

Sarawak opts out of Malaysia Tourism Board

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It comes as leaders across the political divide hit out at the tourism minister's statement lambasting a Sarawak minister as an 'upstart'.

PETALING JAYA: The Sarawak state government today announced that it was withdrawing from the Malaysia Tourism Board, as tensions mount over Putrajaya's move to push ahead with a new tourism tax despite reservations from a local minister.

"The state government deems that the participation of its representatives in Tourism Malaysia is not necessary as this is duplicating the role and functions of the Sarawak Tourism Promotion Board," said a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office today.

It comes a day after Tourism and Culture Minister Nazri Aziz lashed out at Sarawak minister Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah for urging Putrajaya to defer the tourism tax, which could see hotels nationwide forced to charge between RM2.50 and RM20 per night.

Karim's call for the federal government to exempt Sarawak from the new tax drew strong words from Nazri, who called him an upstart minister.

"You should not talk big in politics. If you want to show samseng (thuggery), we are bigger samseng," Nazri had said.

Nazri's statement had since drawn strong reactions from across the divide, with a PKR assemblyman questioning the federal government's jurisdiction in matters related to the tourism industry, with Sarawak Barisan Nasional Youth rebuking Nazri for resorting to insults.

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