

29/10/2002

Let fair play prevail on alerts and travel advisories

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ALL Malaysians share Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's "anger and anxiety" at the recent German alert to its citizens.

No one denies or ignores the right of any sovereign nation to issue any travel advisory or warning to its citizens. But one does call for a sense of fair play to prevail.

Common courtesy and diplomatic norms dictate that before any advisory is issued, there should be communication between both parties so that the nation concerned can verify the information gathered, and if there is truth in it, take steps to eradicate that threat.

In the past Malaysia has done just that and therefore it comes as a slap in the face when Canada, Britain, Australia and Germany issue such travel advisories without any reference to us. And their action comes despite the fact that the Malaysian authorities have taken precautions to maximise security in the country since Sept 11.

As for information sharing, senior officials and politicians from the United States have come to Putrajaya to discuss action plans to address various threats and the war against terrorism in this region.

On the local front, there are also regular updates and meetings between members of Asean to share information on security threats. It is for this reason that one appeals to members of the foreign media and nations to be sensitive to our plight and report fairly and accurately on the ground conditions.

Since the Oct 12 Bali tragedy, the media has unjustly declared Southeast Asia as no longer safe for foreign tourists. Speaking for Malaysia, I