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Tourist arrivals drop by 20pc in most Asian nations

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Tourist arrivals have dropped by between 20 and 21 per cent in Malaysia and most other Asian countries this year.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Sabbaruddin Chik said only Thailand recorded a rise of two per cent in tourist arrivals due to its aggressive promotions.

"For next year, the ministry is realistically forecasting 6.4 million in tourist arrivals," he said.

Before, there was a slight drop in tourist arrivals from 7.1 million in 1996 to 6.2 million last year while revenue also dropped from RM11.2 billion in 1996 to RM10.5 billion last year.

Sabbaruddin said this after launching the 13th Asian international art exhibition at the National Art Gallery. A total of 175 pieces of art works are being featured at the exhibition which ends on Dec 10.

He said in view of the Government's commitment to promote the country as a major tourist destination in the region, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had agreed to increase allocation to further stimulate the growth of the tourism industry.

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