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Disability no deterrent for senior citizen

JOHOR BARU: A physical handicap did not deter former army personnel Md Tahir Hassan from performing the Haj or the holy pilgrimage

The 63-year-old father of two who lost his right leg said it was not a hassle for him to travel far to Mecca is Saudi Arabia as long as he gets to fulfil his lifelong wish.

Md Tahir's leg was amputated below the knee after he was injured by a landmine during a security operation near the Thai border in 1977.

After the incident, he was transferred to a desk job in Johor Baru and retired 14 years later in 1991.

"I crutches to move around and I am grateful that I am able to per-

form my religious responsibilities.

"Now that my two children are all grown up, my wife and I can finally spend time getting closer to God after applying for an opportunity with Tabung Haji since 2004."

Md Tahir said this at a briefing and luncheon for the pilgrims at Persada Johor here.

He was one of the 366 former civil servants sponsored by the Johor government to perform the Haj in September.

Another participant Rini Las, 58, said that she would be following her 75-year-old husband for the pilgrimage next month.

"It will be our first time to Mecca

and I am glad we are going together," said the mother of six from Kampung Bentong Dalam, Kluang.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, who attended the programme, said about 3,000 Johoreans

would be performing the pilgrimage this year.

"For the past three years, the state spent RM1.8mil to fund the pilgrimage sponsorship programme.

"It was a positive sign that

Johoreans are more than willing to perform their responsibilities as Muslims as there are 118,970 people registered on the Tabung Haji waiting list for a chance to do so," he added.



Md Tahir: Upbeat about travelling to the Holy Land to fulfil his lifelong wish.



Greetings: Abdul Ghani (far left) meeting with civil servants at the event.