



**SPEECH BY**  
**YAB DATUK SERI UTAMA HAJI SULAIMAN BIN MD ALI**  
**CHIEF MINISTER OF MELAKA**  
**IN CONJUNCTION OF**  
**THE MELAKA DUTCH FESTIVAL EVENT**  
**DATE: 4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2021 (SATURDAY), TIME: 10:00 AM**  
**AT BUKIT MELAKA @ ST PAUL MELAKA**  
**(REPRESENTATIVE: YB DATUK MUHAMMAD JAILANI BIN**  
**KHAMIS)**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ  
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ أَمَّا بَعْدُ

Thank you the Master of Ceremony;

Madam Eva Oskam

Deputy Ambassador of The Kingdom of The Netherlands  
and spouse;

Mr. Saari bin Basiron,  
General Manager of Tourism Melaka;

Drs Nasarudin bin Rahman,  
General Manager of Melaka Museum Board;

Madam Erni binti Hamzah,  
Chief Executive Officer of Melaka World Heritage Sdn. Bhd;

Tuan Hj. Rosli bin Hj. Nor,  
General Manager of Penang World Heritage Office;

Tn Hj. Shaari bin Mat Saod,  
Consultant for Restoration Work at St Paul Hill;

Mr. Dennis De Witt,  
Director Nutmeg Publisher;

Dr Marina Ng Kher Hui,  
Associate Dean, Faculty of Science & Engineering,  
University of Nottingham Malaysia;

Miss Ng Swee Lai,  
Principal of Pay Fong Middle School;

Miss Melissa Chan,  
Director of The Bendahari Melaka;

Heads of department and Representatives from the Government department;

Representatives from the tourism organisations;

Members of the media;

Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Salam Sejahtera dan Salam Melakaku Maju Jaya, Rakyat Bahagia, Menggamit Dunia. This Melaka state's slogan means **'My Melaka As A Progressive State, People's Happiness and Beckoning Globally'**.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. I am honoured to have all of you here with us, this morning, including several members of the Melaka State Government, the Melaka City Council, Tourism Melaka, Melaka Museum Board, the Netherlands Embassy, the Dutch Association and also the

students from Pay Fong Middle School and Nottingham University Kuala Lumpur.

2. Firstly, on behalf of the Honorable Datuk Seri Utama Hj. Sulaiman bin Md Ali, the Chief Minister of Melaka, I would like to extend sincere apologies from the Chief Minister for not being able to attend this programme because he is currently attending a state function. Therefore, The Honorable Datuk Seri Utama Haji Sulaiman conveys his warm greetings and best wishes to all of you.

3. I would also like to express my utmost gratitude and sincere appreciation to all of you for being here today to witness the Opening Ceremony of **“Malakka Dutch Festival 2021”**, and **launching of 360 degree virtual tour of St Paul Hill and Stadthuys**. This programme is organised with the collaboration of The Embassy of The Kingdom of The Netherlands and Melaka State Government. Honestly, I am proud to see the collaboration with the Melaka State Government departments which are actually taking place.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.



4. I was informed that this is the third year we have events collaborated with the Dutch Embassy. I'm truly humbled and grateful by the participation from all of you. Last year, we didn't manage to organize this program because as all of us know, the whole world deal with the most challenging period of human history which is the pandemic of COVID-19.
5. While we are still progressively tackling this virus, I am hopeful that the success of many countries in controlling the spread of infections, coupled with the discovery of a viable vaccines will allow for a wider and more meaningful opening of our economies.

6. In this respect, we in Melaka are looking forward for the tourism sector to resume and visitors to return to our historic city.

Deputy Ambassador, **Excellencies**, Distinguish Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. Indeed, tourism industry is the largest income earner for Melaka and still a prime contributor to the socio-economic development of the Melaka. However, the tourism industry suffered more severe damages during the COVID-19 pandemic. With nearly average of **17 million tourists per year from 2016 to 2019**, including international tourists, the numbers reduce

tremendously during the months of Movement Control Order (MCO).

8. It was definitely a hard time for Melaka. But now, we are quite lucky, ever since the state borders restrictions start to be lifted, the industry manage to recover well, with the initiative of locals and industries players to ensure the safety of tourists, we try very hard to rebuild tourist confidence to come back to Melaka.
9. Melaka which is popular with its historical and cultural heritage plays huge role in the development of tourism. These heritage being important assets to

Melaka, despite other tourism products such as culinary, sports, youth, medical and many more. In line with our tagline **“Melaka is the place to be”** our selling point consists not only on our rich cultural and heritage diversity but also the harmony life, stability and warmth of local hospitality. The unique blend of cultural heritage, cuisine, arts, crafts and architecture, have always put Melaka a **must visit destination, the place to be.**

10. For your information, recently, the Melaka State Government through the agencies involved has won various awards such as:

- 1) MBMB received a special award on 'Jean Paul L'allier Prize For Heritage' organized by the Quebec-based World Heritage Cities Organization (OWHC);
- 2) MPHTJ received the 2021 Sustainable City Appreciation Award second place in the Municipal Council Local Authority (PBT) category;
- 3) Recognition among the happiest cities in Malaysia through the measurement of the Happiness Index in Malaysia is carried out through the Malaysian Rural Urban Sustainable Indicator Network Program known as MURNInets and many more.

11. **“Malakka Dutch Festival 2021”** by the smart partnership of both Melaka State Government and Embassy of The Kingdom of The Netherlands, with the involvement of communities, students and NGOs, will help to promote Melaka internationally through the Dutch community via virtual.
12. Travellers and holiday makers today are tech savvy, well-travelled and their exposure to tourists' destinations are comprehensive. Their choices have grown and are ever-changing.

Distinguish Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. On behalf of the Melaka State Government, I would like to thank Deputy Ambassador for your support to organise this event in Melaka and shared our event nationwide especially Netherlands. Thank you very much, Deputy Ambassador Eva Oskam, of the Netherlands. I also would like to thank all of the working committee for your hard work and commitment.
  
14. Last but not least, I hope you enjoy the event today. On that note, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Chief Minister of Melaka, I hereby officially declare to open the Melaka Dutch Festival 2021.

Thank you.