



51st National Day of MALAYSIA



The Daily Star

AUGUST 31, 2008



Dato' Seri Abdullah Bin Ahmad Badawi
Prime Minister of Malaysia



The Petronas Twin Towers reaching into the night.

Malaysia: Single destination, multiple experiences

To some people, the introduction to Malaysia is purely by chance. A visit to Malaysia would typically be on the last leg of a backpacking journey just a place to crash for a few days before catching a flight back home. The "few days" would eventually stretch to weeks, the weeks stretch to months. Finally, they would leave, albeit reluctantly, when their tourist visa expires, only to return again for the next vacation.

It's a familiar tale among the millions of travelers from all over the world who "chanced upon" Malaysia's unique beauty. Many travelers often overlook Malaysia for our more popular neighbours, Singapore and Thailand. However, once they have experienced the diverse culture and sincere hospitality of Malaysians, they are smitten. To know Malaysia, as they say, is to love Malaysia. As one return tourist puts it, "Traveling around Malaysia is like visiting many countries at once. The culture and attractions are so diverse and varied that it's never boring. There is always something new to do or see, no matter how many times I've been here."

Compared to its neighbours, Malaysia has a relatively recent history in formal tourism promotions. It started out in the 1970s with a few government-run rest-houses and modestly-operated tourist attractions.

Today, the tourism landscape is totally different. There are hotels on every street and corner, offering comforts to pamper the body and service to melt the heart. The hotel industry has shown such tremendous growth over the years, in stride with the rapid development of travel and tourism in this country.

The choice today is overwhelming. Budget hotels have turned into independent boutiques with classy furnishings and beautiful details. Five-star hotels have incorporated little luxuries to cater to the growing demands of discerning guests. Resorts have included exquisite spa facilities and private villas for a more exclusive retreat experience. Needless to say, when it comes to accommodation, there is one to suit every budget and fancy!

Restaurant establishments in Malaysia have also seen improvements not only in the food quality, but in service, presentation and overall ambience to offer a more satisfying dining experience to guests.

Tourist attractions in Malaysia are well developed and maintained. The variety of things to do and see in Malaysia offers something for every

member of the family. Huge mall outlets and branded goods at reasonable prices for those who love shopping. million-year-old rainforests and exotic wildlife for those who love nature; peaceful islands for those who want to get away from everything. And that's just the beginning!

In tapping niche markets, Malaysia has been successful in attracting large-scale conventions and exhibitions to its shores through its Meet and Experience campaign. Malaysia's growing reputation as the preferred venue for MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) events is largely due to the close public and private sector cooperation, top-notch convention centres, quality accommodation, and value-added services.

Malaysia's diverse range of attractions means that it will appeal to everyone, whether you love shopping or nature, whether you want a relaxing holiday with your partner or a fun-filled one with the entire family. Here are our favourites:

Island Bliss: Malaysia has numerous beautiful islands that boast of white powdery beaches and blue seas teeming with marine life. Among the popular islands are the ones off the coast of Terengganu

and wild orchids are another. Our national parks are thick forests of verdant green, a habitat to tigers, elephants and rhinoceros, endangered and almost extinct in other parts of the world. While spotting these animals during a jungle trek would be a bonus, the sheer excitement of being deep in the middle of the rainforest is also an experience in itself. Those craving for adventure will also find it in Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo where beautiful caves, flowing rapids and mountains are waiting to be explored.

Malaysian Hospitality: To experience the Malaysian way of life in the countryside or kampong as we call it, participate in the homestay programme. Guests will live with a host family in a traditional village house and participate in their daily life. Visit rubber or oil palm plantations or paddy fields, learn to catch fish, do some jungle trekking, and eat freshly-prepared, home-cooked food. Through this programme, guests can learn about the simple way of life of those living in the small villages outside the city. Far from being boring, the programme is an eye-opener to enjoy the simple things in life. Rest assured that basic comforts and conveniences are provided to tourists. (Abridged)



(Kapas, Perhentian Besar, Perhentian Kecil, Gemia, Lang Tengah, Tenggol and Redang) and the Seribuat Archipelago, Johor, as well as the five islands within the Tun Abdul Rahman marine park in Sabah. Some areas have been gazetted as marine parks and offer fantastic snorkeling and diving opportunities such as Sipadan and Redang Islands. For those who wish for peace and tranquility, there are islands that have only one resort operator, ensuring privacy and personal attention. Langkawi island, one of Malaysia's bigger and more developed island destinations, offers the beautiful island life in a vibrant multi-cultural setting complete with duty free shopping and great eating establishments.

Shopping Haven: Due to its favourable exchange rate, Malaysia offers great shopping bargains, even when it's not the sale season. Huge shopping malls tempt shoppers with both branded goods and local productions. Besides shopping for fashion, Malaysia is also a haven for electrical and electronic goods. Three seasonal sales periods throughout the year -- in March, July to September, and December -- offer even greater value for money. During this time, stories abound of tourists who return home with an extra luggage or two just to fill their shopping loot!

Family Fun: Malaysia is the perfect place for family vacations. Many places are child and family friendly. With the theme parks in Malaysia, parents just can't go wrong. Long-term stays in apartments can be arranged at these theme parks which may offer water or dry parks, or both. With park rides, shows, and fun fair games for the children, and golfing and souvenir shopping for the parents, the whole family will be entertained. Besides enjoying the theme park facilities, families can also take advantage of visiting the attractions in nearby towns and cities.

Cool Retreats: Malaysia's year-round sunny weather is a great excuse to escape the cold and dreary winters. But if ever tourists wish for some cool getaways, then head up to Malaysia's highlands. Here too, Malaysia offers a choice of either peaceful highland settings or something with a little more to do. Each highland destination offers different activities in which tourists can engage. Walk amid acres of tea plantation, pick strawberries, enjoy an afternoon at a theme park, trek into mossy forests, or just linger over an extended afternoon tea service.

Back to Nature: A huge part of Malaysia is still under rainforest cover. Trekking through million-year-old jungles may not be easy, but it offers a chance to spot exotic wildlife such as the elusive proboscis monkey and the orangutan. The infamous Rafflesia flower which blooms to a foot in diameter on the forest floor, before wilting away in an odorous stench, is among the attractions in our rainforests. The numerous species of pitcher plants

Message of High Commissioner

TONDAY, Malaysia celebrates its 51st National Day. On this auspicious occasion, I on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia would like to extend my greetings and best wishes to the Government and the people of Bangladesh. I would also like to convey my greetings and sincere best wishes to my fellow Malaysians residing in Bangladesh.

The bilateral relations between Malaysia and Bangladesh in all areas of cooperation have always been warm and close. The regular contacts that have been established between the leaders, officials and the people of our two countries have significantly contributed to the strong friendship that we enjoy today.

Malaysia follows with great interest the developments in Bangladesh towards bringing about political stability, better socio-economic conditions for the people, as well as the various measures towards enhancing economic growth. In this regard, Malaysia deeply appreciates the opportunity to participate in and contribute to the country's development through the ventures of Malaysian companies in Bangladesh.

The close cooperation between our two governments is also demonstrated in the international and regional arena, where Malaysia and Bangladesh share similar views and perceptions on matters of mutual interest.

The two-way trade has been expanding significantly. In 2007, Malaysia recorded a total trade of US\$ 438.3 million. However, this year, from January till May 2008, the bilateral trade has reached beyond 50% of the last year's volume with a total trade of US\$ 292.7 millions.

Malaysia will continue vigorously to promote Malaysian products and services in Bangladesh. In realising this, the High Commission of Malaysia has actively involved in organising two single-country trade shows, namely "Showcase Malaysia 2008" and "Halal Malaysia Week 2008" in March and July 2008 respectively. Malaysia is ready to cooperate with Bangladesh in developing Bangladeshi halal sector as a new area of cooperation by building linkages and collaboration between the business communities of the two countries.

In the investment sector, Malaysia is the sixth largest foreign investor in Bangladesh today, mainly in the fields of telecommunications, power generation and education. Recently, Malaysia has enhanced its presence in banking and finance sector of Bangladesh with the establishment of ICB Islamic Bank Ltd. Bangladesh as well as Ahsania - Malaysia Hajj Investment & Finance

Company Ltd. (AM-HIFC).

Similarly, we wish for more efforts from Bangladesh entrepreneurs to venture into Malaysian market. The initiatives such as the Bangladesh Festival & Trade Fair "Bangla Mela KL 2008" and "Bangladesh Single Country Trade Fair 2008", which were held in Malaysia recently, should become a turning point to harness more collaborative efforts from the private sector and concerned government agencies of Bangladesh to promote trade and investment from Bangladesh into Malaysia.

I am confident that with the full support of Bangladesh, our two countries will be able to reach substantial achievement in all areas of cooperation. At the same time, new areas of cooperation should be identified which will serve the interests of both countries.

I pray to Allah Almighty for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and its people. May the bond of friendship that our two countries enjoy and close relations between the people of our two countries continue to be strengthened from time to time.

Thank you.



Dato' Abdul Malek Bin Abdul Aziz
High Commissioner of Malaysia to Bangladesh

Warmest Felicitations to the Government and the Friendly People of Malaysia on their

National Day

HOMEBOUND

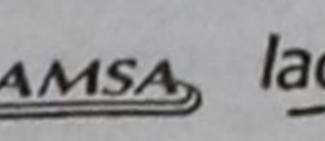
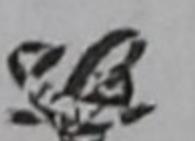
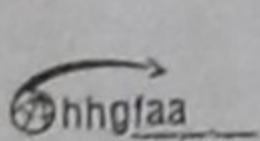
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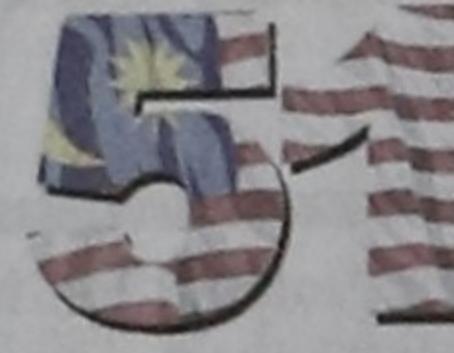
Today
we
stand
high

Today
we
look
beyond



Today
we
prosper

Our best wishes on your



National Day



Jefri Ahmad Tambi
Managing Director & CEO
AKTEL

Malaysia is a country of dream and reality. Thousands of endeavors, millions of good wishes have been invested to create the Malaysia of today.

Industrially, technologically the development of Malaysia is phenomenal. Its development in telecommunication sector is astounding. Bangladesh, being a part of our brotherhood, is reaping the benefit of Malaysia's excellence in telecommunication. This relationship will last long.

Our heartiest felicitations & warm wishes on the 51st National Day of Malaysia.

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CLEARLY AHEAD