

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

ISSUE  
346

# Hospitality Industry Newsletter

Weekly Insights

<https://www.zerinproperties.com>





## Kuala Lumpur Rises in Global Rankings for Business Event Hosting

Malaysia and Kuala Lumpur advanced in the 2024 ICCA Country & City Rankings, reinforcing their status as premier global business events destinations. Malaysia climbed to 31st globally and 9th in Asia-Pacific, while Kuala Lumpur rose six spots to 26th worldwide. These gains were supported by 129 international association meetings hosted nationally, including 78 in the capital.

The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre credited its strong collaboration with MyCEB, participating in major international trade shows like AIME in Melbourne and IMEX in Frankfurt. It will also attend upcoming events in London and Barcelona to attract more global meetings.

To meet evolving business needs, the centre has introduced hybrid-ready meeting spaces and a flexible co-working area. Its central location, strong air connectivity, and visa-free access for 175 countries further enhance its appeal. With a mature supply chain, competitive costs, and cultural richness, Malaysia offers a compelling proposition for international event organisers.



[READ MORE](#)



## Malaysia Marks 10 Years as Top Muslim-Friendly Travel Destination

Malaysia has secured the ‘Top Muslim-Friendly Destination of the Year’ title in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2025, maintaining its top position for ten consecutive years. The award was received at the Halal in Travel Awards in Singapore by Deputy Tourism Minister Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan, who credited the achievement to collaboration across government, industry players, and communities.

The GMTI, developed by CrescentRating, has tracked global Muslim travel trends since 2015, with Malaysia consistently leading due to its robust infrastructure and services tailored for Muslim travelers. The Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) was highlighted as a key driver behind this success.

Initiatives such as the MFAR and MFTG certification reflect Malaysia’s focus on service excellence and inclusivity. Hospitality is framed as a cultural value, deeply embedded in national policy. With the Muslim travel market growing, Malaysia looks ahead to Visit Malaysia Year 2026, inviting global travelers to its vibrant and welcoming shores.



[READ MORE](#)



## OYO Expands Premium Sunday Hotel Brand Across Key Malaysian Cities

OYO has launched its premium SUNDAY Hotel brand in Malaysia, with new openings in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi. The Kuala Lumpur property sits near the Petronas Twin Towers, while the Langkawi hotel is just 10km from the airport and close to Cenang Beach.

This marks the brand's regional debut outside India, aligning with OYO's strategy to expand its premium offerings globally. OYO aims to open 10 more SUNDAY Hotels in Malaysia in 2025, targeting key tourist hubs such as Johor Bahru, Penang, Kuantan, and Kota Kinabalu.

Each hotel features modern amenities including high-speed Wi-Fi, in-room dining, premium toiletries, and 24/7 service by trained hospitality staff. The brand is focused on delivering personalised guest experiences.

Originally launched in India in 2023 through a Softbank and Oravel Stays joint venture, SUNDAY Hotels now operates in India, Saudi Arabia, the UK, Dubai, and Malaysia, with expansion plans firmly underway.



[READ MORE](#)



## IOI Properties Eyes REIT Listings to Unlock Regional Asset Value

IOI Properties, led by billionaire brothers Lee Yeow Chor and Lee Yeow Seng, is exploring ways to monetise its commercial real estate assets in Singapore and Malaysia, estimated at nearly \$9 billion. The group recently acquired full ownership of South Beach Singapore, valued at S\$2.75 billion, setting the stage for a potential Singapore REIT listing.

Analysts expect the REIT—featuring South Beach and IOI Central Boulevard Towers—to list by 2027, with assets possibly reaching S\$8 billion. IOI is also developing W Residences Marina View, further strengthening its premium asset base in Singapore.

In Malaysia, a separate REIT worth RM8 billion could emerge as soon as 2026, anchored by the IOI City complex in Putrajaya. This includes the country's largest shopping mall, office towers, and hotels. While no listings are confirmed, IOI says it remains open to opportunities that enhance stakeholder value and drive sustainable growth across both markets.



[READ MORE](#)



## Hyatt Regency KL Midtown Hiring Ahead of August 2025 Opening

Hyatt Regency Kuala Lumpur at KL Midtown is set to open in August 2025 and is actively recruiting across departments including Front Office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, Culinary, Security, Engineering, Recreation, and Sales.

This five-star hotel will feature 306 refined rooms and suites, along with 104 fully serviced residences. Designed for comfort and privacy, the development offers separate entrances for hotel guests and residents.

Amenities include two chlorinated salt-water pools, a Kids' Club, recreational facilities, and four diverse dining outlets. For business and social gatherings, the hotel provides 16 flexible event spaces, including a pillarless grand ballroom suited for major functions.

Interested candidates are invited to attend the Open House Walk-in Interview from June 19 to 21, between 9AM and 5PM. Free shuttle services will be available from MRT Semantan and Sentul Barat. Attendees can also look forward to engaging activities and complimentary food during the event.



[READ MORE](#)



## iBook Champions Local Hotels With Customer-First OTA Model

Malaysia's iBook is reshaping the online travel agency space by focusing on independent and budget hotels. Competing with global platforms, iBook offers lower commission rates, enabling better pricing and improved margins for hotel partners. The platform prioritises affordability and localised service, often assisting customers directly via WhatsApp for personalised recommendations.

Backed by lean operations, iBook has grown steadily, capitalising on TikTok for organic reach and community engagement. Its bookings surged 70% quarter-on-quarter after a platform revamp in early 2024. The company maintains cash flow by paying hotels only after guest check-ins.

Its main audience comprises women aged 30 to 50, often the travel decision-makers. Notably, 30% of bookings are still done manually through WhatsApp. While already present in Bali and Jakarta, iBook plans gradual ASEAN expansion. For now, it aims to strengthen its domestic foundation and play a major role in Visit Malaysia 2026, delivering reliable service and strong local connections.



[READ MORE](#)



## Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre Strengthens Role as Future-Ready Venue

The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (the Centre) is adapting rapidly to evolving client demands in the events industry. General Manager John Burke emphasised that future success will depend on agility, innovation, and continuous upgrades. The Centre has redesigned key spaces and expanded support services to align with modern event formats.

Since 2005, the Centre has hosted over 22,000 events and welcomed 29 million visitors, contributing RM12.6 billion to Malaysia's economy. It remains a key platform for business tourism, global exchange, and economic growth.

Sustainability is now central to its operations. The Centre runs entirely on green energy, composts all food waste, and sources 70% of its food and beverages locally. These initiatives are part of its commitment to environmental leadership.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Centre paid tribute to its team and partners, reaffirming its role as a premier venue owned by KLCC Holdings under PETRONAS.



[READ MORE](#)



## Malaysia Debuts Visit Malaysia 2026 Campaign at Seoul Travel Fair, Boosts Tourism Ties

Tourism Malaysia officially launched its Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign at the 40th Seoul International Travel Fair (SITF) held June 5–8 in South Korea. Hosted at COEX Hall C, the event was officiated by Malaysian Ambassador Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid, underscoring bilateral cooperation in tourism.

The Malaysia Pavilion featured cultural showcases including traditional games, live Teh Tarik demonstrations, local cuisine, and interactive quizzes, drawing strong visitor engagement ([dayakdaily.com][1]). Led by Azmi Abdullah of Tourism Malaysia, the initiative leverages Malaysia's diverse offerings such as rainforests, urban centres, heritage sites, and cuisine.

In 2024, Malaysia welcomed 38 million international arrivals generating RM106.8 billion in tourism revenue. South Korea contributed over 550,000 visitors and RM2.9 billion ([dayakdaily.com][1]). Tourism Malaysia now targets 45 million arrivals and RM270 billion in receipts by end-2025, supported by 63 weekly direct flights via eight airlines. Looking ahead, the campaign aims to attract travellers who stay longer, meaningfully engage with communities, and contribute to environmental and economic sustainability.



[READ MORE](#)

<b>11 June</b>	<b>The Taste of Korea's Finest Hanwoo</b> ⌚ 11:00-13:00 📍 Kikyo <b>2025 K-Tourism Night</b> ⌚ 19:00-21:00 📍 Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Hotel	<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>12-15 June</b>	<b>2025 K-Tourism Roadshow</b> ⌚ 10:00-22:00 📍 1 Utama	<b>Thursday-Sunday</b>
<b>17-19 June</b>	<b>Korea Beauty Class (17 &amp; 18 June)</b> ⌚ 10:00-17:00 📍 InterContinental Hotel <b>Korea Beauty Class (19 June)</b> ⌚ 10:30-17:30 📍 KOREA PLAZA	<b>Tuesday-Thursday</b>

## K-Culture Festival Deepens Malaysia-Korea Cultural and Tourism Relations

The K-Culture Festival 2025 began in Kuala Lumpur on June 12 and will run until June 22, celebrating the growing cultural ties between Malaysia and South Korea. Organised by the Korean Embassy, the event features Korean food, tourism, beauty, and music under the theme “Feel the Vibes, Savor the Flavors, and Explore with Style.”

Key highlights include the Korea-ASEAN Music Festival, Taste of Korea’s Finest Hanwoo, the Korea Tourism Roadshow, a K-Beauty Class, and the Korean Speaking Contest. The Korean Restaurant Association and World-OKTA are also hosting culinary and promotional events.

In a strategic move, the Korean government will establish a Korean Cultural Centre in Malaysia by 2026, to support rising interest in K-culture among Malaysians, especially youth.

The festival is a joint effort by MOTAC, MAFRA, KTO, KBS WORLD, and other partners, aimed at enhancing tourism collaboration and strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.



[READ MORE](#)



## Malaysia Leads ASEAN in Tourism and Investment Under MADANI Leadership

Malaysia has emerged as Southeast Asia's top performer in tourism and foreign direct investment (FDI) under the MADANI administration. Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming credits this to good governance, investor-friendly policies, and proactive diplomacy.

In the 2025 Baseline Profitability Index (BPI), Malaysia ranked third globally behind India and Rwanda, and led ASEAN ahead of Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The BPI measures countries on profitability, value preservation, and capital repatriation over five years.

Tourism performance was also strong. In Q1 2025, Malaysia overtook Thailand to become the most visited country in ASEAN, recording over 10.1 million international arrivals. Thailand received 9.55 million, while Vietnam and Singapore trailed behind. Nga also highlighted Malaysia's appointment as president of the UN-Habitat Assembly, reinforcing its leadership in sustainable urban development. He called for continued momentum to maintain political stability and investor confidence as Malaysia strengthens its global economic influence.



[READ MORE](#)



## Sandakan Unveils Malaysia's First Historical Tree Trail for Eco-Tourism

Sandakan is set to launch Malaysia's first Historical Tree Trail on June 28, officially recognised by the Malaysia Book of Records. Developed with the Sabah Forestry Department, the 3km Sandakan Heritage Trail highlights 42 tagged, QR-coded trees, combining heritage education with eco-tourism appeal.

The initiative was introduced by trail founder Lai King Hang during a courtesy visit to Chief Conservator Datuk Frederick Kugan, who praised the project as a milestone in conservation, education, and community engagement. The launch will begin at Masjid Jamik and includes a stop at Agnes Keith's House, where the record certificate will be presented.

The event is organised by the Sandakan Heritage Trail Committee and the Sandakan Tourism Association, with support from local authorities and volunteers. Alongside historic trees, the trail features colonial buildings and religious landmarks, offering a holistic cultural journey. The walk concludes at Wisma Warisan, reinforcing Sandakan's position in Malaysia's eco-heritage tourism landscape.



[READ MORE](#)



## Penang Ferry Terminal Upgrade to Boost Tourism and Cruise Capacity

Penang Port Commission (PPC) has announced a major upgrade of the Pengkalan Raja Tun Uda (PRTU) ferry terminal, aiming to modernise the facility with a seaview deck, commercial spaces, and open car parks. The new design will enhance visitor experience and drive tourism growth.

The commercial area will include a food and beverage hub and a garden bridge to attract more foot traffic and increase operational productivity. The project aligns with broader plans to revitalise Penang's ferry and cruise operations.

PPC Chairman Datuk Yeoh Soon Hin highlighted that the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal (SPCT) has been extended to accommodate Oasis-class cruise ships, with capacity for up to 12,000 passengers. Surrounding projects will support Penang's role as a regional cruise hub.

A planned ferry museum, developed with Printhero, will conserve Penang's maritime legacy and transform a decommissioned ferry into a historical tourism attraction, reinforcing cultural and heritage value.



[READ MORE](#)



## Beverly Wilshire Joins KL Wellness City in Strategic Healthcare Alliance

Beverly Wilshire Medical Centre (BWMC) and KL Wellness City (KLWC) have announced a strategic partnership to elevate Malaysia's healthcare and wellness sectors. The collaboration was formalised on June 12, 2025, at KLWC's gallery in Bukit Jalil. BWMC will occupy 22,000 square feet in KLWC, marking a significant expansion into a pioneering integrated medical hub.

The partnership reflects a shared vision to advance Malaysia's position in aesthetic medicine and medical tourism. BWMC's parent company, Beverly JCG Ltd., will also serve as a major anchor at The NOBEL Healthcare Park, KLWC's flagship facility targeted for completion by end-2025. BWMC is scheduled to begin operations in the second half of 2026.

Dato' Francis Ng, CEO of Beverly JCG Ltd., highlighted the alliance as a pivotal step for regional growth. KLWC's Managing Director, Dato' Dr. Colin Lee, reaffirmed their goal of delivering value-based, integrated healthcare to regional and global patients.



[READ MORE](#)



## Sabah Launches RM500 Million Medical and Lifestyle Hub in Luyang

Qhazanah Sabah Berhad and Bina Indah Development Sdn Bhd have signed a joint agreement to develop The Hill @ Damai, Sabah's first integrated medical and lifestyle commercial hub. Located in Luyang, the RM500 million project will feature the proposed Sabah National Heart Centre, strengthening the state's specialised healthcare services.

Spanning 13 acres, the development includes over 500,000 sqft of commercial space, more than 1,500 parking bays, and infrastructure upgrades to ease traffic congestion. Completion is expected within 5 years, with over 1,000 jobs anticipated, enhancing local employment and stimulating economic activity.

The eco-conscious, low-rise design will integrate medical suites, wellness facilities, and a contemporary retail precinct, purposely excluding high-rise residences to avoid market oversupply. Key representatives from both companies signed the agreement in the presence of Sabah's Minister of Industrial Development and Entrepreneurship, reaffirming their shared commitment to innovation in healthcare and commercial development.



[READ MORE](#)



## Kuala Lumpur Declaration Boosts Sarawak's Private Healthcare Investment Plans

The Kuala Lumpur Declaration, signed in November 2024 by all State Secretaries, aims to boost Sarawak's private healthcare sector and support its RM100 billion infrastructure goal by 2030. Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) Deputy Director-General Dr Mohamad Norjayadi Tamam said it reflects a shared effort to cut red tape and improve investment processes.

Two circulars—the Bureaucracy Reform Circular (RKB) and Regulatory Experimentation Circular (UKP)—will guide cooperation among stakeholders to ease regulations and support healthcare growth. Digital improvements are expected to raise productivity and strengthen investor confidence.

The initiative also supports Sarawak's role in medical tourism, targeting 120,000 health visitors and RM162 million in revenue by 2030. It aligns with the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy (PCDS 2030).

A recent stakeholder session included agencies such as MOH, CKAPS Sarawak, MPHLG, and the Society of Private Medical Practitioners Sarawak, all supporting streamlined healthcare development.



[READ MORE](#)



## Batik Air Malaysia Advances International Flights from Subang Airport

Batik Air Malaysia is accelerating its international expansion by launching daily flights from Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (Subang) to Bangkok Don Mueang Airport on July 28, ahead of the original September 12 plan. This early start is possible due to timely aircraft availability and rising summer travel demand.

The new SZB–DMK route marks the airline’s first international service from Subang, operated by Boeing B737–800 aircraft, expanding its short-haul international network. Batik Air Malaysia began B737–800 operations from Subang in August 2024, after the airport reopened for commercial narrow-body jets following a 22-year hiatus.

The airline currently operates multiple flights between Kuala Lumpur International Airport and Bangkok, as well as from Johor Bahru to Bangkok, increasing frequencies soon. Additionally, from July 28, daily flights from Subang to Kuching will start, further enhancing domestic connectivity.

This expansion reflects Batik Air Malaysia’s effort to strengthen regional links and establish Subang as a key hub in its network.



[READ MORE](#)