

MEDIA RELEASE

TOURISM MINISTER LEADS SALES MISSION TO IRAN



The honourable Dato` Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen, Minister of Tourism, Malaysia, has led a delegation to Iran from 7 to 9 May to promote Malaysia as a preferred tourist destination. This five-day post Arabian Travel Market 2011 Sales Mission will showcase a business session and a dinner at the Espinas Hotel, in Tehran, Iran. The mission will then be led by Dato' Haji Azizan Noordin, Tourism Malaysia's Director General, to Isfahan and Shiraz from 9 to 12 May 2011.

The sales mission serves as a platform for the travel trade members from Iran and Malaysia to interact and identify mutually beneficial areas for cooperation with the objective of promoting Malaysia as a preferred holiday and business tourism destination.

Other members from the Malaysian delegation include representatives from five hotels, five travel & tour operators and one state government.

A media conference on the tourism development in Malaysia will be held on 8 May 2011 at the Espinas Hotel, Tehran.

Last year we recorded an **increase of 14.3 per cent** of tourists from Iran visited Malaysia from **101,664 in 2009 to 116,252 in 2010**. The target for 2011 is 117,000 tourists from Iran.

The Minister of Tourism, Malaysia has visited cities of **Shiraz, Isfahan and Tehran from 4 to 8 May 2011**. The Minister of Tourism, Malaysia and the delegation has organised meetings on joint tourism cooperation with top government officials of Shiraz, Isfahan and Tehran as follows:

- i. Meeting with Mr. Dehghonan the High Ranking Counselor & Deputy of Fars Province Governor General of Shiraz, on 5 May 2011;
- ii. Meeting with Dr. Muhammad Mehdi the Deputy Governor General of Isfahan Province on 6 May 2011; and
- iii. Meeting with Mr. Hamid Baghaei, Vice President and Head of ICHTO on 8 May 2011.

The Ministry of Tourism Malaysia and the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organisation (ICHTO) has enhanced the bilateral relationship to increase the number of tourist arrivals between both countries and also in the registration of tour operators, travel agencies and tourist guides.

Ministry of Tourism Malaysia has planned to set up of a consortium consist of Airlines, tour operators, travel agencies and tour guides to facilitate tourism business and joint promotion between two countries. The setting up of this joint promotion will be able to upgrade the quality of packages as we are looking at targeting the luxury or high end holiday packages for Malaysian tourists coming to Iran. This is especially for visits to the cities of **Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Mashhad**.

The collaboration on joint promotion could be further enhanced by carrying out tactical campaigns, seminars and workshops, fam-trips for tour operators, travel agents and media between the two countries. One of the plans is host the national television of both countries to shoot documentary films to be aired in Iran and Malaysia.

As for Iranian going to Malaysia, the Minister of Tourism, Malaysia will promote parks and garden, shopping, Malaysia International Shoe Festival and vacation to Island & beach resorts.

The Ministry of Tourism Malaysia will work together with the Iranian Government in the possibilities of increasing of flight frequencies between both countries especially from Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Mashhad to Malaysia and vice versa.

Flight Frequency

Airlines	Frequency Per Week from Iran to Malaysia
Iran Air	4 (from Tehran)
Mahan Air	2 (from Shiraz)
Air Asia X	3 (from Tehran)
Total	9

BACKGROUNDER

1. Malaysia recorded 24.5 million tourists last year with a 3.9 per cent growth compared to the previous year (2009).
2. Last year, the Iran market registered 116,252 tourists in 2010 with a growth of 14.3 percent over to 2009.

Table 1

COUNTRY	Tourist arrivals 2010	Tourist arrivals 2009	Growth in %
Iran	116,252	101,664	14.3

(Source: Immigration Dept & Research Division, Tourism Malaysia).

3. The promotion in Iran is based on travel packages coupled with the high standard of services and products. Key segments promoted in Iran market include leisure holidays such as beaches and islands, shopping, dining, eco-tourism.
4. Malaysia received an award in 2009 from Lonely Planet for World's Top Ten Countries 2010, Best Value Destinations 2010 and Top Spots for Medical Adventures.

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