

Sabah Wanita Umno delegate calls for special airfares for students, low-income families

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KUALA LUMPUR: Sabah Wanita Umno has called for a special airfare mechanism for residents in the state, particularly students, low-income families and those travelling for emergencies.

Keningau Wanita Umno chief Siti Noor Zati Kamelah Sairin said air travel is not a luxury for Sabahans but an essential link to the peninsula, especially in times of emergency.

She added that last-minute airfares could cost more than RM1,000 one way, placing a heavy burden on B40 families.

"Imagine if our child studying in the peninsula receives news tonight that their mother or father is critically ill or has died. Would we wait for the ticket price to come down?

She cited the experience of a family with five children, three of whom were still in school while two were studying at university, one at Universiti Malaysia Sabah and another at Universiti Malaya.

She said the family had shared how their child studying at UM was unable to return home last year to pay their last respects to a parent who died because the airfare was too expensive.

She contrasted the situation with that faced by people in the peninsula, who have alternatives such as trains and buses for most journeys.

"But for the people of Sabah and Sarawak, air travel is the bridge connecting us with the peninsula.

"If possible, I propose that the government set a reasonable maximum fare that airlines must comply with," she said.