

Malaysia's Ability In Managing Haj Pilgrims Incomparable, Says Najib
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By Abdul Aziz Harun

MECCA, Nov 2 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian government's strong support and efficiency of the authority responsible for managing Haj pilgrims to ensure ease and comfort during the pilgrimage, cannot be matched by other countries, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said the efforts included collecting funds by the authority to raise capacity in assisting Malaysian Muslims perform the Haj.

Najib said the special thing about Lembaga Tabung Haji (Tabung Haji) was that it could provide highly efficient pilgrims management, with the pilgrims getting value for money spent and the arrangements for food, accommodation, transportation, counselling, medical care and other facilities managed well.

"Besides that, the 20 per cent subsidy, which is about RM4,300 (given by the government to each pilgrim) from the actual cost of the pilgrimage trip, is very meaningful for them. Congratulations to Tabung Haji for its sound management of pilgrims," Najib told a press conference at the Tabung Haji headquarters in the Holy Land at a hotel, here.

Najib who arrived with his entourage that included his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, mother Tun Rahah Mohamad Noah, brother Datuk Mohamed Nazim and Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir at about 9.30am, was welcomed by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, Southeast Asia Muasassah chief Zuher Abdul Hamid and other officials.

He said the government worked at making it easy for Muslims in Malaysia to perform the Haj in large numbers, while the country's good relations with the Saudi Arabian government had earned Malaysia appropriate considerations in Haj matters.

"That is why when the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Sultan Abdel-Aziz al-Saud passed away recently, I personally came to pay my last respects and attend the funeral with Datuk Seri Jamil Khir and Datuk Seri Dr Zahid Hamidi (Defence Minister), to demonstrate how important Malaysia viewed its close relations with Saudi Arabia."

He said the good attitude of Malaysian pilgrims and efficient pilgrims management by Tabung Haji were recognised by the Saudi Arabian government and other quarters here.

The prime minister hoped this good track record could be maintained.

On another note, Najib said Malaysia should also seek business opportunities here, including acquiring equity and involving in long-term projects.

"But this should not be restricted to the Holy Land but extended to other parts of Saudi Arabia and globally as long as there is adherence to syariah principles," he said.

The prime minister was then taken to meet a group of Malaysian imam and chairmen of village security and development committees who are sponsored by the 1Malaysia

Development Berhad to perform the Haj this year.

Rosmah, meanwhile, took the opportunity to visit the treatment room at Janadiriah Hotel before joining Najib for a reception with some Malaysian pilgrims.

Najib and Rosmah then spent a few minutes talking to pilgrims at the surau before returning to their hotel.

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