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NEWS FOR ASIA'S TRAVEL PLANNERS

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eMag News Alert

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How Chiang Mai people keep heritage alive

Langkawi's
hidden world
of birds

RWMF call to
action: One
Earth, One Love

Naturally
Langkawi

Visit a story
550 million years
in the making.
99 islands are calling.



Air Canada links up with Deutsche Bahn

Air Canada has extended its codeshare agreement with Lufthansa to include Lufthansa Express Rail services at Frankfurt Airport, operated by Deutsche Bahn.

This agreement enables a seamless, intermodal itinerary booked in one reservation with Air Canada's five daily flights to Frankfurt Airport...

Hong Kong Airlines flies to Sydney

Hong Kong Airlines' inaugural flight from Hong Kong to Sydney, Australia, landed in the state capital of New South Wales, Australia, on Saturday.

To mark this new milestone in its network expansion, Hong Kong Airlines held celebratory events at both Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and Sydney Airport...

Philippine Airlines takes off to Danang

Philippine Airlines launched its new Manila – Danang direct flights on Tuesday, 1 July, with Flight PR585 departing Manila at 1110.

The Philippine flag carrier begins the service with three weekly flights linking Manila, the Philippines' capital, with the coastal city of Danang in central Vietnam...

Travel Meet Asia 2025 wraps up

The 2025 edition of Travel Meet Asia (TMA), held from 25-26 June at Swissôtel Jakarta PIK Avenue, successfully concluded, marking two days of high-value business, dynamic networking and forward-looking discussions.

Organised by Messe Berlin Asia Pacific, this year's event reaffirmed Travel Meet Asia's position as a focused and agile B2B platform tailored to the travel and tourism industry...

ITA Airways grows Lufthansa Group codeshares

Rome-based ITA Airways has extended codeshare flights on an initial set of intercontinental destinations with Lufthansa Group airlines for travel starting from 1 July 1, 2025.

The new agreement covers flights departing from Europe to Africa, Asia, and South...

Trafalgar trio revamp 2026 tours

Trafalgar and sister brands, Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold, announce the launch of 16 new itineraries for travel in 2026, marking the most extensive introduction of new trips in the past seven years.

Spanning five continents and featuring both timeless destinations and trending travel hotspots...



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Managing Editor: Don Ross: donr@ttrweekly.com

EDITORIAL: news@ttrweekly.com
Editor: Don Ross

MARKETING: sales@ttrweekly.com
Content editor: Danai Stephen Ross
Publishing director: Lars Magnusson

PRODUCTION:
Creative director: Danai Stephen Ross
Graphics: Kamolapat Srivirawan

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How Chiang Mai people keep heritage alive

Chiang Mai's appeal lies not just in what can be seen but in what can be felt. Its living traditions are carried forward by real people — artists,



gardeners, chefs, and craftspeople — who see heritage as something to be lived, not exhibited. In their hands, the city breathes.

A Boat That Floats on Story and Spirit

Gliding elegantly along the Mae Ping River, cradled in the sounds of live traditional music, the Dibba Yana Chitta—or “Heavenly Boat” — is one of northern Thailand's most spectacular vessels. Designed by Ajarn Chalermchai Kositpipat, famed for Chiang Rai's White Temple, the boat's figurehead is hand-carved into a mythical creature representing the

passage of humans along the river to heaven—an expression of the artist's lifelong devotion to preserving Thai identity through visual storytelling. With just 18 seats, this exclusive cruise blends sacred artistry with fine Thai dining. Each season, a new tasting menu is curated by leading Michelin-starred chefs, beginning with Chef Piyachart “Boy” Phudtawong of Saneh Jaan. Operated by Anantara Chiang Mai Resort, the experience is an immersion in culture — a passage through Chiang Mai's artistic, spiritual, and culinary heritage.

The Wisdom of Trees: Chiang Mai's Natural Archive

Spanning 12 lush acres in Chiang Mai's San Phi Suea Subdistrict, Changthong Heritage Park is more than a garden—it's a living archive of Thailand's rare and historic green heritage. Visitors explore serene waterfalls, shaded woodlands, and a pioneering landscape that blends moss-filled paths with sustainable design, where century-old trees continue to thrive. The park is the vision of Boonrak Thanacharoenroj, a leading landscape designer with over 30 years of experience in transplanting and curating Thailand's grandest trees. Under his stewardship, the park has become a sanctuary for more than 400 rare plant species — many native to Northern Thailand.

Changthong Heritage Park invites families, students, and nature enthusiasts alike to engage with Thailand's botanical heritage — rooted



in history and growing toward a sustainable future.

Ban Kang Wat: A Sanctuary for Handmade Stories

Nestled against the slopes of Doi Suthep near Chiang Mai, Ban Kang Wat is a lively artist village where every doorway reveals a craft in motion. Artists display their work in colourful showrooms and craft markets, while workshops invite visitors to explore ceramics, accessories and jewellery, watercolour, woodcut printing, papermâché, and more. Within a vibrant space, Note A Book invites guests to try their hand at journal-making, with local bookmakers guiding them through choosing cover materials, hand-binding pages, stitching patterns, and adding personal touches like hand-lettered titles.

A gentle reminder from the workshop: “When you read, you’re reading the writer’s heart—but when you write, you’re reading your own.”

Wisdom and Wellness Experience

Located in the Tai Khern community of San Kamphaeng District, Sahrey Chanta offers visitors a meaningful connection to nature and Northern Thailand’s cultural heritage. Guests can



enjoy the healing power of food with a variety of nourishing dishes, cold-pressed juices, kombucha, and organic teas—including locally grown Assam tea and fragrant rose tea. The space also offers workshops and sessions as part of the experience, such as flower tea blending, yoga, and therapeutic massages. On-site shops offer a curated selection of spa and organic wellness products.

A homestay programme invites deeper engagement with the local community, offering a slower, more reflective pace of life. Sahrey Chanta was founded by Chiang Mai natives and siblings, Jumpol and Anchan Chaiwong, who were inspired to give back to and nurture their hometown.

Langkawi's hidden world of birds

Langkawi isn't just about beaches, duty-free shops, or seafood dinners with a view. Look up or, better yet, pause for a moment, and you'll notice a quieter, wilder rhythm unfolding above and around you: birdsong



in the trees, silhouettes gliding between branches, flashes of colour darting across the sky. Welcome to Langkawi's hidden world of birds.

Langkawi lies just six degrees north of the Equator, where the equatorial and tropical climate zones overlap. This unique position creates an ecological crossroads that supports a remarkable diversity of birdlife, especially for an island its size. Best of all, you don't need to be an expert or own expensive gear to enjoy it, even your smartphone camera will do the trick.



Forget the myth that birdwatching is only for the seasoned or the thoughtfully equipped. As the locals might say, your "Mark II eyeballs" will do just fine. Even a modest pair of binoculars can open up a whole new layer of Langkawi's natural magic.

Start with the raptors that command the skies above Langkawi. These birds of prey are a common sight in the mangroves,

coastlines, and hillsides, often spotted gliding effortlessly on rising thermals. Look out for the White-bellied Sea Eagle, the Crested Serpent Eagle, and the unmistakable Brahminy Kite, with its striking chestnut plumage and white head, often seen circling above fishing boats or perched near the water's edge.

Deeper inland, in the island's forested highlands, hornbills add a touch of prehistoric drama to the treetops. The Great Hornbill, in particular, is a majestic presence on Mount Raya. With its heavy, curved bill



and unmistakable barking call, it's often seen gliding between fruiting trees in the early hours. A sunrise walk or drive up Gunung Raya offers one of the best chances to spot this iconic species in action.

In the cooler months, Langkawi welcomes migratory visitors. Herons, egrets, and other wetland birds fill the paddy fields in search of fish and grubs, turning these landscapes into seasonal theatres of activity.

Meanwhile, colourful residents like kingfishers and sunbirds dazzle with their plumage, if you're lucky enough to catch a glimpse before they vanish into the foliage.

Sunbirds, in particular, are small, shimmering nectar-lovers often spotted near flowering plants. Though not quite...


[Read more...](#)

Langkawi

99 Magical Islands

UNVEIL THE SECRETS OF PANTAI REBAK

Step through nature's doorway to discover Pantai Rebak's hidden alcove. Here, every wave carves out a story, every grain of sand holds a history. Embrace the solitude of Langkawi's secluded treasure and let the timeless tides tell you their secrets.

 Red Rock Beach, Rebak Island

RWMF call to action: One Earth, One Love

The 28th edition of the Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) 2025 concluded after an uplifting and unifying weekend inspired by this year's theme, 'Connections: One Earth, One Love'.

by Otyken was a standout moment on the opening day, entrancing the crowd with a powerful blend of Siberian Indigenous vocals, throat singing, and modern electronic fusion. Thailand's The Paradise

Day one also marked the closing of the Rainforest Youth Summit (RAYS) 2025, during which youth leaders from across the region participated in sustainability workshops, cultural dialogues, and creative exchanges. The transition from RAYS to RWMF underlined the continuity between young voices and global rhythms – a powerful connection that defines the festival's spirit.

RWMF 2025 has established itself as a beacon of environmental stewardship. Building on its previous achievements, the festival reaffirmed its commitment to planting 10,000 trees by 2027, with a portion of every ticket going towards reforestation programmes. Single-use plastics are banned on-site, and visitors are encouraged to refill, reuse, and recycle through clearly marked Eco Stations and water stations.

Supported by an array of dedicated sponsors and partners, the festival united music lovers, environmental advocates, and changemakers in a shared mission of connection, conservation, and celebration.

Leading the way are Diamond Sponsors and Official Airline Partners, Malaysia Airlines and Firefly, alongside Official Broadcast Partner, TVS. Platinum Sponsors include AmBank Group (Official Banking Partner), Proton, Cuckoo, Plaza Merdeka, The Waterfront...

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Now in its 28th edition, RWMF continues to evolve beyond music, offering an immersive journey that bridges continents, cultures, and communities through rhythm, sustainability, and shared humanity.

Held at the iconic Sarawak Cultural Village against the backdrop of Mount Santubong, the festival welcomed a record turnout of world music fans from 20 to 22 June. Over 200 musicians from 20 countries participated this year, offering a blend of traditional and contemporary music that spanned from West African percussion to Māori soul, Indigenous chants, and modern fusion.


The headline performance

Bangkok Molam International Band brought their signature psychedelic Molam groove to the stage. At the same time, Sarawak's own Meruked added emotional depth with their evocative blend of Bornean heritage and post-rock soundscapes.

"This year's theme, 'Connections: One Earth, One Love', was more than a slogan — it is our call to action," said Sarawak Tourism Board CEO Sharzede Datu Hj Salleh Askor. "We are not just gathering for music, we are here to celebrate unity, honour the Earth, and amplify the message of sustainability through cultural exchange. The world needs connection now more than ever."

GATEWAY TO BORNEO

Explore the unique charm of Sarawak, where nature, culture, and adventure come together in harmony. Discover the enchanting Three Sisters Keluan Waterfall, a symbol of natural beauty and serenity. Nestled deep in the forests of Miri, this cascading wonder invites you to immerse yourself in the tranquillity of Sarawak's pristine landscapes. Find peace and wonder in the heart of nature's embrace.

 Three Sisters Keluan Waterfall, Long San, Miri
www.sarawaktourism.com

SARAWAK
More To Discover



RAYS shines on Rainforest Youth Tourism Summit

The second annual Rainforest Youth Summit (RAYS) 2025 concluded in Kuching last week, bringing together young changemakers, environmental leaders, and indigenous voices from around the world to collaborate on building a greener, more equitable world.

Karim Hamzah.

The minister expressed his profound belief “in the power of youth and promise of culture,” which set an inspiring tone for the summit’s dialogues and initiatives.

The event was opened by YB Dato Sri Haji Abdul Karim

Sarawak;

YB Dato Gerald Rentap Jabu – Deputy Minister for Youth, Sports & Entrepreneur Development, Sarawak (Youth and Sports Development);

Puan Sharzede Datu Hj Salleh Askor – CEO of Sarawak Tourism Board



Minister for Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts, Sarawak YB Karim Hamzah believes RAYS has the potential to grow into a global movement to empower and nurture a generation of responsible global citizens who lead climate action while staying true to their cultural heritage, BESarawak reported in a Facebook post.

Minister for Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts, Sarawak, YB

Rahman Hamzah – Minister for Tourism, Creative Industry & Performing Arts.

Also in attendance at the Rainforest Youth Summit 2025 (RAYS 2025) were:

YB Dato Dennis Ngau – Chairman of Sarawak Tourism Board;

YB Datuk Dr Ripin Lamat – Deputy Minister for Youth, Sports & Entrepreneur Development;

YB Datuk Sebastian Ting – Deputy Minister for Tourism,

The Pacific Asia Travel Association CEO, Noor Ahmad Hamid, who also joined the 18-20 June event, noted in a LinkedIn post that “this year’s Summit was more vibrant than ever, bringing together nearly 700 passionate youth from across ASEAN and beyond. We look forward to continued collaboration with STB and RAYS in the years ahead.”

For more information on BESarawak, visit: [Business Events Sarawak](https://www.besarawak.com.my/events).



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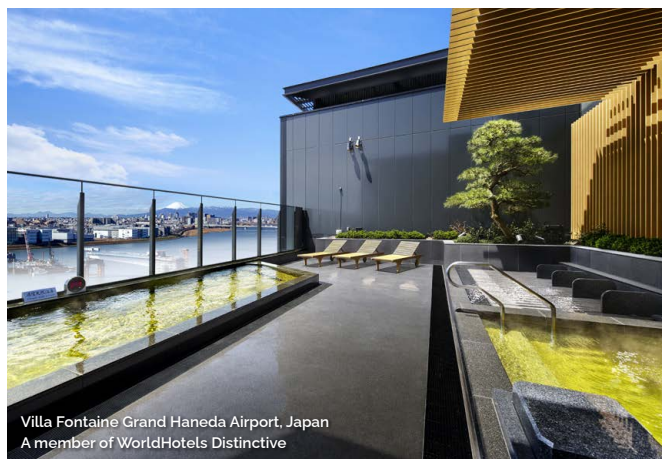
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