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Date : 27 September 2023

Press Statement by Penang Hill Corporation (PHC) in Response to the Article by World of Buzz Dated 26 September 2023 and Article by USA Today “Top 100 Biggest Tourist Traps Worldwide” Dated 24 August 2023

With reference to the recent articles, Penang Hill Corporation would like to state the following:-

We understand that every visitor's experience is unique, and we value all feedback, whether positive or negative. It is noteworthy that Penang Hill has welcomed visitors for over 100 years and receives an average of over 1.5 million tourists annually in recent years, representing a diverse range of preferences and expectations.

The mentioned negative reviews were picked from Google reviews. Upon investigation, some of the Google reviews, by the said writers in July 2023, were stated over 5 years ago. During the said period, PHC has welcomed over 5 million visitors, including during the covid-pandemic period.

The article relied on reviews from only one source, which is the Google reviews platform and from a pool of 3,737 reviews (until July 2023). As per the authors, only 21 out of 3,737 reviews think it is a tourist trap (0.56%) and 6 out of 3,737 reviews (0.16%) said it's overrated.

Please note that it is a small sample size and an inaccurate representation of 3,737 over 5 million visitors to Penang Hill during the 5-year period of the review. The methodology used is grossly inaccurate and flawed as the analysis is based solely on reviews from a single platform and it does not capture the majority with positive experience on the hill.

To amplify a small number of reviews (0.7% from 3,737 of the total Google reviews out of the 5 million visitors) and list Penang Hill as a top attraction worldwide in negative light is misleading, with intentions best known to the authors themselves. While we respect the opinions of individual visitors, we believe it is crucial to view such assessments in the context of our wider visitor base, to stay objective, unbiased and accurate.

Like any popular tourist destinations around the world, queues at Penang Hill will inevitably be long during school holidays, popular weekends and public holidays. PHC always advises visitors to come early to avoid long queues and plan their trips in advance to maximise their experience at this must-visit destination in Penang, riding up the hill on the third-generation funicular along the century-year-old railway.

Penang Hill is a popular family-oriented tourist destination as well as a recently designated UNESCO Biosphere Reserve site that retains its natural and historical characteristics. The hill is nestled within millions-year-old natural rainforest reserves that offer visitors a unique experience with nature and its rich historical heritage. There will not be theme parks and entertainment outlets. We encourage visitors to explore the natural beauty of Penang Hill via the bypaths and hiking trails for visitors to get closer to nature.

PHC takes pride in providing an affordable yet enriching experience for both local and international visitors, ensuring that the place is accessible to all. The funicular ticket price remains one of the most affordable prices in the region.

We also wish to stress that most of the attractions on the hill are privately managed including the food and beverage outlets with affordable pricing. We acknowledge that, like any tourist destination, there is always room for improvements, and we are committed to keep improving. We may not be able to meet every visitor's expectation but PHC will continue to enhance the amenities and facilities to bring a richer and unique experience to the Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve through various family and nature-oriented activities.

We are constantly upgrading our amenities to enhance the comfort and experience of our visitors. We are working on improvement plans and cable car installation as one of the enhancements to be installed on the hill to address traffic and to enhance visitors' comfort. The cable car system will help to balance visitors and traffic congestion as well as the funicular system itself for increased reliability, safety and system operational lifespan.

It is worth noting that the said article was authored by a credit card team and we are not privy to the author's intentions in writing this article based on their flawed analysis. Nevertheless, we appreciate their interest in Penang Hill.

We are open to critics and urge all media friends to be fair in their assessment and analysis of Penang Hill. PHC will keep improving and ensure it stays as a must-visit destination for generations to come.

Penang Hill welcomes writers and the critics to discover its uniqueness and to experience the Penang Hill hospitality. "See the Nature, Feel the History"

#END#



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About Penang Hill Corporation

Penang Hill Corporation was established in 2009 through an enactment passed by the Penang State Legislative Assembly. Its main focus is to manage the funicular system, undertake the development of socio-economy and infrastructure in Penang Hill and promote the Hill as a major ecotourism destination, in its vision to make Penang Hill the Hill Resort of Choice in Malaysia and the region.

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CEKAP AKAUNTABILITI TELUS UNTUK MENJADI
BUKIT PERANGINAN PILIHAN DI MALAYSIA

Extractions from USA Today – Top 100 biggest tourist traps worldwide dated 24 August 2023. <https://www.usatoday.com/money/blueprint/credit-cards/biggest-tourist-traps-in-the-world/>

Top 100 Tourist Traps Worldwide

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Attraction	City / State	Country	Region	Reviews	Tourist trap	Frequency
2 Salem Witch Museum	Massachusetts	United States	North America	9,240	113	1.22%
3 Calico Ghost Town	California	United States	North America	1,972	18	0.91%
4 Crazy Horse Memorial	South Dakota	United States	North America	3,821	34	0.89%
5 International UFO Museum and Research Center	New Mexico	United States	North America	2,057	14	0.68%
6 Blue Lagoon	Grindavik	Iceland	Europe	26,259	171	0.65%
7 Voodoo Doughnut	Oregon	United States	North America	17,827	106	0.59%
8 Capilano Suspension Bridge	Vancouver	Canada	North America	27,179	161	0.59%
9 Penang Hill	Penang	Malaysia	Asia	3,737	21	0.56%

(Top 100 Tourist Traps Worldwide)

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Most Overpriced Attractions Worldwide

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	Attraction	City / State	Country	Region	Reviews	Expensive	Frequency
56	Empire State Building	New York	United States	North America	94,313	1,015	1.08%
57	Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary	Brisbane	Australia	Australasia	8,692	92	1.06%
58	Franklin Institute Science Museum	Pennsylvania	United States	North America	12,495	131	1.05%
59	Salvador Dali Museum	Florida	United States	North America	14,724	153	1.04%
60	Boulders Beach Penguin Colony	Cape Town	South Africa	Africa	4,048	42	1.04%
61	City Palace	Udaipur	India	Asia	79,004	819	1.04%
62	Hearst Castle	California	United States	North America	9,767	98	1.00%
63	Colonial Williamsburg	Virginia	United States	North America	7,846	78	0.99%
64	Penang Hill	Penang	Malaysia	Asia	3,737	37	0.99%

(Most Overpriced Attractions Worldwide)

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Most Overrated Attractions Worldwide

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	Attraction	City / State	Country	Region	Reviews	Overrated	Frequency
5	Hollywood Walk of Fame	California	United States	North America	41,785	170	0.41%
6	Blue Lagoon	Grindavik	Iceland	Europe	26,259	101	0.38%
7	Livraria Lello	Porto	Portugal	Europe	56,562	175	0.31%
8	MONA: Museum of Old and New Art	Berriedale	Australia	Australasia	10,191	29	0.28%
9	Jardin Majorelle	Marrakech	Morocco	Africa	38,834	102	0.26%
10	Old Faithful Geyser	Wyoming	United States	North America	21,459	46	0.21%
11	Stonehenge	Wiltshire	United Kingdom	Europe	47,018	80	0.17%
12	Spanish Steps	Rome	Italy	Europe	64,275	107	0.17%
13	Tegallalang Rice Terrace	Ubud	Indonesia	Asia	38,199	62	0.16%
14	Penang Hill	Penang	Malaysia	Asia	3,737	6	0.16%

(Most Overrated Attractions Worldwide)