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Sabbaruddin dismayed by attitude of public

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik today expressed dismay over the attitude of certain sections of the public and public authorities with regard to the lack of cleanliness.

Sabbaruddin was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remark yesterday over the lack of consciousness about cleanliness.

"I saw the front page picture of the rubbish in the New Straits Times this morning and there is no question that something is wrong with the attitude of those responsible," he said.

According to Sabbaruddin, it was embarrassing to see those responsible taking notice of the matter only after the remark was made by the Prime Minister.

"This is not an issue of setting up a new regulation every time something like this happened, but more a matter of proper enforcement and correct attitude."

Sabbaruddin said his ministry received numerous complaints from tourists and had forwarded recommendations to the relevant authorities on ways to tackle the problem but there was not much effect.

"The complaints were identical in the sense that the tourists said they liked this country but complained that it was dirty.

"I hope those responsible will sit up and do their job properly."

Sabbaruddin said this after launching the Malaysia Sports Tourism Project organised by the Malaysia Sports Tourism Council along with Paximej (M) Sdn Bhd and AOS Management Consultant Sdn Bhd.

The project is aimed at improving the level of sporting activities in the country through which a high level of interest in the tourism industry could be generated.

To achieve this aim, the organisers of the project will hold the Second Asian Sports Tourism Conference 1997 in November and publish a guidebook titled "Malaysia Sports & Recreation Tourism Guide 1998".

Sabbaruddin also touched on the need to continuously promote the Commonwealth Games which are to be held next year.

"On behalf of the country's tourism industry, I would like to stress again that this event is very important to the country and a continuous campaign to promote it is essential for its success."

Sabbaruddin cited the examples of early promotional activities done by the city of Manchester in England which will host the Games in 2002 and Cape Town in South Africa which was bidding to host the next Games after that.

He, however, declined to comment on the promotional activities done for the Games so far.

On the health tourism concept proposed by Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng this morning, Sabbaruddin said it was a good idea and expressed his ministry's willingness to assist in the project.

Meanwhile, City Hall director-general Datuk Noordin Abd Razak said they would increase the compound against litterbugs.

At the moment those caught littering can be fined up to RM500.

He said the lack of litterbins should not be an excuse for the public to throw rubbish indiscriminately.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall advisory board member and former Bukit Bintang MP Datuk Lee Lam Thye said stricter enforcement of the law should be imposed

to restore cleanliness in the city.

He said it was time the authority introduced a law under which litterbugs have to perform community services such as cleaning up the city.

"Public humiliation is a better punishment as it can serve as a deterrent to others," Lee said.

Alam Flora Sdn Bhd acting chief executive officer Mohamed Siraj Abdul Razack said the Prime Minister's statement should make everybody realise that the problem had become very serious.

Kuala Lumpur Citizen Civic Club president Abd Rahman Hashim said the authorities should step up enforcement.

"If they can work late at night to close the nightclubs, I do not see why they could not do so to ensure cleanliness."

The club is planning to organise an awareness programme regarding the matter with the co-operation of the City Hall and non-governmental organisations.

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