

Moral policing in Langkawi: Tiong doubles down on tourists' complaints

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Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Tiong King Sing has repeated his claim that non-Muslim tourists to Langkawi have complained of being prohibited from wearing shorts and drinking alcohol on the island.

Taking to social media, he stands firm on his need to raise tourists' complaints with the intention of correcting the issue before it gets worse.

"I don't want to argue with Kedah Menteri Besar Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor about the tourist complaints that short pants and drinking alcohol are prohibited in Langkawi.

"If this issue persists, it will invite more controversy and the problem raised will not be resolved," Tiong (above) posted on Facebook.

Recently in Parliament, Tiong claimed that there were tourists who complained to the ministry over the alleged abuse of power by government officials in Langkawi who harassed tourists about observing a dress code and alcohol consumption.

He said that it is very unfortunate when complaints of tourists, who contribute to the country's economy, are not taken seriously and even denied.

"It would be nice if investigations were conducted no matter whether the case is big or small, because every complaint raised by tourists, whether local or international, should be thoroughly researched.

"It is even more unfortunate when important matters like this are politicised to the point where it becomes a racist issue. Meanwhile, I was raising this matter in the Dewan Rakyat merely to seek solutions and consensus from multi-racial MPs.

"As a minister, I will do my best to improve the quality of services in the tourism industry, irrespective of whose party is ruling the states," Tiong added.

Sanusi's denial

This came after Sanusi denied claims that there is a ban on non-Muslim tourists wearing shorts and drinking alcohol in Langkawi.

The PAS lawmaker said he did not understand the issue raised by Tiong.

"I don't know why this issue was brought up, maybe someone 'poked' him. I don't want to argue with the minister, but he should come and see for himself instead

of just listening to other people.

"The minister can come to Langkawi wearing shorts because he is not a Muslim and no one forbids him.

"Anyone if their religion allows it can wear it, but you can't be naked on the beach because that doesn't suit our culture," Sanusi was reported as saying by Berita Harian.

Tiong in his post today said some politicians are seen scrambling to make statements, including PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang who touched on how non-Muslims in PAS-ruled Kelantan should dress.

He cited the incidents of traders in the state being issued compounds over "indecent" dressing in their own business premises as an example.

"Doesn't this prove the existence of 'little Napoleon' in the field especially the enforcement department?

"Doesn't this reflect the practice of extremism and denying the rights and freedom of multi-racial Malaysians as enshrined in the Federal Constitution?

"Doesn't this also affect the image of the country in the eyes of international

tourists, when it comes to making Malaysia their destination of choice?" asked
Tiong.

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