

**Golf Game With Obama For Diplomatic Relations - Najib
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KOTA BAHARU, Dec 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today explained that his golf game with United States president Barack Obama in Hawaii recently did not mean that he deliberately ignored the flood faced by the country as polemicized by certain groups.

On the contrary, the prime minister said the game had been planned much earlier on the principle of establishing diplomatic ties with world leaders for Malaysia's benefit.

In addition, he said, the invitation had been extended during Obama's visit to this country in April, and it was difficult to decline the invitation as it had been planned for much earlier in the schedules of both leaders.

Speaking at a media conference here after observing the areas badly affected by the flood in Kelantan, he said: "Actually, during President Obama's visit to Malaysia, he had said that if coincidentally I were in Hawaii together with him (Obama), he would like to play golf with me (Najib).

"And playing golf is not something strange or extraordinary...because during the times of Tun Abdul Razak (Malaysia's second prime minister), Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman (second deputy prime minister), playing golf with world leaders could be described as golf diplomacy," he said.

Najib said although Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin assumed responsibility as the Director of the National Disaster Management Committee, he had decided to shorten his vacation and flew directly to Kota Baharu to look at the latest flood situation personally.

"Every day when I was there, I received the latest report on the flood situation...as it became more serious, I decided to return to the country as soon as possible and went directly to Kota Baharu. I have not even returned home yet.

"And (I) made the immediate visit to demonstrate that the government is very committed to continue to assist the flood victims," he added.

The flood situation in Kelantan is now becoming more serious when tens of thousands of residents had to seek shelter at temporary relief centres.

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