

ISSUE 289

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HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER



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'Positive changes' for MM2H to be announced in mid-December

The Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme is set to undergo significant modifications, with Tourism, Arts, and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing announcing positive changes to be revealed in mid-December.

The MM2H threshold will see major adjustments, aiming to attract more applicants and boost tourism and foreign investments. Tiong disclosed plans to review and re-register MM2H consultant agents, emphasizing transparency and fairness with a fixed consultancy fee.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's announcement in October to ease stringent conditions aligns with the goal of encouraging foreign investments. The current strict scheme, implemented in August 2021, included higher financial requirements, prompting the need for reforms to make the MM2H programme more appealing. The Tourism Ministry anticipates attracting 10,000 to 15,000 MM2H applications in the coming year, projecting a revenue of approximately RM11.25 billion for Malaysia. [READ MORE](#)



Malaysia records 26 million tourist arrivals from Jan 1 to Nov 15, says ministry

Singaporeans topped the list of 26 million tourist arrivals to Malaysia, according to the Immigration Department's latest statistics recorded from Jan 1 to Nov 15, 2023.

Tourism, Arts, and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing expressed optimism about increased arrivals, particularly with the recent implementation of a 30-day visa exemption for Chinese and Indian travelers starting December 1. According to statistics released, the most number of tourists were from Singapore at 12,645,364 tourists, followed by Indonesia (3,166,295), Thailand (2,073,162), China (1,407,471), Brunei (904,841), and India (780,532) while the rest are from other countries.

Meanwhile, Kraftangan Malaysia director-general Ainu Sham Ramli hopes the Rahmah Batik Sales, launched in conjunction with Malaysian Batik Day Celebration Saturday, can provide the public with an opportunity to buy batik at a price of less than RM100.

"We will hold special offers, in collaboration with batik entrepreneurs so that customers can buy more affordable batik items," she said. She added that this year's celebration is being held for five days from Nov 30 until Sunday (Dec 4), with a targetted sales of RM1mil. [READ MORE](#)



World Tourism Day, World Tourism Conference 2025 projected to generate RM2b

Malaysia is poised to host over 156 international business events and conferences from 2024 to 2026, projecting an economic impact of RM2.3 billion, according to Tourism, Arts, and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing.

A strategic collaboration with the Melaka state government includes plans for the World Tourism Day (WTD) and World Tourism Conference (WTC) in 2025, anticipating over 3,000 participants from 159 countries.

Malaysia was chosen to host the global celebration of WTD 2025, themed "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation," as endorsed during the UN World Tourism Organization General Assembly. The events coincide with a 10-year memorandum of understanding with Uzbekistan to strengthen tourism cooperation.

The selection of Melaka as the host reflects its historical significance and commitment to tourism development, aligning with the Malaysia Visit Year 2026 campaign. [READ MORE](#)



AirAsia solidifies Kota Kinabalu as second-largest hub with new route to Seoul

AirAsia has reinforced Kota Kinabalu as its second-largest hub in Malaysia by introducing a new route connecting Kota Kinabalu to Seoul (Incheon), South Korea. The airline will operate 18 routes with 282 weekly flights from and to Kota Kinabalu starting in March next year.

The daily flights to Seoul aim to facilitate travel for passengers exploring the cultural attractions, scenic beauty, and culinary delights of both cities. The decision follows a notable increase in South Korean tourists visiting Sabah, with over 150,000 expected this year.

AirAsia's CEO, Riad Asmat, highlighted the significance of connecting Kota Kinabalu directly to Seoul and emphasized the airline's commitment to expanding the city's status as a vibrant aviation hub. Special promotional rates for the new route start at RM349 one-way. [READ MORE](#)



Local airlines add more international flights from Kuala Lumpur

In a year marked by significant expansion, local airlines such as Batik Air and AirAsia X are enhancing their global networks with new international routes.

Batik Air recently introduced non-stop flights to Dubai, Istanbul, and Melbourne, among other destinations. The Dubai route, launched on November 11, aims to boost inbound traffic and seating capacity at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). Batik Air's seasonal flights to Melbourne will commence on December 20. Additionally, the airline plans a non-stop service to Istanbul from February 9, 2024.

Meanwhile, AirAsia X announced its new route to Almaty, commencing on March 14, 2024, marking the first direct flight by a Malaysian airline to the Kazakh city. Malaysia Airlines also expanded its reach with inaugural flights to Amritsar and Thiruvananthapuram in India, along with plans to start non-stop service to Ahmedabad.

The airline now offers 30-day visa-free travel within Malaysia for Indian nationals. These expansions reflect the airlines' commitment to exploring new territories and enhancing connectivity. [READ MORE](#)



Malaysia, Timor-Leste forge strategic collaboration in tourism, culture

Tourism, Arts, and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing hosted Timor-Leste's Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Francisco Kalbuadi Lay, and Ambassador Joana Veneranda Amaral for a productive courtesy visit on December 4, 2023.

The meeting aimed to establish a comprehensive framework for cooperation in tourism, culture, and heritage development between Malaysia and Timor-Leste. Both nations expressed a strong commitment to collaboration through the development of a memorandum of understanding (MoU), focusing on tourism and culture for sustainable growth.

The discussions included plans for an annual cultural exchange, enhanced air connectivity, joint promotional programs, and potential hospitality sector training for Timor-Leste students in Malaysia. Malaysia expressed support for Timor-Leste's accession into ASEAN and committed to providing capacity-building and technical assistance in cultural heritage management and creative industries. Malaysia looks forward to deepening collaboration with Timor-Leste within the ASEAN region. [READ MORE](#)



How performers like Westlife, Blackpink help KL's hotels: What the numbers tell us about concerts

Major concerts in Kuala Lumpur significantly boost hotel occupancy rates, according to data analytics firm ADATA. Focusing on a sample of 65 hotels, ADATA analyzed monthly figures for the period from January to October 2023, comparing them with the same period in 2022.

While noting that multiple factors could affect hotel occupancy rates and it may be difficult to determine the impact of a particular event on demand for hotel rooms, ADATA said its year-on-year comparison of these KL hotels' average occupancy rates in 2023 to 2022 figures would even out annual factors such as school holidays. This would then enable ADATA to see if concerts had benefited hotels in terms of more hotel rooms being taken up.

The analysis revealed a noticeable correlation between major concerts and increased hotel occupancy rates. In February 2023, during Westlife's concert, hotel occupancy rates increased by 87.9% year-on-year, while March 2023, featuring multiple concerts, saw a 60.1% year-on-year growth.

ADATA concluded that months with major concert events in 2023 showed an average of 188% higher monthly year-on-year growth compared to the 10-month average. [READ MORE](#)

