

## **King Salman's Visit Dispels Claim Of Malaysia A Failed Country - Najib**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 16 (Bernama) -- The state visit by the King of Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to the country recently dispelled false allegations by irresponsible quarters that Malaysia is a failed country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said the visit, which was significant from various aspects, proved that the wrong information conveyed to the Saudi Arabian government was baseless.

He said the state-visit by King Salman was significant in various aspects and in recognition of Malaysia being it the first country for His Majesty to visit in Southeast Asia.

"If there are quarters that say Malaysia is a failed country, economy is not stable, resulting in wrong information to be conveyed to Saudi Arabia, especially Aramco (Saudi Arabian Oil Company), that EPF (Employees Provident fund) is bankrupt, no money to pay the salary of civil servants.

"When King Salman visits Malaysia, gone are all these allegations made by irresponsible quarters," he said during the session on ministers' questions in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Najib was responding to a question by Datuk Dr Shamsul Anuar Nasarah (BN-Lenggong) who wanted to know the impact and significance of the visit by the Saudi Arabian king.

The prime minister said seven Memorandum of Understanding, with an estimated value of RM9.75 billion, were signed between Malaysian and Saudi Arabian companies.

"The agreements between the Malaysian and Saudi Arabian companies involved various sectors, like energy, health, construction, education, small and medium industries and also halal industry," he added.

Najib said the highlight of the visit was on the share purchase agreement between Petronas and Aramco in the Petronas Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (RAPID) refinery project.

It involves an investment of RM31 billion, the biggest investment ever made by a Saudi Arabian company in Malaysia, he added.

Meanwhile, Najib, who is Pekan Member of Parliament, said the outcome of the visit also saw King Salam increasing the haj quota for Malaysian pilgrims.

"Alhamdulillah, the outcome of my discussion with King Salman during the visit, His Majesty agreed to increase the haj quota for Malaysian pilgrims from 27,900 to 30,200 people," he added.

Apart from that, he said, King Salman also agreed to consider Malaysia's request for lease of land to build an accommodation complex for Malaysian haj pilgrims.

Najib said King Salman's confidence in Malaysia's political and economic stability had also placed bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia at the highest level.

In response to a supplementary question from Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan (PAS-Kota Bharu) who wanted to know whether Malaysia was prepared to cooperate in other fields, especially on efforts to reduce crime rate, Najib said Malaysia could cooperate in all fields, including on addressing crime.

King Salman arrived in Malaysia on Feb 26 for a state-visit, making the country the first in Southeast Asia for His Majesty's visit since ascending the throne in 2015.

The Saudi Arabia king, accompanied by a 600-member delegation, was in Malaysia until March 1.

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