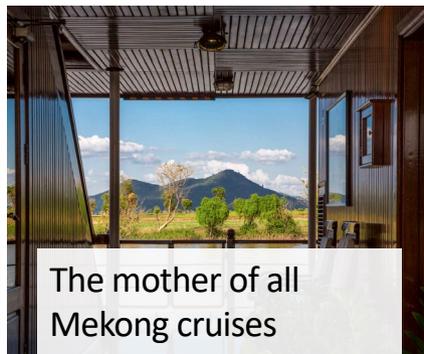




Explore Sarawak's cultural diversity



Centara celebrates five new resorts



The mother of all Mekong cruises



Iconic Dusit Thani opens in September



Langkawi  
99 Magical Islands

Langkawi Sky Bridge

## Emirates shares foodie facts

Emirates shares some foodie facts about the quantities of gourmet products, dedicated chefs, and attention to detail required to provide fine dining in the sky for more than 77 million customers annually.

Emirates caters for 490 flights daily, with 149 meals served every minute – totalling an enormous 215,000 meals served every day across the globe. It takes 1400 dedicated chefs to make these meals at the vast...

## PAL brings back Cebu-Osaka flights

Philippine Airlines will resume direct flights from Cebu in the Philippines to Osaka in Japan starting 1 July.

Independent timetable schedules show the airline will launch four weekly flights on the Cebu-Osaka route using a 199-seat A321 aircraft. Flights depart Cebu on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday...

## THAI to splurge on 45 Dreamliners

Thai Airways International confirmed Tuesday it has placed an order for 45 Boeing 787-9, the middle-size variant of the Dreamliner family, equipped with GEnx engines.

Negotiations on the order concluded last December, but the airline waited until the Singapore Airshow's opening to officially...

## Lijiang to host the MTF2024

The Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office invites travel professionals and stakeholders from the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) to meet in Lijiang, China, from 23 to 25 April for the annual Mekong Tourism Forum.

Themed "Visionary Journeys Redefining Tomorrow's Travel," this year's forum will emphasise collaboration, innovation, and forward-thinking strategies. The aim is to inspire delegates to explore new forms of tourism...

## Portugal leads the World's top beaches

Tripadvisor released its Travelers' Choice® Award for 2024: the Best of the Best Beaches last week with Praia da Falésia in Olhos de Agua, Portugal, topping the global list.

Based on an analysis of all the reviews left on Tripadvisor for beaches globally over one year, the award reveals the beaches that were the highest-rated...

## Resorts World One returns to HK in July

Once Resorts World One's seasonal homeport deployment in Southeast Asia ends on 3 July, when the cruise ship will sail back to Hong Kong to commence its new summer homeport deployment from 12 July to 6 October 2024.

Resorts World Cruises will offer a variety of cruises from its Hong Kong homeport...

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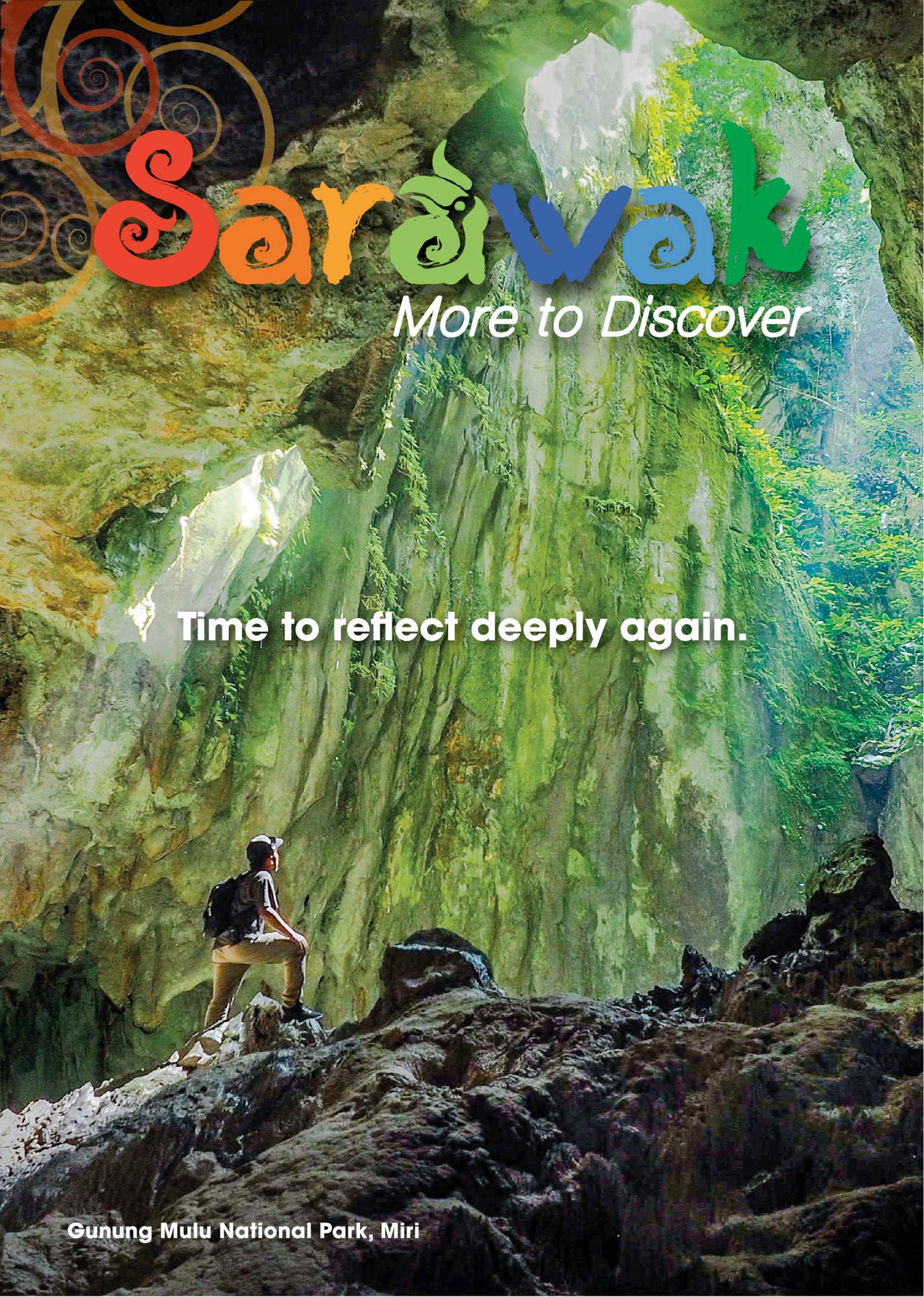
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# Sarawak

*More to Discover*

**Time to reflect deeply again.**

**Gunung Mulu National Park, Miri**



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# Explore Sarawak's cultural diversity

Sarawak is well-known for its cultural diversity, being home to at least 34 different ethnic groups, including the Ibans, Chinese, Malays, Bidayus, Melanaus, Orang Ulus, Penans and Kayans, just to name a few.

## *Ibans*

The Ibans constitute close to 30% of Sarawak's population, making them the largest indigenous ethnic group in the state. They are known for their traditional longhouses, which hold great cultural significance in their architecture.

They celebrate Gawai Dayak, a festival of thanksgiving for the bountiful harvest, where traditional dances like the Ngajat are performed, and a traditional rice wine drink named 'tuak' is served. Sarawakian Ibans are also well known for their artistry and traditional clothing.

## *Malay*

The Malay population constitutes approximately 25% of Sarawak's overall population. Most Sarawakian Malays are indigenous, some descending from native Borneo tribes and others migrating from neighbouring regions like Brunei

and Kalimantan. Malays were traditionally fishermen and lived around coastal areas, but over time advanced economically and are now city-dwellers.

### **Chinese**

The Chinese comprise Sarawak's third-largest ethnicity. The Malayan Chinese first came to Sarawak during the Brooke era to find employment opportunities in gold mines. Most have maintained their Chinese heritage, following traditions and superstitions during major celebrations like Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival. A highlight of Chinese celebrations is the lion and dragon dances, accompanied by distinctive rhythmic drums.

### **Bidayuhs**

The Bidayuh mainly reside in Lundu, Bau, Penrissen, Padawan, Siburan and Serian. They have architectural wonders that



are unique to their culture. An example of this is the baruk roundhouse for community gatherings and functions. It is also here where celebrations for the harvest seasons are held. Traditional dances like the Rejang Beuh or Eagle Dance are performed in the longhouse.

### **Melanaus**

The Melanaus are among the earliest settlers of Sarawak. Their language is categorised under the North Bornean branch of Malayo-Polynesian languages. Over time, they have taken influence from Malay culture in terms of traditional clothing, religion, and lifestyle.

### **Orang Ulu**

Orang Ulu refers to the many diverse tribal groups who live mostly in Sarawak's upriver and uphill areas. Orang Ulu are renowned for their artistic eye, as seen by the elaborately decorated mural designs and wood carvings on their longhouses' walls. This is also seen in their beadwork, detailed body tattoos, and rattan weaving. To celebrate the Orang Ulu's hunting culture, the Kanjet Ngeleput was created and performed by a male dancer in full warrior attire.



### **Penan**

The Penan people are a smaller ethnic group under the Orang Ulu who reside mainly in the Miri district, far east of Sarawak. Even now, they remain nomad travellers in Sarawak's dense jungles and live off produce from their hunting adventures. The Penans adorn themselves with accessories, jewellery on their heads, and a bracelet made from black-coloured rattan. Their traditional dance, Sayau Titot, is performed during social or cultural events. They are also excellent and skilled weavers, looming together basketweaves, mats, rattan bags and accessories to complement their traditional outfits.

### **Kayan**

Another smaller sub-ethnic group of the Orang Ulu's is the Kayan group. Like their neighbours, the Kenyah tribe, they are grouped with the Bahau people under the Apo Kayan people group. The Kayans are renowned for their beadwork and craftsmanship, producing wood carvings from belian wood. They are also revered for their boat-making knowledge. Kayan women, in particular, have a distinctive feature that has drawn attention to this tribe. Their long, slender necks adorned with brass rings have given the Kayans the moniker 'long-neck people'...

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# Centara celebrates five new resorts

Centara Hotels & Resorts will add five properties to its diverse portfolio, strengthening its footprint in Thailand and Vietnam and setting the stage for domestic and overseas strategic

pool bar, spa, fitness centre, and a convenient onsite mini shop.

At the end of 2023, Centara also signed a HMA with Korn Siri Hospitality Management Limited Partnership for Tiva Ao Makham

southeastern coast, this will be Centara's 11<sup>th</sup> hotel in Phuket and the newest edition to its Boutique Collection.

Centara will open two properties in Vietnam during Q1 of 2027 in Vung Tau City, a popular destination on Vietnam's southern coast. The 261-room Centara Life Vung Tau promises exceptional flexible stays full of daily delights, elevating the essentials across an all-day dining restaurant, modern meeting rooms, swimming pools, a pool bar, a fully equipped fitness centre, a spa, and a kids club. Also, in Vung Tau City, Centara Residence Dio Dua will offer 536 rooms, a warm reception, a fitness centre, a swimming pool, and a dedicated kids' club.

Adding to the allure of Van Don, a premier tourist

destination in northern Vietnam, Crystal Holidays Harbor Van Don will open a second tower in Q2 of 2025 as part of its plan to develop five hotel and resort apartment buildings within its five-star international standard resort and entertainment complex,

Complementing the existing Centara-branded Tower A, which boasts a dedicated purpose-built convention centre, Tower B comprises 496 rooms along with a variety of dining options, a state-of-the-art fitness centre, and inviting swimming...

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*Centara Life Vung Tau will be located along the southern coast of Vung Tau City.*

growth initiatives.

“Centara Hotels & Resorts is off to a dynamic start in 2024, unveiling several new properties that exemplify our commitment to strategic growth and delivering exceptional experiences. As we expand our footprint in Thailand, Vietnam, and beyond, we are excited about the future and the expansive opportunities for brands,” stated COO of Centara Hotels & Resorts COO Michael Henssler.

Centara has signed a hotel management agreement (HMA) with Phi Phi Paradise Company Limited for its Villa 360 property. Set to reopen as Centara Villas Phi Phi Island in October 2024, this stunning resort offers 40 villas ranging from 56 to 133.5 square metres, an all-day dining restaurant, a sunset sky bar, an outdoor swimming pool, and



*The perspective of the new Centara in Van Don.*

Resort Phuket, a greenfield project set to redefine health-focused travel with exceptional facilities including yoga, cycling, and a Pilates reformer studio, as well as a sauna, steam room, and onsen available to all guests. Offering 68 rooms along Phuket's

# THE PLACE TO BE

The world is yours to explore. Across Thailand, Laos, the Maldives, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Middle East or Japan, you can find a place you want to be. This is the essence of Centara Hotels & Resorts. Whether your clients are planning a family beach holiday, an immersive cultural experience or an exciting urban getaway, Centara's signature hospitality, warm Thai family values and world-class service will be at the heart of their stay anywhere in the world.

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# Pandaw Cruises



# The mother of all Mekong cruises

Pandaw, a river cruise specialist in Southeast Asia and India, is promoting a mega cruise combination that features four countries on a single river: The Full Mekong Combo Cruise.

and diverse group of peoples and cultures, all from the comfort of locally crafted Pandaw vessels. This combo cruise includes a flight from Saigon to Vientiane and one-night accommodation in

cruise is made possible thanks to Pandaw ultra-shallow draft vessels. Cruises sail upstream and downstream on the various stretches of the Mekong River, offering guests an opportunity to explore Indochina's rich culture, history and nature in one all-encompassing river adventure.

The cost includes flights and accommodation between the various cruise sectors. Sailings are scheduled for October 2024, when river levels are the highest at the close of the annual monsoon season. This is a one-off special departure. Bookings are now open.



Pandaw is offering an in-depth exploration of the Mekong River from South to North for the first time. This unique cruise combines two 10-night Mekong expeditions through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in this special four-country expedition.

Sailing all of the navigable stretches of this mighty river provides amazing insights into how one river can support a vast

Vientiane between cruises within the ticket price.

Sales for the 21-night expedition sailing along all the navigable stretches of the mighty Mekong River are open for bookings. The mega expedition trip is a grand tour of the formerly Indochina countries of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, plus Thailand, an important destination to end the cruise.

The four-country combo





# Charters line up to visit Langkawi

Langkawi's tourism community welcomed 155 visitors from Chongqing in China who joined the first of two Batik Air charter flights on Sunday.

It followed an earlier inaugural for a Batik Air charter series from Chengdu in China Air and the start of scheduled flights from Dubai on Flydubai.

The Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) secured the latest charter series from Chongqing, as part of a project to create attractive incentive packages to encourage more direct international flights from key source markets such as China. The first charter flight from Chongqing, China, to Langkawi, Kedah, Malaysia, arrived on Sunday, 11 February. Batik Air will follow up with a second charter to meet demand

during the peak holiday season.

LADA said it is committed to attracting special charter flights with incentives for airlines organising charter flights in cooperation with online travel agencies in various Asian source market countries. LADA also provides additional incentives to airlines that establish direct flights to Langkawi if they can offer a flight schedule for at least one year and the city, where the flights originate, does not have an airline route to the Malaysian island destination.

Tuan Wan Kamarul Faisal Wan Kamardin, LADA's deputy CEO for planning and development hosted the welcome reception on Sunday, joined by Tuan Haji Zulkifli Bin Abdullah, assistant chief district officer, Tuan Che Sulaiman Che Pa, manager of

Langkawi International Airport, LADA officials, the Batik Air team, MAHB staff, related government agencies and Langkawi tourism industry players. Traditional Malay cultural performances welcomed the inaugural flight.

Just a day earlier, Langkawi welcomed 178 tourists from Chengdu on the year's first charter flight from Chengdu, China. The direct flight is part of an ongoing charter series featuring Langkawi, Malaysia. It involves eight charter flights to Langkawi, bringing in an estimated 1,480 visitors, the Langkawi Development Authority reported. Flights originate in Chengdu, the capital of southwestern China's Sichuan province.

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# Langkawi

## 99 Magical Islands



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 Eagle's Nest Skywalk

# Iconic Dusit Thani opens in September

Dusit Hotels and Resorts, the hotel arm of Dusit International, one of Thailand's leading hotel and property development companies, has announced that it will officially reopen its iconic Dusit Thani Bangkok hotel in September 2024.

rooms (257 versus the original's 517), the newly built 39-storey hotel offers ample space for guests, including deluxe rooms and elegant suites exquisitely crafted by internationally acclaimed Asian interior design firm, André Fu Studio, starting at

seating, seamlessly blends the tranquillity of nature with the modern luxury within.

Since it opened in 1970, the original Dusit Thani Bangkok boasted one of the city's largest, most elegant ballrooms. The new version of the hotel continues this tradition with expansive banqueting and meeting facilities spanning over 5,000 sq m. This includes one of the largest grand ballrooms in Bangkok, with a high ceiling, a panoramic view of Lumpini Park, and a diverse selection of meeting spaces for small to large-scale events.

The hotel will soon announce an exciting line-up of food and beverage outlets, including elevated dining experiences created by renowned chefs and a stylish multi-level rooftop bar.

Reflecting Dusit's commitment to holistic well-being, Dusit's signature wellness concept, Devarana Wellness, will also introduce a unique urban sanctuary concept designed to offer bespoke wellness experiences for guests, visitors, and locals alike. Full details of the hotel's wellness offerings and exciting culinary concepts will be revealed closer to its reopening date.

As part of its design, the new Dusit Thani Bangkok proudly integrates signature elements from the original property that were thoughtfully removed and preserved for use as part of the new building. This includes the original property's signature golden spire, recently returned as part of the new property's topping-off ceremony, and precious artworks by...

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Situated in the exact prime location as the original property, which graced the Bangkok skyline from 1970 to 2019, this highly anticipated, reimagined version of Dusit's luxury flagship hotel promises to deliver a fresh take on its predecessor's esteemed heritage and once again stand as a beacon of Thai-inspired gracious hospitality for discerning travellers from all around the world.

To meet the demands of modern guests, the new Dusit Thani Bangkok hotel has been meticulously reconstructed to offer an opulent accommodation experience, elevating the already high standards established by the original property. With fewer

an impressive 50 sq m.

Envisaged by Architects 49 International Limited and OMA Asia Hong Kong Limited, a division of the esteemed Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), renowned for its groundbreaking contributions to architecture and urban planning, the hotel's distinctive architecture and thoughtful layout further elevate the sense of space. A singular corridor floorplan ensures every room faces the green expanse of Lumpini Park, with guests enjoying uninterrupted scenic views through expansive floor-to-ceiling windows. This unique design feature, complemented by elegantly designed window

# Your Sabah Bucket List

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