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Sabbaruddin-Currency

TOURISM SECTOR MAY BE THE FIRST TO USE ASEAN MEMBER CURRENCY

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- The tourism sector may be the first in the region to use the currency of Asean member countries if the proposal is approved at next month's Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) in Cebu in the Philippines.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said Malaysia will submit the proposal, made at the just-ended Asean Informal Summit, if the ATF secretariat did not include it in its annual agenda.

"Maybe we will discuss the issue at the Asean Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Cebu during the ATF. If the others do not submit it, I will include it as a point in the agenda to promote tourism among Asean member countries," he said.

Sabbaruddin was speaking at a news conference here after giving a speech on the "Kuala Lumpur Tourism Guide" to entrepreneurs and taxi drivers of the Klang Valley.

At the Asean summit held here, the heads of government proposed that member countries use their own currency in regional commercial transactions to reduce the impact of the depreciation of their currency against the US dollar. Also suggested was the possibility of using other foreign currencies in international transactions other than the US dollar.

Sabbaruddin said as a start, the government will ask hoteliers to cooperate by accepting all internationally-recognised currencies as a mode of payment.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had asked him to relate this to the hoteliers as a way of encouraging tourism and foreign exchange.

"What this means is that if formerly the foreign tourists had to change their money into ringgit to make payments, now they can just pay in their own currency. This makes it easier for them, which is good for us," he said. -- BERNAMA

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