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Iconic Group Partners Marriott To Strengthen Penang Mainland Hospitality Growth

Iconic Group will refurbish its Iconic Hotel Penang in Bukit Mertajam and rebrand the property as Courtyard by Marriott Penang Icon City, following a newly signed agreement with Marriott International. The hotel is part of the four hectare Icon City integrated commercial development and represents another milestone in the long standing collaboration between both companies. Refurbishment and phased transformation works are expected to take about six months, with the hotel scheduled to reopen in December 2026. Upon completion, the upgraded property will offer 196 guestrooms, further strengthening Penang Mainland's hospitality capacity.

The collaboration reflects continued confidence in the long term growth potential of Penang Mainland and reinforces Marriott International's expansion strategy in Malaysia. The global hospitality group views the country as an attractive market supported by strong economic fundamentals and evolving travel demand. As a result, the partnership is expected to enhance the quality of accommodation while broadening internationally branded hospitality offerings in one of Malaysia's key economic regions.

Strategically located along the North South Expressway, the hotel enjoys convenient access to Penang International Airport and offers direct connectivity to major industrial and technology hubs. These include the Prai Free Industrial Zone, Penang Science Park, Batu Kawan Industrial Park and Kulim Hi Tech Park. Consequently, the upgraded hotel is well positioned to serve growing demand from business travellers, corporate visitors and investors, while supporting the continued expansion of Penang's industrial, commercial and tourism sectors.

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Magma Group Eyes Profit Recovery Through Landmark Wolo Mont Kiara Development

Magma Group Bhd expects to return to profitability in the 2026 financial year, supported by the launch of its RM850 million gross development value Wolo Hotel and Residences in Mont Kiara. The 60 storey mixed use project will officially launch on July 31 after securing its Advertising Permit and Developer's Licence. Pre launch marketing has generated expressions of interest for about 60% of the available residential units, with the group aiming to convert a substantial share into sales by year end. The development is also being promoted in London, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore.

The project comprises 378 serviced apartments, 98 serviced suites, a 63 room boutique hotel, retail space and supporting facilities. It introduces a boutique branded residence concept combining personalised hospitality, professionally managed operations and curated homes. In addition, Wolo will lease and manage the serviced residence units for investors, creating recurring rental income. The hotel will be affiliated with Design Hotels under Marriott Bonvoy's global distribution network, while the residences are endorsed by Global Branded Residences in the United Kingdom.

For the first quarter ended March 31, 2026, Magma recorded a net loss of RM7.3 million on revenue of RM6.26 million, mainly due to higher staff costs and corporate exercise expenses. Nevertheless, its hospitality business continued to generate stable recurring income. Looking ahead, the group plans to improve hotel occupancy, increase room rates, strengthen operational efficiency and diversify income through the food and beverage business. Construction will take place on its 2.26 acre site, with Grand Dynamic Builders appointed as the main contractor.

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Malaysia Strengthens Muslim Friendly Tourism Standards Through Enhanced Industry Recognition

The Islamic Tourism Centre clarified that the Muslim Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition programme complements rather than replaces the Malaysia Halal Certification in supporting the needs of Muslim travellers. The clarification followed discussions on social media regarding the meaning and scope of the term Muslim friendly. Developed by the Islamic Tourism Centre, the official recognition programme ensures tourism products and services meet Muslim friendly requirements while maintaining existing halal certification standards.

The programme covers tourist accommodation, travel agencies, spa and wellness premises, together with other tourism and hospitality services. For premises serving food and beverages, compliance with Malaysia Halal Certification requirements remains one of the assessment criteria under the recognition process, which is carried out in collaboration with the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia. Consequently, the programme aims to provide a tourism experience that is comfortable, safe and aligned with Islamic principles through prayer facilities, halal food and suitable services.

The Muslim Friendly Tourism and Hospitality approach has gained international recognition, with its framework adopted in destinations including Russia and Taiwan. In addition, the initiative has contributed to Malaysia being recognised as the world's leading Muslim friendly tourism destination for 11 consecutive years. Established in 2009, the Islamic Tourism Centre remains committed to strengthening Malaysia's position as a trusted global destination for Muslim travellers while encouraging stakeholders to obtain accurate information through its official channels.

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Terengganu Records 6.5 Million Visitors With RM1.5 Billion Tourism Revenue

Terengganu welcomed 6.5 million tourists in the first six months of the year, generating tourism revenue of between RM1.4 billion and RM1.5 billion. Domestic travellers accounted for 70% of arrivals, while international visitors made up the remaining 30%, with demand centred on resort islands and other attractions. Supported by this performance, the state is confident of achieving its target of nine million tourist arrivals by year end. Meanwhile, the latest Domestic Tourism Survey 2025 showed Terengganu received 15.46 million domestic visitors, up 6.9% from the previous year.

Of the total domestic visitors, 5.2 million stayed overnight, reflecting the state's growing appeal as a destination for longer travel experiences. At the same time, Terengganu has partnered with redBus to accelerate digitalisation across its tourism ecosystem. The collaboration aims to expand market reach, improve accessibility and support sustainable tourism growth through a single online platform for tourism operators.

Participating businesses will receive free digital participation, including product listings, electronic ticketing systems, inventory management and technical support. Consequently, operators can expand market access without upfront costs while reducing reliance on offline bookings. The initiative also supports small and medium enterprises together with community based tourism operators by broadening market exposure. As visitor numbers continue to rise, the digital strategy is expected to strengthen Terengganu's tourism competitiveness and create wider opportunities across the state's tourism sector.

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Pahang MAHA Generates RM2.3 Million Sales And Draws Record Visitor Turnout

The rebranded Pahang Malaysia Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism Exhibition concluded with strong results, generating RM2.3 million in sales and exceeding its RM1.3 million target. The four day event attracted 212,374 visitors, more than double the initial target of 100,000, while bringing together over 200 entrepreneurs. The strong response highlights continued demand for agriculture and agri food products and reinforces the sector's growing role as an important contributor to Pahang's economy.

The event reflects the success of Pahang's strategy to strengthen agriculture, entrepreneurship and rural economic development through a larger state level platform. Originally introduced as Mini MAHA in 2025, the exhibition was rebranded as MAHA Pahang this year to enhance its profile and broaden industry participation. The expanded format also provided greater opportunities for entrepreneurs, farmers and livestock breeders to showcase products, build business networks and reach a wider market.

Looking ahead, Lipis will host the next edition of MAHA Pahang with an increased allocation of RM3 million, compared with RM2 million previously. The event will be organised on a larger scale to further strengthen the development of the state's agriculture and entrepreneurship sectors. Consequently, the continued expansion of MAHA Pahang is expected to support business growth, encourage greater industry participation and reinforce confidence in the long term potential of Pahang's agriculture and agri food ecosystem.

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Scoot Expands Malaysia Network Amid Strong Travel Demand And Regional Growth

Malaysia remains a strategic market for Scoot, supported by sustained demand for leisure and business travel. The airline currently serves 12 destinations across the country with 130 weekly flights, making it the foreign carrier with the widest network in Malaysia. During the financial year ended March 31, 2026, Scoot carried more than 2.2 million passengers to and from Malaysia, a 14% year on year increase. Strong tourism momentum, including the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign and close connectivity with Singapore, continues to support travel demand.

Malaysia also plays an important role in Scoot's wider network by generating both direct and connecting passengers through Singapore. In the first two months of 2026, 3.4 million Singaporean visitors travelled to Malaysia, accounting for nearly half of all international tourist arrivals. To capture future growth, Scoot entered a three year partnership with Tourism Malaysia through 2028 to promote the country across Singapore, China, Australia and Indonesia. The airline also continues evaluating opportunities to expand its presence in Malaysia.

Beyond Malaysia, Scoot views Southeast Asia as its primary growth market, supported by rising incomes, expanding airport infrastructure and demand for affordable travel. As of June 2026, the airline operated 85 destinations across 18 countries and territories with more than 60 aircraft. It has introduced new regional routes, increased flight frequencies and ordered additional Airbus A320neo aircraft for delivery from 2028. Furthermore, Scoot continues investing in digitalisation and artificial intelligence to improve operational efficiency, customer experience and long term growth.

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AirBorneo Launches Singapore Service To Strengthen Sarawak Regional Connectivity And Growth

AirBorneo Airways launched its first international route connecting Kuching and Singapore, marking a significant milestone in the airline's expansion and Sarawak's aviation sector. The inaugural flight departed Kuching on Sarawak Day and arrived in Singapore 21 minutes ahead of schedule, while the return service reached Kuching 14 minutes early. The new route operates through Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 4 and represents AirBorneo's entry into international operations, reflecting its commitment to strengthening regional connectivity and supporting Sarawak's long term economic development.

Singapore was selected as AirBorneo's first international destination due to its strong economic links with Sarawak and its position as a leading regional aviation and commercial hub. Consequently, the new service is expected to strengthen tourism, trade, investment and business connectivity between both destinations. The launch also marks the beginning of the airline's broader international expansion strategy as it seeks to grow its regional network and connect Sarawak with more international markets.

AirBorneo will operate daily flights between Kuching and Singapore, providing greater travel convenience for business and leisure passengers. The expanded connectivity is expected to support visitor growth, facilitate cross border business activities and enhance Sarawak's accessibility within Southeast Asia. Looking ahead, the airline plans to continue expanding its network strategically, reinforcing its role in supporting regional economic integration and creating long term opportunities for tourism, investment and commercial development.

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Batik Air Partners YeePay To Strengthen Chinese Visitor Growth To Malaysia

Batik Air has signed a memorandum of understanding with Chinese payment service provider YeePay to integrate its digital payment system into the airline's ticketing platform. The partnership will allow Chinese travellers to book flights to Malaysia using one of China's widely adopted tourism payment systems, creating a more seamless booking experience. As a subsidiary of Indonesia's Lion Air Group, Batik Air operates direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to more than 10 destinations across China. Consequently, the integration is expected to strengthen the airline's ability to attract more Chinese visitors to Malaysia.

The collaboration comes as travel demand from China continues to grow. In the first half of 2025, Malaysia welcomed more than 2.17 million Chinese visitors, representing a 35.6% increase from the previous year. Looking ahead, the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign and the mutual visa free arrangement between Malaysia and China are expected to further support tourism growth and improve travel accessibility between both countries.

Beyond supporting tourism, the partnership reflects the increasing importance of digital payment solutions in enhancing the travel experience for international visitors. At the same time, YeePay views the agreement as the first step towards expanding similar collaborations with airlines across Malaysia and Southeast Asia. As digital connectivity continues to improve, the partnership is expected to strengthen regional tourism links, support higher passenger traffic and create new opportunities for the aviation and tourism sectors.

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Korean Air Expands Malaysia Connectivity Ahead Of Asiana Airlines Integration

Korean Air recorded stronger passenger demand on its Kuala Lumpur to Seoul route during the first half of 2026, carrying 86,507 passengers, a 13% increase from a year earlier. Load factor improved to 86% from 76%, despite higher airfares and fuel surcharges. The airline attributed the growth to travellers choosing alternative routes amid disruptions affecting Middle Eastern transit hubs, while demand for travel to Seoul and onward to the United States remained resilient. Korean Air currently operates daily Kuala Lumpur to Seoul services using Airbus A330 300 aircraft and is evaluating future capacity expansion after completing its merger with Asiana Airlines.

The airline is also leveraging its Seoul hub to expand access to secondary cities in Japan while working with travel agencies to introduce new travel packages. Meanwhile, cargo operations remain an important contributor, with freighter services from Penang and Kuala Lumpur transporting semiconductors, servers, medical equipment, aerospace components, electrical and electronic products and solar panels. Korean Air also continues assessing the potential to resume passenger services between Seoul and Penang.

The merger with Asiana Airlines remains on track for completion on Dec 17, creating a combined airline with about 230 aircraft by year end and more than 120 international destinations, including Kuala Lumpur. Looking ahead, Korean Air plans to expand its fleet to 290 aircraft by 2036. The enlarged network is expected to strengthen connectivity across Asia, Europe and North America while reinforcing Malaysia's role in the airline's long term regional growth strategy.

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