

**Agong, Raja Permaisuri Guests-of-honour At Tourism Awards Night**  
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PUTRAJAYA, Dec 16 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Haminah Hamidun will be the guests-of-honour at the 2010/2011 Malaysia Tourism Awards Night at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on Tuesday.

Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen said she hoped the presence of Their Majesties at the event would further spur tourism players to bring the industry to greater heights.

The awards comprise 12 categories including Best Tour Operator, Most Innovative International Tour Operator, Innovative Tourism Magazine, Best Tour Guide, Innovative Shopping Centre, Innovative Homestay, Innovative Spa and the Tourism Minister Award, which is the main award.

Ng said that when the awards event was introduced in 1987, the number of tourist arrivals to the country was 3.4 million, contributing about RM1.8 billion to the economy.

"But last year, the number of arrivals increased to 24 million with receipts of RM56.46 billion," she told reporters here.

Ng said the ministry would prioritise on high-revenue programmes next year, such as the Shoe Festival and Floral Festival, in a bid to intensify the growth of the industry.

"This is how we attract more tourists. We can't be focusing merely on ecotourism," she said.

She added that the disasters which hit Thailand and Japan, political unrests in Middle Eastern countries and the economic downturn in the United States and Europe had affected the country's tourism sector.

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