

## **King Salman sponsors 20 Malaysian pilgrims for Haj**

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 30 (Bernama) -- The King of Saudi Arabia, King Salman Abdulaziz Al Saud, is sponsoring 20 Malaysian pilgrims to perform the haj under the 2019 Saudi King' s guests programme.

The annual programme is organised by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Da' wah and Guidance, and is personally financed by King Salman. The cost covers the pilgrims' accomodation, flight tickets, food and drink as well as haj rites.

Saudi Ambassador to Malaysia, Mahmoud Hussien Saeed Qattan, said the Saudi government has succeeded in getting a large number of Muslims from across the globe to come together.

He also said that the Saudi government has extensive experience in running the programme, which has been conducted for more than 20 years.

“We will always work to improve the programme from time to time,” said the Ambassador to Bernama after an event celebrating the Saudi King' s Guest, here, on Tuesday.

Among the programme' s aim is to get the pilgrims to come together to enable the exchanging of views on Islam and strengthen the ties between them.

The Malaysian pilgrims selected for this year' s programme include religious scholars and leaders, representatives from the government, academicians, and individuals from NGOs.

The group will depart for Jeddah from Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Aug 2, and will be in Saudi till Aug 17.

The selected Malaysian 'guests' will be among the 1,300 pilgrims from 72 countries under the programme.

King Salman has also invited 200 families of victims of the terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, and 2,000 Yemeni military family members to perform the pilgrimage under the programme this year.

Saudi Arabia plans to accommodate up to 30 million haj and umrah pilgrims in the coming years based on Vision 2030 introduced by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

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