

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **LAUNCHING THE SOUTHERN THAI PACKAGES TO MALAYSIA BY HONOURABLE MINISTER OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA**

**HATYAI, 13 October 2017:** Tourism Malaysia launched the “Southern Thai Packages to Malaysia” at the Centara Hotel, Hat Yai to promote the connectivity of cross-country routing with the aim to boost the number of Thai tourists from the south Thailand to Malaysia.

More than 80 delegates from travel agents and members of the media from southern Thailand attended the event and witnessed the launch of the "Southern Thai Packages Malaysia" which promotes the Thailand-Malaysia connectivity cross-country initiative. The interesting rail packages are combined with several attractions and activities including theme parks, city and night tours which will help to promote rail tourism. This programme also aims to strengthen the cooperation between Malaysia and Thailand, as well as to commemorate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our two countries this year.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture of Malaysia, YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri bin Abdul Aziz, welcomed guests at the launching event to personally thank travel agents and media for their dedicated efforts and constant support in promoting tourism in Malaysia in Southern Thailand.

In 2016, it was registered 26.7 million tourist arrivals to Malaysia with RM82.1 billion tourist receipts. Malaysia welcomed 1.78 million Thai tourists, an increase of double digit growth of 32.7% compared to the previous year with RM3.5 billion tourist receipts. Thailand was ranked 4th in top ten tourists generating markets. At the same time, in 2016, Malaysia was ranked number two in term of tourist arrivals to Thailand with the number of 3.5 million, showing an increase of 3.36 percent compared to 2015.

This year, the target is set of 1.8 million tourist arrivals from Thailand. The theme ‘Malaysia Truly Asia’ will continue to be used to promote Malaysia as a preferred holiday destination. From January to May, Malaysia received about 813,000 Thai tourists – an increase of 9.8 percent.

Overall, Malaysia is believed to be an achievable target because the Thais are more adventurous in their holiday plans and Malaysia is just across the border. Packages start as low as THB 4,200 are offered by South Thailand agents in the market to various destinations in Malaysia such as Genting Highlands, Cameron Highlands, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi, Ipoh etc.

Various market segments such as family travel, leisure-seekers, religious travel and shopping lovers, are all potential areas. Malaysia has all these attributes to meet the demands of the Thai tourists.

These unique packages offer Thai tourists more options to travel by road, rail, sea, or air. This initiative will definitely help boost arrivals from Thailand to Malaysia.

In order to enhance the “Southern Thai Packages to Malaysia”, it is collaborated with the Malayan Railways Limited or Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) to promote Rail Packages as another

alternative for Thai tourists, especially those from Southern Thailand, to visit Malaysia. Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad is offering daily 7 times ETS services from Padang Besar to Kuala Lumpur Central with a total of 2,184 seats per day. Five travel agents from Southern Thailand namely Sunny Tours, Happy Time 1009 Group, KST Travel, Hatyai Four Seasons Travel, and Sahachai Travel & Service have agreed to work with Tourism Malaysia to promote this package.

Meanwhile, Tourism Malaysia is also promoting the upcoming event in Malaysia – the Kuala Lumpur International Craft Festival 2017. It will be held at Putrajaya Square from 23 to 26 November. The event will present a market of handmade items from around the world, under the theme “Crafts Unite People”. KLICF 2017 will feature cultural performances, craft demonstrations, and craft exhibitions, where Malaysian and foreign artists, as well as online entrepreneurs, will be showcasing their crafts from all over the world.

Moreover, Malaysian government is working towards extending the operation hours of the immigration checkpoint at Bukit Kayu Hitam. It is targeting the 24-hour operation of the checkpoint will be effective on 1 January 2019. This development will be another positive step towards welcoming more Thai tourists via road travel. As Malaysia and Thailand shared 8 border land-crossing points, this will hopefully be a good start to further facilitate and streamline cross-border travel between two countries.

It is hoped that all these efforts will encourage trade partners and media to continue promoting Malaysia as a preferred holiday destination for Thai tourists.

## ENDS

*For more media releases, media info and media features on Malaysia’s tourism industry, kindly visit the Media Centre of Tourism Malaysia’s website at <http://www.malaysia.travel/en/th>*

**MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD OR TOURISM MALAYSIA** is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia. Tourism Malaysia focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia at all levels. Since its inception, Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds and it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. In 2014, Malaysia registered 27.4 million tourist arrivals and RM72 billion in receipts, making tourism its second largest foreign exchange earner.

Malaysia celebrated its fourth **VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY)** in 2014 with the theme “Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia”. The promotion of the country continues with the **MALAYSIA YEAR OF FESTIVALS (MyFEST)** campaign in 2015 with the theme “Endless Celebrations” emphasising the various festivals celebrated by its multicultural society. Both campaigns are key drivers towards achieving the country’s target of 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020, as outlined in the Tourism NKEA (National Key Economic Area).

Through the Tourism NKEA, collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, other Government agencies and the private sector have been enhanced to help secure Malaysia’s position as a leading tourist destination. The targets set under the Tourism NKEA will be achieved through the implementation of twelve Entry Point Projects (EPPs) clustered under five themes: Affordable Luxury; Nature Adventure; Family Fun; Events, Entertainment, Spa and Sports; and Business Tourism.

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**PHOTO RELEASE**



**Caption:**

1. (6<sup>th</sup> from left) YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri bin Abdul Aziz, The Minister of Tourism and Culture of Malaysia
  2. (1<sup>st</sup> from left) Mr. Buayan Suwanmanee, Director of Songkhla Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports
  3. (5<sup>th</sup> from left) Dr. Phisek Saichanapan, Deputy Mayor of Hatyai City Municipality
- And Malaysian delegates during the launching of the "Southern Thai Packages to Malaysia" at Hat Yai, Thailand