

**1MDB Haj Sponsorship Set To Expand - Najib
Bernama
September 22, 2012**

SEPANG, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- The 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) sponsorship of Haj pilgrims will be maintained and the number of pilgrims may even be doubled, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said the programme might be extended to cover other mosque officials and Quran class teachers after the target of sending imams, village chiefs and chairmen of village development and security committees had been met.

Najib disclosed this in his speech at the departure to the Holy Land of 400 1MDB Haj pilgrims at the KL International Airport here. The text of his speech was read out by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom.

The prime minister, in his speech, reminded the pilgrims that they were minor ambassadors of the country and, as such, had to carry themselves well to earn the respect of the world community.

He also said that they should focus on the Haj and not be unduly worried about the next general election.

The 400 pilgrims, comprising imams, village chiefs and chairmen of village development and security committees, were going on the Haj trip free of charge. This is the second such group to make the Haj trip, the first batch of 111 having done so last year.

Meanwhile, Jamil Khir told reporters afterwards that the offer to perform the Haj under the 1MDB programme was apolitical.

"We do not insist on the participants coming from any political party. The only condition is that they must be imams, village chiefs and chairmen of village development and security committees," he said.

The 400 pilgrims, along with 47 others, left by a Malaysia Airlines flight at 12.30 pm and are scheduled to arrive in Medina at 4.30 pm (9.30 pm in Malaysia).

Jamil Khir said that so far, more than 6,400 pilgrims had gone to Medina by 19 Haj flights.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2012 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=696523>