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Putit: SIC not to blame for drop in Haj quota

BY NORNASHEILA ZAIDI

KUCHING: The Sarawak Islamic Council should not be blamed for the decrease in the quota of Haj pilgrims this year where the state is only allowed to send 630 pilgrims.

Chairman of the Council, Datu Haji Putit Matzen said that the council and the state government have intensified their effort to request for an increase in the state's quota of Haj pilgrims.

"We have put a lot of efforts on the matter but was disappointed with the reply we received from those in charge," he said in his speech when officiating at a Haj course held at Islamic Information Centre at Jalan Uplands here yesterday.

Putit who represent Assistant Minister of Islamic Affairs Datuk Haji Daud Abdul Rahman at the function said that the number of the people who can afford to perform the Haj is increasing every year.

"But sadly, we are unable to send all of them because of the quota

problem," he said.

He therefore advised those selected to perform the Haj this year to use the chance given to them wisely and show their full commitment in performing the Haj.

He also reminded the pilgrims to take good care of their health to enable them to perform their Haj without any problems.

The first group of Malaysian pilgrims will leave for Mecca on 17 Sept and expected to return home on 18 Oct. For pilgrims from Sarawak, the first group will leave for Mecca on 28 Sept.

The two-day course yesterday also involved practical activities so that the pilgrims will be able to prepare themselves before performing the actual Haj.

Also present at the event yesterday were Tabung Haji Corporate Financial and Services Senior General Manager Haji Hisham Harun and State Assemblywoman for LinggaHajah Simoi Haji Peri and members of the State Mosque Welfare Trust (LAKMNS).

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DATU Putit who represented Datu Haji Daud Abdul Rahman presenting the Haj official luggage bag to one of the pilgrims while Hajah Simoi Haji Peri (left), Haji Hashim Harun and Haji Hamid Awang (right) look on. PHOTO: RAMIDI SUBARI