

Malaysia's tourism ministry wooing expatriates in west asia



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Malaysia's tourism ministry wooing expatriates in West Asia As a part of huge campaign to promote tourism in Malaysia, the Tourism Ministry of Malaysia is going all out to attract not only tourists from West Asia but also expatriates working in the West Asian countries.

According to Minister for Tourism Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, there are over 20 million foreigners working in the Gulf states with 20% of them earning more than Malaysian ringgit 15, 000 a month. This 20% can very well afford to vacation in Malaysia. Since most of the expatriates are from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Tengku Adnan said he hoped that the Malaysian Immigration Department would not categorise them as migrant workers looking for jobs but rather as expatriates on holiday in Malaysia, reports Bernama, Malaysian national news agency. The Minister said he had received complaints on instances where expatriates from Saudi Arabia had faced problems at the immigration counters in Malaysia.

These expatriates, who came with tourist visas to Kuala Lumpur for a holiday, were planning to fly home via Singapore. However, the immigration officers asked them to produce tickets or proof to back their claims that they were scheduled to go to Singapore. Minister Tengku Adnan told reporters, accompanying him on his visit to the Gulf States to promote ' Visit Malaysia Year 2007,' that Malaysia always encourages tourists to travel overland from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. If the immigration officers were to ask for bus tickets, how could the tourists produce them? They have not bought the tickets yet; they had just arrived in Malaysia. Tengku Adnan said he would discuss the matter with the ministries and agencies concerned and find a solution since such problems gave Malaysia a bad name.

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These expatriates, he said, came all the way to Malaysia for a holiday only to be confronted with unexpected problems. It should not have happened, but these are the trivial matters that often turn tourists away from Malaysia, according to Tengku Adnan