

Z E R I N
P R O P E R T I E S

ISSUE
334

Hospitality Industry Newsletter

Weekly Insights

<https://www.zerinproperties.com>





RM90mil expansion to double Sepang hotel capacity amid tourism growth

iKHASAS Group is investing RM90 million to expand ibis Styles Sepang KLIA, increasing its capacity to nearly 500 rooms by 2026 and adding new sports facilities. The resort-style hotel, formerly Concorde Inn KLIA, reopened in February 2024 with 229 rooms following a RM55 million redevelopment by iKHASAS and ISY Holdings. It has consistently maintained an occupancy rate of over 80%, reflecting strong demand from travellers.

The hotel features 20 biker-themed rooms designed for motorcycle enthusiasts, leveraging its proximity to the PETRONAS MotoGP venue. The official launch, officiated by the Sultan of Selangor and attended by the Sultan of Pahang, underscored its significance in Malaysia's hospitality sector.

Managed by Accor, which operates 26 hotels in Malaysia, ibis Styles Sepang KLIA is part of the group's expansion strategy. Accor plans to open Novotel Johor Bahru next and has seven to eight more properties in the pipeline within 18-24 months, reinforcing Malaysia's role in its regional growth plans.



[READ MORE](#)



Asteria Melaka: 241-key hotel in Malacca City on the market for \$19.5 mil

The 241-key hotel component of Asteria Melaka is on the market for RM65 million (\$19.5 million). Developed by Axteria Assets, a subsidiary of Axteria Group Berhad, Asteria Melaka is a mixed-use development on a 190,793 sq ft site in Kota Laksamana, Malacca City. The project comprises a hotel tower, two residential towers, a commercial hub, and a retail podium.

The 16-storey hotel spans 212,167 sq ft, with rooms ranging from 229 sq ft to 654 sq ft. Amenities include a gym, lap pool, wading pool, clubhouse, and a rooftop garden. The ground floor features a 6,103 sq ft lobby and a 16,651 sq ft landscaped event space. Levels three and four house staff and engineering facilities.

Located less than 10km from Melaka International Airport, the hotel benefits from proximity to UNESCO Heritage sites and medical tourism, being under 4km from Mahkota Medical Centre. Singaporean buyers are eligible, subject to approval, with foreign buyers facing a 4% stamp duty.



[READ MORE](#)



‘Monopoly: Kuala Lumpur Edition’ to debut in 2025 featuring city’s iconic landmarks for Visit Malaysia 2026

Kuala Lumpur will soon have its own official Monopoly edition, marking the first time Malaysia’s capital is adapted into the iconic board game. Tourism Malaysia has partnered with UK-based Winning Moves to produce Monopoly: Kuala Lumpur Edition, set to launch at the end of 2025, aligning with the Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign.

Tourism Malaysia Director General Datuk Manoharan Periasamy expressed excitement about showcasing Kuala Lumpur in an interactive way, allowing a wider audience to explore the city's beauty and adventure. Winning Moves’ partnerships manager, Jennifer Lau, emphasized working with local stakeholders to ensure the edition reflects Kuala Lumpur’s unique heritage and vibrant atmosphere.

With this release, Kuala Lumpur joins global cities like London, New York, Sydney, Tokyo, and Cape Town, which have their own editions. Organisations interested in being featured can contact Winning Moves, while the public can submit suggestions via email at kualalumpur@winningmoves.co.uk.



[READ MORE](#)



Malaysia ranked seventh among world's top retirement destinations, with 'strong appeal to foreign retirees'

Malaysia has been ranked seventh in International Living's 2025 Annual Global Retirement Index, making it one of the top 10 countries for retirement. It is one of only two Southeast Asian nations on the list, alongside Thailand in 10th place.

The report highlights Malaysia's affordability, modern infrastructure, and multicultural appeal. Rental costs in Kuala Lumpur are lower than in major Western cities, with one-bedroom apartments ranging from US\$300 to US\$500 per month and utilities at US\$40 to US\$60. Dining out is affordable, with meals costing as little as US\$2 to US\$3. Penang and Melaka offer an even lower cost of living with a more relaxed lifestyle.

Malaysia's tropical climate (25°C–35°C), modern amenities, and English-speaking population ease the transition for retirees. The "Malaysia My Second Home" (MM2H) visa also adds to its appeal. Panama topped the list, followed by Portugal, Costa Rica, Mexico, France, Spain, Greece, and Italy, solidifying Malaysia's status as a prime retirement destination.



[READ MORE](#)



LSH Capital plans to transform 10-acre KL Tower area into a tourism, retail and cultural destination

Lim Seong Hai Capital Bhd (LSH Capital) will rejuvenate the 10-acre area around Kuala Lumpur Tower into an integrated tourism, retail, and cultural hub. The company has signed a 20-year lease with the government, effective from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2045, to operate and maintain the tower and its surrounding land, including areas near Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve and Jalan Raja Chulan.

LSH Capital's non-executive chairman, Tan Sri Lim Keng Cheng, emphasized the ambition to transform KL Tower into a world-class destination that merges innovation with heritage. The lease was awarded to LSH Service Master Sdn Bhd (LSHSM), a joint venture between LSH Capital's subsidiary LSH BEST Builders (70%) and Service Master (M) Sdn Bhd (30%), a Bumiputera firm specializing in M&E and building maintenance.

This marks LSH Capital's entry into facility management services, aimed at generating long-term recurring income. KL Tower has faced scrutiny since 2022 over its ownership transfer from Telekom Malaysia.



[READ MORE](#)



MAHB targets 18 airlines for Malaysia route expansion at Routes Asia 2025 in Perth

Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) will meet with 18 targeted airlines at Routes Asia 2025 in Perth to discuss expanding air connectivity across Malaysia. The meeting will involve both new and existing airlines, focusing on increasing operations, particularly at KLIA.

MAHB's senior general manager, strategy, Megat Ardian, emphasized the importance of attracting new airlines and enhancing services with existing carriers through new routes, increased flight frequencies, and upgraded aircraft. Currently, 72 airlines operate within MAHB's Malaysian airport network.

Routes Asia 2025, hosted by Perth Airport and Tourism Western Australia, is a premier aviation event uniting airlines, airports, and tourism bodies to discuss air service development in the Asia Pacific. The three-day event, beginning on March 25, will support Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026), which targets 35.6 million tourist arrivals. MAHB has participated in Routes events since 2001 and co-hosted Routes Asia 2024 in Langkawi with Tourism Malaysia, achieving a record number of post-pandemic delegates.



[READ MORE](#)



Pahang Records Highest Number of Hotel Guests Among Local Tourists

Pahang recorded the highest number of hotel guests among local tourists in 2024, with 11.6 million visitors, according to Pahang Unity, Tourism and Culture Committee chairman Leong Yu Man. The top districts for tourist arrivals were Bentong, Kuantan, Cameron Highlands, Temerloh, and Rompin.

Popular destinations such as Genting Highlands, Cameron Highlands, Kuantan City, Cherating, and Pulau Tioman continue to attract tourists, with numbers rising annually.

Tourism Malaysia data ranked Kuala Lumpur second with 9.8 million hotel guests, followed by Johor (7.4 million), Selangor (6.1 million), and Penang (5.2 million).

Pahang also recorded the highest average length of stay rate in Malaysia at 75.6% from January to December 2024, a 1.5% increase from 2023's 74.1%. Leong noted that the average room rate was assessed based on over 36,000 registered accommodation rooms in Pahang, with data sourced from the Tourism Malaysia strategic planning division.



[READ MORE](#)



Melaka Named Host for Visit Malaysia 2026 Launch

The Malaysian government has designated Melaka as the host for the launch of Visit Malaysia Year 2026 (VM2026), Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing announced. The government has approved the event's budget, with state authorities managing preparations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has also agreed to the launch, scheduled for September during World Tourism Day (WTD) 2025. Tiong shared this update during an engagement session with Melaka's Tourism Industry Players 2025 at Bukit Cina. The event was officiated by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh and attended by Tourism Malaysia director-general Datuk Manoharan Periasamy, State Tourism, Arts and Culture Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Razak Abdul Rahman, and over 1,000 tourism industry players from Melaka.

Tiong urged all stakeholders, particularly industry players, to actively promote VM2026 across various platforms, including social media. He emphasized the importance of a tourism-driven economy to benefit all, especially the people.



[READ MORE](#)



AirAsia targets full pre-pandemic capacity by end-2025, to launch over 30 new routes

AirAsia Aviation Group Ltd plans to launch over 30 new routes in 2025, targeting full network capacity recovery by year-end. Chief commercial officer Amanda Woo highlighted Central Asia as a key focus, following the success of the Kazakhstan route, which became profitable within six months.

AirAsia will add more capacity and introduce a new route to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, while increasing flights to Kazakhstan. Australia is another priority, with improved flight schedules to Melbourne and Sydney. The airline recently announced four weekly Kuala Lumpur–Darwin flights starting June 27 and launched a Bali–Darwin route on March 22.

AirAsia will also expand capacity to Japan, a highly profitable market, particularly during peak seasons. Network optimisation and frequency increases will begin in Q2 2025. The airline is evaluating new routes within Asia, driven by easing visa policies in China, India, Thailand, and Malaysia.

With 234 aircraft expected in operation, AirAsia is nearing full pre-pandemic capacity, with 14 new aircraft deliveries confirmed for 2025.



[READ MORE](#)



British Airways to restart daily flights to KL on April 2 after four-year hiatus

British Airways will resume daily flights to Kuala Lumpur on April 2, 2025, four years after suspending the route in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) senior GM of strategy, Megat Ardian Wira Mohd Aminuddin, said discussions with British Airways have been positive, with strong initial load factors and potential for increased frequency.

The London-KL route is lucrative for both leisure and business travelers. British Airways initially planned to relaunch in November 2024 but delayed due to wear and tear on its Boeing 787 engines. The airline previously operated the route but discontinued it in 2001 before reinstating flights in 2015.

MAHB is also targeting oneworld Alliance airlines in Europe, along with non-member European carriers, to enhance connectivity. While considering US-based airlines, its main focus is Europe for long-haul flights.

Meanwhile, MAHB was delisted from Bursa Malaysia on Feb 25 following its privatization by Gateway Development Alliance, led by Khazanah Nasional and EPF.



[READ MORE](#)



Luxury Liner Queen Anne Makes Maiden Call at Penang Port

Cunard's luxury ship, Queen Anne, made its maiden call at Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal (SPCT) in Penang, marking a milestone for Malaysia's cruise industry. Part of a 107-aiden grand voyage covering 30 destinations in over 20 countries, the visit highlights Malaysia's growing presence in global cruise tourism.

Tourism Malaysia stated that the Norwegian Sun will dock in Penang on March 30, complementing Queen Anne's arrival. The Norwegian Sun's 17-night transoceanic cruise from Singapore to Cape Town includes stops at Penang, Port Louis (Mauritius), and Durban (South Africa). Tourism Malaysia deputy chairman Datuk Yeoh Soon Hin attended the welcoming ceremony, featuring cultural performances for 5,094 passengers. He emphasized that such visits promote Malaysia's rich heritage, landscapes, and hospitality, supporting the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign.

Penang Port has hosted various international cruise ships, including Azamara Pursuit, MS Blue Dream Melody, AIDAStella, and Norwegian Sky. In 2024, SPCT handled 1,046,165 passengers, including 650,518 international transit passengers and 4,840 home port passengers.



[READ MORE](#)



Sunway Malls projects 5% growth in 2025

Sunway Malls expects 5% growth in 2025, driven by Malaysia's expanding tourism sector and GDP growth. CEO HC Chan noted that despite global challenges, Sunway Malls recorded 5% growth in 2024 and remains optimistic about sustaining this momentum.

Malaysia aims to attract 31.3 million international tourists in 2025, generating RM125.5 billion in receipts, with even higher targets for Visit Malaysia Year 2026. Chan highlighted that tourism boosts various industries, including malls, hotels, and theme parks. Sunway Malls is expanding with three new malls: Sunway Square in Sunway City KL, Sunway Pier in Port Klang, and Sunway Ipoh Mall, bringing its total to 12 malls and 7.7 million sq. ft. of net lettable area.

The company focuses on experiential shopping, with F&B, leisure, and entertainment making up nearly 50% of its offerings. Integrated developments enhance foot traffic and strengthen its business model. Chan, a key industry adviser, believes Sunway Malls will maintain its market leadership in Malaysia's competitive retail landscape.



[READ MORE](#)