

Nazri promotes M'sia as second home for Bangladeshis
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Alyaa Alhadjri

In promoting closer ties between the two nations, Tourism and Culture minister Nazri Abdul Aziz has expressed hope that more Bangladeshis from around the world will make Malaysia their second home.

Specifically, Nazri in his speech at the inaugural Bangladesh Global Summit last night, referred to the Malaysia My Second Home programme under his ministry.

"I assure you, as minister of tourism, if you apply for this programme, it will come direct to me.

"InsyaAllah, I will approve," Nazri told the summit participants, comprising Bangladeshi expatriates who are members of the All European Bangladesh Association (AEBA).

Citing similarities between the two predominantly Muslim cultures, Nazri quipped that many Bangladeshis could eventually even become Malaysians.

"You have a very good ambassador here. If he stays another five years, he also can be a Malaysian," he said in reference to Bangladesh Ambassador to Malaysia Md Shahidul Islam.

"There is no difference between us. We all look the same. You will (even) find Malays who are darker than you... Don't worry," said Nazri who promoted Malaysia as a country that welcomes Muslims from all around the world.

"Your presence is very important to us because we pride ourselves as being truly Asia," he said, citing among others the contribution of the Bangladeshi labour force to Malaysia's economic development.

At the same time, Nazri also expressed hope that more Malaysians would be able to visit Bangladesh through special packages offered by travel agencies.

Among others, he said a package could be offered for Malaysians bound to perform their Umrah in Mecca with a stop in Bangladesh, either on the way to Jeddah or when back to Kuala Lumpur.

Earlier in his speech, the Padang Rengas MP recalled how the Bangladeshi community in Hampstead, London, had kept him as a "good Muslim" during his student days in the 1970s.

"Those days in London it was very difficult to find halal food.

"But for sure if you need halal food, look no further than the Bangladesh people," he said.

As the son of a diplomat in London, Nazri added, he also developed great admiration for the

struggles of individuals who eventually became Bangladesh's founding fathers after the Liberation War that led to a split between East and West Pakistan.

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