

# M'sia a top retirement destination

Cost of living, language, climate and location offer 'best bang for the buck'

**NEW YORK:** Despite news of air tragedies, Malaysia still has its charms, particularly among North American retirees looking for attractive overseas retirement destinations.

The country has been listed as one of the top five retirement destinations in *International Living's* Annual Global Retirement Index for 2014, just behind Ecuador, Mexico and Panama.

It is also ahead of other Asian retirement destinations – Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam – in the list.

The index was compiled using input by *International Living* correspondents based in various cities and countries around the world.

*International Living* said that every year, more and more expatriates wake up to the amazing opportunities that Malaysia has to offer.

"The country has one of the most robust economies in Asia and this is reflected in the consistently high standard of living available to Malaysians and expatriates alike.

"It is just one of many factors that led to it being ranked the highest Asian nation in this year's index," it said, citing the rent for a 1,600 sq feet apartment with a swimming pool at just US\$850 (RM2,990) a month.

In an interview with *International Living*, New Yorker Thomas O'Neal,



**Life's a beach:** A hive of activity at Batu Ferringhi beach in Penang, a favourite destination among retired expatriates in Malaysia.

who lives in Penang, said he enjoyed the weather.

"I don't need a car, either, so I'm saving money left, right, and centre.

"I love the weather - 82°F (27°C) on average – and the ease of getting

to Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos.

"When you combine that with a cost of living of US\$1,500 (RM5,274) per month, including my rent, it's almost unbeatable," he said.

The index also cites cheaply available high-speed Internet access in popular expatriate destinations like Kuala Lumpur and Penang and the fact that English is widely spoken by Malaysians as the plus factors.

The index combines real world data on climate, healthcare, cost of living, personal safety and other factors to draw up a comprehensive list of retirement destinations with the "best bang for the buck". — Bernama