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Tourism on the rebound with 7.5 million tourist arrivals in Q1 2024

Malaysia recorded approximately 7.5 million foreign tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2024, according to Deputy Tourism, Arts, and Culture Minister Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan. This is a significant increase from the 5.8 million arrivals reported from January to March, representing a 32.5% rise from the 4.3 million arrivals in the same period in 2023.

Speaking at the launch of Malaysia Mega Sale 2024, Firdaus expressed confidence in achieving the target of 27.3 million foreign tourist arrivals for the year, expected to generate an estimated revenue of RM102.7 billion. He noted that the weak ringgit could be advantageous for the tourism sector by boosting the spending power of foreign tourists. In 2023,

Malaysia welcomed 20,141,846 foreign tourists, with Singaporeans making up the largest share at 8.3 million, followed by visitors from Indonesia (3.1 million), Thailand (1.55 million), China (1.47 million), and Brunei (811,833).



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Tourism Malaysia sets target of 220 million domestic tourists

Tourism Malaysia aims to boost domestic tourism, targeting 220 million domestic visitors with RM88 billion in spending this year. By Q1, they achieved 25% of this goal, attributing it to increased local interest in Malaysian tourist spots.

Director-General Manoharan Periasamy highlighted efforts to promote domestic travel through diverse promotional activities and events like the Cuti-Cuti Malaysia Madani Civil Servants 2024 exhibition. This initiative offers up to 30% discounts on travel packages across various destinations including islands like Redang, Kapas, and Tioman, and activities such as glamping and homestays.

The event underscores the value of domestic travel amidst currency advantages over overseas trips, encouraging Malaysians, especially younger generations, to explore new destinations within Malaysia.



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Southeast Asia emerges as top choice for Indian tourists, finds Oyo report

According to the OYO Global Summer Vacations Travelopedia 2024, Southeast Asia has become a preferred destination for Indian travelers seeking short vacations, benefiting from relaxed visa regulations.

Bali emerged as the top choice, favored by 38% of respondents, followed closely by Pattaya, Bangkok, and Dubai. **Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia and Malaysia are increasingly popular due to easier visa access.** Conversely, Europe and the United States remain top choices for longer stays of 10–15 days or more. OYO Founder and CEO Ritesh Agarwal highlighted improved air connectivity and visa facilitation as factors driving Indian tourism to Southeast Asia.

The report also notes the rise of digital nomadism among Indian travelers, with **Indonesia and Malaysia attracting remote workers due to their affordability, reliable internet, and scenic environments.**



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DE Rantau pass requirements extended to attract more remote workers

Malaysia's DE Rantau Nomad pass, overseen by the Malaysia Digital Economy Corp (MDEC), has expanded its eligibility beyond IT and digital fields. Professionals like CEOs, legal counsel, and business development managers can now apply, with a minimum income requirement of US\$60,000 annually or US\$5,000 monthly.

Since its 2022 launch, the DE Rantau programme has made Malaysia popular among digital nomads, reflected in Kuala Lumpur's rise to 22nd place in Remote's Best Destinations for Remote Work 2023 list. Nomadlist.com also ranked Malaysia highly among digital nomad communities.

Minister Gobind Singh Deo aims to attract more global professionals by enhancing the accessibility and benefits of the DE Rantau Nomad visa, establishing Malaysia as a leading digital nomad hub in Southeast Asia. This initiative promotes digital adoption, professional mobility, and tourism. Gobind views it as a welcoming platform for digital freelancers to explore Malaysia's digital ecosystem before considering it as their permanent base.



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IHH advances medical tourism at expo

IHH Healthcare Malaysia played a pivotal role in promoting medical tourism at the Malaysia Healthcare Expo (MHX) 2024 in Surabaya. As the exclusive partner of the event hosted by the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council, IHH showcased its commitment to providing top-tier healthcare services to Indonesian patients.

With a network including Gleneagles Hospitals, Pantai Hospitals, Prince Court Medical Centre, and Timberland Medical Centre, IHH has served over 50,000 Indonesian patients annually for three decades. Their participation emphasized advanced treatments, personalized care, and partnerships with entities like Bank Mega and Prodia to enhance accessibility.

Recognized for excellence at recent awards, including "Medical Tourism Initiative of the Year – Malaysia," IHH aims to further strengthen healthcare services and continue fostering relationships with Indonesia through value-driven healthcare solutions.



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Malaysia Mega Sale returns with discounts poised to rake in tourists

After a four-year hiatus, the Malaysian Mega Sale has made a comeback from June 15th to July 31st of this year. Discounts of up to 85% are to be expected in order to attract international tourists who already benefit from Malaysia's current exchange rate and affordable cost of living.

Deputy Tourism, Arts, and Culture Minister Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan is quoted as saying this campaign along with Malaysia Super Sale and Malaysia Year-End Sale will be gazetted from next year until 2026 in preparation for Visit Malaysia Year 2026. The previous three campaigns, launched in 2019, generated RM86.14 billion in tourist expenditure alone.

Tourism Malaysia has implemented these major sales campaigns in order to promote Malaysia as a shopping destination while boosting the country's economic sector, including accommodation, gastronomy, and tourism activities. It has received support from numerous shopping malls, hotel associations, travel agencies, airlines, Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad, and other local tourism stakeholders.



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Trip.com & Tourism Malaysia partner together to boost inbound arrivals

Trip.com Group and Tourism Malaysia have expanded their collaboration beyond China to the Asia–Pacific under a three–year Memorandum of Collaboration. The goal is to boost Chinese and international tourism to Malaysia through enhanced marketing, focusing on hotels and attractions.

Harley Travel will support efforts to promote tourism between Malaysia and China amid visa–free travel. Trip.com Group highlights Kota Kinabalu, Penang, Langkawi, and Semporna as popular destinations.

Edison Chen of Trip.com Group aims to elevate Malaysia's tourism profile with quality experiences. Tourism Malaysia's Director General, Manoharan Periasamy, anticipates broader promotion across regional markets. This aligns with Tourism Malaysia's Visit Malaysia 2026 plan, targeting 35.6 million international arrivals and RM147.1 billion in tourist spending.



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Kedah MB & China delegation allegedly discussing Kulim International Airport project

Datuk Seri Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor, Kedah Menteri Besar, recently met with China's Henan Airport Group to discuss a strategic partnership for the proposed Kulim International Airport (KXP).

The discussions aimed to strengthen collaboration for advancing the KXP project in Sidam Kiri, Kuala Muda. Despite awaiting Ministry of Transport (MOT) approval, efforts continue under KXP Airport City Holdings Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Kedah State Development Corp managing Kedah Aerotropolis.

Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd signed an MOU with China Henan Aviation Group to enhance air cargo connectivity between Malaysia and China, complementing the KXP initiative. Originally proposed in 2013, KXP's development is pending final government approval pending the National Airport Strategic Plan (NASP) completion, encompassing all existing and proposed airports nationwide.



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