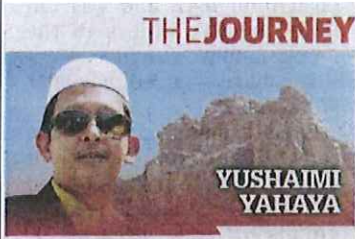


Headline	Stoning ritual a smooth affair		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	14 Sep 2016	Color	Full Color
Section	Local News	Circulation	74,711
Page No	20	Readership	240,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	305 cm ²
Journalist	THEJOURNEY %-r , JB , * fit lifi B	AdValue	RM 10,514
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 31,541



Stoning ritual a smooth affair



MINA: Day 3, Monday, Sept 12.

Our day started with the media team moving to Wisma Tanaf, which is about 1km from the Jamrat complex, after Zohor prayers.

Aidiladha was a muted affair for us, with the focus on the stoning activities until tomorrow to complete the haj.

We had a long day the day before, spending the whole day in Arafah to usher in the auspicious Wukuf Day.

Around 10.30pm local time on Sunday, we were in a bus headed for Muzdalifah, where pilgrims are supposed to *mabit* (stay), even for a while. We passed through the vast Muzdalifah resting areas assigned to various nationalities.

The fenced areas are bare, save for toilets. It is common for pilgrims to collect the pebbles required to carry out the stoning rituals in Jamrat in the three days of Tasyriq, which began yesterday.

We then went back to Mecca to perform the *tawaf*, *sai* and *tahalul* to complete the *tahalul awal*, which allows pilgrims to not wear the two-piece *ihram* and proceed with the rest of the rites wearing normal clothes. It is one of the ways to perform haj.

Most of our pilgrims, however, do not return to Mecca, but proceed to the Mina tent areas where they perform the first stoning act, which is to throw seven stones at the Jamrat Kubra.

This is also another way to perform the *tahalul awal*, which allows them to carry out three days of stoning in normal clothes.

After a press conference by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, we walked towards the Jamrat complex to perform the first stoning act of throwing seven pebbles at the Jamrat Kubra.

bles at the Jamrat Kubra.

It was a far smoother affair than we had expected as there was no queue. We walked straight to the front of the Kubra station and carried out the ritual.

On our way there, we saw pilgrims from all over the world occupying every available space to wait their turn to carry out the stoning ritual. Many scaled up hills to find a resting place.

We then walked 3.5km to the Mina tent area jam-packed with pilgrims. There was an air of carnival as stalls selling food, drinks, religious items, souvenirs and other items were set up to cater to the millions there.

Just before Subuh, we walked back to the Jamrat area and threw seven pebbles each at the Sughra, Wusta and Kubra station. This ritual will be repeated until Thursday.

Meanwhile, Jamil Khir said all 22,307 Malaysian pilgrims had arrived in Mina.

Ten pilgrims have died, while 5 critically ill pilgrims warded at Saudi hospitals could not make it for wukuf, thus rendering their haj incomplete.

"Tabung Haji (TH) will give priority to these pilgrims next year should their health permit them to return," he said.

He urged Malaysian pilgrims to keep their discipline and stick to the schedule fixed by Saudi Arabia and TH to deter untoward incidents.



Pilgrims walking towards the Jamrat complex in Mecca yesterday. Pic by Yushaimi Yahaya