

JB bans entertainment on Prophet's birthday

MalaysiaKini.com

February 3, 2012

Johor Bahru entertainment outlet operators are urging the local authorities to lift the ban on entertainment activities this weekend, which coincides with Prophet Muhammad's birthday, or Maulidul Rasul, on Sunday.

The city council had issued a circular on Monday to the operators informing them of the ban which will be enforced from 7pm on Dec 4 until 7pm the next day.

According to Johor Entertainment Outlet Operators Association president Tan Yam Meng, the ban covers night clubs, pubs, karaoke outlets, spas, massage parlours, billiard parlours and all cinemas.

Johor Bahru baru bharu 031106 old palace Tan stressed that his association is "100 percent" respectful of the religious holiday but hoped that the authorities will "loosen" the ban as their livelihood would be affected.

He explained businesses are hoping to cash in on an expected bumper crowd on Saturday night because of the long weekend which extends until Tuesday for some states.

"Many operators took long breaks during the Chinese New Year holiday and are now hoping to do some business before the end of the festivities.

"However, the council's ban had taken an important business day from us," he told Malaysiakini, adding that about 500 to 600 businesses would be affected.

MCA leader explains ban

The ban comes just a month after a similar order which was enforced on New Year's Eve last December. The order was issued on grounds that the date coincided with the anniversary of the late sultan's death.

State exco member Hoo Seong Chang told Malaysiakini that he was unaware of a ban but said Johor traditionally would order entertainment businesses to tone down their activities during certain religious holidays.

"On Dec 31 last year, there were countdown activities. But it fell on the same day as the anniversary of the late sultan so we wanted business owners to take note of it and not go overboard in their activities," he explained.

"We did not ask them to close shop (on that day). We only asked them to be moderate and not hold big events. There was no ban on their businesses."

Hoo is in charge of tourism, domestic trade and consumer affairs. His exco colleague Tan Kok Hong, also from MCA, however refused comment when contacted.

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