

## PRESS RELEASE

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# KAAMATAN AND GAWAI CELEBRATIONS HIGHLIGHT MALAYSIA'S CULTURAL RICHNESS

**KUALA LUMPUR** — Tourism Malaysia celebrated the arrival of domestic and international visitors through vibrant Kaamatan and Gawai celebrations held in conjunction with the Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign. The welcoming events took place at Kota Kinabalu International Airport on 30 May 2026, KLIA Terminal 1 on 31 May 2026, and Kuching International Airport on 1 June 2026, reflecting Malaysia's continued efforts to enhance visitor experiences at key international gateways.

The celebration at KLIA Terminal 1 was attended by YBhg. Dato' Shaharuddin Abu Sohoh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and YBrs. Mr. Wizani Rosmin, acting Deputy Director General (Planning) of Tourism Malaysia, YBhg. Datin Christina Toh, President of Malaysian Association of Hotels, together with senior management representatives from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) and Tourism Malaysia, and representatives from Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB). Also present to enliven the ceremony were representatives from airlines, tourism industry players, and strategic partners.

Held as part of the VM2026 cultural engagement initiatives, the celebrations showcased the rich traditions and heritage of Sabah and Sarawak through immersive cultural performances and festive experiences. Kaamatan and Gawai are among Malaysia's most iconic harvest festivals, celebrated annually by the Kadazan-Dusun communities in Sabah and the Dayak communities in Sarawak, respectively, as they symbolise thanksgiving, unity, and harmony.

Arriving visitors at the airports were greeted with warm Malaysian hospitality through cultural performances, festive decorations, and interactive welcoming sessions. Visitors also received specially curated souvenirs and were served with *dodol*, a well-loved traditional delicacy, offering them a memorable first taste of Malaysia's diverse culinary heritage. The lively atmosphere was further enhanced by traditional dances and musical performances from the Sabah and Sarawak cultural performance groups, creating an authentic and immersive cultural experience for arriving passengers.

Concurrently, Kaamatan and Gawai celebrations will be held in Sabah on 30 May 2026 and Sarawak on 2 June 2026, respectively. In conjunction with the celebrations, an eight-day Mega Fam Programme (Mega Fam) trip involving 15 influencers and media representatives from Southeast Asia, East Asia, and South Asia, including the Philippines, Vietnam, China, South Korea, and India, will take place in both states from 29 May to 5 June 2026 to showcase Malaysia's lively cultural celebrations. Moreover, this initiative



aims to further strengthen Malaysia's position as a culturally diverse destination with rich tourism offerings.

As of March 2026, Malaysia recorded a total of 10.6 million international visitor arrivals, marking a 5.4 per cent increase compared to the 10.1 million arrivals during the same period in 2025. This positive performance reflects the strong momentum of Malaysia's tourism industry under VM2026.

Through meaningful celebrations such as Kaamatan and Gawai, Tourism Malaysia continues to reinforce Malaysia's position as a destination where culture, heritage, and authentic experiences come together. These efforts are aligned with the broader objectives of VM2026 to drive tourism growth, encourage repeat visits, promote sustainable tourism development, and enhance Malaysia's multicultural identity.

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### **About Tourism Malaysia**

Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, also known as Tourism Malaysia, is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC). It focuses on promoting Malaysia as a preferred tourism destination and has, since its establishment, played a significant role in strengthening the country's presence and competitiveness in the global tourism landscape.

**Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026)** underscores Malaysia's commitment to sustainable tourism development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The campaign aims to showcase the nation's diverse natural attractions, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant tourism offerings, while driving inclusive growth and long-term value for local communities and industry stakeholders.

For more information, visit Tourism Malaysia's website [www.tourism.gov.my](http://www.tourism.gov.my) and social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [TikTok](#).

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