

King Salman's Visit Enhances Haj, Umrah Pilgrimage Management

KUALA LUMPUR, March 1 (Bernama) -- The visit of Saudi Arabia Ruler, King Salman Abdulaziz Al Saud to Malaysia is seen as paving the way to improve the smooth management of Malaysian pilgrims performing umrah and haj in the Holy Land.

The matter was echoed by several tour and travel agencies based on the positive response by the Saudi Arabian Government to several Malaysian pilgrimage applications.

Among them is Malaysia's application to increase the haj quota to up to 30,000 pilgrims to accommodate the increasing number of pilgrims from Malaysia.

Earlier this year, the Saudi Arabian Government restored Malaysia's pilgrim quota to 27,800 after the quota was reduced to 22,320 people since 2013, following developments around Masjidil Haram.

King Salman also agreed to consider Malaysia's request to build two haj pilgrim centres near Masjidil Haram in Makkah and Masjid Nabawi in Madinah.

TH Travel and Services Sdn Bhd Sales and Marketing senior general manager Zoolina Mohd Naim said many travel and tour operators offering umrah packages hoped for facilities provided by the Saudi Arabian Government.

"We (Malaysians) are well-known to have the best haj pilgrimage operator, Tabung Haji and we completely agree if Malaysia continues to request for benefits for our pilgrims.

"All this while, we have been enjoying various facilities, including via application and so on and I feel Malaysian pilgrims will get more benefits after this," he said when contacted by Bernama today.

King Salman ended his visit to Malaysia today and departed from Bunga Raya Complex at the KL International Airport (KLIA) for Indonesia.

Malaysia is the first Muslim country in Southeast Asia to be visited by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques since he ascended the throne in 2015.

Zoolina said various facilities provided by the Saudi Arabian Government for Malaysian pilgrims were not only to strengthen the cordial diplomatic relations between the two countries but also boost tourism between them.

"King Salman's visit reflects the cordial relations between the two countries and I hope after this, more Saudi citizens will visit our country," he said.

UMH Travel and Services Sdn Bhd managing director Mokhtar Ahmad said any facility for haj pilgrimage and umrah would encourage more Malaysians to visit the Holy Land and benefit the Saudi Arabian Government and generate a win-win situation for the two governments.

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