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## **Nazri: Beer festival not Malaysian culture**

KUALA LUMPUR: Having a big beer festival has never been part of Malaysian culture and should not become part of it in any way, says Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz.

He said the National Culture Policy drafted in 1971 had outlined, among others, that the national culture must be based on the indigenous culture of this region, with Islam as an important component in its formulation.

"Please understand, don't think that we have banned all this because we are an Islamic country.

"It is not our culture – whether we are Malays, Chinese, Indian, Kadazan or Iban – to have a big festival for beer," he said at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relation (IDFR) Cultural Diplomacy Lecture Series.

Nazri said the situation differs from Germany or Bavaria as those two were beer-drinking countries and producers.

"They can have Oktoberfest because they want to promote their beers, they are beer-drinking countries and producers. It is understandable. But here, we don't produce beer," he said.

However, he explained that banning such a festival did not mean that drinking beer was totally disallowed in the country.

"They can drink in the pub, where you can control the crowd in case someone gets excited and drunk, but to have a festival where you cannot control the crowd. There might be fights, some people get drunk and they don't know what they are saying.

"Just like four to five years ago we had this rave party ... they took drugs and 11 people died and that's why we stopped this beer festival," he added.

– Bernama