



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TM. 36/2026

15 JANUARY 2026

JUNYEAO AIR LAUNCHES INAUGURAL FLIGHT FROM SHANGHAI TO TAWAU

TAWAU, SABAH — Juneyao Air marked a significant milestone today with the arrival of its inaugural flight from Shanghai to Tawau, further strengthening air connectivity between China and Sabah.

The new route officially commenced operations, operating three times weekly (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays) with a capacity of 180 seats. The service is expected to cater to the growing demand for leisure travel from China while enhancing tourism flows and people-to-people exchanges between the two destinations.

The inaugural flight was welcomed by Mr. Darryl Hamzah, representative from Tourism Malaysia, together with Mr. Rehan Shafiq Azizan, from Malaysia Airport Berhad and Ms. Shirly Ho, from Sabah Tourism Board. Also present was Mr Simon Ng, representing Ground Team Red Sdn Bhd, ground handler for Juneyao Air.

“We warmly welcome Juneyao Air’s inaugural scheduled flight from Shanghai to Tawau. This new service strengthens connectivity between China and Malaysia through Sabah, providing greater convenience for travellers and supporting Sabah’s tourism growth during Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026),” said Mr Mohd Amirul Rizal Abdul Rahim, Director General of Tourism Malaysia.

The launch of this scheduled service forms part of broader efforts to strengthen inbound travel from China, a key source market for Malaysia, while enhancing air connectivity to East Malaysia. Tawau serves as a strategic gateway to Sabah’s east coast, providing access to renowned marine tourism destinations, eco-adventures and distinctive cultural experiences, most notably Semporna and its surrounding islands.

China continues to play a critical role in Malaysia’s tourism landscape. This momentum is highlighted by robust performance from the Chinese market, which recorded 4.3 million visitor arrivals from January to November 2025, marking a 25.9 per cent year-on-year increase. Such figures underscore China’s enduring importance to Malaysia’s tourism expansion strategy and the overarching success of the VM2026 campaign.

The introduction of the Shanghai-Tawau scheduled service supports Malaysia’s delivery of VM2026 by enhancing international accessibility and expanding connectivity to key tourism destinations in East Malaysia. Improved air links are expected to play a vital role in sustaining tourism momentum, encouraging repeat visits and positioning Sabah as a

compelling destination for international travellers. These efforts will showcase Malaysia's diverse attractions, rich culinary heritage, vibrant festivals and renowned hospitality. The added flight capacity supports ongoing initiatives to boost visitor arrivals and increase tourism spending from key source markets.

Tourism Malaysia extends its full support to Juneyao Air on the launch of this new service and looks forward to collaborating on promotional initiatives to showcase Malaysia's diverse travel experiences to potential travellers in Shanghai and the wider region.

-END-

About Tourism Malaysia

Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, also known as Tourism Malaysia, is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC). It focuses on promoting Malaysia as a preferred tourism destination and has, since its establishment, played a significant role in strengthening the country's presence and competitiveness in the global tourism landscape.

VM2026 underscores Malaysia's commitment to sustainable tourism development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The campaign aims to showcase the nation's diverse natural attractions, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant tourism offerings, while driving inclusive growth and long-term value for local communities and industry stakeholders.

For more information, visit Tourism Malaysia's website www.tourism.gov.my and social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), and [TikTok](#).

For enquiries, please contact:

Rahayu binti Ahmad
Deputy Director
International Promotion Division
rahayu@tourism.gov.my
Tel: +603 8891 8309

Norshariza binti Mohd Saad
Deputy Director
Corporate Communication Division
norshariza@tourism.gov.my
Tel: +603 8891 8775