



PRESS RELEASE

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## PRIME MINISTER GRACES NATIONAL LEVEL CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION IN PENANG

**PENANG, 25 December 2013** – In conjunction with the national-level Christmas celebrations, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia hosted the 2013 Christmas Open House Celebration in a very joyous, festive and exciting atmosphere at the Padang Kota Lama, here today.

The open house celebration, jointly organised by the Penang State Government and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, was graced by the Malaysian Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak and his wife Datin Sri Rosmah Mansor, the Chief Minister of Penang YAB Lim Guan Eng, the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, YB Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Joseph Kurup, and the Minister of Tourism and Culture YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri Tan Sri Abdul Aziz as host of the event.

In his speech, the Prime Minister stressed on the importance of maintaining a strong spirit of unity as an important precondition for the nation to achieve greater success in economic and social development as well as ensuring the overall well-being of the *rakyat*.

"We must not harbour any prejudices but instead, at all times, appreciate the importance of the various festive events celebrated in Malaysia and strive to strengthen the unity, goodwill and harmony which are of paramount importance and synonymous with our country's multicultural and multi-ethnic context," said Dato' Seri Najib Razak.

The large crowd numbering in the thousands including locals and foreign tourists who attended were treated to various performances, exhibitions and activities which began as early as 10.00 am. The highlights included medley of popular songs, Indian musical and dance performances, Buskers performance, heritage crafts exhibition, Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014 exhibition, demonstration of Christmas tree decoration using Origami art, Christmas card making, and ginger biscuits decoration.

The visitors were also treated to a wide array of local traditional cuisine especially from Penang such as Penang laksa, fish head curry, char kuey teow, pasembor, nasi briyani, mee rebus, fruit cake, cendol, teh tarik, chapatti, murtabak and many more.

The performing artistes included Awie, Dato' Jamal Abdillah, Nassier Wahab, Salwa Abdul Rahma, Rahmat MEGA, Suki, Shantel Sahnty, Lock-Up, Sivakumar, Forteen, Drumline and Bagpipe, Wakaka Krew and more.



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The 2013 Christmas Open House Celebration is one of the six major national level festive open houses organised by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. Every year the Tourism and Culture Ministry also organises the Open House Celebrations for Chinese New Year, Tadau Kaamatan, Gawai Dayak, Hari Raya Aidilfitri and Deepavali .

The Government's primary initiative in hosting the open house celebrations is to showcase the spirit of 1Malaysia, whilst at the same time enhancing unity, mutual understanding, appreciation of the arts and heritage, and as a platform in marketing Malaysia as among the best global tourism destinations, in line with the target of achieving 28 million tourist arrivals during Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014.

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**MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD OR TOURISM MALAYSIA** is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia. Tourism Malaysia focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia at all levels. Since its inception, Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds and it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. In 2012, Malaysia registered 25 million tourist arrivals and RM60.6 billion in tourist receipts, placing the country firmly as the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular tourism destination in the world.

In 2014, Malaysia will celebrate its fourth **VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY)** with the theme "Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia". The VMY 2014 promotional campaign has started this year with a series of year-long special events and activities leading to VMY 2014. It will contribute to the Government's target to receive 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020, as outlined in the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan (MTTP) 2020.

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