

# Selangor steps into the limelight

This western coastal state has been a perennial sidekick to Kuala Lumpur for a long time. That is all about to change, writes **S Puvaneswary**

**W**ith the arrival of new infrastructure, combined with the Selangor state government's efforts to attract more international business events – in partnership with Tourism Selangor – over the past couple of years,

Selangor is now making a name for itself.

Abdul Rashid Asari, Selangor state government chairman of standing committees for cultural and tourism, Malay tradition and heritage, shared: “The state government of Selangor started to seriously look at business events in 2015, a year after the

national general election, when the opposition party won the mandate to run the state.”

He added that promotions of Selangor's business events offerings have continued this year, with active participation at international travel trade events such as ASEAN Tourism Forum, ITB Berlin and China International Travel Mart.

“We are also actively promoting new products and activities outside of main cities such as visits to Mitsui Outlet Park KLIA; a boat ride to Sky Mirror in Kuala Selangor; or a drive down to visit agro-tourism products in Sekinchan. We have been encouraging inbound agents to include these products in their itineraries for pre- and post-tours,” said Abdul.

The state government is also supporting inbound agents and business events organisers by providing partial sponsorship for cultural shows and gala dinners, he added.

Francis Teo, head, convention centre for Setia City Convention Centre said Selangor is ready to take the next step to further the development of the business events industry. That next step is to create a state convention bureau that would attract more foreign and local business events, and also act as a catalyst for socio-economic growth to help the country develop into a creative and knowledge society.

The recently refurbished Sunway Pyramid Convention Centre (below) and the Setia City Convention Centre (bottom) aim to attract more global events



## TALKING NUMBERS

**46**

The number of scheduled foreign airlines currently flying to the country's main gateway, Kuala Lumpur International Airport

**5,000**

YOFOTO (China)'s incentive trip to Malaysia from June 11-16, 2019, is the largest overseas incentive group received to date. The programme will cover Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Genting and Melaka, and will generate an estimated economic impact of RM68.2 million (US\$16.7 million)

**40**

The number of countries participating in the 3rd Selangor International Business Summit. More than 30,000 trade visitors are expected to attend from October 10-13, 2019. This is the largest trade summit in Selangor for 2019

“The state government has to act immediately so that Selangor is not behind other states that already have a bureau, or are looking at setting up one,” Teo said.

He said the expansion of Selangor’s event space from 3,102m<sup>2</sup> to 9,115m<sup>2</sup> with the opening of a new column-free hall in November 2016 gives the Centre more capacity to cater to larger-scale business events of up to 8,000 attendees.

And while Setia City Convention Centre has a strong base of domestic and national meetings, exhibitions and events, the centre hopes to attract more business events from the Asia-Pacific region in the future.

Teo also revealed that Setia City Convention Centre is promoting the venue as an alternative destination to Kuala Lumpur for national and foreign events hailing from Asia-Pacific.

Its close proximity to nature, as well as cultural and heritage attractions in Klang, Kuala Selangor and Sekinchan, makes the state perfect for event planners looking to organise off-site dinners, as well as pre- and post-tour activities.

Better infrastructure will also contribute to the growth of Selangor’s business events sector.

For instance, two new hotels will be opening later this year. Wyndham Acmar Klang is scheduled to open in 3Q2019 with 488 keys, and is a 15-minute drive from the Setia City Convention Centre, while Courtyard by Marriott Setia Alam will open adjacent to the Centre in 4Q2020 with 425 rooms.

In addition, stalwart Sunway Hotels & Resorts has also recently refurbished its meeting and function spaces at its Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa, and Sunway Pyramid Convention Centre.

Wilfred Yeo, senior group general manager at Sunway Hotels & Resorts, said: “We have ramped up our business events outreach efforts.

“We are focused on getting business events from near home markets such as Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia, while enhancing our footprint and market visibility in Greater China, Taiwan, Japan, India, Australia and the Middle East. We’re targeting not just the primary cities but also secondary destinations and Tier 3 cities.”

Yeo said the group also works closely with Sunway City business units such as Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway University, Sunway

## DEVELOPMENTS TO WATCH

**1** The year-long *Visit Malaysia 2020* campaign kicks off on January 1, 2020 and is expected to attract 30 million tourists and generate RM100 billion (US\$24.3 billion) in tourism revenue.

Meeting organisers should take note that in 4Q2019, Tourism Malaysia will announce a slew of new events for 2020. These events will be listed on the Tourism Malaysia website ([www.tourism.gov.my](http://www.tourism.gov.my)). Meeting planners can use this as a guide when planning events in 2020 and beyond.

**2** The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture is drafting the National Tourism Policy 2020-2050 which includes accessible tourism. The new policy will dictate that accommodation providers should ensure that at least one room is equipped with facilities for the disabled.

**3** Malaysia Airports recently completed its one-year expansion project of Langkawi International Airport. Its terminal facilities have been upgraded to reduce congestion and provide a better experience for users. Immigration counters have been increased to 18; boarding gates have been increased to eight; and the total gross floor area of the terminal building has been expanded to 23,000m<sup>2</sup>, from 15,000m<sup>2</sup>.



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Lagoon Theme Park and Sunway Pyramid Mall to encourage delegates to extend their stay with pre- and post-activities.

Arokia Das, director, Luxury Tours Malaysia, said: “Repeat visitors to Malaysia who have already been to Kuala Lumpur are looking for new destinations.

“Selangor stands out because the main gateways, KL International Airport and klia2 are there, and with its good highways and roads, it is easy to get to venues. The local and international MICE properties also provide good facilities and services, comparable to accommodation in the capital, but at better rates.”

Arokia noted that just five years ago, it was difficult to promote Selangor to event organisers and travel

partners abroad because of the “lack of awareness of the destination”.

During that time, Malaysia’s capital city, Kuala Lumpur, was promoted as it was better suited to handle large business events. However, the situation has changed.

“Now, we not only actively promote Selangor for business events, we also encourage delegates to extend their stay with their families by providing value-for-money pre- and post-tour options,” said Arokia, adding that for the South-east Asian market, shopping-based events coupled with a sprinkling of nature activities are popular.

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**Francis Teo**  
Head, convention centre,  
Setia City Convention Centre

