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Tourism

ACCIDENTS AND CHOLERA CAUSES OF DECLINE IN TOURIST ARRIVALS

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 31 (Bernama) -- Reports on accidents and cholera in several states in the country were among the causes for the decline of tourist arrivals in the country during the first six months of the year.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said that being a sensitive industry, such occurrences could discourage tourists from coming to the country.

The number of tourists coming to Peninsular Malaysia declined by 4.2 per cent, with 3.46 million tourist arrivals during the first six months of the year compared to 3.61 million during the same period the previous year.

However, he did not blame the wide media coverage on accidents and diseases because the public including tourists need to know the latest developments in the country.

For example, tourists from Singapore and Japan were selective and sensitive over incidents like road accidents and landslides but they should be informed of such occurrences, he said after flagging off participants of the treasure hunt in conjunction with Visit Terengganu Year '97 here, today.

"We have been able to overcome the setback during the second half of the year," he said.

He said the decline in the arrivals of tourists was more noticeable from among Singaporeans and not from other countries.

Sabbaruddin said that fewer number of Singaporeans coming to the country during the first six months could have been because of the Singapore squad did not take part in the Malaysia Cup this year.

A total of 38 cars took part in the treasure hunt which was the curtain raiser for the Visit Terengganu Year. They were flagged off at Merdeka Stadium and are expected to arrive at the finishing line in Kuala Terengganu this afternoon.

Visit Terengganu Year will be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Kuala Terengganu, tomorrow.

Sabaruddin complimented the Terengganu government for organising Visit Terengganu Year as an effort to help the growth of the tourism industry in the country.

He said the ministry had also helped promote Terengganu's culture outside the country by allocating 20 minutes for songs and dances from the east coast state at every promotion. -- BERNAMA

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