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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW FUNICULAR WRAP TO COMMEMORATE PENANG HILL RAILWAY'S 100th ANNIVERSARY

New faces for Pinang and Mutiara coaches in conjunction with the centenary celebration

Penang Hill railway is celebrating an important milestone in 2023 – its 100 years of transformation. The century-old funicular railway that Arnold Robert Johnson (1879-1966), an engineer with the Federated Malay States Railways constructed and completed in 1923 is a unique piece of European-made railway heritage. It is undoubtedly the first of its kind in South East Asia and it still remains timeless today even after a century.

“If not the best hill railway in the world, one of the best of such railways” was quoted in His Excellency the Governor, Sir Laurence Nunns Guillemard’s speech at the Penang Hills Railway official opening on 1st January 1924.

In reminiscing the early days of Penang Hill, the means to ascend the Hill proved to be a challenge back then, when the only way up was by walking, using pony rides or doolies. However, this led to the amazing engineering accomplishment of Penang Hill railway, which has served many dignitaries and visitors including the late Queen Elizabeth II, the Emperor and Empress of Japan, the Prince of Cambodia besides the residents and workers on the Hill.

Since the railway’s opening on 21st October 1923, it has served over 47 million visitors to Penang Hill. For year 2022 alone, a total of 1.48 million visitors used the Penang Hill railway. The current funicular has also made more than 275,000 trips, exceeding 550,000 km for the past decade after it replaced the second-generation carriages in April 2011.

“The funicular coach may have physically changed from the first to third-generation but its historical heritage, socio-economic values and importance still remain, befitting its status as one of Penang’s historical icons,” said YAB Tuan Chow Kon Yeow, Chairman of Penang Hill Corporation (PHC).

PHC has decorated both the third-generation funicular coaches; 'Pinang' and 'Mutiara' with the 100th Anniversary logo stickers as well as with its tagline "100 Years of Transformation" and thematic graphic. It will be the new faces of the Pinang and Mutiara coaches in conjunction with the centenary celebration.

“The branded funicular wrap will bring a stand-out centenary message that visitors will see and remember, thus celebrating it together. The gist of the centenary celebration is heightening visitors’ appreciation towards the railway’s history and the social economic transformation that it created over the past century,” added Chow.

To achieve this, PHC will be hosting a series of events and activities such as exhibitions, launching books including a coffee table book, documentary videos, social media contests, tenants’ promotions and commemorative merchandise. In addition, special edition fast lane funicular tickets, a collectable ticket for this year's centenary celebration, are available to the public.

Besides, more exciting surprises and highly-anticipated signature events will take place throughout the year, promising to be more memorable and experiential such as Penang Hill Festival, Penang Hill Heritage Forest Challenge and Trash Free Hill.

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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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