

No change to rule requiring guides in tour buses

By Fuad Nizam - January 13, 2023 @ 7:34pm

KUALA LUMPUR: The requirement for tour bus services to employ guides for both domestic and foreign tourists is here to stay, said the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry.

It added that the need for tour guides for both domestic and foreign tourists was already stipulated in the the Tourism Industry Act 1992.

"It is one of the conditions in matters pertaining to licenced tourist-handling. Unless approved by the Tourism Commissioner, tour agencies (including tour buses) have to employ a tour guide.

"It is also a condition stipulated under the Tourism Vehicles Licensing Act 1999 that if a tour bus is to operate with a licence, it should use the services of a tour guide that is licensed unless exempted by the ministry."

The ministry, however, said that tour bus operators can apply for an exemption permit on its 'TOURLIST' system and are subject to the application of domestic tourists to use tour guides.

"The tourist guide exemption application through the 'TOURLIST' system will be automatically approved, which has also been agreed upon by tour companies with bus operations.

"Through this system, tour companies (including tour bus operators) have the flexibility to apply for the exemption of tour guides in their buses if they are carrying domestic passengers for purposes other than tourism," a ministry spokesman told the New Straits Times.

He said the ministry had also improved the guidelines for the use of tourist guide services from July 1, 2009, which stated that it was not mandatory for tour buses that carry seven passengers or less to employ a tourist guide.

Previously, The Tour Bus Association of Peninsular Malaysia wanted authorities to do away with the mandatory requirement of tour guides for local tourists using their bus services.

Its secretary-general Tai Poh Kim said the ministry should reconsider the rule and only impose the need for tour guides on trips with foreign tourists instead, as having the same requirement for local tourists would only burden the tour bus operators.