

# ISSUE 235

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## WEEKLY INSIGHTS

## HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER



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# AirAsia expected to boost regional inbound tourism in Penang with new Bali route

Penang is set to receive more inbound travellers with the launch of AirAsia's new direct route from Bali, scheduled to start on Oct 20.

State Tourism and Creative Economy Committee chairman Yeoh Soon Hin said he is confident that the route would be popular and provide numerous benefits to the local communities, through the multiplier effect of tourism spending as well as employment opportunities.

“This direct flight will also entice foreign travellers to come to Penang, and this flight connectivity is advancing my vision towards establishing direct flights between Penang and Australia.

“Studies have shown that Bali's leading international tourist arrivals are Australians, and since Penang is a growing business and tourism hub surrounded by beaches, this may also encourage airlines to explore the possibility of developing a new route between Penang and Australia,” he told reporters at the launch of the route by AirAsia here on Wednesday (Oct 12).

The twice-weekly flight would bring AirAsia's flight frequency in Penang to 156 flights per week. [READ MORE](#)



# AirAsia X announces more medium-haul flights

AirAsia X is increasing the number of its medium-haul Malaysian flights to 44 per week across 10 routes, while Thai AirAsia X will also be expanding its operations to 22 flights a week across five routes in the next two months.

AirAsia X has recently launched direct services from Kuala Lumpur to South Korea (Seoul-Incheon) and India (New Delhi), and resumed services to Australia (Sydney, Melbourne and Perth), New Zealand (Auckland), and Japan (Tokyo-Haneda and Sapporo-Chitose).

In a statement on Tuesday (Oct 18), the group also confirmed new flights to Saudi Arabia (Jeddah) and Taipei starting November.

Meanwhile, Thai AirAsia X has launched services from Bangkok to Japan (Osaka and Tokyo-Narita) and South Korea (Seoul-Incheon), and is preparing to launch new direct flights to Australia (Melbourne and Sydney) and Japan (Sapporo-Chitose) in early December.

AirAsia X said all furloughed pilots and retrenched cabin crew members will have the opportunity to be back in the sky by December. [READ MORE](#)



# Sarawak tourism minister: Tourist arrivals expected to surpass target

Sarawak Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts Minister Datuk Seri Karim Rahman Hamzah today said visitor arrivals in Sarawak will surpass the ministry's target as more tourism events will be held before the end of this year.

He said his ministry's target is 1.2 million this year against the original target of over 4 million that was set before the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The total visitor arrivals from January to September this year is 1,141,184 and so we have about 600,000 arrivals more to reach 1.2 million.

"I believe we can surpass the target with more tourism and business events planned this year," he told reporters after officiating a Tribal Gathering organised by Business Events Sarawak.

He said by the end of the month the arrivals would be over 1.2 million.

He said foreign arrivals totalled 313,100 for the January to September 2022 period compared to 15,532 for the same period of last year. He said most of the foreign tourists come from Brunei, Indonesia and Singapore.

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Ministry of Tourism,  
Creative Industry and  
Performing Arts Sarawak

# Asean and EU sign accord to expand flights

The European Union has finalised a deal with Asean to expand flights between the two trading blocs following negotiations that began six years ago.

The deal, signed today in Bali, Indonesia, will add passenger and cargo services between and beyond both regions, boosting connectivity as Asia reopens following Covid-19 restrictions, the EU said in a statement.

Under the accord, airlines from member states can operate unlimited flights between the blocs, replacing more limited bilateral arrangements. In addition, they'll be able to fly as many as 14 weekly passenger services and any number of cargo flights via a third country or beyond to another nation.

The EU said the pact represents the world's first bloc-to-bloc air transport agreement. It will open up services for carriers including Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Air France-KLM, Singapore Airlines Ltd, Thai Airways International and Malaysia Airlines. [READ MORE](#)



# Malaysia remains emerging hotspot in medical tourism

Malaysia is increasingly recognised as a world-leading destination for medical and healthcare tourism, seeing its business revenue nearly triple in less than a decade.

From a sales receipt of approximately RM572 million in 2011, the medical tourism business generated close to RM1.7 billion in 2019, partly attributed to the country's favourable geographical location.

Currently, Malaysia is ranked among the top medical tourism destinations in Asia, alongside India, Thailand, Singapore and South Korea.

Association of Private Hospitals (APHM) president Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh said Malaysia is one of the best in South-East Asia in terms of cost and high standard of healthcare. [READ MORE](#)



# Sarawak and Tourism Malaysia win awards

The Malaysian tourism industry gained international recognition at this year's PATA Gold Awards, organised by the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

Malaysia won three of 23 Gold Award categories: Travel Video, Culture, and Travel Photograph.

Sarawak Tourism Board landed two Gold Awards from the Travel Video and Culture categories. Its promotional video titled "A Journey Awaits" by Faithworks Studios won the Travel Video Gold Award, which invites travellers to Sarawak through its portrayal of the state's enchanting beauty, culture, heritage, and natural wonders.

Tourism Malaysia bagged the Travel Photograph Gold Award through its photo entry of a man flying a Wau, Malaysia's traditional kite, by the coast of Terengganu. Capturing one of the most recognisable symbols of Malaysian culture, flying a Wau is both a cultural icon and a valuable part of the country's cultural heritage. [READ MORE](#)



# Accor to open dual-branded Ibis and Mercure property in Bangkok

Accor has announced plans for a dual-branded property in Bangkok's Ratchathewi district.

The Mercure and Ibis Bangkok Siam Ratchathewi hotels will be housed within a mixed use development at the Ratchathewi intersection, with direct access to the city's BTS Sky train and within walking distance of the Airport Rail Link to Suvarnabhumi International airport.

The property will offer a combined total of 354 rooms – 200 at the Mercure hotel and 154 at the Ibis – with shared facilities including a restaurant, lobby bar, swimming pool, Kid's Club and two meeting spaces.

The hotels are slated to open in 2025, and will join Accor's current portfolio of 83 properties across Thailand. [READ MORE](#)

**MERCURE**  
HOTELS



# Hyatt partners Toyota for Japan's first Unbound Collection Hotel

Hyatt has expanded its portfolio of hotels in Japan with the opening of the Fuji Speedway Hotel in Shizuoka, the first Unbound Collection by Hyatt property in the country.

Flanked by the breathtaking vista of Mount Fuji and the adrenaline-fueled Fuji Speedway race circuit, the hotel – one of several attractions in the new Fuji Motorsports Forest project developed by Toyota – is approximately 80 minutes by car from Tokyo.

Located adjacent to the historic Fuji Speedway motor racing circuit which hosts world-class racing events, the hotel also houses the Fuji Motor Sports Museum, which showcases about 40 racing cars dating from the end of the 19th century.

The hotel features 120 rooms, including 21 suites, all with private balconies offering views of Fuji Speedway race circuit or Mount Fuji.

Facilities at the hotel include two restaurants and a bar, a variety of meeting and event spaces, a spa and wellness centre with indoor pool, indoor and outdoor hot spring onsens, and a fitness center which even has a state-of-the-art driving simulator designed for professional race car drivers that is accessible for guests. [READ MORE](#)

