

Headline	Best haj board in the world		
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Best haj board in the world

Smart investing and prudent finances put Tabung Haji top of its class, says Taib

VANES DEVINDRAN

KUCHING: The sound investment strategies implemented by Lembaga Tabung Haji (TH) have carved out a competitive global reputation for the board as far as handling all aspects of *haj* pilgrimage goes.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said TH had been able to manage its finances and investments prudently, enabling it to provide services that ensured comfort to the country's pilgrims making their way to perform one of Islam's five core pillars.

"There is no organisation in the world that could follow the footsteps of TH. Many have tried to achieve the board's efficiency level but to no avail," he said at the earth-breaking ceremony for Kompleks Tabung Haji and TH Hotel Sarawak here yesterday.

He said good organisational and financial stability had made it possible for the board to cater to the pilgrims' needs through wise diversification of its businesses.

"Here in Sarawak, TH has more than 1,000 acres (over 400ha) of oil palm estates. I believe you (TH) will have a bright future in Sarawak and able to help more Sarawakians performing their *haj*," he said.

Having been at the helm of TH for two years, Taib said it was not enough to stick to traditional business and administrative methods in

managing and enriching the depositors' funds.

With the world changing rapidly, he said TH would need to adapt in order to maintain its efficiency accordingly without deviating from the Syariah laws.

On the new complex and hotel, Taib said the one-stop centre would eliminate the hassle of disorganisation as this would be the place where pilgrims would embark on their journey. He said with Mecca receiving millions of visitors every year,

there were bound to be confusion and disarray in documentation.

Through the new centre, he said pilgrims could be notified beforehand of any change or information and thus, could be more prepared for their journey.

Earlier Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom said TH had invested in several industries ranging from Islamic finance, agriculture, construction, real estate, oil and gas, information technology to halal food.

"The success in these investments, which are in line with Syariah laws, has allowed TH to provide a competitive subsidy to the full cost of the *haj* pilgrimage.

"Inclusive of airfare and accommodation, we offer the lowest (rate) in the world," he said.

It was learnt later that the full fare for performing a *haj* was RM15,555, but TH subsidised RM5,575 so that pilgrims would only need to pay RM9,980.

On the hotel cum complex, Jamil said it would also feature immigration clearance as well as being the sending off point for pilgrims from the state.

Expected to be completed by Feb 2017, he said this would be sixth TH complex in Malaysia.

TH Properties will undertake the RM204mil project on a 6.16-acre (about 2.5ha) land opposite Kuching International Airport. The building design incorporates the needs of the local Muslim community with the development of a nine-storey hotel cum *haj* complex and also a convention hall that can accommodate 1,090 people.

The concept of the structure is based on Sarawak's rainforest and tropical living that features green architecture in terms of space layout, which brings in light and volume to the building's core as well as light-filled working and living environment with prudent selection of sustainable green materials.

It will also have various facilities in a surau, restaurant, seminar room, two indoor swimming pools — one of which will cater specifically for women — and a bank.

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All in one: (From left) Taib, Housing Minister Datuk Amar-Abang Johari Tun Openg and Jamil admiring the design of the Tabung Haji complex as TH Properties group managing director/CEO Datuk Roszali Othman briefs them about the development. – Bernama