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Hyatt Regency Returns to KL with Landmark Opening in Midtown

Hyatt Regency Kuala Lumpur will officially open on August 26, marking the brand's return to Malaysia two decades after Hyatt Regency Saujana closed. Located in KL Midtown, Dutamas, the five-star hotel is part of a mixed-use development near the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MiTEC).

The property offers 306 guestrooms and suites, plus 104 fully serviced residences, designed to suit short visits, business travel, or extended stays. With over 10,000 sq ft of event space, including a pillarless ballroom and 15 function rooms, the hotel targets clients seeking a premium, personalised setting for meetings and events.

Designed by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, the hotel integrates natural elements and Malaysian heritage. It features over 500 artworks and five distinct dining outlets, including Enso Izakaya & Bar and China House. Sustainability is central to its operations, focusing on reducing waste and environmental impact while setting new standards in green hospitality for the region.



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M Social Penang Redefines Hospitality with Culture and Innovation

M Social Resort Penang, Malaysia's first under the M Social brand, opened in Tanjung Bungah following the transformation of the former Copthorne Orchid Hotel. Managed by Millennium Hotels and Resorts, the rebranded property blends Peranakan heritage, modern design, and digital innovation to offer a culturally immersive stay. The hotel features 318 rooms, two wings, and signature dining such as Beast and Butterflies, with a focus on local flavours and social experiences.

The resort embraces sustainability and technology, becoming the first hotel in Malaysia with an in-room AI voice assistant and a digital twin in the metaverse. Designed to appeal to young, eco-conscious travellers, the property includes refillable amenities, a 24-hour gym, and engaging communal spaces like Breezy Bites and The Social Hub.

M Social Penang supports Visit Malaysia 2026 and community collaboration through local partnerships. The launch marks a fresh chapter in Penang's hospitality, balancing legacy with modern sensibilities in a scenic coastal setting.



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Movenpick KLIA Rises as Key Airport Business Hospitality Hub

Movenpick Hotel and Convention Centre KLIA in Sepang is positioning itself as a premier business hospitality destination, catering to the growing demand for airport-area MICE facilities. Just 10 minutes from both KLIA1 and KLIA2, the hotel offers unmatched convenience for time-sensitive corporate travel. Its strategic location near Cyberjaya, Putrajaya, and Greater Klang Valley enhances its appeal for aviation-linked events, conferences, and international meetings.

With over 24 flexible function spaces and a grand hall accommodating up to 2,000 guests, the hotel supports a wide range of business events. It combines halal-certified services, ESG-aligned practices, and comprehensive technical support, drawing corporates, governments, and global organisations. Movenpick KLIA has hosted up to 40 major events this year and targets 150 events by year-end.

Led by a service culture blending Swiss precision with Malaysian warmth, the hotel offers tailored business amenities and curated dining, reinforcing its commitment to productivity, comfort, and seamless event execution.



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Malaysia Airlines Expands South India Network with More Flights

Malaysia Airlines will increase its Kuala Lumpur–Trivandrum flights to five times weekly starting September 12, 2025, responding to strong load factors and sustained demand. Daily flights are planned from December 1, 2025, reinforcing the airline's long-term commitment to the Indian market.

The route, launched in November 2023 with two weekly flights, was previously expanded to four in April 2024. This steady growth reflects rising travel demand and a focus on enhancing connectivity for both business and leisure travellers between Malaysia and South India.

Chief Commercial Officer Dersenish Aresandiran reaffirmed India's role as a key market, citing consistent interest in South India routes. The upcoming daily service aims to boost passenger convenience while maintaining the airline's hallmark Malaysian hospitality. By December 2025, Malaysia Airlines will operate 80 weekly flights across 10 major Indian cities, up from 77 currently. This expansion aligns with its strategy to strengthen regional presence and service excellence.



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AirAsia Adds New Routes to Strengthen Malaysia-Indonesia Connectivity

AirAsia Malaysia has launched two new direct routes from Kuala Lumpur and Kuching to Pontianak, Indonesia, with services beginning September 12, 2025. This makes AirAsia the sole international carrier flying to Pontianak. The move aligns with the airline's continued growth in Indonesia, following recent route launches to Palembang and Semarang.

With the addition of Pontianak, AirAsia will operate 223 weekly flights across 17 destinations in Indonesia, reinforcing its position as the airline with the broadest network in the country. These expansions aim to support Malaysia's goal of attracting 4.3 million Indonesian tourists and Sarawak's five million visitor target, while also contributing to Indonesia's target of 16 million international arrivals.

The routes were unveiled during the Sarawak Travel Fair in Pontianak. Officials from both countries welcomed the initiative, highlighting its role in boosting tourism, trade and cultural ties. AirAsia aims to offer affordable and seamless travel options for business, leisure and medical travellers.



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Batik Air Launches New Kuala Lumpur–Palembang Direct Route

Batik Air will launch direct flights between Kuala Lumpur and Palembang starting September 12, 2025. This marks a new milestone in the airline's ongoing expansion across Indonesia, enhancing regional air connectivity and strengthening Kuala Lumpur International Airport's role as a key hub for Umrah and global travel.

The new route adds Palembang, a historic and growing economic centre in South Sumatra, to Batik Air's existing Indonesian network, which already includes major cities like Jakarta, Bali, and Medan. Operated by B737-800 aircraft with both Economy and Business Class, the service offers improved access for both business and leisure travellers.

CEO Datuk Chandran Rama Muthy reaffirmed Indonesia's importance as a strategic market. The route is expected to support rising Umrah demand from Indonesia, with Batik Air already transporting over 120,000 Umrah-bound passengers in 2024. This service further supports the airline's mission to connect Southeast Asia, bridge cultures, and grow Kuala Lumpur's position as a leading regional aviation hub.



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Batik Air Boosts Sarawak Link with New Subang-Kuching Route

Batik Air has officially launched direct flights between Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang and Kuching International Airport, marking a significant step in regional connectivity. The inaugural flight carried 133 passengers out of a 162-seat capacity, highlighting strong initial demand.

Sarawak Transport Minister Dato Sri Lee Kim Shin welcomed the move, noting the airline now serves all four major airports in Sarawak, including Miri, Sibul, and Bintulu. He expressed hope for Batik Air to further expand by launching direct international flights from Sarawak to cities like Shenzhen or Guangzhou, aligning with the state's broader tourism and connectivity goals.

The flight's arrival was celebrated in a ceremony co-hosted by the Sarawak Tourism Board, reinforcing the state's cultural identity and partnership with Batik Air. This new route offers greater convenience for passengers preferring Subang over KLIA, while supporting growing demand for direct point-to-point access. Batik Air continues to play a key role in linking Peninsular and East Malaysia.



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Firefly Relocates Jet Operations to KLIA for Greater Efficiency

Firefly, the low-cost arm of Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG), will cease jet operations at Subang Airport on August 19, shifting all jet services to KLIA Terminal 1. The move, following AirAsia's similar exit in April, is part of MAG's long-term plan to optimise Firefly's network and reduce operational strain. Turboprop services from Subang to key domestic routes will continue as usual.

KLIA's integration with MAG's engineering and logistics allows Firefly to scale up operations, improve connectivity, and launch new routes starting with Tawau. The shift also opens five daily slots at Subang, with the government reviewing proposals from local and foreign airlines to fill the gap. Structural constraints at Subang, including limited jet movements, parking bays, and access, contributed to Firefly's commercial losses.

Despite financial challenges, Firefly aims to expand its footprint from KLIA, with enhanced domestic and regional services, improved frequencies, and a more sustainable, scalable business model moving forward.



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Malaysia Targets Global Health Travellers with MYMT 2026 Campaign

Malaysia launched the Malaysia Year of Medical Tourism 2026 (MYMT 2026) to position itself as a top healthcare destination in Asia. Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad emphasised Malaysia's edge in affordability, quality care, and culturally attuned hospitality, despite the recent implementation of a 6% SST. The country drew 1.6 million healthcare travellers in 2024, with Indonesia, India and China as key markets.

To diversify and grow, the campaign aims to expand into new segments from the Middle East and Europe. Flagship specialties include cardiothoracic surgery, IVF, oncology and traditional medicine. Four hospitals have been shortlisted under the Flagship Medical Tourism Hospital Programme, supporting Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council's RM12 billion revenue target by 2030.

As ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting chair in 2026, Malaysia seeks to lead regional healthcare discussions. The appointment of singer Datuk Seri Siti Nurhaliza as ambassador reinforces outreach, particularly in Indonesia where she enjoys strong influence.



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Island Hospital Gears Up for 2026 Medical Tourism Boom

Island Hospital in Penang is preparing to capitalise on the dual national campaigns—Visit Malaysia 2026 and Malaysia Year of Medical Tourism 2026. CEO Lim Kooi Ling believes these initiatives will attract both leisure and healthcare travellers, with Penang standing out for its top-tier medical care, cultural appeal, and culinary experiences. The hospital is actively collaborating with the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council to improve visa processing and resources for international patients.

Currently, Island Hospital handles over 230,000 patients annually and aims to reach 250,000 this year, with nearly half from Indonesia. This strong international demand stems from its early efforts since the 1990s and services tailored to Indonesian patients, including language support, transport, accommodation, and fast test results.

Operating a 600-bed facility with 60 percent occupancy, the hospital is well-positioned for growth. It owns adjacent land ready for expansion, aligning with its long-term commitment to lead Malaysia's thriving medical tourism sector.



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Sabah Secures RM72 Million for 77 Sustainable Tourism Projects

The Federal Government has approved RM72 million for 77 tourism development projects in Sabah under the 12th Malaysia Plan. One highlight is the newly completed Tourism Facilities Improvement Project at Layang-Layang, Mount Kinabalu, which was handed over during a ceremony officiated by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture (Motac), Datuk Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan.

The RM13.8 million project adds vital facilities at 2,744 metres altitude, including rest areas, accommodation, a restaurant, and control centres. Previously, facilities could only support 10 climbers in poor weather. The upgrade aims to enhance climber experience, extend visitor stays, and support systematic tourism management on the mountain, a Unesco World Heritage Site.

Despite logistical challenges and delays due to terrain and weather, the project was completed in September 2024. Motac hopes it will boost local economic activities and tourism ahead of Visit Malaysia 2026, while encouraging Sabah Parks to maintain the site for long-term use.



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Government to Train Taxi Drivers Ahead of Visit Malaysia 2026

The Transport Ministry will introduce basic language and etiquette training for taxi drivers in preparation for Visit Malaysia 2026. Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the initiative aims to improve tourist experience, noting that taxi drivers often form the first impression of the country and play a key role in public service.

To further support the industry, the government has raised the Social Security Organisation (Perkeso) contribution incentive from 10% to 30%, ensuring better protection for taxi drivers' welfare and safety. These efforts reflect the ministry's commitment to strengthening public transport services through targeted reforms.

Loke made the announcement during the Malaysia Taxi, Rental Car, Limousine and Airport Taxi Association (GTSM) annual general meeting, where he also engaged with industry stakeholders. He stressed that real progress in the sector depends on active collaboration with associations like GTSM, reinforcing the government's inclusive approach to transport reform in the lead-up to VM2026.



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IslamiCruise Launches Halal Cruise with 26 Sales Agents

IslamiCruise International Sdn Bhd (ICI) launched its AROYA Cruise Package and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 26 appointed Aroya Cruise Link Agents (ACLA) to promote syariah-compliant cruise travel. The three-day, two-night cruise from Port Klang to Langkawi will set sail on January 30, 2026, and return on February 1. These cruises are alcohol-free and gambling-free, aligning with the halal lifestyle.

Officiated by Deputy Tourism Minister Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan, the launch supports Malaysia's positioning as a top Muslim-friendly destination and strengthens tourism offerings ahead of Visit Malaysia Year 2026. Packages start from RM597, making luxury cruising more accessible to domestic and international travellers.

The initiative aligns with the Ministry's broader goals under the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality programme, enhancing inclusive travel experiences. The cruise is also expected to boost Malaysia's appeal through innovative tourism products while supporting economic growth in the hospitality and travel sectors.



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Mega 3D Carnival to Boost Rural Business and Investment

The Mega 3D Carnival (MK3D), held from July 31 to August 4 at MITEC, Kuala Lumpur, is expected to draw around two million visitors. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the event supports rural entrepreneurship through collaboration with the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, Felda, and the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development. The carnival targets RM209 million in transactions, covering sales, financing, and business matching.

MK3D combines three key initiatives: the Rural Entrepreneurs Carnival (KUD), Felda Settlers' Day, and the One District One Industry (SDSI) Showcase. This integration allows entrepreneurs to access support such as financing, training, certification, and export opportunities under one platform.

With over 1,000 participating entrepreneurs nationwide, the event aims to strengthen the rural business ecosystem. Ahmad Zahid noted the approach not only optimises public resources but also aligns with the 12th Malaysia Plan in empowering Bumiputera and rural communities, while exploring international markets.



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Taiping Air Festival 2.0 to Boost Tourism and Aviation Awareness

Taiping Air Festival 2.0 (FUT 2.0), happening from July 31 to August 3 at Tekah Airport, is expected to attract over 50,000 visitors, positioning Taiping as a hub for aviation and tourism. Project director Captain Syafiq Bahri noted that the event builds on the success of its 2024 debut and aligns with Perak Sejahtera 2030 and Visit Malaysia Year 2026, marking it as a high-impact tourism event.

The festival will expose students to aviation careers through interactive sessions, flight simulations, and talks by professionals in engineering and piloting. Over 500 students are expected to benefit from hands-on experiences, including joyrides in Microlight and Cessna 172 aircraft. Competitions and creative activities such as paper plane building and art sessions are also part of the programme.

FUT 2.0 will feature aircraft exhibitions involving up to 10 models. It will also support over 100 local entrepreneurs through booths, making it a catalyst for both tourism and small business growth in Malaysia.



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