

2011 tourism receipts climb to RM58.3b

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia recorded 24,714,324 tourist arrivals last year, with tourism receipts climbing to RM58.3 billion, a remarkable notch over the previous year.

In 2010, 24,577,196 arrivals were recorded with RM56.5 billion in tourism receipts.

Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen attributed the showing to be in line with the Malaysia Tourism Plan 2020 target of achieving 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in tourism receipts by 2020.

She said double-digit growth in arrivals were recorded mainly from medium and long-haul countries like Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Russia, Iran, South Africa, France, Myanmar, Taiwan, China and Brunei.

"Kazakhstan arrivals surged by 65.9 per cent, boosted by the thrice weekly direct Air Astana flights from Almaty to Kuala Lumpur," she told reporters after launching the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) 2000-2010 here yesterday.

Ng said, other markets showing strong growth included New Zealand - up by 23 per cent - which benefitted from the opening of the Tourism Malaysia office in Auckland in May, last year.

The minister said Russian tourist arrivals saw an increase of 21.3 per cent on the back of strong promotional efforts in Russia, as well as the weekly Trans Aero flights which started in December.

She explained that the 25 million tourist arrival target set for 2011 could not be achieved due to a decline in tourist arrivals from countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and the Philippines.

"Indonesia showed a decline of 14.8 per cent due to the abolition of its fiscal fee which allowed Indonesian travellers to go abroad without making a stop-over in Malaysia.

"The number of tourists from Japan was down by seven per cent due to the tsunami, Thailand due to the floods and Middle East countries due to the Arab Spring, which all happened last year," noted Ng.

On the TSA 2000-2010, she said it was a set of accounts on the tourism industry conducted by the Statistics Department. Ng said Malaysia was the third country in Asean, after Indonesia and the Philippines, to implement the TSA, besides being in an exclusive club of 39 countries which currently used the TSA.

"The ministry will use the TSA results to initiate policies and marketing strategies to turn Malaysia into a premier international tourist destination." **Bernama**