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1.9m apply for BR1M 2.0

AID FOR THE NEEDY: Second round of BR1M to be given out next month

BANTUAN Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) 2.0 has attracted 1.9 million applications as of this month, said Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Donald Lim yesterday at the Dewan Negara.

Lim said it received 1,480,481 applications from singles and 435,232 applications from households.

Registration of BR1M commenced on Nov 1 whereby application forms could be downloaded from the Inland Revenue Board website, www.hasil.gov.my.

It will close at the end of this month.

The disbursement for BR1M will take place next month.

Lim, when replying to a question from Senator Chew Lee Giok, said RM2.15 billion was handed out to 4.35 million households last year.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Senator Datuk Dr Mashitah Ibrahim said more than one million Muslims were on the waiting list to perform

the haj.

She said the pilgrims were selected based on the date and time of their haj registration.

"Tabung Haji adopts an open registration system where depositors who meet the conditions will be accepted for haj registration.

"In other words, it is based on first come, first served basis," she said to a question from Senator Muhammad Yusof Husin.

Bernama reported that Mashitah said 1,039,691 Muslims were on the haj registration list to date, while the haj quota given by the Saudi Arabian government from 2008 to 2010 was 26,000 pilgrims yearly and 27,900 pilgrims in 2011 and 2012.

Mashitah said as more and more Muslims registered for haj, Tabung Haji had introduced additional conditions to enable first-timers to go first by not allowing those who had performed the haj to register again within five years, and giving priority to those above 75 years, if there were va-

cancies.

In addition, Tabung Haji did not allow children below 15 to go, except under certain circumstances.

She said as Saudi Arabia was restricting pilgrimage visas to about 0.1 per cent of the population of a country, Malaysia would continue to appeal for an additional quota yearly.

"Massive redevelopment of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina is putting a strain on pilgrim accommodations,"

The Dewan Negara was also informed that as of last month, 1,811 students have been expelled for various reasons.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong said expulsion was the last resort taken by schools against students.

"Among the actions taken before expulsion from school included giving warnings, discussions with parents or guardians, being referred to disciplinary teacher for advice and motivation," he said to a question by Senator Noriah Mahat.