



ASIA PACIFIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARDS 2017

We are extremely pleased to announce that Ms Mandy Chew, President of Lexis Hotel Group, has won the coveted Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Awards 2017 in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry.

The Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Awards, better known as APEA, is a regional recognition program organized by Enterprise Asia, the region's foremost association and think-tank for entrepreneurship. The Awards are presented to a select handful of entrepreneurs across Asia Pacific each year.

The Awards is often compared to the Olympics for the stringent entry criteria and highly competitive judging parameters. The nomination is by-invitation only with each nominee subjected to a rigorous judging process, including financial verification by an appointed audit firm and mandatory physical site audit and interview, culminating in a confidential balloting process by Enterprise Asia's committee. This year, the award received close to 150 nominees from Malaysia and 34 winners across ten industry categories were selected.

TOURIST ARRIVALS REMAIN FLAT DESPITE WEAK RINGGIT

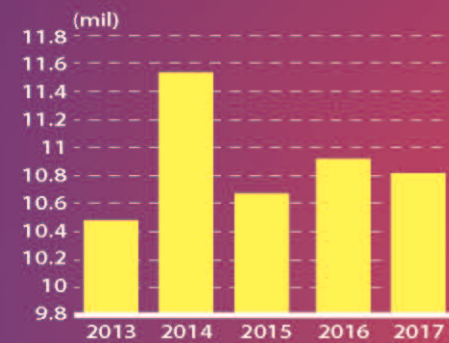
The Edge Financial

Much has been talked about how the weaker ringgit will draw more tourists to the country, but the statistics do not seem to reflect this.

The overall tourist arrivals, however, slipped lower by 0.9% year-on-year (y-o-y) to 10.82 million visitors compared with a year ago, according to Tourism Malaysia. One saving grace is that the number of tourists coming from China has gone up by 7.8% in the first five months of the year.

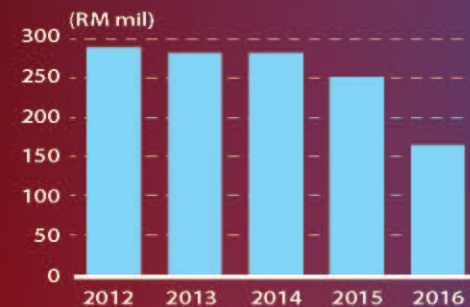
To put things into perspective, the tourist arrivals so far is also lower by 0.61% than the five-year average of tourist arrivals in the first five months of the year. Another data to ponder is that while overall visitors from Asean countries to Malaysia have increased by 0.62% to 8.22 million visitors in January to May, five

Tourist arrivals (Jan-May)



Source: Tourism Malaysia

Advertising and promotion budget for Tourism and Culture Ministry



Source: Tourism Malaysia

out of nine Asean countries have seen a decline, including Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia and Myanmar. Tourist arrivals from Brunei saw the highest growth among Asean countries, which saw an increase of 37.7% to 741,420 tourists.

Tourism was the third largest contributor to the Malaysian economy in 2016 and is expected to remain so for the year. Lacklustre statistics on tourist arrivals may not augur well. Granted, the KL2017 Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games), which recently concluded, was only held in August, the latest official data released by Tourism Malaysia with the cooperation of immigration department only covers until the end of May this year.

Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz had reportedly said that 700,000 foreign tourist arrivals were expected in conjunction with the SEA Games. Julia Goh, an economist with UOB Malaysia, told The Edge Financial Daily that the lagging data provided by Tourism Malaysia might not be reflective of the current situation especially with tourist arrivals expected to increase in the second half of this year.

"If you look at the data released by Malaysia Airports [Holdings Bhd] (MAHB) on passenger traffic in the airports, it shows that international passengers have increased," Goh said.

According to her, the increase in tourist arrivals is expected, especially given the weak ringgit, which is deemed to be attractive at current levels. Goh pointed out that while the ringgit has strengthened further against the US dollar, it has remained relatively flat against most currencies in the region.

At the beginning of the year, tourist arrivals were expected to grow this year with 2017 being Asean@50 Year and as Malaysia played host to the SEA Games and Asean Para Games. The data released by MAHB also saw that passenger traffic in the international sector has grown by 14.8% y-o-y to 28 million for the period of January to July this year, with about 13.8 million to Asean destinations while the remaining 14.2 million to non-Asean destinations.

An analyst who covered the aviation, airport and tourism sectors, concluded that the data could be an indication that more Malaysians are travelling abroad despite the weak ringgit, which in turn helped to lift the passenger traffic in the international sector.

"If you look at some of the hotel operators such as Shangri-La, you could see a drop in occupancy rate in Kuala Lumpur and Penang. We will still need to wait for the official data to gauge how the tourism sector will fare this year," he said.

Just recently, the Malaysia Marathon Kuala Lumpur 2017, which had targeted to attract at least 5,000 participants from China, was scrapped after the organisers failed to sign up the minimum number of China participants required.

A fund manager, who is positive that the weak ringgit would help to boost the prospects of the aviation, airport and leisure industries, said that the tourism tax is more likely to hurt the budget hotel operators.

Barely a month into the implementation of the unpopular tourism tax in Malaysia, travel agents and hoteliers in the country say they are now burdened with the hassle of tax collection and additional costs incurred in the teething stages.

Diethelm Travel Malaysia's managing director, Manfred Kurz, said the company has had clients from Europe and the US complain when asked to pay the tax at hotels as they thought this was already included in the package price.

MATTA wants prompt assistance for agents forced to shoulder additional costs. And while Diethelm's overseas agency partners had attempted to pay the tax on behalf of clients, hotels insisted that the tax be paid by guests at the point of

Malaysian Trade Suffers Teething Pains From Tourism Tax Rollout

Travel Tour Gazette



check-out, according to Kurz.

"Now clients pay the hotels and then get reimbursed by their travel agents back home, but this form of transaction is a hassle. Our fear is that our tour operator partners will be reluctant to promote Malaysia in future if this hassle continues and nothing is done to improve the current system."

Ally Bhoonee, executive director, World Avenues, added: "We've had to pay a staff double to be on standby at the office and handle complaints from clients who refused to pay the tax during the recent long weekend and public holidays from September 1 to 4." Bhoonee explained that the company sees the additional service necessary in order to retain regular agency clients.

There is also the problem of costs incurred by tour operators

who had committed to contractual hotel rates before the tax was announced. Although the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents said those affected may apply for an exemption with the government, the association is still concerned about members who have to pay large sums while awaiting exemption or refunds.

"We are of the view that the intention of the tax is meant to benefit all stakeholders eventually, and those initially affected by its introduction should be given speedy assistance by the government," concluded KL Tan, MATTA president.

Applications for exemption are to be submitted to the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, before being forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for evaluation and approval on a case-by-case basis.



A Brand New Look!

泳池酒吧
POOL BAR



The Pool Bar, located just beside the swimming pool, recently underwent a makeover. Spotting trendy new looks with coloured lightings, it is an ideal place to escape the heat and cool off with a drink or two. Snacks and light bites can also be ordered from the menu.



Welcome Aboard - Chef Ryan Poon

Chef Ryan Poon Wai Chin is the main pillar of Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson's culinary brigade. A graduate of La Trobe University Australia specialising in hospitality management, he brings over his conspicuous passion for cooking, together with more than 15 years of culinary expertise, to Lexis' iconic signature property.

He started off his career at Impiana KLCC Hotel and Spa before venturing around the globe to widen his horizon. Chef Ryan has worked at renowned hospitality establishments such as Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Dubai UAE,

Intercontinental Cairo Egypt, Mandarin Oriental Macau and The Ritz Carlton Guangzhou. His accolades are a testament to his skill and dedication to service, bagging awards such as 2017 Global Gourmet Culinary, Chef Par Excellence – Top 60 Finalist and Dubai Best Family Restaurant Award (Time Out Magazine)

Specialising in progressive contemporary Chinese and European cuisine, Chef Ryan credits his success to building respect on team dynamics, as well as receiving constructive feedback from customers.



A Red Letter Day For Lexis Suites Penang

We are pleased to announce that Lexis Suites Penang have been awarded the 'Loved by Guests' award by hotels.com, a subsidiary of Expedia. A note of appreciation to all our guests as this accolade is awarded based on the reviews that our valued guests have taken the time to share with the public. We truly appreciate this and thank you so much for your continued support!



Event Under The Stars

Thinking of holding an event under the stars? Well look no further than the beachside at our Hibiscus Walk. It is an ideal venue for your family and friends gathering or even a gala dinner for the company. Offering a unique stunning beachside scene with a backdrop of the tallest fountain in Malaysia, one can even watch the waves lapping the shore as you enjoy a scrumptious BBQ or a sit down dinner.



Three Days Of Awesome Deals



The recent Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) Fair had tens of thousands of visitors during its three-day event recently. Families, young professionals, singles and millennials poured over colourful brochures and travel booths, clearly spoilt for choice.



The biannual fair was held from 8 to 10 September 2017 at Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) and opened to the public from 10.00 am to 9.00 pm. About 400 organisations, travel agents, theme park and hospitality operators participated in this event with a total of more than 1,200 booths.



Situated high above the soon-to-be-completed Imperial Lexis Kuala Lumpur is the much anticipated Sky Deck at Level 51. Accentuated with glass floors and floor-to-ceiling glass windows that offer breathtaking panorama view of the city, including KLCC, KL Towers and other skyscrapers, the Sky Deck is innovative in design and definitely makes it one of the most iconic and popular tourist attractions in the city.

Offering sophisticated drinks by a mixologist alongside trendy bites and tummy fillers in a state of the art setting, Sky Bar will be next hangout venue for KLites to see and to be seen.

It's Like Walking On Ice!





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