

30,000 Chinese cancel holiday plans to Malaysia following MH370 disappearance, says Nazri
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By Diyana Ibrahim

At least 30,000 tourists from China have cancelled their holiday packages to Malaysia until next year as the fallout from the disappearance of MH370 becomes evident, Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohammad Nazri Aziz said today.

He said the cancellations were due to the fallout from the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight MH370.

"However, the 30,000 figure is not the overall figure as the complete report of tourist figures for March has yet to be received.

"I have been made to understand that as many as 30,000 tourists from China have cancelled their holiday packages to Malaysia until 2015.

"That is why I mentioned earlier that the tourism sector has been affected," Nazri told a press conference at the Royale Chulan Hotel in Damansara.

"The figures for January and February are extremely good but I have not received the figures for tourism arrivals after March 8."

MH370, carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew members, was on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing when it dropped off the radar at 1.20am on March 8.

When asked what measures his ministry planned to take to resolve the issue of holiday package cancellations from China, Nazri said: "This is not the main issue which needs to be given priority at the moment. I don't think we need to take any measures for now.

"In the culture and traditions of the Chinese people, closure is important for them to continue living.

"So the important issue for the time being is to give them the answers they want by finding the missing aircraft."

Nazri had previously admitted in Parliament that the tragedy of MH370 had affected the number of tourist arrivals in Malaysia.

Putrajaya has already shelved Visit Malaysia Year 2014 promotions in China in respect of the MH370 crisis.

China is the third biggest contributor to tourism arrivals behind Singapore and Indonesia with a record 1.6 million last year.

For Visit Malaysia Year 2014, Putrajaya has targeted 28 million tourist arrivals.

On the abduction of a Chinese woman from the Singamata Reef Resort in Semporna last week, Nazri admitted that the incidents which occurred in Malaysia recently had dented Malaysia's image on the global stage.

"Of course these incidents will cast a negative pall on Malaysia's image. That is why we are calling on the relevant ministry to step up security in Sabah," he said. – April 10, 2014.

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