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KL Convention Centre Secures Six Global Conferences Through 2027

The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre has secured six major international conferences in the first half of 2025, confirming Malaysia's standing as a preferred destination for global business events. These conferences will bring over 6,150 delegates in 2026 and 2027, generating an estimated RM77.5 million in economic impact while supporting the country's innovation and sustainability goals.

General manager John Burke described the successful bids as a strong endorsement of Malaysia's infrastructure, expertise and collaborative ecosystem. The secured events focus on key sectors including aviation safety, health security, clean energy and women's health, aligning closely with the New Industrial Master Plan 2030 and elevating the nation's global profile.

Among the confirmed events are the Global Health Security Conference 2026 and the 85th FIP World Congress 2027. Backed by over 34,000 square metres of modern space, the Centre's track record in sustainability, inclusivity and service excellence continues to attract high-impact international conferences and repeat investments.



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Malaysia Moves to Regulate Airbnb and Short-Term Rental Sector

Draft guidelines for Short-Term Residential Accommodation (STRA), led by the Housing and Local Government Ministry through PlanMalaysia, will soon be presented to the Cabinet. Upon approval, they will be submitted to the National Council for Local Government. The aim is to introduce a more structured and sustainable STRA framework for state and local authorities, with nationwide rollout targeted by the end of the year.

To streamline the sector, the Housing Ministry and the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry (Motac) agreed that STRA premises, including Airbnb-style stays, must obtain a business operating licence from the respective local authority before registering as tourist accommodation. This requirement strengthens local councils' role in licensing and enforcement.

Motac is also preparing to table amendments to the Tourism Industry Act 1992 by late 2025 or early 2026. Proposed updates include clearer licensing procedures, platform registration, improved enforcement powers, insurance protection and the establishment of a Tourism Tribunal, based on extensive stakeholder input.



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Avillion Acts to Strengthen Finances Amid Going Concern Uncertainty

Avillion Bhd's external auditor has raised concerns over the group's ability to continue as a going concern, following a net loss of RM8.84 million and a negative cash position of RM8.96 million for the financial year ended March 31, 2025. The findings were disclosed in the group's audited financial statements, filed with Bursa Malaysia. Although the auditor flagged significant doubt, it did not modify its opinion.

The auditor, Baker Tilly Monteiro Heng PLT, noted that Avillion's viability hinges on several key initiatives. These include launching new and attractive hospitality packages, selling underperforming land assets, intensifying marketing efforts to boost property sales, and maintaining active engagement with financial institutions for support.

Avillion confirmed that some of these measures are already underway and expressed confidence in navigating the current challenges. The group maintains that its financial statements are appropriately prepared on a going concern basis, supported by asset realisation and liability management.



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Gamuda Cove Strengthens Position as Southern Klang Valley Leisure Hub

Gamuda Cove has evolved into a thriving township with over 8,000 residents, driven by well-executed placemaking and strong leisure anchors. Discovery Park and SplashMania Waterpark have welcomed more than one million visitors, establishing the township as a growing hospitality and tourism destination. Green spaces like the 60-acre Central Park and Wetlands Arboretum further enhance its appeal as a nature-centric, lifestyle-led township.

Hospitality offerings will be significantly elevated by 2026 with the opening of the 280-room ASAI Gamuda Cove Hotel by Dusit International, strategically located near Paya Indah Discovery Wetlands. The township will also introduce a 3.8-acre Sports Hub with football, pickleball, and badminton courts, followed by an indoor swimming academy and paddleball courts—supporting both community wellness and tourism.

Gamuda Cove's leisure portfolio will expand with new curated attractions from GL Play, including an eco-resort, safari, upgraded chalets and an indoor edutainment park. These developments reinforce its standing as a key hospitality and lifestyle destination.



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Malaysia-Vietnam Tourism Strengthened Through New Vietjet Air Partnership

Tourism Malaysia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Vietjet Air to boost air connectivity and strengthen tourism ties with Vietnam. The initiative was announced by Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, who emphasised the importance of this partnership in developing sister city tourism products and tapping into the rising flow of tourists between both countries.

The MoU was formalised in Hanoi during the Visit Malaysia Year 2026 launch, which coincided with Malaysia's Food and Culture Promotion and the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) Programme. The event featured 26 Malaysian delegates, including hoteliers, travel agents, and state tourism officers, working together to promote Malaysia's tourism offerings.

Tiong also called for the partnership to go beyond business cooperation, encouraging deeper regional collaboration and sustainable tourism growth. He invited global audiences to visit or even settle in Malaysia, highlighting opportunities in investment, education, and quality living under the MM2H programme.



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Batik Air Expands Regional Routes Ahead of Visit Malaysia 2026

Tourism Malaysia has welcomed Batik Air's new direct route from Bangkok's Don Mueang Airport to Subang Airport, enhancing regional air connectivity ahead of the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign. Operated daily using a Boeing 737, this marks Batik Air's first international route from Subang, offering improved access for both business and leisure travellers. Subang's proximity to Kuala Lumpur makes it a strategic hub for regional travel.

The launch also includes a new domestic route from Subang to Kuching, complementing Batik Air's existing services to Penang, Kota Bharu, Kota Kinabalu and Tawau. This expansion aligns with Tourism Malaysia's strategy to improve accessibility and drive tourism growth through better flight connectivity.

Tourism Malaysia's Director General praised Batik Air's efforts in supporting the national tourism agenda. Currently, the airline operates 57 weekly flights between Malaysia and Thailand, providing over 9,200 seats and connecting major cities like Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru with key Thai destinations.



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Tourism to Drive 16 Percent of GDP Under Malaysia's 13MP

Tourism is expected to contribute 16 percent to Malaysia's GDP during the 13th Malaysia Plan (MP13), with strong backing from government initiatives focused on investment zones and heritage preservation. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim highlighted a significant recovery in foreign tourist expenditure, which surged to RM102.2 billion in 2024, reflecting the sector's resilience and national importance.

Priority will be given to establishing Special Tourism Investment Zones (STIZ) in Johor, Melaka, Negri Sembilan and Sarawak. These zones will be developed in collaboration with state governments, private investors and cooperatives, focusing on tourism products rooted in art, culture, heritage and nature. Notable attractions include the Lenggong Valley in Perak and Niah Caves in Sarawak.

The government will also expand the Kuala Lumpur Heritage Initiative by restoring landmarks such as Sultan Abdul Samad Building and Carcosa Seri Negara. Additionally, village-based tourism will be strengthened, with Visit Malaysia Year 2026 serving as a key growth catalyst.



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Malaysia Unveils Four-Pronged Strategy to Achieve VM2026 Goals

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) will intensify four key strategies to meet the tourist arrival target for Visit Malaysia Year 2026. Deputy Minister Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan stated that Malaysia will prioritise high-potential markets including China, India, Australia, Indonesia, Central Asia, Russia, the Middle East, the United Kingdom, Chinese Taipei and Germany, while ASEAN remains the main contributor.

To boost arrivals, new international flight routes connecting major Malaysian cities will be introduced. The initiative will be supported by the International Aviation and Charter Sector Grant (GSPC), which aims to expand seat capacity and encourage more direct routes. These air connectivity improvements are expected to ease access and stimulate greater travel demand.

MOTAC will also collaborate with travel agencies and digital platforms to offer attractive, competitive packages. The ministry noted a strong impact from the visa liberalisation plan, particularly in increasing tourist arrivals from China and India.



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Bernama and HIMC Partner to Promote Tourism and Cultural Exchange

Bernama has signed a strategic partnership with the Hainan International Media Center (HIMC) to boost Malaysia's tourism and economic growth. The partnership, under the New International Land Sea Trade Corridor Cultural Cooperation Alliance, aims to increase Malaysia's exposure to Chinese audiences and promote destinations like Penang and Terengganu. Bernama will also help promote tourism in Hainan.

The alliance brings together Bernama, HIMC, Malaysian media, educational institutions, and industry associations to boost co-productions, policy coordination, and media talent development. Youth collaboration will be a key focus through joint programmes between institutions like MILA University in Malaysia and the Lingshui Haifeng International Film and Television Base in Hainan.

Malaysia's strategic location and strong historical ties with the Chinese community were cited as key reasons for selecting Kuala Lumpur as a regional hub. The collaboration is also expected to benefit Chinese students pursuing education in Malaysia through community engagement.



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Tourism Malaysia Launches Stargazing Push at Singapore's Malaysia Fest

Tourism Malaysia introduced its Stargazing Packages at Malaysia Fest 2025 in Singapore, spotlighting destinations like Bukit Merah, Pantai Pengkalan Balak, Desaru, Perlis, and Pantai Tok Bali. The initiative features over 30 curated experiences aimed at astronomy enthusiasts, aligning with eco-tourism trends and attracting Singaporean travellers seeking unique adventures.

Launched by Malaysia's High Commissioner to Singapore, Datuk Dr Azfar Mohamad Mustafar, the programme promotes Malaysia as a top-tier eco-adventure destination. Tourism Malaysia's pavilion showcased offerings from 16 co-exhibitors, including Care Luxury Hotels & Resorts, KPJ Healthcare, Hospitality 360, Lotus Desaru, and Sunway Theme Parks, alongside exclusive deals and healthcare tourism options.

This campaign builds momentum for the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign. Singapore remains Malaysia's top tourist source, with 8.3 million arrivals from January to May 2025. With a 2025 target of 43 million visitors, the stargazing push is part of a broader effort to elevate Malaysia's tourism profile.



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Legoland Malaysia Ramps Up Efforts Ahead of VJY 2026 and JS-SEZ

Legoland Malaysia is gearing up to capitalise on rising cross-border activity driven by the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) and the upcoming Visit Johor Year 2026 campaign. The resort sees both initiatives as catalysts for long-term growth, particularly as new businesses and developments drive higher visitor traffic to Johor.

In line with its expansion, Legoland has unveiled a refreshed Miniland Singapore, marking the republic's 60th anniversary. The new attraction features 16 miniature landmarks made from over 1.5 million Lego bricks. This investment forms part of Legoland's broader strategy to continuously enhance its offerings and maintain its competitive edge in the tourism sector.

Currently, visitors from Malaysia and Singapore account for about 60 percent of Legoland's footfall, with the rest coming from markets like Indonesia, China, and Australia. With dual campaigns—VJY 2026 and Visit Malaysia 2026—Legoland remains optimistic and is refining its systems to meet rising demand.



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Sunway Lagoon Launches First Hybrid Water Coaster in Malaysia

Sunway Lagoon has unveiled Malaysia's first hybrid water coaster, the Wild Chase Water Coaster, blending roller coaster excitement with water slide thrills. This RM30 million investment highlights Sunway Theme Parks' commitment to innovation, guest experience, and safety in delivering world-class attractions that appeal to a wide visitor demographic.

Spanning over 280 metres with sharp turns and sudden drops, the new ride is open daily except Tuesdays and offers family-friendly adventure amid a tropical backdrop. The launch was officiated by Selangor and Tourism Selangor representatives, who praised the attraction's safety standards and collaborative approach with regulators to ensure compliance.

Executive Director Calvin Ho reaffirmed the park's commitment to continuous improvement, aiming to attract both domestic and international visitors. With access to Sunway Lagoon's Night Park included in the day pass, guests can enjoy 13 hours of uninterrupted fun across seven unique zones, reinforcing Sunway Lagoon's position as a leading multi-park destination.



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Melaka Prepares to Host World Tourism Day 2025 and Launch Visit Malaysia 2026

Melaka is set to welcome international delegates for the World Tourism Day (WTD) 2025 celebrations from September 27 to 29. Tourism and culture leaders confirmed that preparations are in the final stages, with the main event venues and guest invitations nearly complete. Ministers and members of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation are expected to attend.

The World Tourism Conference will take place at a hotel in Melaka Raya. Meanwhile, the WTD 2025 Gala Dinner and the launch of Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) are scheduled at a multi-purpose performance centre in Kota Syahbandar. This centre will host cultural and artistic performances, engaging both guests and the public.

The chosen venues highlight Melaka's strategic position along the Strait of Malacca and its unique cultural appeal. Organisers are optimistic that these events will boost tourism visibility and contribute to Malaysia's ongoing tourism growth.



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Sarawak Awaits Details on Tourism Investment Zones Under 13th Malaysia Plan

Sarawak is seeking clarification from the federal government on the special tourism investment zones announced under the 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP). State Minister Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah admitted that Sarawak has yet to receive formal briefing or detailed information on how these zones will be implemented within the state. He is working to understand the exact locations involved and their overlap with existing initiatives.

If the zones include key areas such as Mulu, Niah, the Kuching Delta, and the Rainforest World Music Festival, Sarawak is aligned with federal objectives but awaits further discussion. The state is ready to cooperate to ensure efforts complement rather than conflict. These zones were announced by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and will be jointly developed by state governments and the private sector as part of Visit Malaysia 2026.

Despite the uncertainty, Sarawak continues its successful tourism efforts independently. The state has exceeded RM1 billion in monthly tourism receipts and is close to reaching its five million visitor target for the year.



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MK3D Carnival Sets New Records, Drives Rural Entrepreneur Growth

The 2025 Mega 3D Carnival (MK3D), held at MITEC, exceeded expectations by attracting 2.1 million visitors and generating RM6.9 million in cash sales across five days. Organised through a strategic collaboration between Felda, KKDW, and KUSKOP, the event brought together over 1,000 rural entrepreneurs. Additionally, MK3D achieved seven recognitions in the Malaysia Book of Records (MBOR), showcasing its wide-reaching impact.

As of 5 pm on the final day, business matching reached RM200 million out of a RM209 million target, with expectations to surpass this figure. The strong collaboration among the agencies underpinned MK3D's success in fostering the entrepreneurial and green economy, particularly in rural areas. The carnival also supports programmes such as KKDW's One District One Industry (SDSI) and Felda's development agenda.

Encouraged by the outcomes, plans are in motion to organise MK3D again next year in conjunction with Felda Settlers' Day. The event's integrated format offers a scalable platform for Bumiputera entrepreneurs to reach global markets.



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Malaysia Confident to Retain Medical Tourism Leadership Despite SST

Malaysia is expected to maintain its position as a top medical tourism hub in the region, supported by competitive pricing and quality healthcare services. Despite the newly implemented six per cent Sales and Service Tax (SST) on medical tourists, treatment costs in Malaysia remain 30 to 40 per cent lower than in Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore across key disciplines such as cardiology, oncology, orthopaedics, and gastroenterology.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad reaffirmed the sector's strength, citing the consistent delivery of effective treatments and exceptional patient care. Malaysia's medical tourism sector also benefits from its renowned hospitality, which continues to attract international patients and reinforces the country's global healthcare appeal.

In 2024, Malaysia recorded RM2.72 billion in medical tourism revenue, reflecting a 21 per cent year-on-year growth. This performance underscores the sector's resilience and the nation's broader ambitions to remain a regional leader in healthcare and wellness travel.



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