

ISSUE 224

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WEEKLY INSIGHTS

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER



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Hilton Expands Malaysia Portfolio with DoubleTree by Hilton Shah Alam i-City

Hilton announced the opening of DoubleTree by Hilton Shah Alam i-City, a 300-room contemporary hotel that provides easy access to the city's prime manufacturing hubs and recreational destinations.

Through the latest opening, Hilton now has 13 hotels across three brands in Malaysia and an additional nine in the pipeline, holding the global hospitality company's largest portfolio in South East Asia.

"We are thrilled to bring DoubleTree by Hilton's distinct brand of upscale comfort to Shah Alam's i-City, a highly-anticipated mixed development in Selangor's Golden Triangle. Not only does the opening of the hotel signal the brand's robust growth momentum, it also underscores our commitment to growing our presence across Malaysia and South East Asia, delivering warm hospitality and exceptional stays to guests in the region," said Alexandra Murray, area vice president, head of South East Asia. [READ MORE](#)



Crowne Plaza to Open in Butterworth Penang, Malaysia

IHG Hotels & Resorts, one of the world's leading hotel companies, announced a landmark partnership with STC Property Management Sdn Bhd, the Developer of Straits City.

The Master Plan development is by The Straits Trading Company Limited and Malaysia Smelting Corporation Berhad.

The partnership will bring the first Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts to Penang, the flagship hotel for Straits City – a sustainable high-end mixed-use development located at the waterfront of Butterworth Penang. Envisioned as the Future City, the expansive development incorporates green technologies to promote a more sustainable living and spaces designed to encourage interaction, communication and creation.

Nestled within Straits City, the 343-room Crowne Plaza Penang Butterworth Straits City will offer sweeping views of the Straits of Penang, and a nostalgic Georgetown just over the horizon.

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IHH, Prodia to strengthen medical tourism between Malaysia, Indonesia

IHH Healthcare Bhd (IHH) and PT Prodia Widyahusada Tbk (Prodia) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to provide options for comprehensive healthcare services to Prodia customers seeking medical treatment in Malaysia.

IHH's partnership with Prodia, Indonesia's largest laboratory chain, is expected to optimise the management of patients who require clinical laboratory examination services before and after consulting a doctor.

In a joint statement, IHH chief executive officer, Jean-François Naa said IHH has set up a one-stop customer service hotline that supports service in Bahasa Indonesia to provide assistance on appointment booking and medical enquiries.

Data from the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council revealed that over 670,000 Indonesians had sought medical treatment in Malaysia in 2019, but the number had dropped to a mere 635 between 2020 and 2021 due to the lockdowns triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The council expects the arrival of Indonesian medical tourists into Malaysia to return to the pre-pandemic level by 2025. [READ MORE](#)



Deputy minister expects tourism sector to rake in up to RM12b this year

Malaysia's tourism sector is expected to earn between RM11 billion and RM12 billion this year from an influx of tourists, Deputy Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Santhara Kumar said in Parliament today as international travel resumes worldwide.

He added that the country is expecting between 4.5 million and five million tourists from overseas, citing data from United Nations World Tourism Organisation, Pacific Asia Travel Association and other sources on flight seat capacities and the reopening of borders of foreign markets.

The Segamat MP also laid out the ministry's plans for the tourism industry with the short-term targets for this year and 2023 to boost Malaysia as a tourism destination by providing grants and incentives for local tourism players. He said the medium-term target until 2024 is to make Malaysia the top destination choice in the region. [READ MORE](#)



Eight new Ascott properties to open in Philippines next year

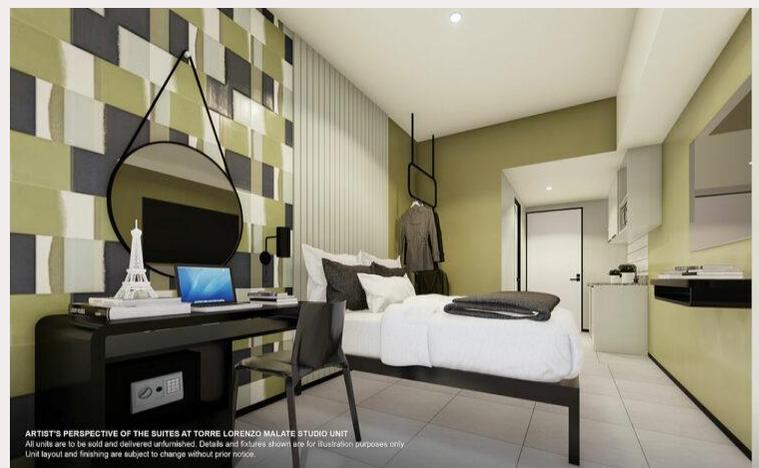
Eight new properties managed by The Ascott Limited (Ascott) Philippines are set to open in 2023, according to its new country general manager.

At a media roundtable on July 27, Ascott Philippines' Country General Manager Philip Barnes said the eight new properties are located in Quezon City, Manila, Makati, Cebu, and Bacolod. He said these projects will add over 1,500 units, bringing the company's portfolio to over 5,000 units across 27 properties in the next few years.

“We're looking at probably increasing our revenues to over P2.5 billion... This is actually a huge substantial amount in terms of top line,” Mr. Barnes said.

Mr. Barnes said the company expects domestic and international tourism to continue its strong rebound from the pandemic.

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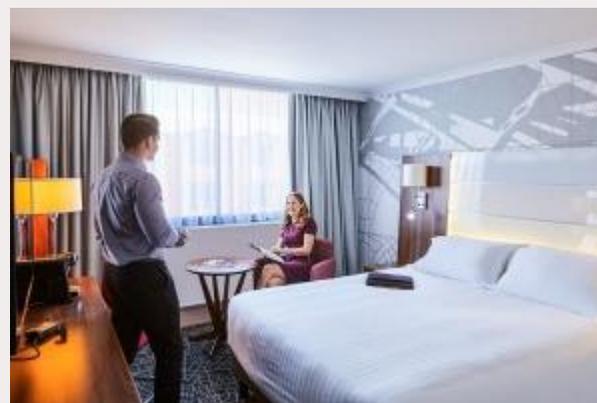
Accor reports strong rebound to pre-pandemic levels

Accor Group's business rebounded significantly in H1 2022 after two years of major pandemic-related disruptions in the tourism and hospitality industry.

In Q2 2022, activity recovered to levels close to, if not above, the 2019 levels in almost all of territories. The only laggards were China, which is impacted by travel restrictions as part of its strict enforcement of a “zero-Covid” policy, and South East Asia, which is highly dependent on Chinese visitors.

This rebound reflects both the recovery of the number of business and leisure domestic guests, and border reopenings which accelerated the return of international travelers. It was accompanied by a sharp increase in prices, driven by demand and emphasized by inflation.

During first-half 2022, Accor opened 85 hotels, representing 11,700 rooms, i.e., net system growth of 1.8% in the last 12 months. At end-June 2022, the Group had a hotel portfolio of 777,945 rooms (5,300 hotels) and a pipeline of 212,000 rooms (1,215 hotels). [READ MORE](#)



Business travel comeback boosts Hilton's Q2 earnings

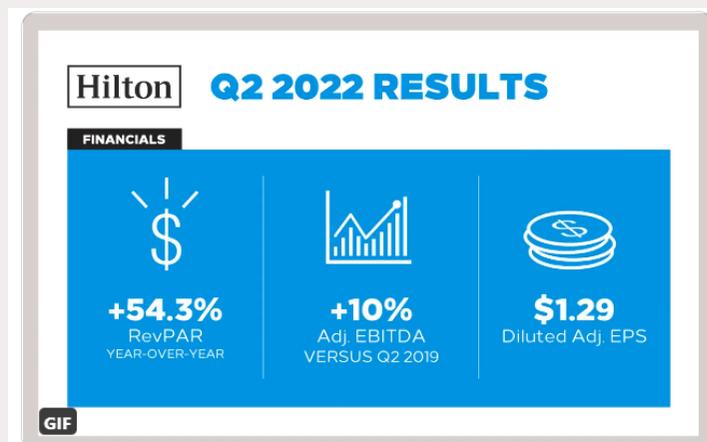
Hilton CEO Chris Nassetta reported an improved outlook for the latter half of the year during Hilton's second-quarter earnings call Wednesday, as revenue per available room (RevPAR) for all major regions, except for Asia Pacific, surpassed 2019 levels.

Nassetta attributed the strong Q2 performance to a solid comeback in business travel as well as the continued strength of leisure travel.

That sustained leisure surge was reflected in Hilton's systemwide weekend RevPAR, which was 14% above 2019 levels for the quarter. For the month of June, weekend ADR was up 20%.

Weekday business also proved robust, with Nassetta reporting that systemwide weekday RevPAR had reached 95% of 2019 levels.

"We expect to see [leisure travel] continue into the fall at higher rates than you would have typically seen pre-Covid because of increased leisure business," said Nassetta. "And business transient continues to recover, led by the big corporates." [READ MORE](#)



RBH Expands Internationally With Australia-Based Gatehouse Hospitality Partnership

Scottish hotel management company RBH Hospitality Management is taking its first steps internationally.

RBH has 44 hotels in its portfolio — including properties affiliated with Hilton, IHG Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International and Accor — all located in the United Kingdom, and has offices in Glasgow and London. But recently it has signed a strategic alliance with Melbourne, Australia-based hotel management company Gatehouse Hospitality that will leverage the skill sets of both sides to propel growth in both markets.

David Hart, CEO at RBH, said it has been a long-term plan for the management company to expand overseas, but what was critical in making the jump was finding the best route and partner.

“We’re clearly a third-party operator. We do not own or lease, so it, so the exercise was in finding markets where third-party management can thrive and where there is some scale,” Hart said.

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