

Malaysia Week in UK to forge ties, attract tourists

NST-7/6/2007

■ By Kamarulzaman Salleh

news@nst.com.my

LONDON: Malaysia wants more Britons to visit the country despite them being among the highest in foreign tourist arrivals, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said at the launch of the Malaysia Week gala dinner here on Tuesday.

The deputy prime minister said the United Kingdom remained a top tourism market with 252,000 British tourists visiting Malaysia last year, an increase of 17 per cent compared with the previous year.

"This figure, however, is much lower compared with British tourists visiting our neighbouring countries," he said.

Present at the dinner were the leader of the House of Commons, Jack Straw, Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim, Federal Territories Minister Datuk Zulhasnan Rafique and Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster councillor Carolyn Keen launched the Malaysia Week in a colourful ceremony at the Covent Garden here, a popular tourist spot.

The large crowd was treated to an hour-long multi-cultural performance by dancers of the Palace of Culture (Istana Budaya).

Earlier, Rais in his welcoming address, said the event was in recognition of the cordiality and friendship of the people of the UK.

Various activities, including cultural performances and local food and fruits exhibition,



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak (centre) planting a wayang kulit puppet in the shape of a tree in 'pulut kuning' to mark the Malaysia Week in London on Tuesday. Flanking him are the leader of the House of Commons Jack Straw (left) and Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim. — Bernama picture

will be held during the five-day event.

The event is organised by the Culture, Arts and Heritage Ministry in conjunction with Malaysia's 50th anniversary celebration and Visit Malaysia Year.

Najib said the Malaysia Week should not be seen as purely showcasing Malaysia's cultural heritage.

"It is a manifestation of our historical ties, goodwill and friendship. It is also to affirm the relationship between the two countries in areas of mutual interests."

Najib added that Malaysia would continue to forge strong trade and business relations with the UK.

The total trade last year

PM's marriage decision 'exciting'

LONDON: It was a much-awaited moment by Malaysians as they had only heard about it through the grapevine previously.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said it was an exciting moment for the people to hear the prime minister's decision to get married.

"On behalf of my cabinet colleagues and the administration, we feel that the prime minis-

ter's decision will bring him happiness and that he has made a wise decision," he said when asked by the Malaysian press here about Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's marriage announcement yesterday.

"As the leader of this country, he is burdened with lots of responsibilities. Therefore, having a life partner will make his life complete."

amounted to £2.64 billion (RM18 billion).

He said there was good prospects for collaboration in the fields of information and communications technology, bio-technology, chemical and

petrochemical for British investors.

Meanwhile, Straw commended Malaysia's rapid development and democracy since achieving independence.

At the dinner, Malaysian shoe designer Datuk Jimmy Choo, who is based here, received a certificate of appreciation from Rais for his contribution to the fashion industry.