

# ISSUE 272

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## WEEKLY INSIGHTS

## HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER



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# "King's Park, Genting Highlands officially launched"

King's Park Development Sdn Bhd has formally launched its newest integrated mixed-use development, King's Park in Genting Highlands, with the inauguration of its sales gallery on Saturday.

The project aims to be the area's premier entertainment, leisure, and shopping destination by 2026. Spanning 150 acres, the development has a RM10 billion gross development value (GDV) and will be completed in five phases over eight to ten years.

**Phase 1**, covering 21 acres, will feature **two theme parks** and 360 retail units across 12 integrated commercial lots. **The theme parks are slated to be launched in the fourth quarter of this year.**

**Phase 2** will include **hotels** and serviced apartments and is expected to launch next year. **Phase 3** will introduce the **300-room, 30-storey Swissôtel Genting Highlands**, along with semi-detached villas and bungalows.

**Phase 4** will bring more shoplots, **hotels**, and serviced apartments, while phase 5 will include a hospital, wellness facility, and other medical services. **Among the hotels at King's Park are Crown Estate and Novotel Genting Highlands.** [READ MORE](#)



# MAHB to gain from strong recovery in tourism sector

Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) is expected to see positive impacts from the improvement in the tourism sector including growth in passenger movements.

According to Kenanga Research, the airport operator is expected to see continued recovery in business and leisure air travel throughout this year. Citing Tourism Malaysia, it said tourist arrivals are expected to jump 60% to 16 million this year from an estimated 10 million in 2022.

The research house expects tourism activity to return to the levels seen before the Covid-19 pandemic by 2024. Tourist arrivals would likely expand further by 24% to 20 million in 2024 compared with the pre-pandemic level of 26 million annually. “This should underpin growth in MAHB’s passenger throughput demand in 2023. We expect traffic trajectory to grow in subsequent months as airlines continue to reactivate more aircraft to match increasing demand,” it said in a report.

Similarly, RHB Research expects a stronger recovery in the tourism industry in the second half of this year.

“We like MAHB for the salient recovery of international tourism expected in 2H23, driven by a gradual recovery of tourist arrivals from China and resumption of airline capacity,” it said. [READ MORE](#)



# Air China launches direct flight from Chengdu to KL to enhance China-Malaysia travel and boost tourism

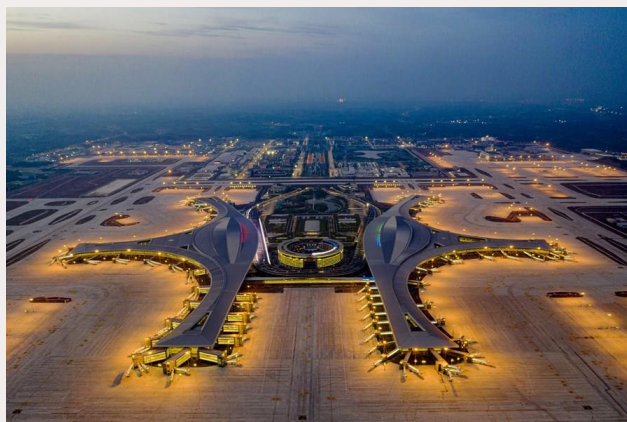
China's flag-carrier airline Air China has officially commenced its direct international flight from Chengdu (Tianfu) to Kuala Lumpur to boost travel between China and Malaysia, and increase tourist traffic between both countries.

The inaugural flight, CA483 departed on 19 July from Chengdu Tianfu International Airport and landed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) at 5.58pm.

More than 150 passengers from the inaugural flight were greeted by a ceremonial water cannon salute by KLIA's Airport Fire and Rescue Services (AFRS) firetrucks before being welcomed by Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing.

"This (inaugural flight) shows that Malaysia is receiving a tremendous amount of support from Chinese tourists. "Therefore we must continue to improve our services so that we are able to cater to all these tourists coming from across the world so that our country's economy will flourish," he said.

Air China will operate four flights a week to and from Chengdu on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. [READ MORE](#)



# Sarawak expects to hit three million tourist arrivals target this year, says state minister

Sarawak is expected to hit its 2023 target of three million tourist arrivals, says Datuk Seri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah.

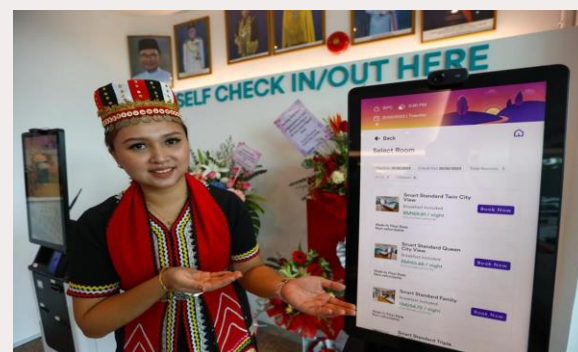
The state Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts Minister said that this is due to several international events expected to take place from now to December.

Abdul Karim said that the number of tourist arrivals from January to June is about the same as in 2019 and 2018, and added that this is back to pre-pandemic levels. Sarawak received 4.4 million and 4.6 million tourists in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

Abdul Karim said this at the closing of the Borneo Cultural Festival on Sunday (July 23) night and added that it has become difficult to book hotel rooms in Kuching due to a series of events.

"The national-level International Museum Day from July 31 to Aug 6 will involve all states in the country. We will have thousands of participants in Kuching for the event," said Abdul Karim.

"The events will continue until the end of the year, when we will have the Dragon Boat Race and the Sarawak Regatta. We do hope many of those coming down to Kuching will also go to other places in Sarawak to extend their holidays," he added. [READ MORE](#)



# How Tourism Malaysia is building back the sector in the post-Covid era

Festivals, endurance sports, food trails, hiking and heritage tours. These are among the products that the government is banking on to bring the buzz back to the Malaysian tourism industry after Covid-19 lockdowns nearly decimated it says newly appointed Tourism Malaysia director-general Datuk Dr Ammar Abd Chapar.

“According to the World Tourism Organisation, the global tourism sector is showing signs of recovery in 2023,” Ammar tells The Star in an interview recently. “In Q1 2023, international arrivals reached 80% of pre-pandemic levels, with an estimated 235 million tourists travelling internationally. This figure more than doubled compared to the same period in 2022, indicating a resilient rebound.

“As for Malaysia, we are forecasting a gradual return to pre-pandemic numbers.” Ammar estimates that the number of international visitors could return to pre-Covid 19 levels by 2025, when arrivals are projected to reach 23.5 million, while total receipts are expected to hit RM76.8 billion.

In 2019, before Covid-19 shut down all travel, Malaysia received 26.1 million international visitors who brought in RM86.1 billion in revenue, according to Tourism Malaysia statistics.

For this year, after the last of the pandemic era travel restrictions were lifted in China, Malaysia aims to attract **16.1 million international tourists that are expected to bring in RM49.2 billion in receipts.** [READ MORE](#)



# Malaysia, Cuba exploring potential for cooperation in tourism

Malaysia and Cuba are exploring the potential for cooperation in the tourism sector, key to their economic development, said Mohd Akbal Setia, Vice President (Americas) of Tourism Malaysia.

During a meeting in Havana with representatives of various travel agencies which is part of a five-day visit to Cuba (July 17 to today) with the aim of improving bilateral relations focused on tourism, Mohd Akbal said the industry is very important for their respective economies.

He held a meeting with officials from the Cuban Tourism Ministry, with whom he agreed that their respective countries have the potential to establish profitable cooperation in this field for mutual benefit. Also present at the meeting was Malaysian Charge d'Affairs to Cuba Chenderawasih Abdul Malak.

Mohd Akbal noted that work can be done to promote holiday travel in both directions and explore other opportunities.

During his presentation, Mohd Akbal outlined the richness and diversity of tourism products, and that the Malaysian destinations received an average of 26 million visitors per year, before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out at the beginning of 2020. That flow provided the country with US\$22.2 million (RM101 million) in income, according to official statistics. [READ MORE](#)



# Accor Doubles Its Footprint in Japan, Unveils Massive Expansion Plans Across Asia

Accor, a world-leading hospitality group, is set to expand its hotel presence in Japan, a move that is expected to double its current portfolio in the country.

The global hotel and hospitality corporation has entered into a new partnership with Japan Hotel Reit Advisors (JHRA), aiming to transform the Daiwa Resorts portfolio into Grand Mercure and Mercure branded hotels.

This agreement will bolster Accor's position in Japan, with an additional 23 properties and over 6,000 rooms added to its existing portfolio. The transformation of the hotels will take place throughout 2024, after which they will operate under Accor's umbrella.

Jean-Jacques Morin, Group Deputy CEO and CEO Premium, Midscale & Economy Division at Accor, expressed the company's enthusiasm for this growth phase. He highlighted Accor's ambition to provide travelers with a richer and more diverse range of experiences across Asia, driven by the region's recovery.

Accor's expansion isn't confined to Japan alone. The Group also announced the debut of several new properties across Asia Pacific, showcasing its extensive network in the region. These include Pullman Singapore Hill Street, ibis Styles Bangkok Twin Towers, Novotel Nara, Fairmont Hanoi, Mondrian Singapore Duxton, and Fairmont Tokyo. [READ MORE](#)



# IHG Expands Footprint in Saudi Arabia with a New Hotel Indigo Property in NEOM's Oxagon

IHG Hotels & Resorts has signed a franchise agreement that will see a Hotel Indigo property open in Oxagon, a coastal industrial city in NEOM, located in the Northwest region of Saudi Arabia.

In Oxagon, thriving communities will exist seamlessly alongside clean industry, commercial, hospitality, entertainment and retail activities. The 250-key Hotel Indigo property will be situated in Oxagon's first residential community and will open its doors in 2026. Designed to seamlessly integrate work, live, and play, Oxagon's neighborhoods will be fully walkable, with sustainable on-demand mass transit and micro mobility solutions.

As one of IHG's lifestyle brands, Hotel Indigo properties offer a gateway to some of the world's most inspiring locations. Just as no two neighborhoods are alike, no two Hotel Indigo properties are the same, taking inspiration from the area around each hotel to inform all aspects of the guest experience, from the hotel's boutique design approach to locally inspired restaurants.

Haitham Mattar, Managing Director, India, Middle East & Africa, IHG, said: "We are delighted to announce our first IHG hotel in the exciting and rapidly developing region of NEOM. Hotel Indigo is dedicated to embracing the unique essence of each local destination, ensuring that our hotels truly embody the spirit of their locations. [READ MORE](#)

