

Tourism Tax law could have been articulated better: Rahman Dahlan

Amar Shah Mohsen|Posted on 13 June 2017 - 05:48pm



KUALA LUMPUR: The federal government could have articulated better the law on the Tourism Tax to the state governments, says Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department said while the tax was necessary to expand the country's revenue base, the issue surrounding it would not have blown up like it did had the details on the tax been explained clearly to the respective states.

"The thing is what was passed in parliament wasn't articulated clearly to the state governments. I think that was the issue ... it could be done better," he told reporters after the launch of the World Bank's Malaysia Economic Monitor, here, today.

The issue on the tax first came to light after Sarawak Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman criticised the federal government for imposing tax laws in Sarawak without consultation, and urged that the July 1 implementation date be deferred.

This led to Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Abdul Aziz to label the former as a gangster and a greenhorn, drawing the ire of several East Malaysian ministers, including Abdul Rahman.

"Karim wanted to know more about the tax, I don't think there's anything wrong with that. But the manner in which Nazri replied to Karim, could have been more tactful. I think he went a little overboard," Abdul Rahman said.

"You know Chief (Nazri), he has always been very vocal. I know he's good-hearted, but I think he should learn that there are certain things he's been talking for so long, so I think we need to move on," he added.

Abdul Rahman said ministers at the federal level should be more accommodating to the concerns felt by the states, and should not simply brush aside their queries.

However, the Kota Belud MP is optimistic that this current episode would not sour relationship of those in Barisan Nasional, describing it as "one of those little brother, big brother spat".

"He has a special relationship with all of us. He will be smiling and embrace Karim," he said.