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P R O P E R T I E S

ISSUE
313

Hospitality Industry Newsletter

Weekly Insights

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Courtyard by Marriott opened its latest hotel, Courtyard by Marriott Kuala Lumpur South

Courtyard by Marriott has opened its latest hotel, Courtyard by Marriott Kuala Lumpur South, on Jalan Puchong, part of the 5.2-acre Bloomsvale @ OKR development by Kerjaya Prospek Property Bhd.

The 278-key hotel offers standard and deluxe rooms, one-bedroom and presidential suites, all equipped with plush bedding, ergonomic chairs, smart LED TVs, high-speed Wi-Fi, Nespresso machines, and bathtubs in suites. Facilities include a grand ballroom for up to 2,100 guests, five seminar rooms, a boardroom, and a bridal room with a lounge and fitting room.

Marriott International VP Ramesh Jackson expressed excitement about expanding in Greater Kuala Lumpur. The Bloomsvale development also includes two residential towers, a corporate office tower, and the newly opened Bloomsvale Shopping Gallery.



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HSBC Forecasts Strong Recovery in Chinese Tourism and Investment for Malaysia Amid Extended Visa Exemption

Malaysia is set for a robust recovery in Chinese tourism, driven by booming foreign direct investment and exports to China, as per HSBC.

The return of Chinese tourists is supported by Malaysia's visa-free scheme and new flight routes, with direct flights recovery just 7% shy of pre-pandemic levels. HSBC believes Malaysia's goal to attract over five million Chinese tourists in 2024, surpassing the 2019 figure of 3.1 million, is achievable. This influx is expected to boost foreign exchange, reduce the services deficit, create jobs, and diversify Malaysia's growth.

Malaysia has extended its visa exemption for Chinese tourists until the end of 2026, coinciding with China's extension for Malaysian tourists. This extension, announced during Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit, marks the 50th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic relations. Significant Chinese investments, especially in green sectors like solar and electric vehicles, and strong trade ties highlight the deepening cooperation between the two nations.



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Revised MM2H guidelines to renew interest in the programme, revive high-end segment - analyst

The revised Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme is expected to revive interest and boost the high-end property market, according to Hong Leong Investment Bank (HLIB) Research.

The new, more lenient guidelines reduce requirements for fixed deposits, offshore income, and liquid assets while introducing a mandatory house purchase. MM2H now includes Silver, Gold, and Platinum categories, plus a special category for Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and Special Financial Zones (SFZ). The Silver category requires a fixed deposit of RM500,000, no offshore income requirement, and no liquid asset stipulation, with the 90-day minimum stay rule unchanged.

While the relaxed requirements are expected to attract more interest, the mandatory house purchase may deter some applicants. HLIB Research notes this requirement benefits the property sector by ensuring all MM2H applicants buy property. The minimum property value for the Silver category is RM600,000. However, competition from similar programmes in Thailand and Indonesia, which do not have a minimum stay requirement, could affect MM2H's appeal.

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Malaysia is among the top trending tourist destinations in Asia

Since reopening to international tourists two years ago, Malaysia's tourism sector has shown promising signs of recovery, despite not yet fully rebounding from the pandemic. In 2023, the country welcomed 20.14 million international arrivals, doubling from the previous year, generating RM71.3 billion in revenue. Tourism Malaysia aims for 27.3 million arrivals in 2024, with RM102.7 billion in expenditure projected.

According to the Mastercard Economics Institute, Malaysia ranks 6th globally and 2nd in the Asia Pacific for tourism recovery, buoyed by increased spending on shopping and dining. Tourists are now staying longer, with average visits extended to 6.4 days, contributing to higher spending on casual and fine dining.

Thailand anticipates a return to pre-pandemic economic levels by late 2024, supported by increased visitor numbers and visa exemptions, particularly from China.



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Saudi Arabia's Riyadh Air flying to Kuala Lumpur, test flight starts in October

Riyadh Air, Saudi Arabia's new national airline, will commence test flights in October 2024 to global destinations, including Kuala Lumpur, ahead of its operational launch in 2025.

Operated using a leased Boeing B787-9 aircraft, the test flight will include a stop at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) Terminal 1, affirming Riyadh Air's intent to establish direct routes to the city in the future. Peter Bellew, COO of Riyadh Air, highlighted Southeast Asia's strategic importance in the airline's network expansion, citing growing business and leisure travel between the region and Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh Air has engaged in productive discussions with Malaysian and Singaporean transportation authorities and Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) to facilitate its operational setup and route establishment.



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Turkish Airlines eyes more flights to Malaysia, Indonesia

Turkish Airlines aims to expand its presence in Southeast Asia, specifically targeting Malaysia and Indonesia with increased flight frequencies.

Chairman Ahmet Bolat highlighted growing demand from Malaysians and Indonesians for travel to Istanbul and Turkey, signaling promising prospects for expanded operations. Currently operating double daily flights from Istanbul to Kuala Lumpur, Turkish Airlines seeks to enhance connectivity through potential new codeshare agreements with Malaysia Airlines Bhd and further expansion of its own direct flight services.

The airline plans a substantial fleet expansion, intending to acquire 600 new aircraft—400 narrow-body and 200 wide-body planes—to increase its current fleet of 435 to 813 aircraft. Bolat emphasized Turkish Airlines' strategic goal to rank among the world's top three airlines, aiming to surpass 86 million passengers by year-end, supported by continuous growth in new destinations and additional flight frequencies globally.



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AirAsia Flies Direct To Pattaya From KL

AirAsia has resumed flights from Kuala Lumpur to Pattaya, the eighth largest city famed for its beautiful beaches, water sports activities and entertainment venues.

The inaugural flight with a close to 90 per cent load factor, departed from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (Terminal 2) at 11.20 AM and landed in U-Tapao-Rayong-Pattaya International Airport at 12.05 PM local time. Guests onboard flight AK840 were celebrated with a water cannon salute upon arrival in Pattaya and warmly received by AirAsia Allstars and representatives from the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

The reinstatement of the route to Pattaya marks the airline's ninth direct route to Thailand – from Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru and Penang – following Bangkok (Don Mueang International Airport), Bangkok (Suvarnabhumi Airport), Krabi, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Hatyai.



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MAHB: KLIA aerotrain project to be completed by January 31, 2025, ahead of schedule

Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) announced that the Aerotrain Replacement Project at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) is set to finish by January 31, 2025, two months ahead of its revised completion date of March 31, 2025.

The project, managed by MA Sepang and a joint venture of IJM Construction Sdn Bhd and Pestech Technology Sdn Bhd (IJMC–Pestech JV), involves installing three new aerotrains and upgrading two lines. Alstom Transport Systems (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd oversees project coordination and will ensure rigorous testing for safe operation post arrival from China in late 2024. Initially scheduled for completion in March 2022, delays led to a new consortium contract in January 2024 to expedite progress.

Mohamed Rastam Shahrom, MAHB's acting CEO, emphasized the project's early completion as a testament to enhancing passenger experience and reinforcing KLIA's stature as a premier regional transport hub with upgraded infrastructure and services.



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