

Enlighten pilgrims before departure for Haj: Al-Farsy

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Published: May 4, 2011 21:53 **Updated:** May 4, 2011 21:53

JEDDAH: Haj Minister Fouad Al-Farsy held talks here Wednesday with a Malaysian Haj delegation on arrangements for Malaysian pilgrims coming for Haj this year.

Al-Farsy urged the delegation led by a minister in the prime minister's department, Jamil Khir Baharom, to enlighten Malaysian pilgrims about Haj affairs before they arrive in the Kingdom.

"They should also follow the schedules for pilgrims to go in groups to the Jamrat to perform the stoning ritual," the minister said.

He also advised the Malaysian team to speed up signing aviation and housing agreements. More than 25,000 Malaysians come for Haj every year under Tabung Haji, which has been successfully managing the country's Haj affairs over the past five decades.

During the meeting Minister Baharom commended the Saudi government's services to nearly 2.5 pilgrims who come from different parts of the world to perform Haj.

He underscored the new pilgrim welfare projects such as the Mashair Railway linking the holy sites, the Haramain Railway that connects Makkah with Madinah and the construction of sunshades in the courtyards of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah.

Tabung Haji, or the Pilgrims Fund Corporation, is building a complex near the international airport in Kuala Lumpur. The complex has a hotel with 182 rooms, a multipurpose banquet hall, swimming pools for men and women as well as other facilities.

The complex was specially designed for use during the Haj season with a special arrival hall, registration and immigration counters, baggage inspection area and a departure hall. The complex would be used for Haj flight operations to Jeddah and Madinah.

Tabung Haji was established in 1962 to enable Muslims to save money to support their Haj expenditures and for other beneficial purposes, to enable Muslims to participate in investment projects and take care of pilgrims by providing various facilities and services.

According to a study conducted in 2007, among the factors that drew depositors to Tabung Haji are the halal investments (98 percent), managed business tithes (97 percent), friendly staff (90 percent) and competitive dividends (96 percent).

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