that it becomes a model for other Muslim countries.

"I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Saudi embassy for the cooperation given, especially in taking care of the wellbeing of Malaysian pilgrims."

More than 90 per cent of Malaysian pilgrims have left for Makkah for this year's haj season.