

PRESS RELEASE

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**JAPANESE DELEGATION VISITS MALAYSIA TO STRENGTHEN TOURISM TIES**



Dr. Junaida Lee Abdullah, Deputy Secretary General (Management) of Ministry of Tourism and Culture (right) receives a memento from Mr. Toshizo Ido, Governor Hyogo County. On the left is Mr. Keiji Yamada, Governor of Kyoto Prefecture.

**KUALA LUMPUR, 1 December 2014** - A Japanese government delegation paid a courtesy visit to Ministry of Tourism and Culture at Putrajaya recently to exchange ideas on tourism promotion towards achieving higher numbers of tourist arrivals for both countries as well as to forge stronger ties with local tourism counterparts.

The 26-member delegation, representing the Union of Kansai Governments, was led by Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Mr. Keiji Yamada, and they were welcomed by the Deputy Secretary General (Management) of Ministry of Tourism and Culture, YBrs. Dr. Junaida Lee Abdullah.

“We are pleased that the Union of Kansai Governments wish to establish a wider and closer network of contacts with our Ministry. I really believe that cooperation and forging smart partnerships are vital so that both countries can enjoy an increased two-way tourism flow,” said Dr. Junaida during the welcome address.

Last year, Malaysia welcomed a total of 513,076 Japanese visitors to Malaysia. This showed an increase of 9.2 percent compared to 2012, and it is the highest number achieved since 2004. Tourism Malaysia is eyeing 1 million tourist arrivals from Japan in the near future.



Mr. Keiji Yamada said, “We are preparing to launch more halal tourism products to cater for Muslim travellers and to position Japan as a Muslim friendly country. Apart from this, both countries can work together to promote sports tourism especially with the upcoming Tokyo Olympics 2020 and Kansai World Masters Games 2021. ”

During this trip to Malaysia, the delegation also took the opportunity to promote Kansai’s culture and tourism products to the locals by participating in Kansai Tourism Festival promotion event held at 1 Utama Shopping Complex.

In 2013, there were 176,500 Malaysians who visited Japan, which is a 35 percent increase from 130,300 in 2012. This was attributed to the short term visa exemption from 1 July 2013 and the drop in yen currency.

Members of the Union of Kansai Governments include Shiga Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture, Tottori Prefecture, Tokushima Prefecture, Kyoto City, Osaka City, Sakai City and Kobe City. The promotion of tourism and culture is one of the main areas of focus for this union.

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**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 2013, Malaysia registered 25.7 million tourist arrivals and RM65.4 billion in receipts, making tourism its second largest foreign exchange earner and the sixth highest contributor to its Gross National Income (GNI).

Malaysia is celebrating 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



**MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD**  
(MINISTRY OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA)  
No. 2, Tower 1, Jalan P5/6, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia  
Tel: +603 8891 8000; <http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my>  
[www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia); [twitter.com/tourismmalaysia](https://twitter.com/tourismmalaysia); [blog.tourism.gov.my](http://blog.tourism.gov.my)





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.

**Press contact:**

**Media & Publicity Unit:**

Azizah Aziz (Ms), Senior Deputy Director, Communications & Publicity Division

Tel: +603-8891 8752

Email: [azizahaziz@tourism.gov.my](mailto:azizahaziz@tourism.gov.my)

**Editorial Unit:**

Anis Rozalina Ramli (Ms), Senior Editor, Communications & Publicity Division

Tel: +603-8891 8759

Email: [anisramli@tourism.gov.my](mailto:anisramli@tourism.gov.my)



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(MINISTRY OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA)  
No. 2, Tower 1, Jalan P5/6, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia  
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