

MEDIA RELEASE

TRAVEL SAFE ALLIANCE MALAYSIA EXPANDS PARTNERSHIP WITH TOURISM PENANG TO ATTRACT TRAVELLERS TO THE STATE

Alliance to play a lead role in making Penang safer for travellers

PENANG, 21 DECEMBER 2021: Travel Safe Alliance Malaysia (TSAM) has joined forces with the Penang State EXCO Office for Tourism and Creative Economy (PETACE) to raise the travel market confidence in Penang state.

TSAM, which was recently launched in October this year, comprises four major players in Malaysia's tourism, business events and the airline industry, namely the Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS), Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) and airlines under the Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) consisting of Malaysia Airlines, Firefly and MASwings.

With tourism activities gradually picking up, the joint partnership is seen as a timely move by Penang to lead efforts in tourism and economic recovery, where safety and hygiene aspects are prioritised across the industry including for hotels, food establishments, convention centres, tours, and transportation.

Penang State EXCO for Tourism and Creative Economy, YB Yeoh Soon Hin, said: "As the Penang State EXCO for Tourism & Creative Economy, spearheading necessary efforts to ensure everyone's safety is also essential to me. We have and will continue to work hard to ensure that Penang can safely receive tourists to revive the economy."

He noted that the double assurance of Penang's industry-specific safety accreditation programme -- the first in Malaysia -- and TSAM's travel solution certified by Bureau Veritas Certification Malaysia, raised the benchmark for travel safety. "This provides solid assurance to travellers that the Penang State Government puts travel safety top-most on its agenda and welcomes tourists to its shores for peace-of-mind holidays," he said.

He added: "On top of that, Penang Responsible Tourism campaign was also unveiled in July last year to remind all parties of their respective roles while partaking in travel activities. Allow me to note that this campaign is also updated from time to time, in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the National Security Council, to better suit the nation's pandemic situation."

Pointing out that TSAM would provide a competitive edge for those in the tourism industry, YBhg Datuk Tan Kok Liang, President of MATTA, shared: "TSAM will play a key role in promoting Malaysia as a travel-safe destination more so since travel safety and hygiene has become one of the top concerns for travellers worldwide today. TSAM will set the bar in first-to-last-mile travel standards, and accredited Malaysian tourism stakeholders will definitely have a keener competitive edge when it comes to competing for market-share in various key source markets."

YBhg Dato' N. Subramaniam, President of MAH, was pleased that the hygiene practice established by the hoteliers was gaining traction. He said: "Malaysian Association of Hotels first launched the Clean & Safe Malaysia hygiene and safety certification for hotels back in July 2020, and today it has become the benchmark of hotel safety standards as well as a key component in TSAM. The endorsement by the Penang State Government is a significant step forward to further boost travellers' confidence for the impending tourism recovery."

Meanwhile, MACEOS President, Mr. Francis Teo, felt that industry-wide implementation of consistent safety standards was necessary to strengthen Malaysia's tourism industry. He called upon all tourism industry players to subscribe to TSAM, saying: "TSAM looks forward to seeing a wider acceptance and implementation of its certification programme among the island's tourism industry players. This is especially urgent in light of the launch of new flights into Penang from Kota Kinabalu and Kuching from 1 December 2021."

Group Chief Executive Officer of MAG, Captain Izham Ismail, said that the collaboration was in line with its corporate mission of providing a safe travel experience. He said: "We are excited to collaborate with our counterparts in Penang as this continues to be a key domestic market for us – evident with the recent launch of Penang as our new hub for direct flights from the state to Kota Kinabalu and Kuching. As the national carrier, we will continue to be the flag bearer in providing a seamless, safe and hygienic travel experience for business and leisure travellers, supported by our sister airlines Firefly and MASwings. This is underpinned by our 7-star rating for COVID-19 health and safety measures by Airlines Ratings, consisting of stringent safety initiatives and procedures so our passengers can travel with peace of mind."

He added: "Safety and security are an integral part of MAG's DNA and way of doing business. We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensure safety in all aspects of our operations and the stakeholders in our journey. As a responsible organisation, we recently completed a detailed audit for our subsidiaries with the Bureau Veritas Certification Malaysia to ensure that we not only meet the standards of health within the organisation but also certify our efforts in keeping our customers safe. This will further strengthen our commitment to ensuring safer and seamless travel, so that leisure and business travellers can continue to #FlyConfidently with us."

At the same event, MAG launched its MHFlySafe campaign and logo that further reinforced its commitment of putting safety and hygiene as the anchor across all end-to-end consumer touchpoints – beginning from the check-in counters, lounges, onboard its flights and through to point of arrival.

With year-end travel to Penang expected to rise due to pent-up demand and attractive holiday offerings, tourism industry players can instil confidence in the travelling public by subscribing to the TSAM certification programme endorsed by PETACE.