



MEDIA RELEASE

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MALAYSIA CHARTS 24.7 MILLION TOURISTS IN 2011

Malaysia recorded overall growth in tourism last year as the positive effects of its luxury destination branding kicked in.

Tourist arrivals rose to 24,714,324 compared to 24,577,196 in 2010 while receipts climbed to RM58.3 billion compared to RM56.5 billion the previous year.

Minister of Tourism YB Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen said this was in line with the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan 2020 of achieving 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion receipts by 2020.

"The branding of Malaysia as a luxury destination and our efforts to attract high yield tourists to Malaysia have been well-received and this has made a difference," she said.

Since 2010, the Ministry of Tourism had implemented various initiatives to draw high net-worth tourists to Malaysia with events like the 1Malaysia International Shoe Festival, 1Malaysia Contemporary Art Tourism Festival and the packaging of helicopter tours.

Other events included private sector collaboration on the "A Journey through Time" luxury watch exhibition and the CIMB Asia Pacific Classic Malaysia golf tournament sanctioned by PGA Tour which positioned Malaysia as a luxury tourism destination.

The top ten tourist generating markets from January to December 2011 were Singapore (13,372,647), Indonesia (2,134,381), Thailand (1,442,048), China (1,250,536), Brunei (1,239,404), India (693,056), Australia (558,411), United Kingdom (403,940), Japan (386,974) and Philippines (362,101).

Markets showing double digit growth in arrivals were mainly from the medium and long-haul countries with Kazakhstan arrivals surging by 65.9% assisted by the thrice weekly direct Air Astana flights from Almaty to Kuala Lumpur.

Other markets showing strong growth included New Zealand (23.0%) which benefited from the opening of a Tourism Malaysia office in Auckland last May. Russian tourist arrivals saw an increase of 21.3% on the back of strong promotional efforts there in addition to the weekly Trans Aero flights which began operations in December.

Double digit growth arrivals were also recorded for the following markets: Iran (20.1%), South Africa (19.1%), France (15.1%), Myanmar (12.6%), Taiwan (10.7%), China (10.6%), and Brunei (10.2%).

Although Indonesia contributed strongly to the tourist arrivals, it was among the markets that showed a decline in tourist arrivals, down by 14.8%. The abolishment of its fiscal fee allowed Indonesian travelers to travel abroad to other countries without making a stopover in Malaysia. The opening of Integrated Resort and Universal Studios in Singapore and the reinstatement of Garuda Air's route to Europe further contributed to the decline.

Japan also showed a decline of 7% due to the tsunami which resulted in the cancellation of travel plans. Other markets that saw a decline in tourist arrivals last year were Philippines (-25.6%) and several markets in Europe such as Germany (-4.8%) and the United Kingdom (-6.1%).

YB Dato' Sri Dr. Ng said that despite being hampered by global economic, political, social and natural challenges, "our tourism partners pulled through and I have no doubt that we would have been able to perform even better under different circumstances."

"This year will continue to challenge us but we will proceed with efforts to promote Malaysia as one of the preferred holiday destinations in the region.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners in the Malaysian travel trade industry and overseas, as well as members of the media, for their support," she said.

To view more statistical information, visit http://www.tourism.gov.my/facts_figures/. For more media releases, media information and media features on Malaysia's tourism industry, kindly visit the Media Centre of Tourism Malaysia's website at <http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my/>

Issued by: Communications & Publicity Division, Tourism Malaysia

Date: 10 February 2012

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