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Sheraton Kota Kinabalu Expands Regional Portfolio With New Community Focused Hub



Sheraton Hotels & Resorts has successfully launched the new 24-storey Sheraton Kota Kinabalu, strategically adding 307 keys to the vibrant Sabahan hospitality landscape. Positioned as a premier gathering hub near CentrePoint Sabah, the property reflects a robust commitment to expanding community-focused designs across key regional destinations. Consequently, this opening strengthens the brand's footprint while offering modern amenities, including a 703-sqm grand ballroom and a rooftop bar overlooking the South China Sea.

Furthermore, the hotel is meticulously designed to foster connections, featuring innovative spaces such as a communal lobby, soundproof booths, and studios that cater to both business and leisure travellers. The integration of local culture into the hotel's aesthetic ensures that guests experience the authentic warmth of Sabah throughout their stay. This strategic positioning allows the property to capture diverse market segments effectively.

Looking ahead, the inclusion of comprehensive facilities like an infinity pool, spa, and varied dining venues positions the hotel competitively within the market, with room rates averaging between RM600 and RM650. By offering signature experiences that blend modern convenience with cultural richness, Sheraton Kota Kinabalu is poised to become a central pillar for corporate and social gatherings in the region.

Eastin Hotel Repositioned as Petaling Jaya Marriott Following Strategic Acquisition



Marriott Hotels has officially unveiled the 393-key Petaling Jaya Marriott Hotel, marking a significant rebranding of the former Eastin Hotel Kuala Lumpur following a strategic acquisition. Ideally situated along the SPRINT highway near the Phileo Damansara MRT, this property establishes itself as a prime urban sanctuary for both business executives and families. Therefore, it effectively bridges the gap between commercial convenience and personalized hospitality service.

Additionally, the hotel has been revitalized to meet diverse needs, featuring family-friendly layouts with bunk beds and a Kids Club alongside premium business amenities like the exclusive M Club Lounge. With 11 meeting rooms and a state-of-the-art fitness centre, the infrastructure is robustly designed to support high-value corporate events and leisure stays simultaneously. This versatility enhances its appeal in the established commercial district.

Ultimately, this opening signifies a renewed vibrancy for the asset, which was acquired for approximately RM200 million, showcasing strong investor confidence in the location. With competitive room rates ranging from RM550 to RM630, the Petaling Jaya Marriott Hotel is well-positioned to deliver exceptional value and service, reinforcing the brand's leadership in the Malaysian urban hospitality sector.

Penang Tourism Thrives With High Hotel Occupancy During Festive Season



Penang continues to solidify its status as a premier tourist destination, recording impressive hotel occupancy rates of 70 to 90 per cent during recent school holidays and Christmas. This strong performance underscores the state's enduring appeal to both domestic and international visitors, particularly families. Moreover, weekday occupancy remains healthy at 70 per cent, demonstrating resilience despite the competitive landscape introduced by new hotel openings.

In addition to robust accommodation figures, major attractions such as Bukit Bendera have seen a significant surge in footfall, welcoming over 30,000 visitors in just four days. The influx of over 2.2 million vehicles further highlights the vibrant economic activity generated by tourism. Consequently, this high demand confirms that Penang remains a top choice for travellers seeking diverse experiences from heritage to nature.

Looking forward, the upcoming opening of several new hotels is expected to further strengthen the hospitality sector rather than dilute it. With the Penang Festival running through January 2026, the outlook remains exceedingly positive. The continuous flow of visitors ensures sustained revenue growth for local businesses, affirming the state's strategic importance in the national tourism agenda.

Gleneagles Hospital Johor Unveils International Lounge To Boost Medical Tourism



Gleneagles Hospital Johor has strategically launched a new International Lounge, significantly enhancing the experience for its growing base of foreign patients. Officiated by the Health Minister, this facility provides a dedicated, comfortable space for patients and their companions, directly addressing the needs of medical travelers. Specifically, this initiative targets the robust Indonesian market, which has shown remarkable growth and loyalty to Malaysian healthcare services.

Furthermore, the hospital has witnessed a substantial 66% increase in medical tourist arrivals in 2025 alone, building on a strong track record of treating over 20,000 Indonesian patients since 2022. This surge reflects increasing regional confidence in Johor as a preferred healthcare destination. The new lounge serves as a tangible commitment to elevating service standards and patient comfort.

By investing in such patient-centric infrastructure, Gleneagles Hospital Johor actively supports the broader national medical tourism ecosystem. This development not only improves operational efficiency but also reinforces Malaysia's competitive edge in the global healthcare market. The optimistic trajectory suggests continued growth and a strengthening of cross-border healthcare relationships.

Melaka Targets Indonesian Market As Key Health Tourism Hub For 2026



Melaka has been strategically identified as a primary health tourism destination for Visit Malaysia 2026, with a sharp focus on attracting Indonesian visitors. The state leverages its high-quality medical expertise and competitive pricing structure to appeal to regional neighbours seeking reliable healthcare. Additionally, excellent connectivity via the Melaka-Dumai ferry service enhances accessibility, making it a convenient choice for short-term medical trips.

Moreover, the state's rich tourism portfolio, including heritage sites and diverse gastronomy, perfectly complements its medical offerings, creating a holistic value proposition. Tourism Malaysia is actively collaborating with the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council to maximize this potential, supported by a significant RM20 million government allocation aimed at generating RM3 billion in revenue. This coordinated effort ensures a unified approach to market expansion.

Ultimately, these initiatives are set to drive substantial economic growth, with over 300 events planned nationwide to sustain momentum. The enthusiastic reception of tourists from Dumai signals strong market interest. By integrating medical excellence with leisure tourism, Melaka is well-positioned to achieve its ambitious targets and significantly contribute to the national tourism economy.

Melaka Launches Smart AI Initiatives To Transform Tourism Experience



Melaka is aggressively advancing its digital ambitions with the implementation of Smart Tourism Melaka AI and the Visit Melaka 2.0 Tourism Passport. These innovative tools position smart technology as a central pillar of the state's tourism strategy, aiming to provide a seamless and competitive visitor experience. Consequently, these efforts align perfectly with the goals of Visit Melaka Year 2.0 and the upcoming Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Furthermore, the state government targets attracting 19 million tourists by leveraging these digital systems to support over 220 planned events. This modernization drive is designed to not only facilitate easier travel but also to enhance Melaka's global image as a forward-thinking destination that blends rich heritage with cutting-edge technology. The integration of AI promises to revolutionize how tourists interact with local attractions.

The launch, celebrated alongside a massive New Year's Eve crowd, signifies a strong public and governmental commitment to this transformation. By prioritizing digital efficiency, Melaka is setting a new benchmark for state-level tourism management. The outlook is highly positive, with technology expected to drive higher engagement and visitor satisfaction across the board.

Penang Adopts High Value Strategy For Cruise Tourism Economic Growth



Penang is shifting its cruise tourism strategy to focus on high-value returns, prioritizing onshore spending and longer engagement over simple arrival headcounts. This strategic pivot coincides with the expansion of the International and Charter Flight Matching Grant to include the cruise sector, maximizing economic spillover. Therefore, the state is actively encouraging collaboration between cruise operators and local businesses to ensure benefits reach the grassroots level.

Additionally, infrastructure upgrades at key sites like Fort Cornwallis are being implemented to enhance the visitor experience and encourage longer shore excursions. By promoting authentic local services—including transport, guides, and gastronomy—the state aims to deepen the economic impact for small and medium enterprises. This approach ensures that the tourism value chain is robust and inclusive.

Moving forward, the state remains committed to attracting high-spending passengers and large-scale vessels without setting rigid spending caps, allowing for organic growth. The focus on authentic culinary and cultural experiences strengthens Penang's brand identity. This qualitative approach is expected to deliver sustainable economic benefits and elevate Penang's status as a premier regional port of call.

Malaysia Expands Global Air Connectivity To 126 Cities with Over 3,300 Weekly Flights



Malaysia has successfully established direct flight connectivity to 126 cities globally, significantly bolstering its tourism infrastructure with over 3,300 international flights weekly. This extensive network brings approximately 674,000 passengers into the country's gateway cities, with ASEAN remaining the dominant source market. Consequently, this robust connectivity positions Malaysia as a central hub for regional travel, driven largely by flights from Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand.

Furthermore, connectivity with East Asia and South Asia is strong, with China leading the East Asian market through over 600 weekly flights. The entry of new airlines and the launch of 40 new international routes in 2025 demonstrate aggressive growth and continued investor confidence in Malaysia's aviation sector. This expansion opens access to secondary cities, broadening the potential tourist base.

With Kuala Lumpur handling the majority of traffic, secondary hubs like Penang and Kota Kinabalu are also seeing healthy activity. The strategic addition of flights ensures that capacity meets growing demand. Overall, this comprehensive air network provides a solid foundation for sustained tourism growth and economic resilience.

Malaysia Airports Upgrades Facilities or Visit Malaysia 2026 Readiness



Malaysia Airports has proactively strengthened its network operations to ensure seamless and reliable arrivals ahead of Visit Malaysia 2026. By implementing a coordinated nationwide framework, the group ensures consistent high service standards across all international and domestic gateways. Thus, the focus remains firmly on managing rising traffic volumes efficiently while upgrading assets to meet global expectations.

Significantly, 2025 saw extensive modernization at KLIA, featuring over 30 improvement initiatives ranging from upgraded check-in kiosks to enhanced family amenities. These upgrades are mirrored at other key airports like Penang and Kota Kinabalu, which now feature self-service bag drops and refurbished facilities. This comprehensive approach ensures that the passenger journey is smooth, inclusive, and welcoming from the moment of arrival.

In parallel, strategic airline engagement and government incentives are driving route expansion, further supporting connectivity goals. These combined efforts reflect a strong commitment to national tourism objectives. The outlook is optimistic, with optimized infrastructure ready to support a successful and vibrant tourism year.

AirBorneo Launches Inaugural Flights Boosting Sarawak Regional Connectivity



AirBorneo has successfully launched its inaugural flights under its own livery, marking a transformative milestone for Sarawak's aviation and transport landscape. Connecting Kuching to Mukah and Tanjung Manis, these services reinforce the airline's critical role in enhancing regional connectivity across Borneo. Consequently, this development serves as a major step forward in strengthening the state's transport infrastructure and accessibility.

Moreover, the airline operates with a dual mandate to maintain commercial discipline while fulfilling essential public service obligations to rural communities. This balanced approach ensures that vital connections are maintained while the airline progressively expands into regional routes based on market demand. The successful launch signals a new era of autonomy and capability for Sarawak's aviation sector.

Looking ahead, AirBorneo is poised to stimulate economic opportunities by improving travel access within the region. The introduction of a distinct corporate identity and uniform reflects pride in Sarawak's heritage. With a focus on safety, reliability, and prudent growth, the airline is well-positioned to support the state's long-term economic and social development goals.