

(EMBARGO UNTIL 3 PM, 22 JULY)

PRESS RELEASE

MALAYSIA STRENGTHENS STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT TO TAP THE CHINA MARKET

LANGKAWI, KEDAH, 22 JULY 2026: Recognising China as one of the most important tourism source markets, Malaysia is stepping up efforts to attract more Chinese visitors through targeted promotions, partnerships and introduction of fresh tourism products.

The **Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC)** and **Tourism Malaysia**, both agencies under the **Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture**, have gone beyond destination marketing to delve into partnerships that strengthen the tourism ecosystem. Their collective efforts are expected to increase visitor confidence and create greater business opportunities for the tourism industry.

With the Visit Malaysia campaign underway, these efforts are expected to contribute to the overall 47 million visitor arrivals targeted for this year.

Partnerships Signed at the Malaysia-China Tourism Dialogue

The Malaysia-China Tourism Dialogue held in Langkawi today saw efforts made to strengthen Malaysia's presence in China, and vice versa, through the signing of three key Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). At the event, ITC forged a strategic partnership with **China International Travel Services (CITS)** to step up cross promotions of Muslim-friendly tourism products and destinations in China and Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Tourism Malaysia joined forces with **China Tourism Group Travel Services Corporation Limited** and the **Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism** to amplify the exchange of tourism information

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and market insights as well as work together on joint promotional campaigns to increase destination awareness and drive visitor arrivals.

These collaborations will strengthen bilateral tourism cooperation and position Malaysia as a preferred destination for Chinese travellers.

No.	LIST OF PARTNERSHIPS	SIGNATORIES
MOU SIGNED AT THE MALAYSIA-CHINA TOURISM DIALOGUE		
1	Strategic cooperation on cross-promotion of Muslim-friendly products and destinations in China and Malaysia between Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) and China International Travel Services Ltd. Head Office.	Mr. Mohammad Faisal Abu Suaib Khan, Director-General, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) Mr. Wang Bo Deputy General Manager, China International Travel Services Ltd. Head Office
2	Facilitating Cultural and Tourism Development of the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board between Tourism Malaysia and Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism.	Mr. Lee Thai Hung, Deputy Director General (Promotion II) of Tourism Malaysia; and Mr. Liu Yufeng, Second-level Inspector of Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism.
3	Appointment of a marketing representative for Tourism Malaysia in China between China Tourism Group Travel Services Corporation Limited and Tourism Malaysia.	Mr. Lee Thai Hung, Deputy Director General (Promotion II) of Tourism Malaysia; and Mr. Zheng Lijuan, Chairman and General Manager of China Tourism Group Travel Services Corporation Limited

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Enhancing Muslim-Friendly Tourism Opportunities

The rapid growth of the global Muslim travel market has also driven ITC to expand cooperation with several tourism stakeholders in Malaysia and China to develop more Muslim-friendly tourism experiences.

Malaysia has long been a trusted and established Southeast Asian destination for China. From January to May 2026, Malaysia welcomed 2,196,169 visitor arrivals from China, of which 43,923 were Muslim visitors.

In a separate ceremony organised by ITC earlier today, several collaborations were sealed through the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) to enhance Muslim-friendly tourism opportunities with its key partners in tourism and hospitality.

Of significance was ITC's role in introducing its internationally recognised **Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR)** framework, industry guidelines and capacity-building programmes to the **Dorsett Hospitality International** brand and Dorsett properties in Chengdu, Shanghai and Wuhan.

The partnership with Dorsett Hospitality International opens the door for the implementation of ITC's hospitality standards that resonate with Muslim visitors travelling between both countries, creating a more seamless travel experience for all.

ITC also signed a MoU with tourism organisations, **Oriental Zhen Shang (Beijing) Cultural Media Co., Ltd** and **Xi'an You Shen Creative Marketing Planning Co., Ltd.**, to introduce Malaysia's Muslim-friendly tourism offerings through awareness seminars and training.

With food and beverages being a key tourism experience, Malaysia is also leveraging one of its unique competitive strengths — its rich halal Chinese culinary heritage.

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Through collaborations with industry partners, namely **Mohd Chan Signatures Sdn Bhd** and the **Malaysian Inbound Chinese Association (MICA)**, halal Chinese gastronomy is being positioned as a distinctive tourism offering. Chinese Muslim travellers seeking familiar flavours while travelling abroad will find comfort in Malaysia's halal food and beverage offerings, through the Mohd Chan chain of 30 restaurants throughout the country.

This creates opportunities to combine food, culture and tourism into memorable visitor experiences while further strengthening Malaysia's reputation as a leading Muslim-friendly destination.

No.	LIST OF PARTNERSHIPS	SIGNATORIES
MOU SIGNED AT THE ISLAMIC TOURISM CENTRE PROGRAMME		
1	Expansion of Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) Programme for international chain hotels between Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) and Dorsett Hospitality International.	Mr. Mohammad Faisal Abu Suaib Khan, Director-General, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) Ms. Peggy Tan, Cluster General Manager, Dorsett Hospitality International
2	Strategic collaboration to enhance Malaysia as a premier destination for Chinese tourists through Halal Chinese gastronomy and tourism collaboration between Mohd Chan Signatures Sdn Bhd and Malaysian Inbound Chinese Association.	Datin Wira Aishah Sim, Executive Director, Mohd Chan Signatures Sdn. Bhd. Dato' Dr. Angie Ng, President, Malaysian Inbound Chinese Association (MICA)
3	Development of the Muslim-Friendly Ecosystem in China between Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) and Oriental Zhen Shang (Beijing) Cultural	Mr. Mahathir Amin, Industry Development Director, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC)

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	Media Co., Ltd and Xi'an You Shen Creative Marketing Planning Co., Ltd.	Ms. Elena Wang, Asst. Director of Sales, Oriental Zhen Shang (Beijing) Cultural Media Co., Ltd. Ms. Shana Wang, Asst. General Manager, Xi'an You Shen Creative Marketing Planning Co., Ltd.
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Partnerships as a Tourism Growth Strategy

Malaysia continues to strengthen its position as the world's leading Muslim-friendly destination. Just last month, Malaysia was once again recognised as the Top Muslim-Friendly Destination (OIC) in the Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2026, marking its 11th consecutive year at the top of the global rankings. This achievement reflects the strength of Malaysia's holistic Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality ecosystem, built through close collaboration between the government, industry and our strategic partners.

Industry partnerships like these continue to play a critical role in Malaysia's tourism strategy. These initiatives are expected to generate greater tourism flows in both directions while creating new commercial opportunities for hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, attractions and tourism service providers.

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Additional Information

CHINA STATISTICS: VISITOR ARRIVALS TO MALAYSIA

YEAR	VISITOR ARRIVAL	MUSLIM VISITOR ARRIVAL
2019	3,330,129	66,603
2020	428,642	8,573
2021	7,729	155
2022	260,079	5,202
2023	1,613,312	32,266
2024	3,725,894	74,518
2025	4,661,878	93,238
2026 (Jan-May)	2,196,169	43,923

Sources: Tourism Malaysia

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About Islamic Tourism Centre

Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) is an entity under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia, tasked to develop the Islamic Tourism segment for Malaysia. It advocates for Muslim-friendly tourism and hospitality (MFTH) by offering research and market intelligence, training, industry development consultation, services standards and recognition, and information exchange.

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