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Nazri refutes claims over population rise

Kota Kinabalu: The Federal Government has refuted allegations linking population increase in Sabah to issuance of false identification documents.

"Increase in population could be due to various factors, including a high birth rate compared to a low fatality rate because of improved healthcare facilities and services," said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

"Hence, the allegation linking Sabah's population increase to issuance of false documents is not true," he said in his written reply to Sandakan MP Chong Hon Min at the Dewan Rakyat.

Nazri said the Government nevertheless would investigate such claims thoroughly to ensure that all identification documents were issued through proper procedures, adding stern action would be taken against individuals or syndicates involved in issuing fake documents.

Nazri also said the Government had always given serious attention to the illegal immigrant problem in Sabah, as evident from intensified patrol of Sabah waters through operations such as "Ops Pasir" jointly taken by the Royal Malaysian Police and the Royal Malaysian Armed Forces.

This was coupled with continuous operations and deportations of illegal immigrants by the relevant Government agencies like the Immigration Department and police, he said.

"This has resulted in the arrest of 154,925 illegal immigrants during the period between 2000 and 2005, an average of 30,985 illegal immigrants annually or 2,582 per month or 86 per day," he added.

The statistics also showed that their numbers were declining, reflecting success of the efforts by the relevant authorities against illegal immigrants.

For example, he said, the number of illegal immigrants arrested between 2003 and 2005 was 53,602, whereas the number arrested between 2000 and 2002 was 101,287.

"This is a 47 per cent reduction," he added.



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