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Flight bookings to Asia Pacific surge 250pct ahead of CNY despite high inflation: Sojern

With a recent report indicating Asia Pacific's travel industry may be the only one in the world to recover by 2023, this year's Chinese New Year could be cause for additional celebration.

Looking at flight bookings, top origin countries travelling to or within Asia Pacific for Chinese New Year were Singapore (16%) and the United States (12%), according to Sojern, a leading provider of digital marketing solutions for travel.

This was followed by Thailand (9.0%), Taiwan (8.0%) and Japan (7.0%), Sojern said, adding that this was likely due to the long awaited loosening of their Covid-19 travel restrictions.

For hotel bookings, South Korean travellers take the top spot with 16.0 of all Asia Pacific bookings, then the US (11%), moving up from sixth place, followed by Japan (10%), Hong Kong (8.0%) and Australia (8.0%).

Sojern said Southeast Asia hotspot Thailand (27%) came out as the top destination country based on flight searches for global travellers, Japan (19%), Singapore (18%), the Philippines (10%) and Malaysia (8.0%) make up the remainder of the top five. [READ MORE](#)



Tourism Ministry to review rating system for hotels and restaurants in Malaysia, says minister

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (Motac) is restudying the rating system for hotels as well as food and beverage premises in Malaysia, said its minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing.

He said in a Facebook post that this is to develop a clearer and more reflective way to rate the quality of these cornerstones of the tourism industry.

While adding that more details on the new rating will be announced at a later date, Tiong did not discount the possibility of downgrading the star rating of outlets found flouting basic standards of service quality and cleanliness. “Hotels must ensure that they provide the quality and standards expected of their star rating, rather than being complacent following any boost to their rating. This includes, but is not limited to, room and toilet cleanliness, age of facilities and product and service quality.

“Currently, a total of 4,851 tourist accommodations and hotel operators are registered under Motac,” he said. [READ MORE](#)



Anthony Loke: Mavcom approves 291 additional flights for CNY

A total of 291 additional flights to various domestic destinations have been approved by the Malaysian Aviation Commission (Mavcom) for the Chinese New Year celebrations in a bid to overcome the issue of flight fare hikes during festive seasons.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook said the additional flights approved for the travel period from Jan 18 to 31 involved several airlines, such as Batik Air, AirAsia, Malaysia Airlines, MyAirline and SKS Airways.

"This (additional flights) is an effective approach to deal with the flight fare hike during festive seasons which has been an unsolved issue for quite some time.

"This approach will also be used during other festive seasons, including Hari Raya," he told a press conference after launching Batik Air's additional flights to Sabah and Sarawak and new destinations to Japanese cities, here today. [READ MORE](#)



Aviation sector set for profitability in 2023, says Maybank IB

Malaysia's aviation sector is set for profitability in 2023 as passenger traffic continues to recover, with jet fuel prices easing and airfares remaining high, said Maybank Investment Bank Bhd (Maybank IB).

However, the investment bank has revised downward its projection on passenger (pax) traffic handled by Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) to an average of 78% of pre-Covid levels in 2023, with domestic traffic at 85% and international traffic at 70% due to the slower-than-expected return to service of AirAsia's aircraft in Malaysia.

It had previously expected MAHB's pax traffic to average 90% of pre-Covid levels in 2023, with domestic passenger traffic fully recovered and the international segment hitting 80% of the pre-Covid levels.

"In the long term, we expect domestic pax traffic to continue to be driven not just by the return to service of AirAsia Malaysia's aircraft but also by the expansion of service by MYAirline. [READ MORE](#)



Bertam water theme park gets licence to resume operations

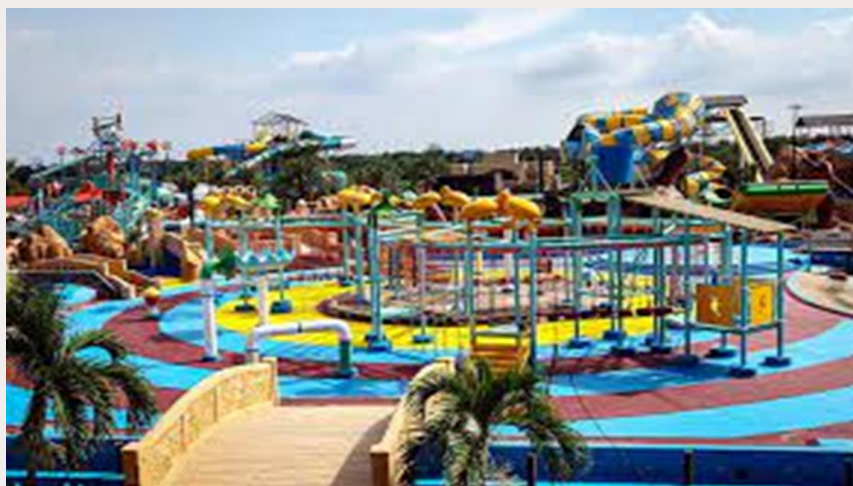
The Bertam Souk & Water Park here has received a license from the Seberang Perai City Council (MBSP) to resume operations as usual.

The theme park was ordered to close on Dec 28, after the MPSP issued a notice to its management to stop all entertainment activities at the water theme park under the Entertainment and Places of Entertainment Enactment 1998.

MBSP said the water park's application for a license was approved on Friday (Jan 6).

"MBSP hopes that the reopening of the theme park will benefit visitors, and that it will become a new tourist attraction in the Seberang Perai area," MBSP said in a statement on Saturday.

Previously, MBSP said it had conducted inspections several times from Dec 16 to 27 at the theme park. It had found that the theme park was operating without a license, and issued a notice for the management to stop all activities there. [READ MORE](#)



Hong Kong investor proposes RM200 mil military-styled theme park in Melaka

A Hong Kong investment company plans to build a RM200 million military-styled theme park in Klebang here next year.

Senior state executive councillor for investment, industry and entrepreneur development Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh said the proposal was submitted to him by the company's representative on Wednesday. The State Economic Planning Unit and agencies involved will evaluate it.

The project is expected to add diversity to Melaka's tourism offerings and attract more domestic and foreign tourists.

"This is an initial proposal and I found it very interesting at the project presentation yesterday. It was proposed that (the theme park) will be developed on Melaka Museum Corp land.

"Based on the proposal, the theme park will be equipped with various military-styled activities for children and adults in addition to a display of military vehicles at the military museum," Ab Rauf said.

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