



<b>Shirajiv Sirimane in UAE</b>		

**S**ri Lanka is an important market for Malaysian tourism with a 24% growth last year. Malaysia's Tourism Authority Director, Zulkfly, speaking to the *Daily News Business*, said that this growth was expected to continue. Last year over 15,000 Sri Lankans had visited Malaysia. He also said that Malaysia was the 9th best tourism market in the world and had attracted 24 million arrivals last year. "We hope to make this figure 26 million by end of 2013 and 28 million by 2014."

He said that they were currently building a new airport which has already attracted over 12 new airlines. Representatives from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Chiang Mai, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, the tour operator and travel industry sectors have been working on an enhanced promotional campaign to continue growth out of the Middle East market.

TAT Director of the Dubai and Middle East office, Chalernsak Suar-anat, said that during the past two years, the number of visitor to Thailand from the region had grown considerably. "While the UAE remains in top position bringing 108,994 vis-

itors to Thailand in 2012, other GCC countries were also emerging as potential expanding markets, including Oman, KSA and Kuwait.

The Arabian Travel Mart (ATM) which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, is gaining popularity with the growth of the event, jumping from just 300 exhibitors in

# SL important market for Malaysian Tourism

## - Malaysia Tourism Authority Director



1994 to more than 3,000 this year. Addressing the inaugural session of the seminar programme at the Arabian Travel Market 2013, which opened on Monday, May 6, at the Dubai World Trade Centre, Emirates Chairman and President of Dubai Civil Aviation, Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, emphasised how travel and tourism had become the bedrock of the Dubai economy over the past years, since the event was inaugurated in May 1994.

"The Arabian Travel Market has played a significant role in the development of Dubai, underscoring its position as a highly attractive centre for exhibitions and events," he said. Emirates' passenger traffic too rose from 1.9 million 20 years ago to 40 million last year.

With a new tourism vision announced last week, the visitor target for 2020 had been announced as 20 million and this total would be significantly enhanced, should Dubai win its bid to host the World Expo 2020, a decision which is due to be announced in November.

The country is also looking at a Visa on arrival facility for all tourists soon.

The four-day Arabian Travel Market 2013, concludes on Thursday, May 9. September 2013 would see the launch of IBTM



India in Mumbai and another exciting launch in the ski travel sector, with International Ski Travel Market in March 2014 in Austria.

Reed Exhibitions is the world's leading

event's organizer, with over 500 events in 39 countries. In 2011, Reed brought together six million active event participants from around the world, generating billions of dollars in business.



Some of the highlights of the Sri Lankan and other stands at the ATM. Pictures by Shirajiv Sirimane