



PRESS RELEASE

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MALAYSIA UNVEILS NEW ECOTOURISM DESTINATION TO EUROPEAN MARKET AT ITB BERLIN 2014

BERLIN, 5 MARCH 2014: The Royal Belum Rainforest was officially introduced as Malaysia's best-kept ecotourism secret at Europe's largest and most prominent tourism fair, International Tourismus Borse (ITB) Berlin 2014 which began here today.

"We are introducing the Royal Belum Rainforest as an exciting and new ecotourism destination to Europeans for the Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014. The Royal Belum is a relatively untouched forest complex, believed to have been in existence for over 130 million years, even older than the Amazon and Congo rainforests.

"With the growing interest in ecotourism, I am confident that the Royal Belum Rainforest will have an extraordinary appeal amongst tourists. This 3,000 sq. km complex of nature is home to over 3,000 species of flowering plants, including three species of the largest flower in the world, the Rafflesia.

"It is also the natural habitat for 14 of the world's most threatened mammals including the Malayan Tiger, Sumatran Rhinoceros and Asiatic Elephant," said the Minister of Tourism and Culture, Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

"To complement Tourism Malaysia's promotions of the Royal Belum, a new series of ecotourism television commercials will also go on air in Europe. This publicity is a build-up to the global release of "Eco Malaysia," a special National Geographic documentary on the Royal Belum Rainforest and ecotourism hosted by renowned British naturalist, Nick Baker," he added.

Holiday Tours Malaysia, with the support of Tourism Perak, also launched a 7D/6N tour programme today called *Two Valleys, Perak Man and The Lost World: The Royal Belum and Pangkor's Jewels*. Besides showcasing the Royal Belum State Park, the tour programme also highlights other natural and historical treasures of Perak.

The Minister of Tourism and Culture is leading a 120-member delegation comprising 59 organisations from Malaysian tourism boards, state governments, hotels and tour operators on a 12-day VMY 2014 sales mission which has covered the key European cities of Amsterdam, Paris and Milan before coming to ITB Berlin 2014. Earlier, Tourism Malaysia hosted the VMY 2014 Travel Mart & Seminar and a VMY 2014 Evening reception for the European media, tour operators and invited guests in Amsterdam, Paris and Milan.



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Malaysia which has been an active participant at the ITB Berlin over the last 40 years since 1974, is the Convention and Culture Partner for the ITB Berlin Convention 2014 which is one of the highlights of ITB Berlin.

“Our participation at ITB Berlin 2014 is of special significance as we celebrate VMY 2014. We are equally proud to be the Convention and Culture Partner for ITB Berlin Convention,” Dato Seri Mohamed Nazri continued.

The Tourism and Culture Minister also opened the Malaysia Pavilion at ITB Berlin showcasing the rich diversity and culture of the country and its innumerable tourism attractions, crafts and cuisine.

Over 300,000 visitors are expected to converge at ITB Berlin.

Dato Seri Mohamed Nazri’s extensive schedule also includes media interviews with leading European publications and broadcast stations besides meetings with the travel trade operators and tourism organisations.

On an average, over 1 million tourists from Europe visit Malaysia annually. The Europe market is expected to grow by 14.1% in 2014, and contribute towards the overall 28 million tourists expected to Malaysia. A total of 418 VMY 2014 packages worth €56 million have been developed and sold by Tourism Malaysia and its partners in Europe.

Captions:

Pic 1: Minister of Tourism and Culture, YB Dato’ Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz and British naturalist Nick Baker launches the ecotourism series of television commercials for Europe market at ITB Berlin 2014

Pic 2: Part of the Malaysian delegation taking part in ITB Berlin 2014, Europe’s largest and most prominent tourism promotion fair, pose at the Malaysia Pavilion

Pic 3: Minister of Tourism and Culture, YB Dato’ Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz (front, second from left) and British naturalist Nick Baker (front, first from left) introduce the Royal Belum Rainforest as a fascinating ecotourism product to Europe market

Pic 4: Minister of Tourism and Culture, YB Dato’ Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz (centre) officiates the opening of the Malaysia Pavilion at ITB Berlin 2014. Malaysia is this year’s co-host of ITB Berlin for the first time, giving prominence to the destination at Europe’s largest tourism promotion fair.

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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 2012, Malaysia registered 25 million tourist arrivals and RM60.6 billion in tourist receipts, placing the country firmly as the 10th most popular tourism destination in the world.

In 2014, Malaysia will celebrate its fourth **VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY)** with the theme "Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia". The VMY 2014 promotional campaign has started this year with a series of year-long special events and activities leading to VMY 2014. It will contribute to the Government's target to receive 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020, as outlined in the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan (MTTP) 2020.

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