

Malaysia, Saudi Arabia To Forge Cooperation In Education, Culture And History

From Kamarul Irwan Alias

RIYADH, March 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's participation as the Guest of Honour Country at the Riyadh International Book Fair 2017 has opened a new chapter in Malaysia-Saudi Arabia relations, especially in education, culture and history.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said the Saudi Arabian government had shown keen interest to forge cooperation in those fields following the four-day visit of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to Malaysia recently.

"I paid a courtesy call on Saudi Arabian Minister of Culture and Information Dr Adel Zaid Al Toraifi and during our meeting, he said they wanted to forge a long-term collaboration with Malaysia in the field of culture and also other fields.

"Our participation at the book fair will be the catalyst for cooperation between the two countries," he told reporters after the launch of the book fair by Dr Adel at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Center on Wednesday night.

Also present were Malaysian Institute of Translation and Book (ITBM) chairman Budiman Mohd Zohdi and chief executive officer Mohd Khair Ngadiron.

Mahdzir said Malaysia's maiden participation in the Riyadh International Book Fair on March 8-17, was also hoped to help Saudi Arabia in achieving its Vision 2030, especially through the selection of books on education and children development.

He said the Malaysian Pavilion, measuring 72 square metres, was built with the theme "Young Readers: Limitless Future Projects" in line with the Saudi Arabian government's focus in preparing a quality education development plan under the Vision 2030.

"We also brought along the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 to spread the national education agenda, besides the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) plan which we can share with them," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr Adel, in his speech at the launch, said Malaysia's participation could further strengthen the existing ties between the two countries, especially in the fields of education and literature.

"It shows that the ties also covered other aspects, not just tourism," he said.

Malaysia is the first member of ASEAN, the third among Asian countries, and the 10th country in the world ever invited as the Guest of Honour Country at the book fair.

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