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AmanahRaya REIT completes RM145mil sale of Holiday Villa Resort in Langkawi

AmanahRaya–Kenedix REIT Manager has completed the RM145 million sale of Holiday Villa Beach Resort & Spa Langkawi as part of AmanahRaya Real Estate Investment Trust's strategy to reduce borrowings.

The sale, initiated through a June 28, 2023, agreement with Plenitude Gateway Sdn Bhd, includes a 4–star beach resort with 238 rooms on freehold land. Acquired in 2007 for RM55 million, the property is currently leased by Langkawi Holiday Villa Sdn Bhd until July 12, 2026, with an optional 10–year extension. The transaction aligns with AmanahRaya REIT's goal to optimize returns and will result in a RM45 million gain, reflected in the December 31, 2024, financial statement.

Proceeds will fund new acquisitions, supporting the company's asset portfolio yield enhancement. Plenitude aims to diversify regional hospitality industry risks through this purchase.



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ONYX Hospitality Group to introduce three properties in Malaysia this year

Thai-based hotel management company ONYX Hospitality Group will be introducing three new properties in Malaysia this year. Located in Johor, these properties are OZO Medini, Shama Medini and Shama Suasana Johor Bahru.

"The new hotels in Malaysia form part of ONYX Hospitality Group's strategy to drive significant expansion in the hotel, resort and serviced apartment business in Southeast Asia. The company is on track to operate over 50 properties by 2025, up from 44 at present, and an even more ambitious target of 70 by 2028," according to a statement dated Jan 3.

With the three upcoming properties, ONYX will have a total of seven properties in its Malaysian portfolio as it currently manages Amari Johor Bahru, OZO George Town Penang, Amari SPICE Penang and Amari Kuala Lumpur. The expansion will also make Malaysia the first country outside Thailand to host all three ONYX brands — Amari (upscale hotel), OZO (hotel) and Shama (serviced apartments).





Sabah needs more quality hotels

Sabah's tourism revival in 2023, with an expected surge in 2024–2025, is prompting a need for additional quality hotels, especially during peak periods, according to Zerin Properties Group CEO Prevedran Singhe.

The state government is actively attracting hoteliers to address the demand, emphasizing the necessity for international branded hotels to cater to the rising international arrivals. Currently, there's a shortage of three- to five-star hotels in Kota Kinabalu. The tourism boom has led to the conversion of shophouses into accommodations, with plans for heritage building conversions. The State Tourism Ministry allocates funds for rural infrastructure repair to boost community-based tourism.

Numerous hotel projects, including Airbnb suites and large-scale developments, are underway, with Semporna and Tawau expecting significant increases. Despite strong domestic-driven room sales, hotels face competition from short-term rentals. Prevedran highlights the pressing need for upscale accommodations to match Sabah's flourishing tourism industry.



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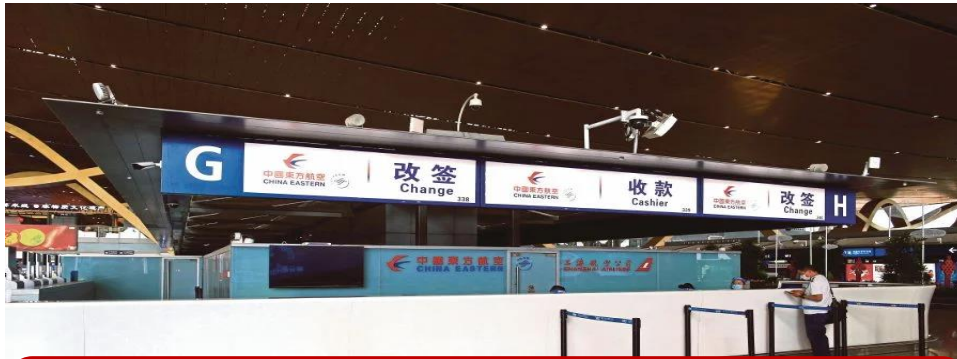
MOTAC achieves milestone in forging Malaysia-China cooperation in tourism

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture's recent visit to China has strengthened ties and fostered cooperation in Malaysia–China tourism. Minister Datuk Sri Tiong King Sing announced significant collaborations with major Chinese online travel platforms, including Tongcheng Travel, Fliggy Travel, and a strategic cooperation memorandum with Ctrip Group.

Partnerships with Tuniu Travel and Meituan Travel aim to actively market Malaysia to Chinese tourists online and offline. This initiative, fostering a beneficial relationship, is expected to boost prosperity and development in Malaysia–China tourism for years to come.

Tiong emphasizes common goals of enhancing amenities, providing exciting travel options, and bringing the tourism industries of both countries closer. The minister envisions continued success in Malaysia–China tourism cooperation, creating compelling experiences for both nations and elevating Malaysia's global standing.

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Malaysia-China tourism takes off: Shanghai and China Eastern Airlines boost flights to 62 weekly

Shanghai Airlines and China Eastern Airlines are set to significantly increase flight services between Malaysia and China, committing to a minimum of 62 weekly flights.

Tourism, Arts, and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing revealed plans for expanded operations, adding five departure locations and introducing three new destinations, with a focus on Xi'an and Urumqi for the Chinese Muslim market. Visa exemptions have spurred increased tourism, prompting the airlines to enhance schedules, boost frequencies, and introduce new routes.

Currently operating 45 weekly direct flights, the airlines plan to cater to Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) program participants, with immediate steps including increased flight frequencies. Shanghai Airlines will elevate the Langkawi route frequency, while China Eastern Airlines initiates flights on the Beijing to Kuala Lumpur route and plans for new daily flights to Penang and Kuching in the second half of the year, potentially reaching a total of 73 weekly flights.



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Langkawi gains international flights

Langkawi gears up for increased air connectivity in 2024, featuring new services, including Flydubai's daily flights from Dubai via Penang starting February 10. This marks the first direct link between Langkawi and the United Arab Emirates.

AirAsia Indonesian plans to launch the first-ever direct flights from Kualanamu, Medan, Indonesia, to Langkawi in March, significantly reducing travel time.

Malaysia Airlines expanded its services, while AirAsia and Scoot maintain routes from Singapore. Notably, Langkawi Development Authority secured a charter flight series with ITAKA, Poland's largest tour operator, connecting Warsaw and Langkawi starting early 2024.

Domestically, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Subang, and Johor Bahru offer frequent flights, emphasizing Langkawi's growing appeal as a tourist destination with enhanced international and domestic accessibility.



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Ascott lyf brand expands with 8 new city hotels meeting demand for social living

Ascott's lodging arm, The Ascott Limited, announces the expansion of its lyf brand with the signing of eight new properties, bringing the total to over 30 operational or upcoming lyf properties globally. The new additions span resort and city destinations like Bali, Penang, Sydney, and Frankfurt.

Originally a coliving concept, lyf has evolved to offer flexible accommodation options, including coliving spaces, city hotels, and full-service resorts. With a focus on the modern traveler demographic, lyf aims to foster connections between guests, the city, and its culture.

Ascott plans to introduce lyf to more destinations, targeting 150 properties and over 30,000 units by 2030. The newly signed properties, nearly 1,500 units, include locations in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Bali, Sydney, Tokyo, Frankfurt, and Shanghai, scheduled to open within the next four years.



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