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Curtailling all unhealthy activity is right

Ajit Singh Jessy

I refer to the interview with the Chief Minister of Penang on Radio 3 Pulau Pinang, Apa Khabar Y.A.B. The Chief Minister stated that if night-spots are closed at the State's whims and fancies then it would affect the tourism industry.

Firstly, I would like to know which nightspots is he talking about?

Secondly, has he or any of his officials carried out a survey of the nightspots before making such a sweeping statement? Thirdly, how many tourists were interviewed or their views obtained prior to making such a statement?

If the Chief Minister were to visit the nightspots in his own constituency along Jalan Tanjong Tokong, and there are several, he will not find any tourist.

These dimly-lit nightspots are frequented by locals be they youth, businessmen, bad hats and even gays.

One thing the Chief Minister would observe is that some of these nightspots are located right in the centre of residential areas.

How does he expect the residents to sleep early and be productive workers when the karaoke singing sessions last until the wee hours of the morning?

Cars and motorcycles with loud exhausts keep coming and going till early morning.

Whilst no one is against having entertainment places, those in authority should exercise care when making statements.

This State Government owes its political position to the majority of ordinary law-abiding citizens and thus should stop pampering and jumping to the defence of nightclub owners.

It should pay more attention and give greater weight to the opinion of others, too. I would also like to invite the Chief Minister to visit some of the karaoke lounges around Georgetown, some of which are but a stone's throw away from his office. It would be interesting to know how many foreign tourists frequent such places.

I believe the majority of the people in our country are with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the urgent need to check these unhealthy activities.

If some businesses have to be curtailed in order to achieve this objective then that must be done.

If those in possession of drugs can be hanged why can't places of entertainment that sustain and encourage such activities be required to close earlier or even shut down?

I was not the least surprised to read in the NST of Feb 6, 1997 issue that the patrons at a Sungai Petani nightspot had been tipped off about a police raid.

It is this sort of thing that makes it impossible to stamp out such activities. How is it that the authorities are always the last to know where illegal or immoral activities are being carried out?

Does the Chief Minister and his officials not know at which outlets Ecstasy pills are easily available? Do not take the public for fools. Most people in Penang either know or have heard about such spots.

The answer to tackling this social problem is not merely determination but a high dose of honesty from those sitting in their ivory towers.

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