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Plan for central kitchen concept

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Entrepreneur Development Ministry wants to implement the "central kitchen" concept among food franchisers to maintain quality and cleanliness of food outlets.

Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz cited a Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia report which found that only 10 per cent out of 2.3 million food-related business here is on par with international hygiene standards.

He said the concept, which involved food processing and preservation, first caught the eye of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during a visit to Japan in 1997.

The Prime Minister had visited one of Skylark Co Ltd Japan's eight central kitchens, which serves its 2,000 outlets in Japan.

"This kind of technology will help food-related business here in terms of cleanliness," Mohamed Nazri said after witnessing the signing of agreements between Perbadanan Nasional Bhd, Skylark, and Sky Luck Restaurant Sdn Bhd.

The first Skylark restaurant will open in Bangsar in October and will feature an affordable Japanese-Western-Malaysian fusion menu. The second outlet is scheduled to open in Bukit Bintang next year.

Here, the franchise is owned by Sky Luck Restaurant, a subsidiary of PNS. PNS spent RM6 million in initial investments.

Explaining the concept, Sky Luck Restaurant chairman Datuk Dr Abdullah Mohd Tahir said food would be prepared at the central kitchen and heated up in the restaurant.

"The key difference with this technology is being able to maintain the same standards so patrons know we are consistent."

He said one central kitchen would cost RM25 million and as such, more Skylark restaurants would have to open before a kitchen can be set up.

"For starters, we plan to tie up with other companies that use central kitchens, such as Malaysia Airlines," Abdullah said.

Skylark Co Ltd Japan also has outlets in Taiwan, Thailand and Korea.

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