



**WELCOME SPEECH
DATO' MIRZA MOHAMMAD TAIYAB
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, TOURISM MALAYSIA
1ST PENANG INTERNATIONAL GOLF TOURISM CHALLENGE 2015
PENANG GOLF CLUB
10 MAY 2015**

Salutations

Good evening. First of all, I wish to welcome all of you to Malaysia for the 1st Penang International Golf Tourism Challenge 2015.

Penang has always been known as a food, culture and heritage paradise. Not only has it been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, but Lonely Planet, the well-known authority on travel, has listed Penang as the top food destination in 2014.

Tourism Malaysia is pleased to introduce and promote golf as another tourism product on the island. It's a great combination of sun, sea, food, culture and golf – one that I'm sure will be an attractive proposition to the avid golfers out there.

At this juncture, I wish to thank Penang Global Tourism for partnering with us in making this 1st Penang International Golf Tourism Challenge 2015 a reality.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Golf tourism is certainly one of the main agendas for Tourism Malaysia. We started promoting golf tourism more than 20 years ago with our home-grown event, World Amateur Inter-Team Golf Championship (WAITGC). Today, I am pleased that Malaysia is the host of four major international-class golf tournaments every year, namely the EurAsia Cup, Maybank Malaysia Open, Sime Darby LPGA Malaysia and CIMB Classic.



All these efforts have borne fruit for Malaysia with RM312 million golf tourism revenue in 2014 compared to RM305 million golf tourism revenue in 2013.

We are also motivated by the recent award given to Malaysia by World Golf Awards for being the Best Golf Destination in Asia. In fact, just last month, IAGTO, the global golf tourism association, awarded Tourism Malaysia with a Diamond Award for our initiatives in promoting and developing the golf tourism industry. IAGTO cited our support for the establishment of the Malaysia Golf Tourism Association (MGTA) as being a key driver for the industry.

We're very encouraged by these developments, and hope that more golfers from all over the world will discover the value and experience of golfing in Malaysia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Moving forward, Malaysia is making the year 2015 as a Year of Festivals. Due to our diverse population, naturally, the holidays and celebrations are aplenty, too. In fact, throughout 2015, there are 46 state and national public holidays observed in Malaysia!

This year is a year of endless festivals that include not only the religious celebrations, but also those that celebrate our cultural roots, our love for food, our unique past-times and hobbies, music and more. As such, I take this opportunity to invite you, your family and friends again to Malaysia to fully enjoy everything we have to offer.

Before I conclude, I wish to thank all the sponsors whose support has made for a much more interesting inaugural tournament -- DRB HICOM, Public Gold, Firefly, Malaysia Airlines, Thai Airways, Garuda Indonesia and Dragon Air.

I also wish to congratulate all the golfers who took part in this tournament. Win or lose, I hope you have enjoyed yourselves thoroughly.

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD

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As for the winners, my congratulations to you for being the best among the best here tonight! Your triumph is a celebration of your combined talent, determination and great sportsmanship!

We have in mind to make this a yearly event and include it in the Penang State Tourism Calendar, with the tournament hosted each year by different golf clubs in Penang. As such, I look forward to seeing you again next year at a bigger and better Penang International Golf Tourism Challenge.

Thank you.

END

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