

# Al-Azhar sets up first branch in M'sia

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**THE opening of Al-Azhar University's branch campus in Rembau, Negri Sembilan, would attract thousands of Muslim students from South-east Asia and enhance Malaysia's image to the world; said a representative of the university from Egypt, Dr Umar Abdullah Kamil.**

The establishment of the branch campus outside the Middle East also marked the changing of the Al-Azhar mindset in its history of over 1,000 years since the reign of the Fatimiyyah dynasty, he said.

"Just like in Cairo, the branch campus will have a mosque and students' organisation. We have worked hard to make this come true and God willing, we will



**FIRST BRANCH: Al-Azhar's main building in Rembau**

succeed," he told reporters after the ground-breaking ceremony for the branch campus at the

Yayasan Sofa Negri Sembilan Complex, near Kampung Bukit Sembilan, yesterday.

He is confident that due to Malaysia's image and the Islamic development in this country, students from Indonesia, Thailand and India will prefer to further their studies at Al-Azhar's Rembau branch.

Al-Azhar, established in 975 AD, has about 28,000 students, with about 7,000 of them coming from this region.

Asked why the university council chose Malaysia, Umar said: "You have a large Muslim population and the Malays are known among Arabs as having strong faith in the religion and follow the Sunnah Al Jamaah."

He hopes the branch campus will be a step for Al-Azhar to broaden its influence in the western world. — Bernama