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P R O P E R T I E S

ISSUE
342

Hospitality Industry Newsletter

Weekly Insights

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Paradigm-REIT Eyes Growth with Hotel Assets After Bursa Listing

Paradigm Real Estate Investment Trust (Paradigm-REIT), scheduled to list on Bursa Malaysia on June 10, plans to expand into hospitality assets after the listing. The REIT's sponsor, WCT Holdings Bhd, currently owns three hotels located near Paradigm-REIT's retail properties.

The targeted hotels are Hyatt Place Johor Baru Paradigm Mall, Le Méridien Petaling Jaya, and Premiere Hotel Klang. Paradigm-REIT holds the right of first refusal (ROFR) to acquire these assets if WCT chooses to sell them.

Following the Bursa listing, the REIT aims to inject these hotels into its portfolio starting in 2026. Additionally, there is potential for the gateway@klia2 mall asset to be added by 2027 or 2028.

This post-listing plan reflects Paradigm-REIT's strategy to strengthen its portfolio by including hospitality assets, reinforcing long-term income growth and enhancing asset diversity alongside its strong-performing retail base.



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EXSIM

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Exsim Hospitality Eyes Hotel Growth and Future REIT Formation

Exsim Hospitality Bhd (EHB), which assumed Pan Malaysia Holdings' listing status in 2023, is growing its hotel asset base with long-term plans to establish a real estate investment trust. Its recent RM240.25 million acquisition of a 294-room hotel in Empire City, Petaling Jaya, marks a key step. Funded partly through a rights issue, the deal includes support from major shareholders and is structured at arm's length with staggered payments.

EHB's pipeline includes a serviced residence in Ipoh and potentially another Empire City hotel, both under consideration based on market conditions. Corus Paradise Resort in Port Dickson is also undergoing a major refurbishment, with RM113.6 million allocated. EHB is in talks with international brands to elevate the asset's long-term returns.

Besides owning hotels, EHB manages 496 units across several states. Its growing hospitality management arm blends short and long-term rentals, aiming to increase occupancy and fee income. Dividend plans may begin in 2027.



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Ascott Expands in Penang, Launches Global Hospitality Talent Drive

Ascott Group, owned by CapitaLand Investment Limited, plans to open six more properties in Penang, confident in the state's tourism growth despite increasing room supply. With 14 properties in Penang and eight already operating, Ascott offers over 2,000 rooms. Nationwide, it has 42 properties in operation or development.

Globally, Ascott aims to open 300 new properties by 2028, creating over 12,000 jobs, including 1,500 leadership roles. Penang was chosen as the launch site for its new talent development strategy, reinforcing Malaysia's role in its global expansion.

To support growth, Ascott will roll out "Ascott Accelerate," a fast-track training programme with a digital learning platform. Staff will be trained across services, including food, rooms, and AI integration.

In 2024, Ascott achieved US\$343 million in fee-related earnings, a 12% rise. The 2025 Learning Festival highlights its focus on leadership, innovation, and cross-regional collaboration across its global network.



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Malvest and Maplehome Expand Hospitality with Kelantan's Tallest Tower

Malvest Group has partnered with Maplehome, Malaysia's largest short-term stay operator, to manage homestay operations at Arika@Kubang Kerian. The 42-storey serviced apartment project is poised to become Kelantan's tallest building and a key hospitality landmark upon completion.

Located near the USM Health Campus, Arika@Kubang Kerian offers 668 fully furnished units and 26 commercial shoplots. With over 45 lifestyle facilities, it is drawing strong market interest and setting a new standard for urban living in Kelantan.

The agreement was formalised by Malvest's Tan Kian Boon and Maplehome's Danny Hor, witnessed by Kelantan executive councillor Hilmi Abdullah. The partnership aims to deliver a seamless short-term stay experience backed by Maplehome's hospitality expertise.

Following the success of Troika Kota Bharu, Malvest's 36-storey project, Arika reinforces the developer's commitment to premium, modern Islamic design and sustainable, community-focused living in the state.



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BPMB Funds Pangolin Resort's Expansion to Boost Sarawak Tourism

Bank Pembangunan Malaysia is extending RM33.87 million in financing to Pangolin Resort for the second phase of its Lundu Beach Resort project in Sarawak. The expansion will include a 72-room hotel, 28 villas, a banquet hall and dining facilities, supporting the state's growing tourism industry.

The financing was assessed through BPMB's Measuring Impact on National Development framework. The project aligns with the 12th Malaysia Plan and ESG principles, scoring strongly in job creation, sustainable tourism and community upliftment.

This phase is expected to benefit up to 300 people and create 69 jobs, with 49 in construction and 20 in resort operations. It reinforces the resort's role in enhancing local economic development and tourism infrastructure.

According to Pangolin Resort director Datuk Sri Thomas Lau, the project aims to showcase Sarawak's coastline and natural beauty while driving hospitality growth in the region. BPMB remains committed to national development goals.



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New Nine-Storey Hotel to Boost Tourism Growth in Kapit

A new nine-storey hotel will be developed in Kapit, Sarawak, to strengthen the town's tourism appeal and economic development. The project is a collaboration between Borneo Development Corporation (Sarawak) and Jurubina Unireka. It will be built at the former GiatMARA Kapit site, near the Lily Pond area.

The design will incorporate local cultural elements such as pua kumbu and ngepan Batang Rajang, reflected in both the interior and exterior. This cultural focus aims to offer guests a distinctive Sarawakian hospitality experience while highlighting the region's heritage.

The hotel site, located on the southern bank of the Rajang River, will embrace nature and tranquillity. The architecture will blend with the surrounding environment while promoting sustainability.

Once completed, the hotel is expected to elevate Kapit as a unique travel destination and act as a landmark development that supports both tourism and the local economy.



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Wyndham Suites i-City Strengthens Hotel Development in Selangor's i-City

I-Bhd is boosting its hospitality presence in Shah Alam with Wyndham Suites i-City, a RM323 million freehold integrated tower. Slated for completion in September and opening in December, the 55-storey development includes a 200-room, five-star hotel and 312 branded residences. Unit sizes range from 550 to 865 sq ft.

This is I-Bhd's second hotel-branded residence in i-City, joining ****DoubleTree by Hilton Shah Alam i-City**** and ****Wyndham Garden i-City****, both achieving an average occupancy of 80%. The new project meets rising demand from expatriates, business travellers, and families seeking short-stay suites without long-term leases.

Wyndham Suites i-City offers hotel-standard amenities such as an infinity pool, jogging track, café and lounge, and enjoys seamless access to major highways and the upcoming Seksyen 7 LRT station. Backed by I-Bhd's strong track record and Wyndham's brand value, the project supports i-City's standing as a key commercial and hospitality hub.



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Quayside JBCC Hotel Development Validates BHP's Hospitality Blueprint

Bangsar Heights Pavilion Sdn Bhd (BHP) has fully sold its RM600 million Quayside JBCC project in Johor Bahru, its first foray into the city. The development consists of 482 serviced suites, 24 commercial units and 200 hotel suites housed in a striking 195-metre tower. Over 80% of units were snapped up by foreign investors, confirming strong regional demand.

Located in the Ibrahim International Business District and part of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, Quayside JBCC offers exceptional connectivity and appeal. Notably, it features Malaysia's first transparent cantilevered sky pool and panoramic full-height glazing that overlooks the Johor Strait and Singapore skyline.

The hotel suites and serviced units will be managed by Oakwood Hospitality and Hyatt Place, enhancing operational quality and investor confidence. These international brands contribute more than prestige — they ensure professional management, consistent tenant demand and strong rental performance. Encouraged by market validation, BHP aims to replicate this model in Kuala Lumpur City Centre.



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Avillion Plans Major Upgrade to Port Dickson Hotel Property

Avillion Bhd plans to raise RM11.5 million through a private placement to fund the refurbishment of Avillion Port Dickson, one of its flagship hotels. The upgrade, estimated to cost RM15 million, will focus on rooms, restaurant, gym and pool facilities. Work is set to begin in the third quarter of 2025 and will take two years.

Of the RM11.5 million raised, RM4 million will be allocated to refurbishment, RM3.9 million to working capital and RM3 million to loan repayment. The remaining refurbishment cost will be covered by internal funds or bank loans.

The group also seeks shareholder approval to reallocate RM3 million from its 2021 private placement. Initially intended for hotel upgrades and an eco-tourism park, the funds will now go to working capital and debt reduction.

Avillion has cancelled the eco-tourism park plan at Admiral Cove, choosing instead to focus on upgrading and maintaining its core hotel asset to stay competitive.



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Aneka Jaringan Wins Contract for 62-Storey Hotel Development

Aneka Jaringan Holdings Bhd has won a RM50.54 million contract for a hotel and apartment development in Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur. The job, awarded by Clement Chan Architect on behalf of Kuala Lumpur Metro Property Sdn Bhd, involves earthworks, piling and substructure works.

Spanning 18 months, the project will begin on June 2, 2025, and is expected to complete by December 1, 2026. The development will rise 62 storeys, with the hotel occupying nine floors. Service apartments will span 35 floors, while the remaining levels are dedicated to commercial space and shared amenities.

This contract adds to Aneka Jaringan's strong pipeline of high-rise urban projects, reinforcing its capabilities in major hospitality-linked developments. Its involvement in this strategically located tower underlines continued confidence in city-centre investment potential and its role in shaping Kuala Lumpur's evolving skyline.



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MRCB to Develop RM2.94 Billion Sports Complex in Shah Alam

Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd (MRCB), via its unit Lembaran Prospek Sdn Bhd (LPSB), will design and build a RM2.94 billion sports complex in Shah Alam. The development will include a 45,000-seat stadium, training pitches, a running track, landscaped areas with flood control, and supporting facilities.

Demolition of Stadium Shah Alam, commissioned in February 2024, is nearly complete. The project also includes demolishing Stadium Malawati. MBI Selangor will pay using up to RM200 million worth of land and the balance in cash. Construction will take 48 months, with key works expected to finish in 36 months.

MRCB noted the project will not significantly affect 2025 earnings but is expected to support long-term financial growth.

This development builds on MRCB's prior work at KL Sports City in 2017, reinforcing its project credentials. The land component will help grow MRCB's land bank, potentially strengthening future earnings.



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Malaysia Enhances MM2H Programme to Attract Strategic Residents

The Malaysian Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry (MOTAC) is upgrading the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme to improve transparency, simplify processes, and increase flexibility. The enhanced MM2H offers Platinum, Gold, and Silver tiers to suit high-net-worth individuals, families, retirees, and digital nomads.

Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing described MM2H as more than a visa—a lifestyle package featuring premium living, accredited healthcare, quality education, safety, and strong ASEAN connectivity. During a Maybank event in Singapore, he encouraged Singaporeans to see Malaysia as a strategic base for lifestyle and business.

The partnership with Maybank provides financial advice and onboarding support, boosting interest from Singaporeans. In 2024, nearly 19 million Singaporean visitors came to Malaysia, up 27%, generating RM27.94 billion in tourism revenue. Singapore ranks third among MM2H applicants, showing Malaysia's growing appeal as a top long-term residency and tourism destination.



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Experiential Tourism Key to Malaysia's Growth Ahead of Visit Malaysia 2026

Malaysia aims to lead in experiential tourism, focusing on dining, eco-adventures, and immersive entertainment to attract regional and long-haul visitors. This strategy supports Visit Malaysia 2026, seen as a pivotal moment to advance the tourism sector. Hotel occupancy and domestic tourism remain strong, reinforcing confidence in growth prospects.

Consumer insights from key markets like Singapore help shape targeted promotions. Entertainment, including concerts and e-sports, is emerging as a vital revenue driver. Business, medical, and educational tourism are also expanding, supported by Malaysia's role as ASEAN Chair and its welcoming environment for diverse visitors, including Chinese Muslim tourists.

International arrivals rose 13% in March 2025, led by Singapore, China, and Indonesia. The tourism sector's recovery is steady, bolstered by government-industry collaboration. Experts stress the importance of precise marketing and incentives for travel agents to boost visitor numbers and spending, with China and India identified as key markets for future growth.



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WITEX 2025 to Elevate Malaysia's Global Islamic Tourism Profile

Malaysia will host WITEX 2025 and the first World Cultural & Arts Festival (WCAF 2025) from August 22 to 24 at Sunway Resort Hotel, Bandar Sunway. Organised by MATA, WITEX 2025 highlights Malaysia's leadership in Islamic tourism and has evolved from AITEX to reflect broader global participation.

The event will feature over 150 booths with strong involvement from ASEAN, BRICS, and other global tourism players. Key hotel-linked highlights include business networking, tourism investment sessions, and a black-tie awards gala celebrating excellence in tourism, trade, and culture on August 25.

Major segments like the World Islamic Tourism Conference and Ministers & CEOs Summit will strengthen investor confidence and foster trade ties. Tourism Investment Asia aims to attract capital into Islamic hospitality and travel ventures.

WITEX 2025 is aligned with Visit Selangor Year 2025 and builds momentum toward Visit Malaysia Year 2026, reinforcing Malaysia's hospitality and tourism sector on the world stage.



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Johor Targets RM42.48 Billion Tourism Revenue for Visit Johor Year 2026

Johor aims to generate RM42.48 billion in tourism revenue for Visit Johor Year 2026, based on 12 million tourists spending an average of RM3,500 each. The state government is optimistic this target is achievable.

To support this goal, RM116.35 million has been allocated for tourism upgrades over two years. Key projects include improvements to Johor Zoo, Gunung Ledang, Tanjung Piai National Park, Royal Botanical Gardens, and heritage sites. These upgrades will enhance visitor experience and benefit locals with lower ticket prices compared to foreigners.

Johor plans to host several international events such as the Johor Bangsa Carnival, International Museum Day, and sports events including the Iron Man and Dragon Boat Regatta. Involvement of prominent athletes is expected to boost these initiatives.

The Menteri Besar emphasized that Johor offers more than shopping and dining, highlighting untapped tourism potential that will benefit both visitors and the local economy.



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Penang's Business Events Tourism Generates RM1.29 Billion Economic Impact

Penang achieved a notable milestone in business events tourism, recording an Estimated Economic Impact (EEI) of RM1.29 billion in 2024. This was driven by hosting over 2,000 events with more than 300,000 delegates.

The state government, through the Penang Convention and Exhibition Bureau (PCEB), employed strategic initiatives including participation in global trade shows and roadshows to maintain competitiveness. They are bidding for 27 more international events through 2030.

Key events such as the Penang International Travel Exchange and BE @ Penang have expanded networks with international buyers and strengthened local industry players, including conference organisers, travel agencies, and hotels.

Since the country moved into the endemic phase, business event activity rose sharply from RM375.91 million in 2022 to RM1.03 billion in 2023. Major upcoming international events include the World Research Travel Conference and the International Advertising Association World Congress, boosting Penang's profile further.



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Kota Belud Debuts as Key Stop in Sabah's Growing Sailing Tourism

Kota Belud, known as the Land of the Cowboys of the East, will be a new stop in this year's Sail Malaysia Passage to the East. The district's Bajau heritage and horse-riding culture add unique appeal for sailors.

The rally begins in April and will reach Sabah from July 18 to September 1. Over 31 yachts and 70 participants from 15 countries, including newcomers like Lebanon and India, will explore Sabah's coastal and inland attractions. This shows rising global interest in Sabah's tourism.

Sabah is improving infrastructure with new berthing areas to support more yachts. Datuk Joniston Bangkuai, Sabah's Tourism Board Chairman, said the rally boosts Sabah's reputation as a cultural, adventure, and nature destination, fitting well with Visit Malaysia Year 2026 goals.

Organisers are encouraged to work closely with Sabah Tourism to enhance the event's success. Sailors will also enjoy unique experiences, such as sailing along the Kinabatangan River, known for its rich wildlife.



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Sin-Kung Airways Launches to Expand Regional Air Cargo and Charter Services

Sin-Kung Logistics Bhd is launching its rebranded aviation arm, Sin-Kung Airways Sdn Bhd, in Q3 2025. Formerly Prima Air, the new identity was revealed at LIMA 2025 following regulatory approvals in Malaysia.

Sin-Kung Airways will operate air cargo and premium private charter services using Piaggio P180 Avanti II aircraft. It plans to lease three planes by year-end, with the first arriving in July. Initial routes will link Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu, Kuching, Labuan, and Hong Kong, focusing on high-demand sectors such as e-commerce, pharmaceuticals, and oil and gas.

The rebranding unifies the group's aviation operations under one identity, reinforcing Sin-Kung's role as a full-spectrum logistics provider. Expansion plans include air feeder services and cargo interline agreements to widen network coverage across Asia.

Additionally, Sin-Kung Airways will integrate air and road feeder services and enter the MRO sector with full regulatory certifications, ensuring operational self-sufficiency and compliance.



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Russian Airline Plans Direct Flights to Boost Malaysia Tourism

A Russian airline has shown interest in launching direct flights between Russia and Malaysia, aiming to boost tourism. This was confirmed by Russian Deputy Transport Minister Vladimir Poteshkin at the Russia–Islamic World: KazanForum event.

Discussions between the two countries are ongoing to finalize the plans. The move follows earlier talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who highlighted growing tourist exchanges as a key driver for direct air links.

The initiative aligns with both nations' efforts to strengthen travel and economic ties. The KazanForum, held from May 13 to 18, provided a platform for these discussions.

This potential new air route is expected to facilitate easier access for tourists, supporting Malaysia's tourism growth and enhancing connectivity between Russia and Southeast Asia.



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Batik Air Launches Direct Flights Between Sabah and South Korea

Batik Air will begin direct flights between Kota Kinabalu and Seoul's Incheon Airport on September 12, 2025. Operating three times a week, the service removes the need for stopovers and offers faster access between East Malaysia and South Korea.

The route is expected to increase inbound tourism, as Sabah welcomed nearly 152,000 South Korean visitors from January to September 2024. The airline aims to attract more travellers by offering a convenient way to explore Sabah's nature and culture.

Batik Air CEO Datuk Chandran Rama Muthy said this move supports the airline's goal to strengthen ties with North Asia and improve regional connectivity. The route also helps position Kota Kinabalu as a key international hub.

This expansion supports Malaysia's tourism growth, while enabling two-way travel and trade opportunities between South Korea and East Malaysia. It marks another step in Batik Air's wider regional growth strategy.



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Penang Expands Regional Reach with Direct Phnom Penh Flights

Penang will welcome direct flights from Phnom Penh starting June 26, operated by Cambodia Airways. The new route, flying twice weekly, strengthens Malaysia's regional connectivity and aligns with its role as 2025 Asean chair. It is Penang's first direct link to the Cambodian capital and follows the recent launch of the Chengdu-Penang route.

The flights, scheduled for Thursdays and Sundays, will depart Phnom Penh at 8.05am and arrive in Penang at 10.55am. Return flights leave Penang at 11.55am, landing in Phnom Penh at 12.40pm. This connection is expected to support tourism, business travel, and bilateral trade.

With this launch, Penang now has direct links to six Asean countries. The addition elevates Penang's status as a growing regional hub and supports Malaysia's Asean connectivity goals.

Direct flights to 22 international cities from Penang reinforce its strategic role in aviation, investment, and regional collaboration.



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AirBorneo to Launch with Upgraded Aircraft and Cargo Focus

Sarawak is set to enhance regional air services through its upcoming state-owned airline, AirBorneo, which will take over MASwings operations by 2026. The new ATR 72-600 aircraft will undergo seat reconfiguration to improve passenger comfort, addressing concerns about the current 72-seat layout.

Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg announced that Sarawak will acquire new aircraft as the existing fleet is returned to operators. One of the seven planes may be converted for cargo use, supporting logistics and agriculture exports to markets like Singapore.

The upgrades align with plans to expand Tanjung Manis Airport, enabling it to handle ATR 72-600 aircraft and potentially larger Airbus planes as infrastructure develops. Future growth will be reassessed based on demand and hotel completion nearby.

AirBorneo aims to provide efficient, safe and responsive services while replacing the aging MASwings fleet, further strengthening Sarawak's rural air connectivity and logistics network.



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Airbus Sees Strong Future for A220 in Malaysian Market

Airbus is in talks with Malaysian airlines to introduce the A220, aiming to strengthen regional air connectivity. The aircraft is seen as ideal for domestic and long regional routes, given Malaysia's position between China, India and ASEAN.

Airbus Asia-Pacific president Anand Stanley said the A220 offers advanced technology, fuel efficiency and strong passenger comfort. While no timeline is confirmed, Airbus is confident the A220 suits Malaysia's aviation needs and expects rising demand.

Malaysia is Airbus's third-largest market in Asia-Pacific after China and India, with 150 aircraft in operation and about 400 more on order. AirAsia and Malaysia Airlines already operate major Airbus fleets, including A320s, A330s and A350s.

Airbus also opened a new office in Putrajaya to support 60 global airlines and 1,000 aircraft. At LIMA 2025, Airbus will showcase aircraft systems including the A220, A400M, ACH160, and various innovations.



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Malaysia Airlines Expands Reach With 'Time For Memorable Journeys' Campaign

Malaysia Airlines has launched *Time For Memorable Journeys*, offering attractive fares across domestic and international routes until 20 May 2025, for travel up to 31 March 2026. The campaign supports tourism growth while enhancing passenger experience.

Economy return fares start from RM119 for domestic routes like Langkawi and Kota Kinabalu, and RM419 for international cities such as Bangkok, Trivandrum, Paris, and Brisbane. All fares include 20kg checked baggage.

The campaign adds value with a Bonus Side Trip, allowing free stopovers in Malaysian cities for passengers transiting through KLIA Terminal 1. Premium travellers benefit from Chef on Call menus, family-friendly perks, and luxury Mercedes-Benz terminal transfers.

Malaysia Airlines also enhances its Fare Family options, offering added benefits, flexibility, and a 5% discount for Enrich members. With improved service and expanding routes, the airline aims to strengthen regional connectivity and customer loyalty across key markets.



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