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Sabbaruddin urges hoteliers to implement nett pricing system

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Hoteliers were today urged to clear the air that only five per cent of the 15 per cent surcharge they impose on their food and room rates goes to the Government.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said the public were under the impression now that all the surcharge went to the Government.

Sabbaruddin said instead of putting up the ++ tag, the hoteliers could implement the "nett pricing" system by adding the surcharge onto the prices of their products.

The current ++ price tagging practised by the majority of the hotels nationwide, represents a 10 per cent service charge in lieu of tips and five per cent Government tax.

"They (hoteliers) can do some simple calculation to give the right impression to their clients.

"Otherwise, the Government will be seen as a big beneficiary of the hotel industry," he told reporters after presenting the Quick Information and Guide to Kuala Lumpur tourist guide to taxi and limousine operators in the Klang Valley and Selangor at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Also present were Deputy Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism Datuk Teng Gaik Kwan and the Ministry's secretary-general Datuk Ismail Adam.

Rangkaian Hotel Seri Malaysia, the owner of Malaysia's first franchised hotel chain, is one of the few hotels which follow the nett pricing system.

In echoing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's proposal to promote intra-Asean tourism, Sabbaruddin said he would look into the possibility of addressing the issue during the Asean Tourism Ministers meeting in Cebu, Philippines from Jan 9 to 12.

"For a start, I will seek the co-operation of hoteliers to accept all recognised currencies as part of their business transaction.

"Currently, all transactions are done in ringgit, thus requiring every hotel client who wishes to pay in other currencies to exchange their money into ringgit first.

"This will facilitate payments as well as giving our tourism industry an additional boost," he said, adding that transactions in foreign currencies would be based on daily exchange rates.

"I will meet the hoteliers soon to explain the move. However, they can implement it now if they wish to do so."

Sabbaruddin also called on local tour agencies to include foreigners in their special discount drive on domestic tour packages.

"Domestic tourism is not solely a matter of advertisements, but more importantly the attractiveness of the price and duration of the package," he said.

The guide book which was a proposal by the Entrepreneur Development Ministry, contains a map of the Federal capital, short and precise information on tourist sites, hotels, embassies, important telephone numbers and annual events to be held in the city.

Last year, foreign tourists spent RM766 million or 7.4 per cent of their expenditure on transportation as compared to 4.4 per cent the previous year.

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