

Hotels seeing spike in room cancellations due to severe weather warnings, misconceptions

By **T.N.Alagesh** - February 16, 2023 @ 11:00am



Adverse weather warnings issued across Pahang in recent weeks have triggered a spike in cancellation of hotel room bookings. - NSTP file pic

KUANTAN: Adverse weather warnings issued across Pahang in recent weeks have triggered a spike in cancellation of hotel room bookings.

The forecast saw a drop in hotel occupancy since the Chinese New Year holidays last month while misconception among holidaymakers on the weather reports had resulted in many choosing to cancel their vacation plans at popular destinations here.

Malaysian Association of Hotels Pahang chapter chairman Patrick Tee described Chinese New Year holidays as usually "a super-peak season" when visitors would make advance bookings and travel here during the festive break.

"Hotels will usually be fully booked during the festive season but not this year. Hotels in Cameron Highlands experienced a 50 per cent drop in occupancy and Kuantan was also affected by cancellations.

"Besides the festive holidays, people did not want to travel even during the weekends, fearing the rainy weather or possible floods. The regular weather forecast updates over the past few weeks had put holidaymakers on the lookout," he said when contacted today.

Tee said when the warnings were issued, some people from outside Pahang assumed the whole state might face the risk of floods and this was not accurate as only certain areas were hit.

He said with the flood situation recovering and promising weather, holidaymakers could start making plans to visit Pahang especially with the school holidays starting next week.

Meanwhile, a hotel manager here, who declined to be named said the weather warnings had resulted in a drop in business for the hotel industry but stressed that no one should be blamed as it was a forecast (weather) issued to inform the public.

"The weather warnings issued every few days over the past few weeks might have instilled some fear. Besides the room cancellations, some called to ask about the flood situation in Kuantan when the only district hit by floods last month was Rompin.

"Some assumed Pahang was badly flooded and there were some who claimed they did not want to travel to Kuantan fearing the East Coast Expressway (LPT1) would be cut-off by floodwaters... some old pictures of the floods were circulating on social media prompting people to panic and cancel their bookings," he said.

Meanwhile, a four-star hotel manager in Cameron Highlands said when a few houses in Kampung Raja at the hilltop holiday resort were inundated by a mudslide following flash floods last month, people began to call and cancel their bookings.

"It was an isolated incident affecting a few houses in Kampung Raja but people assume the entire Cameron Highlands was affected. These misconceptions are bad for the hotel industry as people make their own judgement without seeking the truth and get accurate facts," he said.

He said when the floods struck several districts in Pahang last week, the weather warning issued included a danger-level continuous heavy rain warning, severe-level and alert-level, which saw hotels affected by cancellations.