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`Boycott call will not affect tourist arrivals'

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KULIM, Sun. - Malaysia is confident that the recent call by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre for a boycott of tourism and investment in the country will not affect on tourist arrivals.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said many Westerners understood Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's opening speech at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Summit recently that Jews ruled the world by proxy.

"Only a few Government leaders who depend on their (Jews) support, especially in terms of monetary aid, are against the speech.

"We can understand all that. Even the international media are controlled by the Jews and the leaders have to make statements which support them," he said after inspecting the election preparations in Mahang, near here.

Kadir said there were also times when Jews had passed remarks that were much "harsher" and more "offensive" but no one protested.

"I am confident Malaysia will not in any way be affected by the boycott call," he said, adding that foreigners were aware that Malaysia was one of the most peaceful countries in the world.

Kadir also said that the tourism industry, which suffered a drop in tourist arrivals following the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome scare, was expected to show signs of recovery next year.