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Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar to arrive tomorrow

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Dr Mohamed Sayed Tantawi will visit Malaysia from Tuesday to Friday at the invitation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Mohamed Sayed, 70, will be accompanied by two officials including Deputy Minister for AL-Azhar Institutions Sheikh Ali Muhammad Fathalia.

His programme includes an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Jaafar and a courtesy call on Dr Mahathir. The Prime Minister will also host a dinner for the Grand Sheikh at Sri Perdana.

Mohamed Sayed will also give a public lecture at Pusat Islam on Aug 19.

The following day, he will hold a dialogue session with students at the International Islamic University and meet senior officials of Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd and Pilgrims Fund Board.

Mohamed Sayed will later visit the Islamic Institute of Kedah Darul Aman (INSANIAH) in Alor Setar and the Sultan Zainal Abidin Religious College (KUSZA) in Kuala Terengganu.

These institutions have twinning programmes with Al-Azhar University. Last year, IIUM signed an Agreement on Cultural and Academic Cooperation with Al-Azhar University.

There are currently 5,101 Malaysian students studying at the University of Al-Azhar.

After memorising the Quran, he enrolled in the Alexandria Religious Institute in 1944. He then joined the Faculty of Usuluddin and graduated in 1958.

The following year, he obtained a teaching degree and a few years later, obtained a PhD in Interpretation and Hadith on Sept 9, 1966.

Mohamed Sayed then taught at the Faculty of Usuluddin in Assuit in 1976. During his work at Al Azhar University, he was sent to the Islamic University in Libya from 1972 to 1976 and appointed as head of the Interpretation Department (Higher Studies) at the Islamic University in Madinah from 1980 to 1984.

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