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Weekly Insights

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Wyndham, J City and Trinidad Forge Partnership to Elevate Kuantan Hospitality

Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, J City Group and Trinidad Hospitality have formalised a strategic partnership to develop and manage Wyndham Garden Kuantan, J City. The signing ceremony in Kuala Lumpur signals continued brand growth in Malaysia and marks a notable step for Kuantan's hospitality market. Senior representatives from all three organisations and Tourism Pahang attended, underscoring strong institutional support for the project.

The property is scheduled to open in Quarter 3 of 2026 with 361 rooms in what will become the tallest building in central Kuantan. It features generous suite layouts and a city centre location near Kuantan 188, East Coast Mall and other key destinations. Originally converted from serviced apartments, the hotel aims to offer a refined stay experience supported by premium facilities, including an Olympic size pool, gym, multipurpose hall, jogging track and landscaped recreation areas.

The partners share a clear vision to elevate service quality, reinforce local character and strengthen Kuantan's appeal for both domestic and regional travellers.

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Hilton

HOTELS & RESORTS

Hilton Strengthens Luxury Portfolio with Key Openings Across Asia Pacific

Hilton is expanding its luxury portfolio across Asia Pacific with new openings under the Waldorf Astoria, Conrad and LXR brands. This expansion reflects the group's confidence in the region's continued demand for premium hospitality. The Waldorf Astoria Shanghai Qiantan opened in October 2025, adding 204 rooms and suites inspired by Chinese culture and the city's Art Deco heritage, while offering waterfront views and direct access to nearby parks.

Further growth continues with openings scheduled through 2026. The Den Bengaluru will launch in Quarter 2, bringing a balanced mix of heritage and modern comfort to Whitefield, a major technology and business district. In Japan, Conrad Nagoya will open in Quarter 3 with 170 rooms in a central mixed use development connected to commercial and cultural attractions. NoMad Singapore will also debut in Quarter 3 with 173 rooms on Orchard Road, combining contemporary design with curated dining and cultural experiences.

Hilton's pipeline is anchored by Waldorf Astoria Kuala Lumpur, set to open towards the end of 2026, adding 272 suites and extensive event facilities in the city centre.



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STF Launches Malaysia's First Private MM2H One-Stop Centre in TRX

STF Revenue (MM2H) Sdn Bhd has opened Malaysia's first privately operated Malaysia My Second Home one-stop centre at The Exchange 106, TRX. The launch reflects confidence in Malaysia's long-term economic prospects and growing appeal for international retirees, investors and professionals. Officiated by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the centre operates under a tiered Silver, Gold and Platinum framework, offering clear options and encouraging investment across property, education and healthcare.

As of July 2025, MM2H has received over 3,300 applications, expected to bring in more than RM300 million in foreign funds and over RM430 million in property investment. STF Revenue provides end-to-end support for MM2H and PVIP, including eligibility assessments, visa processing and lifestyle assistance.

Through strategic partnerships with Rivertree Group, Batik Air and major banks, STF integrates real estate, travel and financial services to ensure seamless settlement. The TRX office positions Malaysia as a connected, attractive destination for global residents, supporting long-term economic growth.



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Khazanah Drives Tourism Growth with RM4 Billion Investment in Johor

Khazanah Nasional has invested over RM4 billion in Desaru Coast and Legoland Malaysia Resort through Destination Resorts and Hotels. The investment covers major tourism assets such as The Westin Desaru Coast Resort, Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast, Anantara Desaru Coast Resort and Villas, and The Sireya Desaru Coast by Mandarin Oriental, previously operated by One and Only. Over the next five years, development at Desaru Coast will expand with additional hotel rooms, resorts, branded residences and supporting facilities.

Desaru Coast is expected to benefit from the Johor Singapore Special Economic Zone, which will help strengthen competitiveness and regional growth. The development has already created about 1,500 jobs, mostly filled by Malaysians. Khazanah and DRH remain focused on ensuring the area's growth continues to support and benefit the local community.

As Malaysia's sovereign wealth fund, Khazanah invests in long term developments that support sustainable economic progress. The Desaru Coast investment is catalytic, able to stimulate financial returns, attract private investment and strengthen Malaysia's tourism profile.



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Tourist Arrivals Soar at Penang International Airport in 2025

Penang International Airport recorded strong international arrivals from January to September, led by Indonesia with 284,364 visitors, a 12.3 per cent increase from 2023. China led growth, with arrivals increasing from 26,056 in 2023 to 161,599 in 2025. India also grew strongly, rising 245.1 per cent over two years. Other key markets such as Taiwan, Thailand, the UK, Australia and Japan saw steady double-digit increases, while Singapore declined by 12.2%.

Penang continues to attract a wide mix of travellers drawn to its beaches, hawker food, cultural heritage, medical facilities, nightlife and its growing position as a technology hub. Market opportunities remain strong across China, India, Southeast Asia, Australia, the Middle East, Korea and Japan. These trends indicate broad and resilient demand for the state's tourism offerings.

To build on this momentum, Penang Global Tourism is expanding partnerships with airlines and travel agencies in West Asia. New routes to Doha and Dubai, digital campaigns tailored to regional preferences and stronger promotion of Muslim friendly, family oriented and wellness services aim to enhance connectivity and increase tourism flows.



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MOTAC Urges Kuala Lumpur Authorities to Upgrade Tourism Areas for 2026

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (Motac) has called on local authorities to enhance Kuala Lumpur's tourist areas ahead of Visit Malaysia Year 2026. Motac Secretary General Datuk Shaharuddin Abu Sohot emphasized the need to maintain pedestrian walkways, lighting, and repaint buildings to keep attractions such as Little India, Brickfields, and Jalan Alor safe and visually appealing. Even minor issues, if ignored, could damage the city's image, especially on social media.

A "walkabout" with the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Association assessed cleanliness, maintenance, and tourism appeal while collecting input from traders and the community. Key improvements highlighted include better lighting, refreshed paint, upgraded rest areas, and clearer signage along tourist routes.

Motac provides financial support for these upgrades, allocating RM80 million nationwide in 2025 to refurbish facilities in tourist focal areas. These initiatives aim to strengthen Kuala Lumpur's image, attract international visitors, and support sustainable tourism growth.



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Sarawak Advances Medical Tourism Ahead of Malaysia Year 2026 Initiatives

Sarawak is working to become a regional medical tourism hub for Malaysia Year of Medical Tourism 2026. Deputy Minister Datuk Snowdan Lawan highlighted this at the International Medical Tourism Conference on November 11-12. The event focused on collaboration, investment, and sector growth, urging delegates to turn ideas into actions that benefit patients, the industry, and the economy.

The ministry acts as an active partner, supporting connectivity, wellness development, and strategic promotion. Initiatives include improving air and land access for markets such as Indonesia and Brunei, expanding Air Borneo services, and offering integrated wellness experiences in locations like Damai and Telok Melano.

Promotional collaboration with private healthcare providers, including the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council, aims to highlight Sarawak's quality care, affordability, and cultural and natural assets. The conference drew 200 delegates from hospitals, insurers, airlines, NGOs, tour operators, and investors, demonstrating strong international interest.



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AirAsia X Launches Inaugural Direct Kuala Lumpur to Istanbul Service

AirAsia X launched its first direct flight from Kuala Lumpur to Istanbul, Turkiye, on November 14, marking the airline's debut in the country. The new route opens opportunities for connections between South-East Asia and Europe via Istanbul, a key hub for both regions. AirAsia X CEO Benyamin Ismail highlighted strong demand from Malaysians and the potential for further network expansion. The service enhances Malaysia's air connectivity while positioning AirAsia X as a major player in affordable long-haul travel.

Operating from Kuala Lumpur International Airport Terminal 2, the route initially offers four weekly flights with over 150,000 seats annually. The A330-300 aircraft will cover the 11-hour journey, providing direct access to one of the world's most visited destinations. Istanbul's historical and cultural attractions, including landmarks such as the Hagia Sophia and the Grand Bazaar, are expected to draw more ASEAN travellers.

Promotional fares start at RM749, available for booking until November 30 for travel until September 14, 2026. This milestone strengthens AirAsia X's long-haul strategy and enhances Malaysia-Turkiye connectivity.



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