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Malaysia welcomed 25m tourists in 2012

By Hashini Kavishtri Kannan

BOOMING: Country earned RM60.6 billion from sector

KUALA LUMPUR: MALAYSIA'S tourism industry has been the most dynamic in the last few years, with 25,032,708 tourists arrivals in the country last year.

Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen said tourist arrivals yielded RM60.6 billion in 2012 compared with RM58.3 billion in the previous year.

She said the double-digit growth in tourist arrivals was largely contributed by Iraq, Nepal, the Philippines, China, Japan, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan.

"The Asean market contributed the most number of tourists with 75.1 per cent because of competitive offers by low-cost carriers such as AirAsia, Mandala Airlines, SEAir and Tiger Airways besides the existence of new tourism products such as Johor Premium Outlet and Legoland Theme Park," she said in a statement here.

She said the growth in tourist arrivals was in line with the target of the Malaysian Tourism Plan 2020 to achieve 36 million tourist arrivals and tourism revenue of RM168 billion by 2020.

Among factors which made Malaysia the preferred destination, according to her, was the country's political and economic stability.

She said Kuala Lumpur was rated the world's fourth best shopping city in a survey by CNN Travel.

It also came in second after Hong Kong in the Globe Shopper Index that ranked 25 Asia-Pacific cities on the experience they provided to international travel shoppers.

Malaysia Welcomed 25m Tourists in 2012 – New Straits Times (Feb 2013)

Further, Malaysia was ranked third top retirement destination in the world, up seven places from 10th in InternationalLiving.com's annual ranking in 2011.

Malaysia also received three Pata Gold Awards at the international membership association's annual conference and took the seventh spot on the top 10 Meetings Destination in Asia-Pacific by International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Rankings 2011.

Dr Ng said the emergence of Malaysia as a top destination for Muslim travellers had also attracted many Middle East tourists.

"The availability of halal food and facilities for prayers are among the factors crucial to this group.

"Connectivity and availability of flights also plays an integral part in generating tourists arrivals to Malaysia."

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Top ten arrivals to Malaysia by percentage

INFOGRAPHIC: NST

Rank	Country	2011	2012	% change
1	Philippines	362,101	508,744	+40.5
2	China	1,250,536	1,558,785	+24.6
3	Japan	386,974	470,008	+21.5
4	Indonesia	2,134,381	2,382,606	+11.6
5	Brunei	1,239,404	1,258,070	+1.5
6	India	693,056	691,271	-0.3
7	United Kingdom	403,940	402,207	-0.4
8	Singapore	13,372,647	13,014,268	-2.7
9	Australia	558,411	507,948	-9.0
10	Thailand	1,442,048	1,236,024	-12.4

Top ten markets showing double digit growth

Rank	Country	2011	2012	% change
1	Iraq	13,568	21,939	+61.7
2	Nepal	81,791	123,173	+50.6
3	Philippines	362,101	508,744	+40.5
4	Bangladesh	65,603	86,465	+31.8
5	Laos	29,520	38,364	+30.0
6	China	1,250,536	1,558,785	+24.6
7	Japan	386,974	470,008	+21.5
8	Vietnam	173,783	211,008	+21.4
9	Saudi Arabia	87,693	102,365	+16.7
10	Kazakhstan	17,462	20,188	+15.6

Source: Tourism ministry with the cooperation of immigration department