

**Rais Proposes Foundation To Boost Malaysia-Indonesia People-to-people Ties**  
**Bernama**  
**March 8, 2012**  
**By Ahmad Fuad Yahya**

JAKARTA, March 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim today proposed the setting up of an umbrella foundation for programmes to strengthen people-to-people relations between Malaysia and Indonesia.

He said the "Yayasan Ikatan Rakyat Malaysia-Indonesia" (Malaysia-Indonesia Peoples' Bonding Foundation), to be established under the auspices of the governments of the two countries, would focus on research, language development and creative industry development programmes, among others.

It would also draw up various cultural exchange programmes for undergraduates and writers, which would be undertaken on a large scale, he told a news conference after delivering a public lecture, on strengthening Malaysia-Indonesia people-to-people relations, at the Depok campus of Universiti Indonesia, near here.

The lecture was held in conjunction with the launching of the "Malaysia Corner", housing a collection of socio-cultural books on Malaysia, at the university.

Dr Rais said he was confident the foundation would be able to continue carrying out cultural cooperation programmes between Malaysia and Indonesia as was being done now.

He said this foundation Rais could also play a useful role in explaining to Indonesians and Malaysians that culture was the most important aspect to preserve the existing good ties between both countries.

"This is why we will carry out the "Titian Budaya" (Cultural Exchange) programme at least twice a year. This is a popular cultural programme undertaken by the neighbours and we will continue it without any hurdles," he said.

The minister noted that bilateral ties between Indonesia and Malaysia were on a very good track and mutually beneficial through various fields of cooperation, inter-government and people-to-people.

Rais also welcomed Universiti Indonesia's involvement and support in helping further boost people-to-people relations between both countries, especially through educational forums and student activities.

"As the biggest university in Indonesia, Universiti Indonesia can play an instrumental role in the effort. For example, today we are doing this programme in Jakarta, later, God willing, we can go to Sulawesi and other provinces in Indonesia and likewise in Malaysia," he said.

Also present were Malaysia's former Information Minister Tan Sri Zainuddin Maidin, Malaysia's ambassador to Indonesia Datuk Syed Munshe Afdzaruddin Syed Hassan and Indonesia's former ambassador to Malaysia, Tan Sri Da'i Bachtiar.

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