



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **EXCITING YEAR-END DEVELOPMENTS IN MALAYSIAN TOURISM**

The year may be drawing to a close, but by the looks of it, the pace of tourism doesn't seem to be slowing down!

This is definitely reflected in the huge increase in tourist arrivals last month, i.e. 2,078,485 tourists visited Malaysia in October, marking a significant increase of 14.3 per cent in tourist arrivals compared to 1,818,304 arrivals received in October 2008.

Minister of Tourism, Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen said, "We are happy with this increase in tourist arrivals despite the global challenges that the tourism industry has to contend with. It just goes to show that with strong support from tourism industry partners both locally and overseas, and our continuous promotions in all our focus markets, we are able to rise up above the challenges and make this significant contribution to our national economy."

The *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer Worldwide* had earlier forecasted international tourist arrivals to decline by 7% between January and August

2009. The healthy growth of Malaysia's tourist arrivals these past few months bodes well for the nation's year-end prospects.

The top ten markets contributing to the increase in tourist arrivals for October 2009 are from the following countries, i.e. Singapore (1,104,415), Indonesia (223,238), Thailand (143,973), China, including Hong Kong and Macau (95,235), Brunei (75,517), Australia (56,601), India (54,206), UK (38,842), the Philippines (37,902) and Japan (35,028).

Among the top ten markets, the five markets that have recorded most significant growth were Australia (47.4%; 56,601), China (27.4%; 95,235), Singapore (24.4%; 1,104,415), UK (23.1%; 38,842) and India (20.9%; 54,206).

Markets that recorded the most significant declines include: South Korea (-26.1%); United Arab Emirates (-24.4%); Saudi Arabia (-15.3%); Brunei (-14%); and Japan (-12.6%).

Cumulatively, tourist arrivals from Jan to Oct 2009 stand at 19,456,525, a 7.2 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2008 which recorded 18,148,159 tourist arrivals.

## **CONTRIBUTION OF SHOPPING ACTIVITY TO ECONOMY**

As a sub-sector or segment of the tourism industry, the shopping industry has a significant role to play in the economy. As it is, shopping holds the second biggest share of tourist expenditures after accommodation, with its contribution of RM13,282.4 million in 2008, compared to RM12,254.6 million in 2007, signifying an increase of 8.4%.

In 2000, when the first Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival was organised, shopping only constituted 23.1% of total tourist expenditures. Last year, it constituted about 26.8% of total tourist expenditures.

Malaysia's retail industry growth rate in the past few years has been growing strong. In 2007, the Malaysian retail industry was worth RM67.1 billion, a 12.8% growth rate in sales compared to 2006. While in 2008, it was worth RM70.4 billion, a growth of 5% from 2007. This year, with the global economic recession, etc. growth rate is only expected at 3%.

During the 59 days of the Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival 2008 (5 July – 1 Sept 08), MasterCard International recorded RM147.24 million worth of sales transactions made by foreign card holders, a 22.7% increase compared to RM120 million transactions in 2007. The figure for foreign tourist shopping would be higher if cash transactions are also taken into account.

However, it is not only the tourists who love to shop during the Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival, even Malaysians cash in on the bargains, too.

MasterCard International reported that local card holders spent RM1,568.4 million (RM1.57 billion) during the sale period last year.

Meanwhile, the total number of transactions by MasterCard cardholders recorded during the Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival (MMSA) 2009 increased by 2 per cent from 15,992,714 to 16,294,837 transactions compared to the previous year.

## **M-YES CELEBRATIONS**

The year-end excitement of school and winter holidays and festivities is clearly felt in Malaysia with shopping malls and retailers getting into a celebratory mood for the Malaysia Year End Sale (M-YES), a much-anticipated celebration of shopping, dining and entertainment from 21 November 2009 until 3 January 2010.

One of three major shopping seasons in Malaysia, M-YES is the end-of-year shopping event that wraps up the year with a bang! The other two being the Malaysia GP Sale that coincides with the Formula One Grand Prix in KL and the Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival during the summer holidays.

Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen said, "I believe that we are on target to reach 20 million tourist arrivals by the end of the year; these final quarter events including M-YES will certainly boost our tourism revenue. But whether

there is a sale or not, I believe that tourists will find that Malaysia offers great value for money!"

Over 44 days, M-YES brings to visitors and shoppers in Malaysia a whole host of spectacular events and bargains. Organised by the Ministry of Tourism and Tourism Malaysia, the event has the support of the retail industry and related parties, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, Malaysian Retailers Chain Association, Malaysia Retailers Association and the Malaysian Association for Shopping and High Rise Complex Management. In fact, M-YES 2009 will see some 350 retailers across the country participating by offering discounts and promotions on their goods and services.

Among the specials awaiting shoppers to Malaysia are the Privilege Cards at selected malls that entitle them to better bargains. They only need to present their passports and / or boarding passes at the customer service counters of participating malls in the Klang Valley. Look out too for Parkson's Tourist Privilege Card, applicable at selected Parkson outlets.

We may not have snow in Malaysia, but a green Christmas can still be full of hot bargains. And shoppers can enjoy these hot deals as they shop in a festive ambience. During M-YES, shopping malls in the Klang Valley will be out-doing each other to beautify their premise according to the theme "A Fabulous Tropical Christmas, M-YES!" in order to bring home the title of "Shopping Mall Award" and "Best Window Display."

Mid Valley City's Christmas celebrations include Come-Meet-Santa charity event, Elves Workshop and gift bazaars. Queensbay Mall Penang is organizing the Rejoice! Christmas Caroling Contest from 4 to 6 December, while Pavilion KL has decorated its front entrance with huge Christmas trees complete with a lighted-up Santa sleigh!

The celebrations wouldn't be complete without ushering in the New Year in a grand style. Pavilion KL will celebrate with a Royale Street Festival full of thrilling music, fun and entertainment, while 1 Utama will have a New Year Countdown at its Central Park Avenue with favourite artistes and spectacular fireworks!

Other attractive promotions during the M-YES 2009 include the "180 Minutes Shopping Madness" at Suria KLCC where shoppers have to look out for Santarina in order to win a shopping voucher valued at RM500; and the MasterCard promotion of a chance to win a Paris holiday with every RM500 charged to their card.

Besides the special discounts and promotions by retailers, it has to be remembered that Malaysia is a haven for duty-free products. Even though the two most popular duty-free destinations in Malaysia are Langkawi and Labuan, there are many duty-free shops located throughout the rest of the country.

## CONCURRENT EVENTS

November and December are two months filled with various entertainment and exciting events. Catch the live concert by veteran Hong Kong Canto-pop singers, Alan Tam and Hacken Lee, on 28 November at Bukit Jalil Stadium. It brings together fashionable stage design, great audio visual effects, creative dance choreography, glitzy costumes and new song arrangements. ([www.axcess.com.my](http://www.axcess.com.my))

On 3 December, Grammy Award-winning R&B outfit, Earth, Wind and Fire, will rock Sunway Lagoon with a one-night only concert. ([www.axcess.com.my](http://www.axcess.com.my))

*Dazzle*, a mystifying journey of magic and entertainment is dazzling audiences at Genting Highlands. It features award-winning magic man from Cuba, Ernesto Planas, hand shadow master, Sonny Fontana and more. ([www.ticketcharge.com.my](http://www.ticketcharge.com.my)).

On 6 December, the public can join in the Ministry of Tourism's Cuti-Cuti 1 Malaysia Dance event at Merdeka Square to witness the medley of traditional Malaysian dances (zapin, Chinese, Indian, and Sabah and Sarawak ethnic dances) being performed by 12,000. The dance is expected to be performed at international events promoting Malaysia and its 1Malaysia culture.

Tennis fans can catch the Showdown of Champions 2009 – the Glam Slam on 19 December and see their favourite tennis stars in action, including Sania Mirza, Elena Dementieva, Maria Kirilenko, and Zheng Jie. (<http://showdownkl.com/>)

From 3 to 13 December, Asia's largest luxury watch and jewellery showcase, A Journey Through Time, will come to Kuala Lumpur, featuring the latest and most innovative timepieces from 100 illustrious brands and renowned international watchmakers. (<http://www.ajourneythroughtime.com.my/>)

Coinciding with the M-YES celebrations is the event Fabulous Food 1Malaysia festival. In November, the FF1M celebrates the exotic and rich cuisine of Asean countries through the Asean Heritage Food Trail at Lot 10 and Avenue K. Meanwhile, from December 18 to 20, there is a showcase of Malaysian restaurants and street food at the Putra World Trade Centre.

**For more information, kindly contact the Shopping Malaysia Secretariat at +603 2615 8188.**

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