

Anifah to meet Bangladeshi foreign minister over migrant crisis
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Malaysia's Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman will meet his Bangladeshi counterpart today to discuss the crisis involving a surge in stricken boat people from Bangladesh and Myanmar flooding to Southeast Asia, state media said.

"It is one of the topics and a very important issue in the agenda," Anifah Aman was quoted as saying by national news agency Bernama.

The meeting with Bangladesh's A.H. Mahmood Ali will take place in Kota Kinabalu.

Reports in Bangladeshi media suggested that the country's top diplomat was in Malaysia as part of a pre-planned trip rather than in response to the growing international uproar over the migrant influx.

Wisma Putra officials could not be reached for comment.

More than 1,000 migrants have washed ashore in Malaysia over the past week, with hundreds of others reaching Indonesia.

Activists say thousands more are feared to be drifting at sea in rickety boats after a Thai crackdown on human-trafficking disrupted busy smuggling routes to Southeast Asia.

International pressure on the region to take in the starving migrants arriving in rickety vessels has mounted after Malaysia and Indonesia turned away boats.

The arrivals from Muslim Bangladesh are believed to be mainly economic migrants seeking to escape their country's grinding poverty, while those from Myanmar are predominantly members of that country's repressed Muslim ethnic Rohingya minority.

Thousands of such migrants make it to Malaysia every year, which is sought after for its relatively prosperous economy and for being majority Muslim. – AFP, May 17, 2015.

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