

Malaysia, Russia To Sign Visa-free Agreement This Year
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 14 (Bernama) -- Russia is looking at introducing visa-free travel for Malaysians to the federation, reciprocating such facility extended to Russian visitors to Malaysia, said Russian envoy Lyudmilla G. Vorobyeva.

The Russian ambassador to Malaysia said that the agreement for visa-free travel is being finalised and hoped that the agreement would be signed this year.

"For Russians we don't need the visa to come to Malaysia for 30 days, in our system we cannot grant the same thing to our partner (Malaysia), we need to have a visa-free agreement and we are working on this kind of agreement so that Malaysian nationals can go to Russia without any visa for 30 days," said the 47-year-old envoy, who took up her posting here in August 2010.

She hoped the visa-free travel would further enhance the tourism and economic relations between both countries.

"My impression is that people here are very interested in going to Russia, everyone knows about St Petersburg and Moscow and many people are visiting this major tourist destination," Vorobyeva told Bernama during her visit to the news agency here Wednesday.

"There are a lot of potential and interesting places to visit in the Asian part of Russia, with a lot of eco-tourism, national parks, historical and cultural places," she said.

On education, Vorobyeva hoped to see more Malaysians studying in Russia since the quality of education there was very good, while the cost was quite affordable compared to the western countries.

She said there were some 3,000 Malaysian students in Russia, taking courses such as medicine, while there were only some 150 Russian students in Malaysia taking up mostly Islamic studies.

Vorobyeva said that she had been discussing with vice-chancellors of various universities in Malaysia to do some exchange programmes with Russian universities.

"There are a number of students in Russia who are studying Malay language and are specialising in Malay studies, and I would like to share a success of one of the students who won second place for the international category in the International Malay Language Oratory Contest for the Prime Minister's Trophy last week," she added.

Vorobyeva also hoped more Russian universities would take part in the education fairs held in Malaysia in a move to promote and expose the courses they are offering besides medicine, such as in the field of aviation and technical.

"Russia has a lot more than just medical studies to offer. We have also very good schools for fundamental scientific studies, economic and engineering," she said.

She said the Russian government also provides scholarships for Asean countries, however, Malaysians have not taken up these scholarships.

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