

Revealing the inner beauty

The Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), driven by newly-minted Director-General Nizran Noordin, and its esteemed partners are elevating the Islamic tourism experience to greater heights during Islamic Tourism Month from Aug 21 to Sept 17.



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Nizran Noordin is the new DG of Islamic Tourism Centre

ISLAMIC TOURISM Centre (ITC) is delighted to announce the appointment of Nizran Noordin as its new Director-General, effective July 10, 2023. With over 23 years of experience driving transformational growth, Nizran's extensive background includes working for a diversified Malaysian conglomerate, a career in investment banking, entrepreneurial experience in the technology space, state government administration and leading a public-listed company.

Nizran was formerly the Group CEO/Executive Director of Majuperak Holdings Berhad,



a public-listed company controlled by Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Perak which is involved in property development, facilities management, and renewable energy business.

With Nizran's extensive corporate and business background, he has been entrusted to lead ITC to greater heights through transformational initiatives that capitalise on Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality, which is expected to be worth US\$225 billion globally by 2028. This includes assisting the Minister and Deputy Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture in developing Malaysia as an Umrah hub.

Strengthening good governance and upholding integrity

THE ISLAMIC Tourism Centre (ITC) unveiled the ITC Organisational Anti-Corruption Plan 2023-2027 (ITC OACP), which was developed in collaboration with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and Malaysian Institute of Integrity (IIM).

The initiative reflects ITC's support for the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture's (MOTAC) goal to establish Malaysia and its ministry as an anti-corrupt organisation. It also stands for ITC's commitment to becoming a better organisation that cultivates good governance, promotes integrity and is corruption-free, conforming with the Government's anti-corruption agenda through the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP).

On launching the ITC OACP 2023-2027, YBhg. Datuk Hajah Saraya Arbi, Secretary-General of MOTAC, said: "The collective efforts of all organisations towards the sole goal of fighting corruption is to support the Malaysian Government's aspiration to ensure a fairer and more equitable



management of the country, resulting in a prosperous nation and people."

She added: "As the leading agency for the development of Islamic Tourism in Malaysia, integrity, transparency, and trust are among the core values that ITC prioritises. This is important considering that ITC often deals with the public and foreign parties, promoting Malaysia's positive image on a global scale."

ITC embarks on nationwide Islamic Tourism roadshow



CARRYING THE responsibility for developing Malaysia's Islamic Tourism industry, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) kicked off a nationwide roadshow to engage with more tourism industry players in sharpening Malaysia's appeal as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination.

With Muslim travel gaining traction and estimated to be worth US\$225 billion globally by 2028, ITC is keen for more tourism industry players to develop, brand and market themselves within the Muslim-friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH) ecosystem.

Towards this end, ITC has initiated

various training and recognition programmes, which include the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR), the Islamic Tourism Entrepreneurship and Leadership Seminar (ITELS), Muslim-Friendly Tourist Guide (MFTG), Islamic Tourism Writers Workshop (ITWW), and Mosque Visit Guide (MOSVI) Training Programme.

Collaborating with State tourism boards and State religious affairs councils, ITC's nationwide tour includes Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang and more until year-end.

Dato' Dr Ammar appointed as Director-General of Tourism Malaysia

THE MALAYSIA Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) announced the appointment of Dato' Dr Ammar Abd Ghapar as the new Director-General of Tourism Malaysia, effective April 12, 2023. With a PhD in Hotel and Tourism Management and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Ammar previously served as the Senior Director of the International Promotion Division (America, Europe, and Oceania). Having served in the public service for 35 years, he was entrusted with various roles, including Senior Management Director and leading the Strategic Planning Division and the Domestic & Events Division of Tourism Malaysia.



Tourism bureau, Tainan City Government creates Muslim-Friendly Environment



AMIDST THE easing of the global pandemic and Taiwan's reopening of borders, the Tourism Bureau, along with several counties and towns, are actively engaged in robust marketing efforts to entice more foreign tourists.

To enhance Tainan City's presence in the Muslim travel market, the Tourism Bureau of the Tainan City Government has established a Muslim-friendly tourism environment. This involves compiling a dedicated list of Tainan shops that have obtained halal certification.

Tainan City's renowned culinary

and historical attractions appeal to many Muslim tourists worldwide. Furthermore, the Tainan City Government is fervently promoting halal certification and encouraging tourism that welcomes Muslim visitors, ensuring their safety and enabling them to savour delightful meals.

The Tourism Bureau has already verified 19 businesses as halal-certified. The historic Taiwanese capital anticipates increased commercial opportunities and development by cultivating a Muslim-friendly atmosphere.

The Philippines wants more Halal-Friendly food and services nationwide



ACCORDING TO the Department of Tourism (DoT) of the Philippines, there is a need for more establishments in the country that offer halal-friendly food and services to attract the growing global Muslim travel market, projected to spend around US\$225 billion by 2028.

Tourism Secretary Christina G. Frasco emphasised the potential of halal tourism but acknowledged that further development was required in the Philippines. The DoT stressed

that achieving a larger share of the halal tourism market would require nationwide support, extending beyond Mindanao, the region with the highest Muslim population in the country.

Tourism Undersecretary Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar highlighted the importance of places that understand and incorporate the basic concepts of halal, beyond just food, as a vital aspect of the Islamic faith to attract more Muslim travellers to the Philippines.

Strategic partnership to boost leisure traffic to Malaysia



QATAR AIRWAYS has announced a partnership with Tourism Malaysia to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination and provide flight offers to travellers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman.

Qatar Airways Holidays recently launched limited-time travel packages for travellers from Qatar to plan unforgettable holidays to Kuala Lumpur with incredible savings and exclusive offers.

Malaysia is an excellent destination for travellers seeking adventure, culture, and relaxation. With its stunning natural landscapes, rich history, and vibrant cities, Malaysia is a versatile destination with something to offer everyone.

Allowing more travellers to experience Malaysia, there are currently three daily flights between Doha's state-of-the-art airport, Hamad International Airport (HIA), to Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KUL). – R&R

Beyond hospitality

Malaysia tops as a Muslim-friendly and Muslim women-friendly destination

MALAYSIA has established itself as a leading force in Islamic tourism, earning widespread acclaim and recognition. The country's unwavering dedication to providing exceptional experiences for Muslim travellers has placed it at the forefront of the industry.

Malaysia's outstanding achievements in Islamic tourism were celebrated at the Halal in Travel Awards in Singapore, held on June 1, 2023, when the country received the prestigious recognition as the "Top Muslim-Friendly Destination (OIC)" and "Muslim Women-Friendly Destination of the Year" by CrescentRating and Mastercard.

It also proudly retained its top position as "Top Muslim-Friendly Destination" in the "Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2023" report at the same event.

According to Dato Sri Tiong King Sing, Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC) Minister, this achievement is a source of pride that further solidifies Malaysia's position and branding as a leader in the Islamic tourism segment and Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH) regionally and internationally.

Malaysia attracted 2.12 million Muslim tourists to the country last year, with Muslim tourist spending totalling RM5.37 billion. This development demonstrates Muslim travellers' desire and capability to enhance the country's international tourism sector.

TOP MUSLIM-FRIENDLY DESTINATION

While Malaysia has been seriously exploring and attracting Muslim tourists for over a decade, the Islamic Tourism segment has recently gained attention from other leading destinations worldwide. This year, both Malaysia and Indonesia shared "Top Muslim-Friendly Destination" ranking in the GMTI.

"As a leader in the Islamic Tourism industry, Malaysia is proud to witness this sector's development, garnering increasing attention from international tourism practitioners," said Tiong in an official statement.

The Muslim travel market is a significant global segment. According to the GMTI, Muslim international arrivals reached 110 million in 2022 and are forecasted to reach 140 million this year. By 2028, it is expected to reach 230 million, with a projected expenditure of US\$ 225 billion. Asia currently leads with over 31 per cent of travellers to the region identifying as Muslims.

Indonesia and Malaysia, with equal scores in this year's index, have established themselves as renowned choices for Muslim travellers. Indonesia had previously secured the top position in the 2019 report, while Malaysia has consistently maintained its leading position in the GMTI since 2015.

The index evaluates destinations based on four critical criteria: Access, Communications, Environment, and Services (ACES). Southeast Asian destinations excelled in all four criteria, ranking among the top 10 globally. In the overall assessment, Indonesia and Malaysia achieved an impressive 73 out of 100.

The report also found several global

travel behaviours impacting trends among Muslim travellers, with the demographic increasingly: incorporating sustainability into their travel; opting for destinations and activities to improve their health and wellness; finding opportunities for immersive experiences and authenticity; and incorporating personal development into their travel plans.

MUSLIM WOMEN-FRIENDLY DESTINATION

According to the report, Malaysia emerged as the leading Muslim women-friendly destination. It highlights Malaysia's well-rounded appeal to Muslim women, emphasising safety, the absence of faith restrictions, and sustainable socio-economic practices.

Indonesia follows closely with a score that mirrors Malaysia's, showcasing its comprehensive efforts to create a welcoming environment for Muslim women.

The report also highlights the evolving landscape of Muslim women travelling within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) destinations, acknowledging their unique needs and preferences. Each destination provides a comfortable, secure, and faith-friendly environment catering to Muslim women travellers.

The Mastercard-CrescentRating Muslim Women in Travel (MWIT) 2019 report introduces the P.A.I.N.S model, which identifies unique concerns stakeholders should address regarding Muslim women travellers.

The model stands for Privacy, Amenities, Identity, Networks, and Safety. By addressing the problems outlined in the P.A.I.N.S model, stakeholders can enhance the travel experiences of Muslim women and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for their unique needs and preferences.

WELCOMING MORE ISLAMIC TOURISM PLAYERS

MOTAC Deputy Minister Tuan Khairul



YB Tuan Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan (centre) at Halal in Travel Awards.

Firdaus Akbar Khan proudly accepted the awards on behalf of Malaysia at the Halal in Travel Awards. These prestigious accolades catalyse MOTAC and its agency, the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), to further strengthen their commitment to positioning Malaysia as a preferred destination for Muslim travellers.

With unwavering dedication, Malaysia strives to welcome increasing numbers of Muslim tourists by offering various activities, services, and facilities that promise a unique, captivating, and unforgettable tourism experience.

This endeavour benefits Muslim travellers and extends to non-Muslim visitors who seek to explore Malaysia's rich culture, heritage, history, and Islamic architecture.

The encouragement is extended to local entrepreneurs and industry practitioners of all religions and ethnicities to develop their own Muslim-friendly services as an added value. They are also urged to actively engage in courses and programmes offered by the ITC, such as the Muslim-Friendly Tourist Guide (MFTG) course, designed for licensed local tour guides, and the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) programme, which provides promising



business development opportunities for Malaysians in the rapidly growing Islamic tourism industry.

Together, these efforts foster a vibrant and inclusive tourism landscape, showcasing Malaysia's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional experiences and services to cater to Muslim and non-Muslim travellers' diverse needs. – R&R

“As a leader in the Islamic Tourism industry, Malaysia is proud to witness this sector’s development, garnering increasing attention from international tourism practitioners.” – Tiong King Sing



Winners at Halal in Travel Awards.

THE BEST HOLIDAYS COME WITH TOTAL PEACE OF MIND



LANGKAWI ISLAND, KEDAH
MALAYSIA

Visit Malaysia, top-ranked Muslim-Friendly Destination for the 8th consecutive year in the Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index and the awardee of Muslim Women-Friendly Destination of the Year 2023 at Halal in Travel Awards.



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Islamic Tourism Centre itc_my



Muslim-friendly
Tourism and Hospitality
Assurance and
Recognition



ISLAMIC TOURISM
21 AUGUST -
MONTH 2023 | 17 SEPTEMBER

Unveiling the wonders of Islamic Tourism Month 2023

The month-long event features unmatched deals and offers within the Islamic tourism ecosystem

THE ISLAMIC tourism ecosystem is far-reaching, encompassing tourism operators and various other parties within the halal industry. Together, they collaborate to create seamless experiences for Muslim

travellers whether for leisure or business purposes.

Within this dynamic landscape, Islamic Tourism Month (ITM) 2023 takes centre stage from Aug 21 to Sept 17, catalysing to showcase the diversity and vibrancy of this

growing tourism sector.

Amidst this remarkable event, the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) has partnered with various industry players, igniting the stage for many promotions and offers designed to attract Muslim travellers.

Join us as we delve into the extraordinary offerings of ITM 2023 throughout Malaysia and explore how ITC, alongside its esteemed partners, is elevating the Islamic tourism experience to new heights. — **R&R**



Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS)



MALAYSIA International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) is the world's largest halal tradeshow organised by Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) under the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI).

MIHAS is a crucial platform for Malaysian halal micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to connect and conduct business with global counterparts. The 19th edition of MIHAS, titled "Paving the Way of Halal," will take place on Sept 12-15, 2023, at Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC). This edition will continue the digitalisation initiative of the halal industry through the organisation of this showcase in a hybrid manner.

"Since both Islamic tourism and the halal sector serve Muslim tourists' requirements and preferences, by participating in Islamic Tourism Month, MIHAS would capitalise on the growing popularity of Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality. It confers the possibility that halal products and services complement tourism, which conse-

quently encourages the development of halal-friendly locations globally," said MATRADE CEO, Datuk Mohd Mustafa Abdul Aziz.

Since its inception till 2022, MIHAS has featured more than 9,000 exhibitors from over 40 countries and visited by close to 500,000 trade visitors across 18 editions, enhancing Malaysia's position as a Muslim-friendly travel destination for both business and leisure. As global borders reopen, MIHAS 2023 expects to welcome over 35,000 visitors, thus invigorating Malaysia's tourism sector.

MIHAS promotes the integration of business and leisure, encouraging international visitors to extend their stay beyond business transactions.



Datuk Mohd Mustafa Abdul Aziz

SPECIAL PROMOTION:

- Discounted pricing on MAS and Firefly for travel between September 5 and 22, 2023, with promo codes: MAS: MHMIH20 & Firefly: FYMIH20.
- SkyZone Tours was appointed as the official travel agent, offering exceptional promotional hotel rates. For enquiries, contact Ms Stanlie at stanlie@skyzonetours.com. Please visit the official website (www.mih.com.my) and social media for more information about MIHAS.

myBurgerLab



Chin Ren Yi

myBurgerLab, Malaysia's exclusive halal charcoal burger chain, takes pride in crafting burgers that harmoniously blend distinct local and Western flavours, nestled between two tantalising charcoal buns. Their menu offers an exciting array of adventurous options, including the indulgent Salted Egg Yolk Chicken Burger, the unconventional Peanut Butter Jelly Beef Burger, and even the unique Kelantanese Budu Burger infused with Pepper Relish.

According to myBurgerLab founder Chin Ren Yi, Islamic Tourism Month presents a valuable opportunity to celebrate Malaysia's Islamic heritage and promote Muslim-friendly tourism.

"We are interested in participating in ITM 2023 to foster understanding and appreciation for Islamic

culture. Malaysia, known for its harmonious blend of cultural diversity and Islamic principles, warmly welcomes Muslim travellers. Its captivating attractions, vibrant cultural experiences, and commitment to promoting Islamic tourism make Malaysia an enticing destination," said Chin.

"By participating, we aim to contribute to the growth of Muslim-friendly tourism and showcase Malaysia's unique offerings, fostering intercultural



myBurgerLab offers a special bundle deal for all four cheeseburgers accompanied by refreshing sodas at a limited-time offer of RM69.

dialogue and harmony among travellers from diverse backgrounds."

SPECIAL PROMOTIONS:

- Enjoy myBurgerLab's latest collection of Cheeseburger offerings, each delivering a unique flavour experience. These four distinctive cheeseburgers demonstrate the incredible variety that can be achieved with just buns, meat, and cheese. myBurgerLab offers a special bundle deal for all four cheeseburgers accompanied by refreshing sodas at a limited-time offer of RM69 (Normal Price: RM96). Take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to savour the delectable range of flavours at an unbeatable price!

For more information and inquiries, please reach out to myBurgerLab at askme@myburgerlab.com. You can find them on various digital platforms, including Facebook ([myBurgerLab](https://www.facebook.com/myburgerlab)), Instagram ([@myburgerlab](https://www.instagram.com/myburgerlab)), and TikTok ([@myburgerlab](https://www.tiktok.com/@myburgerlab)), where you can stay updated and engage with them.



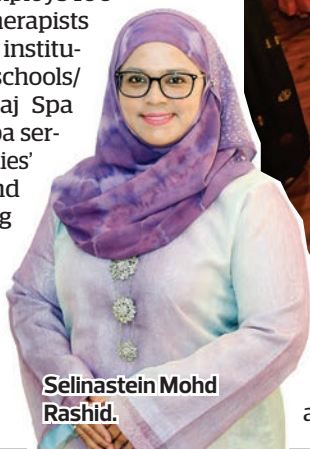
myBurgerLab has obtained the halal certification from JAKIM.

Nur Taj Spa

Nur Taj Spa, founded by Selinastein Mohd Rashid, is a Muslim-friendly spa in Busana@Menara MARA in Kuala Lumpur City Centre. Since 2015, Nur Taj Spa has provided a stress-free spa experience for families and busy parents.

The spa features traditional Malaysian decoration and employs 100 per cent of local therapists from government institutions and Islamic schools/Madrasah. Nur Taj Spa offers a range of spa services, including Ladies' Spa, Men's Spa, and Kid's Spa, catering to the relaxation needs of the whole family.

"I am very excited to be part of the industry and to participate in



Selinastein Mohd Rashid.



The spa features traditional Malaysian decoration.

ITM 2023. It is one of the right times to show the spa Industry in Malaysia as one of the places to visit where



Nur Taj Spa offers a range of spa services, including Ladies' Spa, Men's Spa, and Kid's Spa.

people can try the services full of 'Adab' and gender concern. Malaysia has so many activities and places to enjoy as we are now very concerned about the gender separation in spa, halal products and the right and polite way of handling guests," shared Selinastein.

SPECIAL PROMOTIONS:

- 25 per cent discount on the NUR TAJ ROYAL SIGNATURE MASSAGE, a unique massage using local natural ingredients

and traditional massage techniques with hand and hot compress.

For more information and to take up the ITM offer, the public can book through the Nur Taj Spa website at www.nurtaj.com.my or via WhatsApp or call at 010-8171700. To stay updated and access further details, follow Nur Taj Spa & Beauty on Instagram at @nurtajspaandbeauty and on Facebook at Nur Taj Spa & Beauty.



Faez Fadhillah

Some packages offered by Tripfez.

Tripfez Travel



Tripfez Travel was founded in 2013 and is a leading Muslim-friendly online leisure travel company in Malaysia, offering various packaged tours, ticketing, and travel services. "Throughout the years we keep our vision, 'value for money, client satisfaction & impeccable service' as a compass. The number of passengers serviced annually today is more than ten times higher than five years ago," said Faez Fadhillah, CEO and Co-founder of Tripfez & Salam Standard. With technology, Tripfez & Salam Standard simplify the life of Muslim travellers by offering reliable and affordable Muslim-friendly travel services.

Faez believes the initiatives which promote Muslim-friendly tourism, like Islamic Tourism Month, are now more critical than ever in fostering tourist-

related services to Muslim travellers. The company is excited to participate because it is a highly targeted event for their customer target group, and they can showcase their services and travel products to other Muslim travellers.

SPECIAL PROMOTIONS:

- Domestic packages in Malaysia, including theme park tickets.
- Packaged tours (FIT and GIT) to destinations: Korea, Dubai, Taiwan, Turkiye, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, etc.
- Leisure packages and Umrah packages to Saudi Arabia are all designed with Muslim-friendly considerations.

For more information and to explore Tripfez's products and travel packages, please visit their website at www.tripfez.com. You can also find them on social media platforms such as Facebook at facebook.com/tripfez and Instagram at @tripfez. For any inquiries, feel free to send them a message at sales@tripfez.com.

Hotel Lavender Inn



Budget & Business Hotel Association (MyBHA), ensures that Hotel Lavender Inn upholds high standards in service and hospitality.

During this Islamic Tourism Month, Hotel Lavender Inn reviewed the

Hotel Lavender Inn, founded by Jarod Chia Lik Ming, is a reputable hotel chain with two branches in Johor Bahru and one in Subang Jaya, Selangor. Hotel Lavender Inn aims to provide the best staying experiences for Muslim travellers. The hotel offers prayer mats and Kiblat signs in each room to cater to their needs and implements a non-alcoholic and non-smoking room policy.

Chia, also the National Deputy President and Chairman of the National Foreign Trade Affairs Bureau cum Johor State Chapter of Malaysia



Jarod Chia Lik Ming.

hotel policy and facilities provided to comply with the basic needs of Muslim travellers. Hotel Lavender Inn remains committed to placing the cleanliness and comfort of its hotel rooms as the top priority.

SPECIAL PROMOTIONS:

Up to 40 per cent discount during the Islamic Tourism Month by quoting code "ITM2023" when booking through hotline 010-880 7211 or website www.lavenderinn.com.my. Terms and conditions apply.

For further details, individuals can contact the alternative numbers at 03-8081 7366 / 7866 or visit the Facebook page @lavenderinnusj.

Special promotions at Lavender Inn during ITM 2023.





Masjid Sri Sendayan, Negeri Sembilan.

A month of enriching experiences

ITC continues the success of last year's Islamic Tourism Week with Islamic Tourism Month 2023

MUSLIM-FRIENDLY tourism has emerged as a significant segment within the global travel industry, driven by the increasing demand for destinations that cater to Muslim travellers' unique needs and preferences.

With a rapidly growing Muslim population worldwide, countries have recognised the importance of developing tourism offerings that align with Islamic principles and provide a welcoming environment for Muslim visitors.

Malaysia has positioned itself as a leading destination for Muslim-friendly tourism, and at the forefront of promoting this sector is the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC).

As an agency established under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) in 2009, ITC is dedicated to developing and promoting Islamic tourism in the country. It serves as a critical entity responsible for enhancing the Muslim-friendly Tourism & Hospitality (MFTH) brand, supporting the efforts of MOTAC and Tourism Malaysia in attracting Muslim travellers to Malaysia.

Through programmes encompassing research, training, recognition, education, capacity development, and industry advancement, ITC aims to empower the Islamic tourism segment and ensure that Malaysia remains a preferred destination for Muslim tourists.

ISLAMIC TOURISM MONTH

Building upon the landscape of Muslim-friendly tourism in Malaysia, ITC will organise the highly anticipated Islamic Tourism Month (ITM). ITM serves as a platform to showcase Malaysia's diverse Islamic tourism offerings and experiences while fostering collaboration and rebuilding the industry following the reopening of borders post-Covid-19 and towards Visit Malaysia 2025 (VM2025).

The month-long event is on Aug 21-Sept 17, 2023. This initiative was first introduced in 2022 as Islamic Tourism Week (ITW), which managed to capture more than 30 strategic partners offering enticing and special discounts and packages during

two weeks.

The launch of ITM 2023 will take place on Aug 24, 2023, in Perak. This launch event will set the stage for engaging activities and programmes catering to tourism players' and tourists' interests and needs.

ITM 2023 will feature five major programmes, including Mosque Open Day, seminars and talks on Muslim-friendly tourism, expos and showcases, promotions and offers, and unique collaborative programmes such as Quran recitation events, Malaysia Quran Hour, modest fashion shows, and more.

ITM 2023 will also feature the participation of various industry sectors, including hotels, homestays, spa and wellness centres, medical and healthcare facilities, theme parks, shopping malls, airlines, food and retail outlets, and training providers offering discounted offers and promotional packages. This extensive involvement ensures visitors enjoy various Muslim-friendly services and experiences in Malaysia.



Malaysia has been recognised as the Muslim Women-Friendly Destination of the Year at the Halal in Travel Awards 2023.

AN INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE EVENT

The potential collaborators of ITM 2023 include prominent mosques like Masjid Jamek Sultan Abdul Samad Kuala Lumpur, Masjid Sri Sendayan, Muzium Masjid Sultan Abdullah Pekan, Masjid Muhammadiyah Ipoh, Masjid Sultan Iskandar Johor Bahru, and Masjid Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin Putrajaya.

As part of its seminars and talks component, ITM 2023 will offer a diverse range of programmes and interactive sessions to enrich the knowledge and skills of its participants. These include the Muslim-friendly Tourism & Hospitality (MFTH) training, MFTH Assurance & Recognition (MFAR) programme, Muslim-friendly Tourist Guide (MFTG) training programme, Mosque Tour Visit (MosVi), the Share, Enrich, Enhance, Develop (SEED) programme and Islamic Tourism Entrepreneurship and Leadership Seminar (ITELS).

Partners of ITM 2023 can look forward to a host of valuable benefits. By joining this prestigious event, businesses will gain enhanced visibility through dedicated promotion on the ITM 2023 microsite and strategic social media exposure.

Discounted fees for exhibition booths at renowned events like MATTA 2023 and the Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) 2023, under ITC banner, will provide them with a unique platform to showcase products and services to industry professionals and potential partners. They can also take advantage of exclusive discounts of at least 15 per cent on all ITC training programmes to expand their skills and knowledge in the Islamic tourism sector.

In recognition of their involvement, product and company information will be included in the goodie bags distributed during various ITM 2023 programmes, providing additional exposure and engagement opportunities. Additionally, partners will receive a certificate of ITM 2023 participation, acknowledging their contribution to this prestigious event.

- R&R



ITC actively participates in tourism expos worldwide to promote Muslim-friendly tourism.

ISLAMIC TOURISM MONTH 2023 | 21 AUG - 17 SEPT

<p>PACKAGES/PROMOTIONS</p> <p>Discounted offers and promotional packages on MFTH from hotels, spa and wellness centre, tourism products, theme parks, shopping malls, retails and training providers.</p>	<p>MOSQUE OPEN DAY</p> <p>Selected mosques having activities to give exposure to both Muslims and non-Muslims, to experience being in the mosque as well as understanding the Islamic arts and architecture.</p>	<p>SEMINARS/TALK</p> <p>MFTH and Islamic Tourism contents from ITC, Nasyrul Quran and others such as MFTH, MFTG, MosVi and MFAR to name a few.</p>	<p>EXPO AND SHOWCASE</p> <p>Participation of tourism and hospitality industry players in domestic and international exhibitions/showcase such as MATTA 2023 and MIHAS 2023</p>	<p>SPECIAL PROGRAMMES</p> <p>Collaborated programmes such as Khatam Quran, Malaysia Quran Hour, Muslimah/ Modest fashion show and others.</p>
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Scan to register as ITM 2023 partner



Scan for info on ITM 2023



Muslim-friendly spas are among Islamic tourism products promoted during ITM 2023.



Driving transformation

ITC's industry development division drives Islamic Tourism Roadshow and unveils 10 MFAR guidelines

BY FATIHAH MANAF

THE ISLAMIC Tourism Centre (ITC) has proactively supported and empowered tourism industry players since 2009. With a clear objective, ITC, under its industry development division, has organised two significant programmes during its Islamic Tourism Roadshow: the Islamic Tourism Entrepreneurship and Leadership Seminar (ITELS) and Let's Sembang Together on Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) programme to help strengthen the Islamic tourism segment.

Marina Muhamad, Director of the Industry Development Division of ITC, said ITELS and Let's Sembang Together MFAR represented two different approaches.

"Regarding ITELS, we aim to engage various players in the tourism and hospitality industry, such as hoteliers, spa owners, tourist guides, and tourism product operators. These business owners have experienced significant challenges during the Covid-19 and MCO periods, resulting in losses and business contraction. To assist them in re-establishing their operations, ITELS serves as a platform to connect them with guiding agencies and financial institutions," shared Marina.

"Our strategic partners include Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) and banks, with Bank Islam currently on board. Additionally, we collaborate with Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), as its DE Rantau programme seeks registered accommodation hubs to be promoted to the digital nomads."

She revealed that the agency also collaborated with State tourism boards nationwide to inform local players about the activities occurring within their respective States.

The Islamic Tourism Roadshow serves as a means to connect industry players with strategic partners who could provide guidance and opportunities that players might have yet to be aware of. As part of the roadshow, business coaches were invited to share insights on leadership and financial management.

The event format consisted of discussions in the first half of the day, followed by face-to-face interactions where participants could seek guidance from

ITC's strategic partners and address their concerns directly.

INTRODUCING 10 NEW MFAR GUIDELINES

ITC has expanded the scope of its MFAR programme from exclusively covering Muslim-friendly tourist accommodation premises to including spa and wellness centres, medical and healthcare facilities, travel agencies, transportation hubs, shopping malls, amusement parks, rest and service areas, tourism products and convention centres.

"We are in the process of developing standards and rating guidelines for Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality products. Previously, this scheme was called the Muslim-friendly Tourism Products, Hospitality & Packages (MFT ProHPack), but now everything falls under the MFAR umbrella.

"The guidelines for tourist accommodation premises are already prepared, and we anticipate the readiness of guidelines for spa and wellness centres by the third quarter of this year. By the end of the year, we will open the application for spa owners and hoteliers to apply for Muslim-friendly spa recognition. The remaining schemes will be introduced gradually. The next one we are looking into is the medical and healthcare facilities," explained Marina.

During the Islamic Tourism Roadshow, industry players were informed about the MFAR requirements, application process, and available silver, gold, and platinum ratings. Marina clarified that during the application stage, industry players did not specifically apply for a particular rating category; instead, they submitted their applications. Upon evaluation, ITC would provide them with the appropriate rating based on the fulfilment of the MFAR requirements.

She said: "We encourage all these industry players to get their premises rated. We are doing this to ensure that our tourism industry, industry players and Muslim-friendly infrastructure are ready and geared up towards Visit Malaysia 2025. By the time 2025 arrives, it will give us ample time to ensure that our industry players have their Muslim-friendly services and infrastructure ready. So when Muslim tourists come, their needs will be fulfilled."



Marina Muhamad



ITC invited Ustaz Ridzuan Awang (right) from Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan to explain about halal certification during its roadshow in the State.

ENCOURAGING RESPONSE FOR ISLAMIC TOURISM ROADSHOW

"The first roadshow we had was in Ipoh. Alhamdulillah, the participation in the programme exceeded our expectations, and we received support from Perak's tourism exco, YB Loh Sze Yee. Before the roadshow, we had the opportunity to meet him and explain our programmes. He then participated in our Let's Sembang Together event held on May 30 at Sunway Lost World of Tambun, Perak," said Marina.

With Perak being the first destination for the roadshow, she noted that ITC gained valuable insights and identified areas for improvement. The agency observed industry players' genuine interest and curiosity regarding halal certification processes and requirements.

Thus, for the subsequent session of the Islamic Tourism Roadshow in Negeri Sembilan, ITC collaborated with Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan (JHEAINS) to provide the participants with comprehensive explanations regarding halal certification. Looking ahead to future sessions in different states, Marina mentioned that ITC planned to continue to involve religious department officers to

enhance this knowledge-sharing session further.

Regarding the Islamic tourism space in general, Marina said Malaysia was still ahead in terms of Muslim-friendly services and infrastructure. Still, some elements can be improved further to maintain Malaysia's position as the top Muslim-friendly destination.

"It shows that we already have industry players in place. ITC, under its industry development division, aims to encourage more industry players to adopt this concept and get themselves recognised as Muslim-friendly. It will further strengthen Malaysia's Muslim-friendly infrastructure, allowing for more creative itineraries and a wider range of destinations for Muslim travellers to explore."

She emphasised ITC's commitment to inclusivity, stating that its goal was to incorporate Muslim-friendly principles as a value-add across all tourism segments, such as eco-tourism, edu-tourism, and more. Rather than being a standalone concept, ITC aimed to integrate Muslim-friendly practices seamlessly into the overall tourism experience.

— R&R



The Islamic Tourism Roadshow in Perak.



The Islamic Tourism Roadshow in Negeri Sembilan.

Innovate and elevate

ITC expands the horizon of Islamic tourism with research and innovation

BY FATIHAH MANAF

AS THE year progresses, many exciting events await in Malaysia's Islamic tourism sector. The Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) has meticulously planned two key signature events that will shape the future of this burgeoning industry - the Islamic Tourism Month (ITM) and the Islamic Tourism Symposium.

"We aim to create a marketplace for Muslim-friendly tourism products and services through ITM. So, we're inviting our partners with these related products to be part of this programme," explained Anis Rozalina Ramli, Senior Corporate Communications Manager of ITC.

"This initiative creates branding and positioning for Malaysia as a destination that offers numerous options for Muslim tourists, ranging from travel products to food products, health products, and everything related to their travel needs."

Meanwhile, the Islamic Tourism Symposium presents a valuable opportunity for the collaboration between ITC and academia to explore the untapped potential within the Islamic tourism space. As the field is relatively new, the symposium seeks to bridge existing gaps and address areas where the industry can further flourish. By engaging with researchers and experts, ITC aims to identify and fulfil the evolving needs of the Muslim tourist market, ensuring a robust and comprehensive Muslim-friendly tourism landscape.

"The topics that we want to focus on during the symposium are the trends in the Muslim travel market, travel preferences of Muslim tourists, and the potential of other specific tourism products such as mosque tourism, pondokstay and even the usage of digital technology to support the Islamic tourism ecosystem.

"We also want to look into how youths and Muslim women travellers can be further supported because there may not be enough tourism products or services to support Muslim youths and women who want to travel," Anis elaborated.

UTILISING RESEARCH AND DATA IN ISLAMIC TOURISM

ITC recognises several gaps in the demand and supply of Muslim-friendly products. In response, the agency offers grants - the Islamic Tourism Research Grant - to academia and research centres interested in studying specific topics related to Islamic tourism. Some topics of interest include developing tourism products for the Muslim tourist market and learning about their future needs.

Anis explained that while Muslim tourists had basic needs, it was essential to project their future preferences and identify new travel trends that industry players should consider in the long term. This proactive approach ensures



One of the activities during the Islamic Tourism Writers Workshop (ITWW) 2022.



Anis Rozalina Ramli.

industry players are prepared and stay caught up when the time comes.

"We also want to explore sustainability topics because sustainability is a significant focus, particularly within the tourism industry. We want to inform our industry players that engaging in Islamic or Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality aligns well with the UN SDGs.

"Islamic tourism inherently encompasses sustainability values. However, we aim to present it in a different light so that industry players can perceive its significance from a new perspective,"

said Anis.

She shared that ITC had been collaborating with various local and private institutions as these institutions possess the necessary resources and manpower for conducting research. ITC's role is to provide support through financial funding, where each year or every two years, a specific amount is allocated and disbursed to selected universities that have submitted research proposals aligning with ITC's objectives. The research articles would then be published in the Islamic Tourism Journal.

"At the end of it, we are coming up with the Islamic Tourism Symposium, where the research that has been done will be presented to an audience of potential investors, business owners, and industry players who may be interested in developing the research further or commercialise it for their use."

EXPANDING MFAR PROGRAMME

"ITC originally developed the Muslim-friendly Accommodation Recognition (MFAR) in 2018. We had an excellent response from the industry players in the accommodation sector. They all wanted to be part of the Muslim-friendly ecosystem by getting this recognition from ITC.

"Then, there was demand from other tourism sectors, such as the spa industry. They wanted recognition that would allow them to market themselves as Muslim-friendly. So, through engagement and discussions with the industry, we developed guidelines for them to be recognised

under ITC.

"From there, it expanded to other sectors - theme parks, shopping malls, and more. Currently, we have around 10 different guidelines catering to these sectors' unique needs and requirements. These guidelines outline the necessary steps for establishments to be known as Muslim-friendly tourism product suppliers or providers," Anis shared.

She mentioned that ITC had collaborated with industry players and engaged with them to gain a deeper understanding of their challenges in becoming Muslim-friendly. This information was considered while working alongside researchers and academia to develop the MFAR guidelines, now known as the Muslim-friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR). She said the aim was to facilitate more industry players to adopt them.

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO DESTINATIONS

Anis highlighted that ITC was committed to supporting any destinations aspiring to become Muslim-friendly. The organisation has observed growing interest and discussions surrounding Islamic tourism, with many destinations expressing their intentions to provide more options for Muslim tourists.

Despite the competition, ITC is pleased to witness this positive shift and the increased focus on catering to the needs of Muslim travellers. To assist destinations in pursuing Muslim-friendly tourism, ITC provides various valuable services, including comprehensive training programmes, consultancy services, and informative workshops.

She explained that ITC's training programmes mainly focus on four areas: communication skills, understanding the faith, understanding the market, and digitalisation.

"It is essential for our industry players to have a strong grasp of these areas," Anis emphasised.

She shared that ITC prepared industry players for the upcoming Visit Malaysia campaign. Through recognition programmes, training, and the provision of relevant research information and data, ITC was equipping these tourism players to make informed decisions and effectively cater to the needs of Muslim tourists during the campaign. - R&R



The Islamic Tourism Writers Workshop (ITWW) is a programme designed after research identified a gap in communication skills within the sector.



Upholding core values

Integrity, transparency and trust remain fundamental values for Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC)

BY KHIRTINI K KUMARAN

THE ISLAMIC Tourism Centre (ITC) has come a long way since its founding in 2009. ITC Corporate Development and Finance Division Senior Manager Mohd Zaidi Bahirin Zainal Abidin said: "We had only nine employees when we started. We kept expanding and now employ more than 20 dedicated staff. With this growth, we want to further uphold our integrity, transparency and trust values.

"ITC, a company limited by guarantee under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), has its own governance and work procedures independent from MOTAC, therefore requiring its integrity plan."

Hence, in line with the MADANI government recommendation, ITC has launched its anti-corruption policy document, the Organisational Anti-Corruption Plan 2023-2027 (OACP), at the organisational level to address problems and weaknesses in governance, integrity and



anti-corruption in organisations.

The OACP will be implemented over five years, from 2023-2027. The scope of ITC's OACP implementation includes all aspects of anti-corruption, integrity and governance involving all areas and activities in this organisation.

STRENGTHENING ITC'S GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

According to records from Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), Zaidi shared ITC has not reported any cases or severe misconduct.

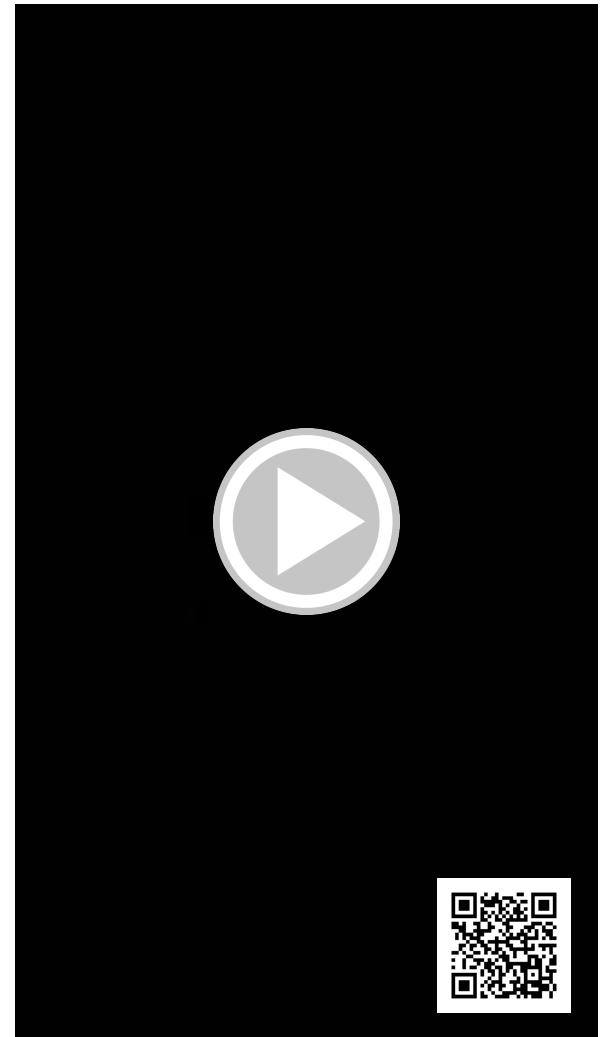
"Therefore, this record should be continued to ensure that ITC staff are always free from the symptoms of corruption that will tarnish the good name of this company," he said.

"Hence, the OACP will serve as a guide for all ITC's top management, employees, and tourism stakeholders aimed to eliminate situations and lower the likelihood of corruption, unethical and unprofessional behaviours in all facets of the ITC's operation in line with the Islamic values."

"All ITC officers and staff are fully committed to ensuring the implementation of every initiative planned in this OACP will be achieved. We are determined to cultivate integrity in delivering services guided by laws, regulations and directives in force to produce a company free from corruption, abuse of power and malpractice."

GUARANTEEING TRUST AND SUPPORT

With the existence of this plan, he also believes it will facilitate the achievement of the vision and mission, improve the quality of service delivery at ITC, and help build the trust and loyalty of cli-



Mohd Zaidi Bahirin Zainal Abidin



ents and stakeholders.

By strengthening ITC's governance, management and operations, the OACP will guarantee continuous trust and support of tourism industry players and stakeholders by fostering work governance free from deviations and leakages.

"I am confident that by putting the strategies and initiatives outlined in OACP into practice, we will continue to expand and become more well-known in the Muslim-friendly tourism sector domestically and abroad."

To ensure the effectiveness of this OACP, all initiatives that have been identified will be monitored and reviewed periodically. – **R&R**

OACP ITC 2023 - 2027



Prevention's better than cure

Committed to arrest corruption at its grassroots levels before it sprouts towards other divisions within ITC

BY DANIAL FAUZI

AS THE Malaysia MADANI concept is steadily gaining traction, many organisations are also progressing in adapting their policies to fit their needs.

However, corruption remains one of the most widespread issues plaguing the country, destroying public trust and tarnishing the nation's image.

Therefore, the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) recently unveiled its latest plans, dubbed Organisational Anti-Corruption Plan (OACP) 2023-2027, to uproot corruption at its grassroots levels before it sprouts towards other divisions within ITC.

The OACP originated through a meeting of the Anti-Corruption Committee at the Ministry level, whereby the government requested all agencies under the Ministry

of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) to develop their respective anti-corruption plans respectively.

Once a solid framework was developed, a consultant from the Malaysian Institute of Integrity (IIM) was appointed. A physical workshop was then implemented to develop further the framework to prevent corruption.

"During the workshop, we mapped out a clear picture of the potential types of corruption," said Mohd Ikhrum Abdul Rani, Executive, Corporate Development and Finance Division of ITC.

"With many divisions and units, there are many potential corruption risks. We need to identify the potential risks of corruption and the preventive measures to counter them."

Ikhrum noted that the key objectives of the OACP were as follows:

- To empower the public service delivery system and its effectiveness.
- To assist organisations and stakeholders in developing OACP to identify integrity, governance and anti-corruption issues.
- To provide a systematic platform for addressing corruption issues with the existence of the reporting mechanism to the organisation's top management regularly.

- Corruption prevention from the grassroots level in line with the policies through the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP)

The ITC's OACP focuses on three priority areas which are,

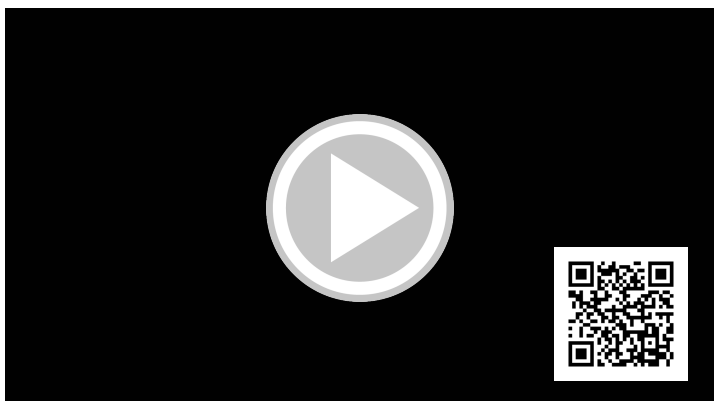
- Governance
- Islamic Tourism Development, and
- Administration and Corporate

Ikhrum added: "Additionally, ITC's OACP introduced 44 initiatives that have been identified based on corruption's causes, probabilities and potentials. These initiatives are then implemented based on analysing the level of impact and the degree of complexity of the corruption."

Implementing ITC's OACP improves an organisation's shortcomings, especially in developing programmes that benefit the public and industry stakeholders.

"For a company to attract consumers, they must gain their trust. That is the aim of our OACP. By getting consumers' trust, they will believe in our products and programmes," Ikhrum explained.

Ikhrum concluded integrity within an organisation acts as a bridge to gain the trust of the public and industry players. British author C.S. Lewis once said, "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching." – **R&R**



Making culture a tourism asset

The International Conference and Exhibition on World Cultures 2023 Kuala Lumpur to embrace global diversity and highlight sustainability in tourism



LIKE A blossoming flower in a vibrant garden, culture adds beauty and richness to the human experience. Recognising its significance, Malaysia will host the International Conference and Exhibition on World Cultures 2023 (ICWC '23), positioning itself as a cultural hub and championing the preservation of this precious essence of human existence.

Organised by UDS Media Sdn Bhd and supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC), ICWC '23 is on Sept 7-10, 2023, at the MATRADE Exhibition and Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

"We believe Malaysia has much to offer as a cultural hub. As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, Malaysia showcases a wide and varied diversity of cultures. The beauty of Malaysian society lies in the mutual respect and enjoyment of each other's cultures through cultural celebrations. For instance, Malays may visit a Chinese household to experience Chinese traditions, and vice versa," said Azmi Mustapha, President of ICWC.

"Culture serves as the central theme of ICWC. When we talk about world cultures, we aim to gather countries from all over the globe to promote and share their cultures at the exhibition. We have targeted more than 50 countries to showcase their cultures. Moreover, these countries will also actively contribute to activities and programmes such as cultural dances, fashion shows, the Kebaya competition, cooking competitions, and more."

He said the objective was to display



various cultures and foster mutual learning and understanding. The essence of the event lies in humanity coming together in an all-inclusive setting where every culture is valued and no culture is left out.

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Through ICWC, a range of segments are organised, encompassing conferences, keynote speeches delivered by renowned speakers, panel discussions, and special feature presentations. While workshops, keynotes, and panel discussions are standard components of similar events, Azmi said the special feature presentation stood



"Culture serves as the central theme of ICWC. When we talk about world cultures, we aim to gather countries from all over the globe to promote and share their cultures at the exhibition. We have targeted more than 50 countries to showcase their cultures."

– Azmi Mustapha

out as a distinct element.

The unique feature presentation offers a platform for invited individuals to share their insights, including cultural festival and event organisers and community-based tourism representatives, such as those involved in Thaipusam.

"Let's take Thaipusam, for example. It initially started as a small religious programme, but now it attracts over one million visitors. How did it become like that? The answer lies in the preservation of Thaipusam as a festival and tradition. We recognise it as a major cultural heritage in Malaysia," Azmi elaborated.

Allotted a 20-minute time slot, these selected individuals will enlighten attendees and a broader audience about their respective events, discussing their festivals' origins, growth, and impact. This exchange of knowledge and understanding provides valuable insights for attendees, including organisers and cultural enthusiasts, and fosters the development of culture as a tourism asset.

"For the exhibition part, when participants come, it's not just about cultural shows; it also involves business people. Culture encompasses various areas. Travel agents from other countries can visit Malaysia to explore travel agencies that promote or try to introduce new tourism products. From there, they can learn from each other, and that will create business and commerce," Azmi shared.

He mentioned that unique Malaysian foods such as roti canai had the potential to capture the interest of chefs worldwide. These chefs might introduce these delightful dishes to their restaurants in countries like South America or Spain. Azmi further highlighted that the film industry operated similarly. Film producers, for example, may visit a place to understand the show's essence and explore the prospect of integrating elements from specific locations into their documentaries.

PROMOTING ESG AND MUSLIM-FRIENDLY TOURISM

"ICWC also aims to serve as a platform for people to discuss ESG - environmental, social, and governance. This aspect is of utmost importance in the context of cultural tourism. We must prioritise environmental friendliness and sustainability while the government simultaneously strives to promote and regulate the industry, particularly concerning cultural sites," Azmi added.

Touching on Muslim-friendly tourism, he emphasised the attendance of hotel operators from different countries at ICWC to promote their offerings. These operators, when visiting Malaysia, may select Muslim-friendly accommodations. Their experience may prompt them to consider the significance of catering to this particular segment and acknowledge the potential opportunities it presents. Consequently, Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality are indirectly promoted to the ICWC participants.

"These attendees will gain valuable insights not only within the premises of ICWC but also from outside ICWC," said Azmi.

He pointed out that Muslim-friendly tourism also included the aspect of Muslim women-friendly tourism, indicating that they are closely connected. Azmi emphasised the importance of Malaysia being welcoming and accommodating to Muslim women and prioritising creating an environment that supports and promotes friendly tourism towards women in general. – R&R



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITIONS on World Cultures 2023

7 - 10 SEPT 2023

2 Days Conference

7 - 8 SEPT 2023

30+ Distinguished cultural experts and thought leaders. Engage with diverse perspectives on topics like tourism preservation technology and globalization's impact on arts. Let's join this global conversation on cultural exchange and appreciation.

Featured Speakers:



Halimah Saad
Culture Activist



Peter Portheine
Founder & Director,
Brainport Smart District,
Eindhoven



Mustafa Cerić
Raisu-L-Ulama
Emeritus, Islamic
Community in Bosnia &
Herzegovina
Honorary President,
Religions for Peace



Daniel Bernbeck
Executive Director,
AHK Germany



Senaid Zajimović
Director General,
Wakaf Directorate of
Bosnia & Herzegovina

4 Days Exhibition 7 - 10 SEPT 2023

During the 4-day exhibition, there will be 2 main segments, with 8 categories and some highlights such as Food Competition & Food Tasting, Cultural Game Spots, Dance Shows & Music Performances, Traditional Wedding Showcases and Cultural History Gallery & Theme Cultural Photo Booth and more. Our Exhibition is free for all to come!

- A- Heritage & Natural Environment World
- B- Food & Drink World
- C- Wellness & Medicine World
- D- Fashion & Textile World
- E- Language, Art & Literature World
- F- Celebrations & Festivals World
- G- Science & Technology World
- H- Architecture World



15 JUNE - 30 AUG 2023

Kebaya Heritage Design Competition

The Kebaya Heritage Design Competition (KHDC) is designed to celebrate the cultural heritage of the kebaya and promote its artistic and cultural value.

By providing a platform for designers to showcase their creativity and expertise, the competition encourages innovation and development in the kebaya fashion industry

An Event By:

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Join our competition at www.icwc.global



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Tanjung Tualang Tin Dredge No 5 (TT5).



Taiping Lake garden.



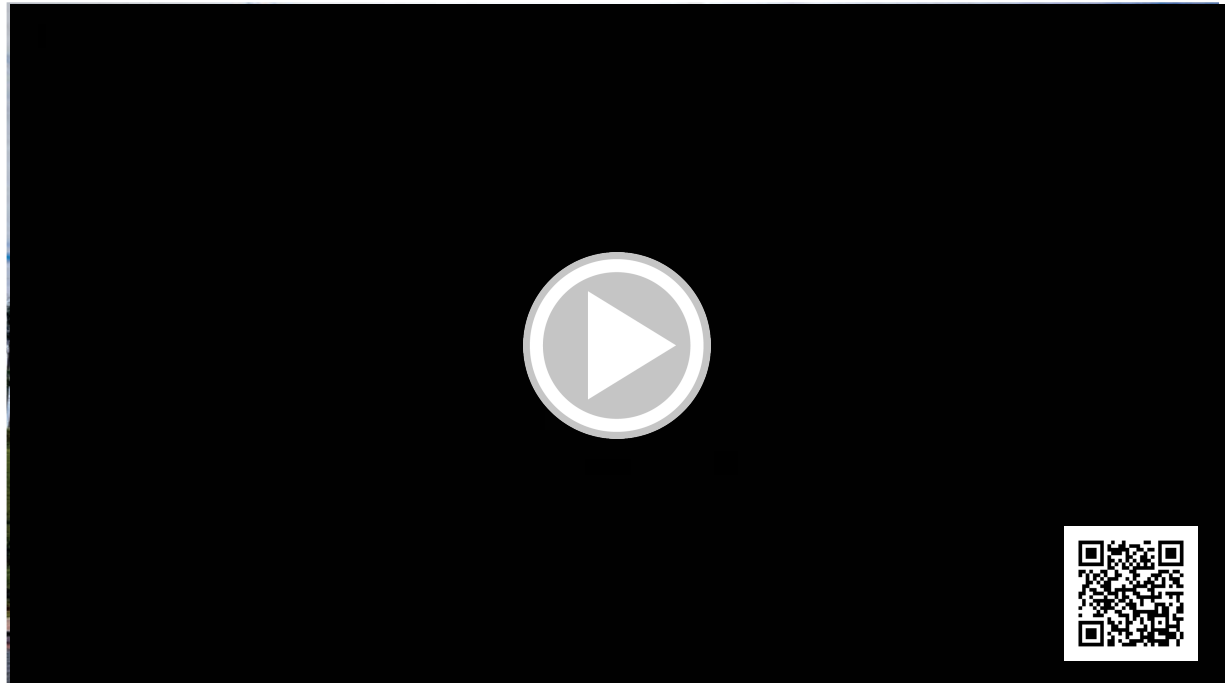
Zoo Taiping.



Istana Iskandariah.



Masjid Ubudiah.



Kellie's Castle.



Perak taps into Muslim-friendly tourism

Perak committed to developing stakeholders to utilise the potential of Muslim-friendly tourism fully

BY KHIRTINI K KUMARAN

THE MUSLIM-FRIENDLY tourism industry has enormous potential, and Perak is geared towards developing its tourism products and services to draw Muslim tourists, particularly from the international market.

Perak State Executive Council of Tourism, Industry, Investment, and Corridor Development, YB Loh Sze Yee, said Perak is committed to developing its tourism industry players to understand Muslim friendly tourism market and how to diversify their service and offerings to capitalise on its potential.

PUTTING PERAK ON THE MAP FOR MUSLIM TOURISM

He noted that most, if not all, tourism products and offerings in Perak were Muslim-friendly to cater to the Muslim majority populace. Perak is, therefore, well known among the local tourist industry as a Muslim-friendly destination, in contrast to the international tourist market.

“However, we are definitely on the right track and are gaining traction among international travellers,” said Loh.

“It’s a combined effort from the government, NGOs, tourism players, non-tourism

players, and the community.

“Support and recognition from government agencies like Islamic Tourism Council (ITC) help promote and establish Perak as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination.”

He also shared his appreciation for the two-day Islamic Tourism roadshow organised by ITC, which encompassed two programmes, the Islamic Tourism Entrepreneurship and Leadership Seminar (ITELS) and the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR).

“These programmes help create awareness among the tourism players on the nature of Muslim friendly tourism, and correct the misconception that Muslim friendly tourism is only for Muslim tourists and travellers.”

MULTICULTURAL AND RICH IN HISTORY

Loh pointed out Malaysia was very special because of its multicultural society, where the Muslim and non-Muslim communities have lived harmoniously for a long time. It offered multicultural tourism experiences. And Perak was no different.

Ipoh, the capital city of the Perak state, is known for its great food and culture,



YB Loh Sze Yee

architectural buildings, caves, and limestone hills. In Taiping, attractions include a large park around the famous Taiping Lake and the nearby Taiping Zoo.

Kellie’s Castle, he shared, was one of the top tourist spots in Batu Gajah, famous for its mystery and romantic stories of love and tragedy.

“We also have the Tanjung Tualang Tin Dredge No 5 (TT5) in Batu Gajah, the only remaining tin dredge in Malaysia.

“Meanwhile, in Kuala Kangsar, we have one of the oldest mosques in Perak, Masjid Ubudiah. It is considered one of the most beautiful mosques in Malaysia and a symbol of pride and faith for Muslims in Perak.

“We also have one of the most beautiful palace complexes in Malaysia, Istana Iskandariah, the royal palace of the Perak Sultanate and the official residence of the Sultan of Perak, located in Kuala Kangsar.”

Perak has a UNESCO site in Lenggong Valley, where the Perak Man, Southeast Asia’s oldest, most complete human skeleton, was found and is currently displayed at the Lenggong Archaeological Museum.

The State, said Loh, was rich in history, natural resources, tradition and culture.

– R&R



CULTURAL PRESERVATION

“It is not an exaggeration to say that one of the symbols or identities of Kuala Kangsar’s rich cultural heritage and history is highlighted or depicted through the Royal Museum,” expressed Amir.

“Therefore, the Perak State Museum Board takes an approach to ensure that Royal Museum can maintain the authenticity of the original architectural design, which includes the surrounding area.”

Amir added that although the palace was converted into a museum, its layout and authenticity were maintained. This included the guest rooms, the throne room, the features and designs of the palace, the fence, and even the surrounding gardens.

Additionally, to ensure the preservation of the building, the Kuala Kangsar Royal Museum received recognition from the National Heritage Department and is declared a National Heritage Site.

“Every repair or maintenance of the building will go through the necessary processes, including advice or recommendations from a registered conservator to meet the standards and guidelines set by the National Heritage Department,” Amir added.

NURTURING FUTURE GENERATIONS


Despite preserving cultural artefacts and heritage sites against the test of time, it is simply not enough if the future generation does not acknowledge their existence in this modern age.

“The interest and love for history and culture should be nurtured from childhood starting from their parents and further developed through formal education by teachers and tutors through the various approaches and syllabuses involved,” expressed Amir.

Therefore, the Kuala Kangsar Royal Museum has emphasised the concept of “Museum and Education”. This approach involves the museum trying to convey and relay information about cultural artefacts and the museum’s history through guided tours and periodic exhibitions.

The museum also has a programme dubbed IPIM (Student Inspiration, Museum Innovation).

“This programme allows school teachers to take students to the museum for a class teaching session. Museum staff will help teachers with guided tours based on the topics taught by the teacher.

“The teachers are allowed to use the museum artefacts as teaching aids to increase the understanding and experience among the students. Students will also follow hands-on activities based on the equipment available at the museum to complete the class session at the museum,” added Amir. – 

Preserving cultural heritage

The Kuala Kangsar Royal Museum provides opportunities for the tourism industry through its cultural artefacts and heritage site

BY DANIAL FAUZI

PRESERVING CULTURAL artefacts and heritage sites is a noble cause to stand with. The goal of preserving historical artefacts and places that hold significant cultural value helps the future generation learn their roots and appreciate the things they have now in this modern era.

Historical palaces in Malaysia are often converted into museums to house these artefacts to be displayed for both local citizens and international tourists.

The Kuala Kangsar Royal Museum is one such palace that is now a museum in the State of Perak.

Historically, the Kuala Kangsar Royal Museum, also known as Istana Kenangan, Istana Lembah and Istana Tepas, was built in 1926 by a Malay carpenter named Haji Suffian. He was assisted by his two sons, Zainal Abidin and Ismail.

The palace was constructed by the orders of the late Sultan Iskandar Shah (Marhum Kadasallah), the 30th Sultan of Perak. The palace was to act as an interim residence until the completion of the



Mohamad Amir Mohd Dahalan

Istana Iskandariah.

The Sultan resided in the Istana Kenangan from 1931 to 1933. When the Sultan moved to the Istana Iskandariah, the Istana Kenangan was used as a Guest Palace.

The Istana Kenangan was then converted into the Kuala Kangsar Royal Museum by the Perak government with

a mutual agreement with the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Muhibuddin Shah, on Nov 16, 1986. On Mar 9, 2009, the museum was gazetted as a historical heritage site.

UNIQUE CULTURAL ATTRACTION

The Royal Museum’s main attraction is the exhibition of artefacts or objects relating to the Perak Sultanate and also the site of the palace. It attracts visitors and tourists from various nationalities and even from schools.

“The main attraction for the Kuala Kangsar Royal Museum lies in the museum building, which is a real artefact and unique in traditional Malay palace architecture,” said Mohamad Amir Mohd Dahalan, Director of the Perak State Museum Board.

“The construction of this building uses selected hardwood, bamboo woven walls, and belian roofs. Pegs and mortise techniques were used in the construction of the building instead of iron nails.”

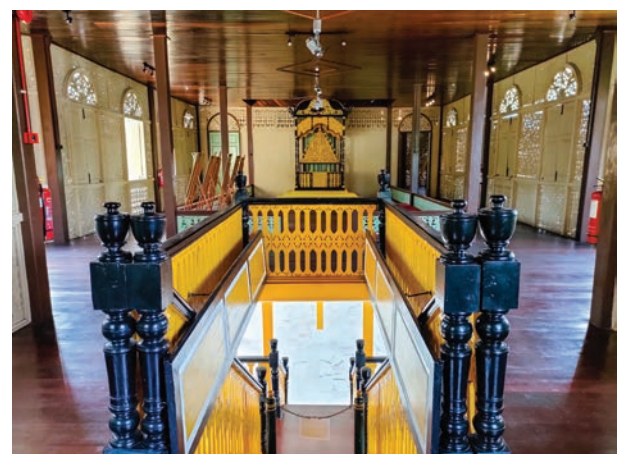
Indeed, from a symbolic perspective, the palace’s design resembles a sheathed sword seen from above.



View from the entrance of the back staircase.



The chamber on the lower level once served as the esteemed official quarters of His Majesty during the reign of the 30th Sultan of Perak in this Palace. Presently, it has been repurposed to function as an area dedicated to hosting temporary exhibitions.



The upper areas of Istana Kenangan.



Family Suite.

Sunway Lost World Hotel, located in Sunway City Ipoh.



Haku Suite.

Welcoming, inclusive and family-friendly

Sunway Lost World Hotel is favoured choice among travellers who seek lodgings that meet their cultural and religious needs



BY KHIRTINI K KUMARAN

THE MUSLIM travel industry can emerge in Perak, said Sunway Lost World Hotel (SLWH) General Manager Nurul Nuzairi Mohd Azahari.

“We can see increased demand for halal tourism products due to changes in social and economic conditions where Muslims are the majority. Therefore, the Muslim travel market is essential and lucrative to SLWH.”

SLWH, he said, sought to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all guests, regardless of religious or cultural background, by providing relevant amenities and facilities.

“We make every effort to provide services that meet the needs of Muslim travellers. It allows them to enjoy their vacation without jeopardising their religious obligations.”

SLWH has received Muslim-friendly Accommodation Recognition (MFAR) silver category from the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC).

ENHANCED REPUTATION AND APPEAL AMONG MUSLIM TRAVELLERS

The MFAR recognition establishes the SLWH as a favoured choice among Muslim travellers who seek lodgings that meet their cultural and religious needs.

“This attracts a loyal customer base and contributes to SLWH’s long-term prosperity.

This results in more reservations, higher occupancy rates, and higher revenue for the hotel.”

He also noted that the prestigious recognition helps generate positive reviews and feedback from Muslim travellers.

“These reviews can further enhance the hotel’s reputation and appeal among Muslim travellers, as potential guests rely on the experiences of others to make informed decisions about their accommodations.”

The MFAR recognition also has motivated SLWH to prioritise and enhance their Muslim-friendly services and offerings

“This acknowledgement encourages hotel staff to continue providing high-quality services and offerings that cater to the demands of Muslim travellers.

“Reviewing the guests’ feedback and recommendations, these testimonials provide first-hand insights into the impact of visitors’ experiences. This feedback is useful for the hotel in identifying areas for improvement and continuously improving



Nurul Nuzairi Mohd Azahari

its offerings.”

SLWH, he said, would continually improve and create a welcoming and inclusive environment that enhances the overall guest experience.

SLWH’S MUSLIM-FRIENDLY AMENITIES

“We understand that many Muslim travel-

lers travel with their families. Therefore we offer family-friendly amenities such as connecting rooms and extra beds. It is to ensure that we can improve the comfort and convenience of Muslim families during their stay.”

SLWH’s kitchen facilities and food preparation also meet halal standards, providing halal food to their Muslim guests. SLWH also has praying rooms for males and females at the hotel and Qibla direction indicators in hotel rooms.

Other key features and amenities that make SLWH a Muslim-friendly hotel include halal certification, prayer mat and Quran, cleanliness, and modesty.

Nurul Nuzairi also shared plans for further improvement in this segment to better cater to the needs and preferences of Muslim travellers.

“We plan to consistently gather feedback and improve our services and offerings to cater to Muslim travellers’ needs and preferences.

“We will also partner with more local businesses and organisations that cater to the Muslim community.

“And lastly, training and educating staff to ensure they understand Muslim culture and customs well.”

MUSLIM WOMEN-FRIENDLY DESTINATION

Muslim women travellers hold the right to freely wear a fully covered outfit aligned with Sharia compliance and personal beliefs, Nurul Nuzairi opined.

He said Malaysia is known for promoting Islamic tourism and has been recognised as a Muslim-friendly destination.

“Our country provides various attractions and amenities such as women-only swimming pools, spas, and prayer rooms. These areas offer Muslim women travellers more privacy and comfort.

“Therefore, Malaysia’s recognition as a Muslim-friendly destination, as well as its efforts to meet the needs and preferences of Muslim women travellers, make it an appealing option for those seeking a welcoming and culturally accommodating destination.” – **R&R**



Hotel Lobby.



Naziah incorporates the elements of Arabic calligraphy into the interior design of her spa.



Naziah's spa - NK Spa, is located in Tapah, Perak.

consumers, regardless of their faith, feel a sense of trust and safety when utilising these facilities at the spas.

CREATING AWARENESS OF SPAS AND WELLNESS

Naziah's spa - NK Spa - is located in Tapah, Perak. While the concept of Muslim-friendly spas is relatively new, she has been implementing it earlier. Interestingly, her non-Muslim clients felt at ease when she incorporated Arabic calligraphy into her spa. They described the ambience as reminiscent of an Arab spa. Their comfort stems from the understanding that the Muslim-friendly concept emphasises cleanliness.


Naziah acknowledged that challenges were expected in the business, but they would come and go. She emphasised the need to focus on educating people who might not fully grasp the significance of spas and wellness. She stated that spa owners were selling a service and offering value.

"Therefore, when facing economic challenges, we educate customers about the value we provide rather than abruptly lowering prices. By educating customers about the importance of wellness and emphasising the value spas offer, customers are willing to pay for that value beyond monetary considerations," she said.

SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS

Naziah said the government had formulated an excellent policy and plan for developing Muslim-friendly spas. However, she emphasised that the programme's success would rely on practical implementation, which requires cooperation from all stakeholders.

"All parties need to play their roles. If the government alone makes an effort, but we as Malaysians do not cooperate, this programme cannot be realised. It all comes back to education and awareness. We need to have one voice. When our voice is strong and loud, we will be heard. As a spa operator, I need to support the government's efforts for my spa and convey information about this Muslim-friendly spa initiative to other spa owners."

Naziah commented on Malaysia's recognition as a Muslim-women-friendly destination: "The mere mention of it is already remarkable. Women play a vital role in driving this initiative. What's particularly noteworthy is that it's not only women who will visit, but their entire families will also accompany them. Although it is considered a Muslim-women-friendly destination, the inclusivity extends to everyone. This innovative concept allows families to indulge in Muslim-friendly offerings, including Muslim-friendly spas." – 



Most importantly, these standards instil confidence in our clients and consumers regarding the quality of services provided. Hence, Muslims and non-Muslims can equally indulge in the facilities and amenities offered," Naziah elaborated.

Despite the ever-changing trends in the industry, Naziah emphasised that the aim was not to limit the scope of Muslim-friendly spas to only Muslims. Instead, the goal is to ensure that all travellers and

Wellness for all

Muslim-friendly spas deliver safe and valuable wellness experiences to Muslims and non-Muslims

BY FATIHAH MANAF

A FASCINATING concept in Islamic tourism has emerged that captures the interest of Muslim and non-Muslim tourists: Muslim-friendly spas. Driven by the vision to provide inclusive experiences for Muslim travellers, the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) has proactively shaped this concept of Muslim-friendly spas.

Collaborating with industry experts and stakeholders, ITC has crafted specific guidelines and requirements to ensure these spas cater to Muslim travellers' unique needs and preferences while offering a sanctuary for relaxation and rejuvenation.

Naziah Pir Khan, Vice President of the Association of Malaysian Spas (AMSpa), expressed great excitement and enthusiasm regarding developing Muslim-friendly spas in the country. She wholeheartedly embraced the concept and acknowledged its significance for the spa industry.

"We are thrilled by this news, which everyone has eagerly anticipated. The decision made by ITC to establish the Muslim-friendly spa concept is commendable. It brings about a more positive and impactful transformation to the spa industry.

"I cannot deny that in the past when we talked about spas, there was a negative perception due to the misuse of spas by certain irresponsible parties. So, introducing a programme like this creates awareness and closes people's negative perception of spas.

Naziah shared that in the past, discussions about the negative perception surrounding spas had discouraged many people, especially youth, from pursuing a career in the industry. Parents were also



Naziah Pir Khan

hesitant to support their children's aspirations in this field. However, she mentioned that introducing the Muslim-friendly spa programme was crucial in changing perceptions. It helps the public recognise the spa industry as a significant occupation and a primary source of income, mainly benefiting the local community and young individuals.

CATERING TO BOTH MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS

"We at AMSpa are among those collaborating with ITC in developing requirements for Muslim-friendly spas. Therefore, I perceive these requirements not only as exclusive to Muslims but as an inclusive concept that caters to the needs of everyone, regardless of their faith.

"When we consider the specifications and requirements established by ITC and industry experts, we find that they are designed to ensure comfort and convenience for Muslims and non-Muslims. They are universally suitable and aim to create a sense of ease for all individuals.

MoU-mentous alliances

THE ISLAMIC TOURISM industry is experiencing remarkable growth, with the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) leading its development. Through establishing strategic collaborations and the forging of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), ITC has effectively propelled the advancement of Islamic tourism, driving its progress to new heights. Let's look closely at some of ITC's notable MoUs and the outcomes of these partnerships!



MoU with Institut Pengajian Islam dan Dakwah Sabah (IPDAS)

ITC joined hands with IPDAS to focus on human capital development in the Islamic tourism industry. The collaboration aims to enhance Islamic tourism-related programmes and curricula in tertiary education. ITC will provide training services to IPDAS' academic staff and industry players, fostering a deeper understanding of Islamic and Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH).

Outcomes:

- Developing modules and curriculum for the 'Diploma Pengajian Islam' to be offered by IPDAS.
- ITC and IPDAS have co-organised the "Seminar Pelancongan Islam" on Mar 30, 2022, at Raia Hotel, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.
- Ustaz Mohd Ikhwan from IPDAS was invited as the trainer at the Muslim-Friendly Tourist Guide (MFTG) Training Course organised by ITC on Dec 5 to 7, 2022, at Grandis Hotel and Resort, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.



MoU with Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)

The objectives of the MoU between ITC and USIM are focused on sharing expertise and knowledge to advance various aspects of Islamic tourism. These include training, research, module development, standards development, and creating publicity materials in the tourism sector. The collaboration also extends to the joint organisation of meetings, conventions, seminars and other areas in the Islamic tourism sector. Another key focus of the MoU is the joint development and implementation of the "3uli Study Mode" programme in the field of management and administration of Islamic tourism and other relevant areas. "3uli Study Mode" is a programme to ensure graduates are truly job-ready by acquiring the necessary theoretical and practical experience.

Outcomes:

- Development of training modules for Muslim-Friendly Tourist Guide (MFTG) Course and Mosque Visit Guide (MosVi) Training by USIM.
- USIM was invited as trainers and speakers for courses and events organised by ITC, i.e. MFTG Course, MosVi Training, MTCP and WITC.
- Volunteers from USIM assisted the ITC secretariat during the Launching of Islamic Tourism Week (ITW) on Jun 24, 2022, at Zenith Hotel, Putrajaya.
- ITC invited as member in USIM's Board of Studies for its Bachelor's Degree programme in management and tourism.



MoU with TUI

The MoU between ITC and TUI sets forth clear objectives to promote Muslim-Friendly Accommodations (MFAR) on the TUI website. The collaboration seeks to enhance the visibility and accessibility of these accommodations to a broader audience of travellers. One of the primary goals is to facilitate seamless digital and online travel bookings specifically for MFAR hotels.

Outcomes:

- Updated website with MFTH information on MFAR and ITC.
- Inclusion of the MFAR logo on the website.
- Creation of promotional posters highlighting Muslim-friendly holiday packages.



MoU with the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA)

ITC and MATTA joined forces to strengthen and develop Malaysia's Islamic Tourism attractions, services, and hospitality. The partnership emphasised intelligence sharing, research and development (R&D) on Muslim social, cultural, and heritage tourism products, and training and capacity-building activities. This collaboration fostered the exchange of valuable insights and expertise, laying the foundation for future initiatives that would contribute to the growth of Islamic Tourism in Malaysia.



MoU with the International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF)

ITC collaborates with INCEIF as an industry partner and evaluator for studies related to Islamic tourism conducted by INCEIF's students under the Action Based Learning (ABL) programme. Their past research included; A study of Malaysia's UNESCO World Heritage Site and how the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality industry plays its role in elevating the community and The Potential Use of Crypto-Currencies in Malaysia's Muslim-Friendly Tourism Industry.

Some of their proposed future research are:

- A study on the perception and awareness of Malaysian Silver Hair on Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality (MFTH)
- A survey of the Islamic Tourism ecosystem in Malaysia
- A study of Malaysia as the hub of Modest Fashion
- A study on the readiness of commercial airlines to become Muslim-friendly (Airlines in a study on how the tourism industry promotes Islamic Tourism/ Muslim-Friendly Tourism & Hospitality (MFTH) Southeast Asia)
- Muslim-Friendly branding; The opportunities and effects of using the Muslim-Friendly tagline for promoting services/ tourism products in Malaysia
- Turning culture, cuisine, and arts into Muslim-friendly attractions (specifically on UNESCO Heritage Site in Malaysia)

Elevating Mosque Tourism as a key Islamic tourism product in Malaysia

Mosque Visit Guide (MosVi) Training Course enhances the Islamic tourism experience

MOSQUE TOURISM is a thriving segment within Islamic tourism, offering immense potential for cultural exploration and spiritual experiences. With their historical significance and architectural beauty, mosques attract visitors from various backgrounds.

Therefore, recognising the importance of mosque tourism, the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) joined forces to create a comprehensive training module for the Mosque Visit Guide (MosVi) Training Course.

On Sept 1, 2022, ITC and the module developer from USIM had a workshop and discussion session at Movenpick Hotel in Sepang, Selangor, to refine and improve the draft module for the MosVi Training Course.

After the module was completed and ready to be implemented, Sarawak was chosen as the pioneer location for Mosque Visit Guide (MosVi) Training Course since a few mosques in Kuching, Santubong, Batang Sadong, Simunjan have participated in 'Seminar Pelancongan Islam' organised by ITC on Nov 27, 2021, at Pullman Hotel, Kuching.

The objectives of the MosVi Training Course are:

- To strengthen the basic knowledge of Mosque Visit Coordinators in the Islamic tourism industry;
- To improve the communication and interpersonal skills of mosque visit program coordinators; and
- To equip Mosque Visit Coordinators with knowledge of comparative religions as well as skills in programme management.

MOSVI TRAINING COURSE IN SARAWAK

The MosVi Training Course in Sarawak was conducted for the first time from Nov 7 to 9, 2022, at Pullman Hotel, Kuching. Thirty-one participants from various mosques in Kuching, Santubong, Simunjan, Sebuyau, and other districts in Sarawak attended the course.

Some modules in the MosVi training

course include:

- Islamic Tourism Industry & Mosque Tourism in Malaysia
- Characteristics and History of Mosque Construction
- Role and Importance of Mosques for Muslims
- Etiquette and Conduct in the Mosque
- Art of the Adhan (Call to Prayer)
- Virtues of Salah (Prayer)
- Basics of Comparative Religion
- Field Visits
- Group Workshops
- Public Speaking Skills
- Communication Skills for Mosque Tour Guides
- Integration of Media Technology in Public Communication for Mosque Tourism
- Needs and Expectations of Non-Muslim Tourists
- Assessment of Understanding

On the second training day, the participants embarked on a fascinating day tour to explore several prominent mosques and Islamic tourism sites in Sarawak. Led by Bob Zakaria, a Muslim-Friendly Tourist Guide (MFTG) in Sarawak, the tour covered significant locations such as Masjid Darul Hana on Jalan Tun Salahuddin, Masjid Darul Muttaqin in Kampung Buntal, the picturesque Batu Gambar in Sg Jaong, Santubong, Masjid Nurir Rohmani in Kampung Santubong, Masjid Jamek Negeri Sarawak, Masjid Bandaraya Kuching, Masjid India Bandar Kuching, and Masjid Al Ghazali.

This insightful tour provided participants with practical exposure to the diverse and rich Islamic heritage present in Sarawak, further enhancing their skills as Mosque Visit coordinators.

This MosVi Training Course will also be organised in other states, such as Perak, Sabah, Pahang, and Pulau Pinang. The programme is a testament to ITC's dedication to providing world-class Islamic tourism experiences. Focusing on empowering Mosque Visit coordinators and enriching visitors' understanding of Islam, the course sets a new standard for the industry. It contributes to Malaysia's reputation as a leading destination for Islamic tourism.

– **R&R**



Special Remarks by Ustaz Suharman Hj Edward, Islamic Religious Officer of the Kuching Division, who is the representative of the Chairman of the Sarawak Islamic Council.



Prof. Madya Dr Khairunneezam Mohd Noor from Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) presented a lecture session on the topic "Public Speaking" and "Mosque tour guides' communication skills".



A photo session with the module developers.



Group photos during the technical tour session.





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