

# AIRLINK

MALAYSIA AIRPORTS

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With one more month to go before we enter into 2019, we foresee more passenger traffic at our network of airports. Based on our last-twelve-month figures as at October, we registered 4.4% growth with 132.3 million passengers. This represents the highest volume of passengers we have handled to-date. Despite global challenges such as the hike in oil prices affecting airlines and ultimately passenger traffic, we are optimistic of ending the year with strong passenger growth in view of the year-end school holiday breaks and festive period.

In November, we witnessed two new carriers flying into Malaysia. Both Condor and IndiGo were targeted at the business and leisure traveller segments. With Malaysia Airlines as its interline partner, the former is extending its reach from Kuala Lumpur to other local destinations as far as Sarawak. IndiGo, the sole Indian-registered airline operating from India to Malaysia, will be operating double-daily direct flights that will be a boost to bring in more passengers from India, one of our key target markets.

With AirAsia's opening of its new Singapore-Ipoh route this month soon after recommencing its Johor Bahru-Ipoh sector in October, we foresee very encouraging demand in passenger growth for Sultan Azlan Shah Airport in Ipoh. In fact, its passenger movements has grown tremendously since 2015 from 222,606 to 269,696 in 2016 and 274,146 in 2017.

## Acting Group CEO Speaks

**A leading corporate leader with strong financial background and extensive experience in various fields, he is currently steering Malaysia Airports to greater heights.**

**This month, Raja Azmi Raja Nazuddin shares how Malaysia Airports has been strengthening its position as the preferred global hub when it recently welcomed two new carriers, Condor and IndiGo, into Kuala Lumpur International Airport. To support the increase in passenger and aircraft movements at its airports, the airport operator has embarked on upgrading its facilities, including at its smaller airports such as Sultan Azlan Shah Airport in Ipoh, in order to provide a seamless and joyful experience for its passengers.**

Looking forward to accommodate more air passengers for the Perak state and its tourism sector, we plan to increase the aircraft parking apron to five stands at its Ipoh airport and segregate the operations area for aircraft and helicopters. Plans are also afoot to improve the open bay to include facilities such as covered pathways for passengers during their departures and arrivals.

Also mindful of providing more comfort and conveniences at klia2, where the new low-cost carrier IndiGo flies into, we expect to see the completion of 30 additional self-bag drop (SBD) machines to be installed between 18 November and the first week of December after receiving positive feedback on the first set of 15 SBD machines that were installed here earlier this year.

Moving towards Airports 4.0, which speaks of efficiency in processes through digital and technology initiatives, the SBD facility has enabled us to handle more passengers per hour, thus helping us to save time and have a seamless check-in experience.



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## Commercial Reset for International Airports

**Owing to the rapid changes in the travel retail scene, the dynamics for the commercial services division of an airport is totally different these days. Recognising this, Malaysia Airports has embarked on a commercial reset strategy of its international airports over the next three to five years, which will change the retail landscape at these airports.**

These airports will serve as "international shopfronts" not only to the passengers but also to the local community as well as they now positioned as "destinations" fetching high-street rentals for categories such as fashion and food and beverage (F&B).

The airport operator has kicked-started its reset strategy with the KL International Airport (KLIA) since it is the main gateway into Malaysia, with its roll-out to the klia2 terminal expected to happen a year later.

The other international airports involved in its commercial reset are in Langkawi, Kota Kinabalu, Kuching and Penang.

Malaysia Airports senior general manager for commercial services Mohammad Nazli Abdul Aziz emphasised, "We want to do it right and will be doing it in phases due to practical reasons."

He explained that the affected airports cannot be fully closed as they are the gateways to the state. In addition, the smooth handling of passengers to their desired destinations is top priority for Malaysia Airports.

Nazli said the reset strategy to refresh its retail offerings will also take into consideration the group's revenue preservation.

"We aim to achieve the future growth of our commercial sector via several strategies. They include benchmarking ourselves with our peers and raising the profile of our airports through customers' knowledge, brands collaboration and cross packaging.

Nazli added, "We are also deep diving into retail analytics for trends and insight, improving the terminal's facilities to increase passenger movements as well as investing into offline and online retail integration.

"We are very excited with online retail as e-penetration is growing very fast due to e-literacy and ease of internet access."

One of Malaysia Airports' key components in its commercial reset strategy is to position its international airports as destinations. He said this is achieved through its five key clusters, namely duty free (DF), F&B, high fashion, retailtainment pop-ups and a curated sense of place.

DF has been one of the fastest growing segments for Malaysia Airports group's commercial services division, contributing to about 68% of its total sales until it was overtaken by perfumes and cosmetics earlier this year.

KLIA & klia2, with combined retail outlets of about 300 units, contributed to RM2.3 billion worth of sales in 2017, of which RM1.3 billion came from KLIA, which were contributed largely by its bigger numbers of high-net worth passengers from overseas.

"We are looking at a higher sales forecast for 2018, of which 80% will be contributed by KLIA," Nazli said.

Out of its 68% sales contribution from DF last year, he said a third of them were from its Chinese passengers who opt only for the trusted brands. Apparently, some 20% of these purchases are then resold in the Chinese website, Weibo, as the taxes for designer brands are very high in China.

Malaysia Airports general manager of commercial business Hani Ezra Hussin quipped, "You can expect to see high-end brands such as Coach, Victoria Secret, Kate Spade and Rolex at the international departure hall of klia2 by the first quarter of 2019 as we have recently awarded the tenders."

Nazli remarked, "We have our hands full as the commercial reset warrants individual treatments to all our international airports. In KLIA, our tenure efforts are aimed at maximising footfalls and increasing customers' expenditure. As such, our commercial offerings are consolidated with clear sightlines and accessibility."

At both KLIA and Langkawi International Airport, he said a food court would be







incorporated, among other things, which are aimed at increasing passengers and footfalls into these two destinations.

Another key component to its commercial reset strategy is its latest leasing strategy and formats. Nazli said, "Our current model of high fixed rent, early capital expenditure (capex), high revenue sharing and standard tenure is geared towards more growth focus with performance targets and shared goals.

"It is done via selective and open tender, direct negotiations for standard tenancies, master concessions and package deals within and across the airports."

On how its commercial services division measures and paces itself for optimum growth, Nazli replied, "It is not about monetising but about consolidating. It is about taking a step back, looking at

ourselves and reformatting."

He reckoned that getting a lease or longer tenure for the next 10 years would enable them to have higher capex in the fast-changing retail landscape.

"We have also embarked on an airport benchmarking tour to learn from our peers and later validated it with an independent study." From the benchmarking study, Nazli said they discovered how the category compositions of high-yielding products at successful airports have helped to drive percentage rentals.

Meanwhile, he observed certain airlines are encouraging their passengers to check-in earlier these days. This has enabled the passengers to enjoy the exciting promotions and offerings at Malaysia Airports, which believes in providing joyful experiences for its passengers.

“ We are looking at a higher sales forecast for 2018, of which 80% will be contributed by KLIA ”

**MOHAMMAD NAZLI ABDUL AZIZ**  
Senior General Manager  
for Commercial Services  
Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad

# SkyTeam's New Metasearch Tool Speeds Up and Ease Bookings



**With the introduction of a new metasearch tool in September, customers booking flights through SkyTeam's website will find the process quicker and easier. SkyTeam, which represents 20 member airlines harnesses the full scope of its global network, showing real-time availability, schedule and pricing information across 1,074 destinations with clearly displayed results all at one place.**

Customers need to take only three simple steps in the website: Firstly the customer enters the dates of travel and itinerary in Find Flights on skyteam.com. Then, the metasearch aggregates all the flight options for the customer from the 20 member airlines, which are then all displayed on one page. Lastly, the customer selects the preferred trip from real-time price, schedule, availability, and routing, and is then redirected to the chosen airline's website to complete the purchase.

Kristin Colvile, SkyTeam's Chief Executive Officer said, "Find Flights is the most used online function for the millions of unique visitors to our site each year, the majority of whom tell us they want to book travel online

with ease. SkyTeam's latest technological innovation meets customers' needs by delivering a tool that simplifies searching for flights online while making it easier to earn Frequent Flyer miles by booking within our alliance".

Find Flights is one of a series of technology solutions provided by SkyTeam's new metasearch engine to enhance customers experience at every touchpoint.

In June, SkyTeam unveiled the SkyLink Digital Spine, which bridges technology differences between members to make it easier for customers to book ancillary products such as preferred seats across different airlines on one itinerary.

Another tool, SkyTeam Rebooking is helping customers at the airport to mitigate flight delays and cancellations. Meanwhile, SkyTeam's airport maps, available on the free SkyTeam app, are helping customers navigate airports, reducing stress and making their transfers smoother.

SkyTeam's 20 members are: Aeroflot, Aerolineas Argentinas, Aeromexico, Air Europa, Air France, Alitalia, China Airlines, China Eastern, China Southern, Czech Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Garuda Indonesian, Kenya Airways, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Korean Air, Middle East Airlines, Saudia, TAROM, Vietnam Airlines and XiamenAir.

For more information, visit [www.skyteam.com](http://www.skyteam.com)





# China Southern Airlines Features New Shenzhen-Kota Kinabalu Route

**Sabah, with its iconic mountain and beautiful beaches, is becoming a popular destination for China visitors. State Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Christina Liew said in September, they hope to achieve 500,000 tourists from China by the end of this year. Last year, there were 431,000 arrivals from China to this magnificent state in Borneo.**

Asia's largest carrier, China Southern Airlines (CSA), is now flying from Shenzhen to Kota Kinabalu, its second direct flight to Sabah after Guangzhou.

With the inaugural flight in September, there are now 98 weekly flights connecting Sabah and 10 Chinese cities.



"Today, we will launch our new route with 7 flights per week with Airbus 320, by providing full services on board," said CSA general manager for Malaysia Eric Wang.

"We believe that these new direct flights will give an additional lift to commercial trade

and tourism between both countries, and covering a wide range of tourism and cultural exchanges between Shenzhen and Sabah," he added.

For more information, please call 03 – 2163 9977

## Alaska Trials VR Experience

**In September, Alaska Airlines put on trial, a virtual reality (VR) experience for its first class cabin and becoming the first airline in North America to have the service on trial. The facility came with virtual reality headset as essential accessory.**

To achieve the service, the airline partnered with innovative French company Skylights to pioneer a new lightweight immersive

virtual reality headset. Wearing the headset together with noise cancelling headphones will provide similar experience of being in the cinema.

Alaska Airlines flies mostly regional routes in the United States, Mexico and Russia. Malaysian travellers on these routes with the airline may get to experience this in the first class cabin.

David Scotland, Alaska Airlines Manager of Inflight Entertainment and Connectivity said, "I'm really excited to see this technology

onboard. I was impressed with Skylight's Allosky headset early on as it's the smallest, lightest, and most stylish VR headset in the inflight entertainment market".

He added, "These trials will help us understand how comfortable our guests are using the technology, if they prefer it to our current offerings, and let our flight attendants share feedback about its impact to our inflight service flow".

For more information, please visit [www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com)



# Malaysia Airlines and Qatar Airways Increased Connectivity with Expanded Codeshare

**In September, Malaysia Airlines and Qatar Airways announced the expansion of their codeshare partnership, with increased destinations in Malaysia, Qatar, Indonesia, Australia and the United States of America.**

Under the new codeshare agreement, Qatar Airways code is placed on 19 Malaysia Airlines flights. Qatar Airways customers can now fly seamlessly on one booking reference to new Malaysian cities such as Kuantan, Kota Bharu, Miri and 10 other domestic cities in Malaysia. Passengers will also benefit through baggage check-in as well as other benefits such as frequent flyer miles accrual.

Conversely, Malaysia Airlines passengers can take advantage of Qatar Airways presence in the Americas, with the new codeshare extending to cities such as New York City, Miami, and Boston among others. Malaysia Airlines has placed its MH code on new destinations served by Qatar Airways.

Qatar Airways Senior Vice President for Asia Pacific, Mr Marwan Koleilat said, "Qatar Airways and Malaysia Airlines have been codeshare partners since 2001. This latest enhancement opens up access to new gateways, making it easier for our global travellers to visit Malaysia and experience its warm hospitality and rich culture. We are delighted to strengthen codeshare partnership and our **oneworld** relationship with Malaysia Airlines through this latest expansion".

Malaysia Airlines' Chief Revenue Officer, Ignatius Ong said, "We are delighted to announce the codeshare expansion with Qatar Airways which further strengthens our relationship with the **oneworld** Alliance. Through this codeshare, we will be able to offer additional destinations beyond Malaysia Airlines' current network to our customers with seamless connectivity to nine major cities in North America".

For more information, please visit [www.malaysiaairlines.com](http://www.malaysiaairlines.com).



# Cathay and Boeing Donate World's First 777 to Museum



**In September, Cathay Pacific and Boeing announced that they were donating the first-ever Boeing 777 airplane to the Pima Air & Space Museum in Arizona, which is one of the world's major aerospace museum.**

The donation acknowledged the iconic status of the aircraft as well as the role the two entities played in pioneering the popularity of the aircraft. The aircraft joined the Cathay Pacific fleet in 2000 and was retired in May 2018 after 18 years of service. During the period of service, the iconic 777-200 airplane (line number WA001 and registration B-HNL) operated 20,519 flights and recorded 49,687 hours of flying time.

Cathay Pacific Chief Executive Officer Rupert Hogg said, "As the world's very first 777, B-HNL holds a very special place in the history of both our airline and that of commercial aviation, and we are very pleased it will soon bring enjoyment to enthusiasts at its new home in Arizona".

Boeing Commercial Airplanes President and CEO Kevin McAllister said, "Cathay Pacific has been instrumental in the tremendous success of the 777 programme. The airline contributed greatly to the airplane's original design and has been one of the biggest ambassadors ever since".

For more information, please visit [www.cathaypacific.com](http://www.cathaypacific.com)



# Delta's Seamless Experience with First Biometric Terminal in the U.S.

**In September, Delta Air Lines, in partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), launched the first biometric terminal in the U.S. at Maynard H. Jackson International Terminal (Terminal F) in Atlanta.**

With Delta's investment at Atlanta's Terminal F, the world's busiest and most efficient airport, international customers traversing through the terminal will have a much more seamless passage through touchpoints. Malaysian passengers on international flights through the terminal will get to experience the new facility.

In the way the facility works, customers first enter their passport information when prompted during online check-in. Otherwise the option is available at the terminal after an initial passport scan and verification.

The customer then click 'Look' on the screen at the kiosk in the lobby, or approach the camera at the counter in the lobby, the TSA checkpoint or when boarding at the gate.

Thereafter, breeze through once the green check mark flashes on the screen. Travellers would still need to have their passports available and bring their passports when they travel internationally for use at other touch points during their trip.



Essentially, the facial recognition technology from curb to gate transforms the customer journey with seamless travel experience through the airport. The Delta Biometrics experience includes, check in at the self-service kiosks in the lobby, drop checked baggage at the counters in the lobby, serve as identification at the TSA checkpoint, board a flight at any gate in Terminal F, and, go through CBP processing for international travellers arriving into the U.S.

If customers do not want to participate, they could proceed normally, as they have always done, through the airport.

Gil West, Delta's COO said, "Launching the first biometric in the U.S. at the world's busiest airport means we're bringing the future of flying to customers travelling around the globe.

Customers have expectation that experiences along their journey are easy and happen seamlessly – that's what we're aiming for by launching this technology across airports touch points".

TSA Administrator, David Pekoske said, "The expansion of biometrics and facial recognition throughout the airport environment represents the next generation of security identification technology. TSA is committed to working with great partners like Delta, ATL and CBP on developing new capabilities like these".

In Malaysia, Lite Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd is the General Sales Agent (GSA) for Delta Air Lines.

For more information, please call 03 – 2282 4648



# Condor Airlines Affirms KLIA's Position as a Global Hub

**In the launch of Condor Airlines' inaugural flight, Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KUL) continues to maintain its position as one of the important global hubs. The arrival of the flight at 6.30am on 2 November 2018 from Frankfurt, Germany was attended by Deputy Minister of Transport, YB Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar; Deputy Minister of Tourism, Arts & Culture YB Tuan Muhammad Bakhtiar Wan Chik; Deputy Head of Mission and Charge D'Affairs of German Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Dr David Krivanek; and Chief Strategy Officer of Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad, Azli Mohamed.**

Condor Airlines is currently the only airline that is offering direct flights back and forth Germany and Malaysia. Its first landing here, makes Condor Airlines the 58<sup>th</sup> passenger airline to land on the shores of KLIA. For the flight, Condor Airlines operated its B767-300 aircraft from Frankfurt International Airport (FRA) which carried the Ambassador of Malaysia to the Federal Republic of Germany, Sarah Nava Rani Al Bakri Devadason as well as the Group Airlines Director of Customer Operations, Managing Director & Accountable Manager of Condor Airlines, Christian Schmitt.

Azli congratulated the new airline partner with his statement, "I am happy to share with you that KLIA has seen a tremendous growth with a 3.2% passenger growth as at September 2018 and is the 12<sup>th</sup> busiest airport in the world in terms of international passenger movements. Condor Airlines is Germany's second largest commercial airline and I am sure that it has had many pioneering moments in their history. Malaysia has often been Germany's primary trading partner among ASEAN countries. With this new three times a week direct flight service, we strongly believe that this will enable for both countries to further strengthen both the tourism and economy sector".



Tuan Muhammad Bakhtiar added, "With this new development, we can enhance our promotion of Malaysia in Germany and encourage the tour operators there to create Malaysian holiday packages for this market."

He also pointed out that, "To support this inaugural flight, we worked with the Sarawak Tourism Board to bring 7 media representatives from Germany on a familiarisation trip to Malaysia. They will be exploring Kuala Lumpur, Sabah, and Sarawak. Giving them this first-hand experience of Malaysia will enable them to get to know the country better and help to create more awareness of our unique offerings through media publicity".

On the other hand, Christian Schmitt stated, "Our flights from Kuala Lumpur to Frankfurt provide Malaysian and Southeast Asian travellers with varied opportunities to discover Europe and Frankfurt as one of the most important economic centres in Europe. Likewise, European travellers have the chance to discover beautiful Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia. By connecting two cities that are of the same importance for their respective regions, we can promote economic and cultural exchange - something we as an airline always particularly encourage".

Condor Airlines will be operating the KUL-FRA route three times a week on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday whereas the FRA-KUL route will be serviced three times a week as well on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

In Malaysia, AVIAREPS is the General Sales Agent (GSA) for Condor Airlines.

For more information, please call 03 – 2148 8033





# Air France Presents New Business Lounge at Paris-Charles De Gaulle

**Business Class passengers travelling with Air France passing through Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport now have the chance to experience the airline's new Business lounge located in Hall L of Terminal 2E at the airport.**

The brand new, futuristic lounge complete with superlative – exceptional – comfort and digital access has a total surface area of 3,200 sq m and a capacity of 540 seats. The completely redesigned lounge wows customers with several impressive features:

- “Le Balcon”, an exclusive space created by the designer Mathieu Lehanneur;
- A chic and elegant cocktail menu created by the Hotel Lancaster in Paris;
- The largest wellness area of all the Air France lounges;
- A Kids area to entertain children before their trip;
- The “Gourmet Table”, a catering area where a chef prepares the dish of the day in front of customers;
- Several other areas for a tailor-made experience.

On arrival at the lounge, guests can easily find their way around thanks to the interactive



plan at the entrance, and browse at all the services available.

Mathieu Lehanneur's captivating design of the bar area has such an ethereal quality that the 160 m area felt to have suspended between heaven and earth, where time seemed to stand still. Located at the heart of the new Air France Business Lounge is “Le Balcon”, a unique welcoming curvilinear lounge, sheltered overhead by a mesmerising golden mirrored ceiling.

The space includes a central bar and a succession of outlying theatrical box seats where passengers can relax and enjoy exquisite comfort prior to their flight. Each box is upholstered in blue velvet and embroidered with their respective numbers, and features a large sofa, a pedestal table and the latest digital connectivity. Mixing wood, marble, mirrorwork and light, “Le Balcon” is chic, immersive and digitally connected.

At the centre, the designer has integrated a LED screen into the parquet floor depicting an image of the sky. Throughout the day, this giant window of light imitates the variations of the day in real time.

At the heart of Le Balcon, every evening from 7pm to 9pm, Air France offers a selection of cocktails specially designed by the head bartender of the Hotel Lancaster in Paris. The creative cocktails are complemented by a rich and varied gourmet cuisine, as well as the dish of the day that is specially prepared by a chef in an open kitchen.

The elaborate wellness area, and the cosy and fun Kids area, complete the impressive range of facilities at the new Business lounge.

For more information, please call 03 – 7724 8181



# EVA Brings New Royal Laurel Class with Its First 787-9 Dreamliner



**In October, EVA Air took delivery of its first Boeing 787-9 at Boeing South Carolina in Charleston, being the first of this model in Taiwan's airline industry. The aircraft comes with brand new seats and a new look throughout. The new aircraft is configured for 304 seats in two cabins, with 26 in the Royal Laurel Class business and 278 in Economy.**

EVA President Clay Sun said, "The introduction of Boeing 787 Dreamliners is essential to our continuous pursuit of excellence. We have adopted a more modern, globalised design concept and combined it with Boeing's latest aviation technologies to create a luxurious cabin environment and provide all our passengers with an even more comfortable flying experience".

The latest generation of Royal Laurel Class seats was designed with Designworks, a BMW Group company. The design team used core concepts of space and brand to create tailor-made business class seats that



are seamlessly integrated into bespoke cabin environment. The team used mature, muted colours to enhance the sense of spaciousness and comfort.

EVA's new Royal Laurel Class cabins are 58.4 cm wide and reclined into flat-bed positions that can stretch out to as much as 193 cm long, enabling passengers to lie down and sleep on long-haul flights.

Design Director Johannes Lampela from Designworks' LA Studio said, "We wanted EVA's business class experience to be fresh and memorable for passengers and to make service, design and brand all work together. Our goal is to take a proven seat platform and make it unique to EVA. From privacy, service, interaction, stowage and amenities, we explored the holistic passenger experience".

For the Economy Class, EVA called upon Teague, Boeing Company's long-time working partner for complete redesign. It selected a colour palette that complemented shades used in Royal Laurel Class and created an elegant cabin.

Economy class seats are designed by RECARDO, the well-known German Automotive Seating company. It equipped seats with sophisticated leather headrests that adjust as much as 15cm from the top of the seatback to the highest position. It added customised neck supports with functions, allowing passengers the flexibility to adjust the angle in six directions. It also upgraded the IFE with 30cm HD touchscreen monitors at every seat, giving passengers more comfort and satisfying in-flight entertainment.

The airline operates seven weekly flights between KLIA and Taipei Taoyuan International Airport. With a stop-over at Taipei, EVA Air provides Malaysian travellers one of the best ways to get to various parts of the world. The improved cabins with the new aircraft further elevates one's travel experience.

For more information, please call 03 - 2162 2981





# Sama-Sama Treated MotoGP Guests with Deepavali Enchantments



**In early November, the 2018 Shell Malaysia Motorcycle Grand Prix coincided with Deepavali celebrations, which became a treat for the MotoGP guests at Sama-Sama Hotel KL International Airport.**

As with other Malaysian festivals, Sama-Sama Hotel makes it a point to celebrate with the adherents of beautiful decorations. Being a multi-cultural country, these celebrations happen intermittently throughout the year and each is meaningful to the people concerned.

Deepavali is the Hindu Festival of Lights that symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. The decorations are usually exuberant, bright and colourful.

The hotel was beautifully decorated in a fusion of Deepavali creations with candles lit around colourful rangoli artworks known as 'Kolam', specially made as the mainstay in welcoming guests to the hotel together with chequered flags themed decorations to celebrate the Hotel's hosting of the MotoGP teams.

Acting General Manager Sundra Kulendra said, "Proudly Malaysian, it's a way for us to glorify the Malaysian culture during international events such as MotoGP. Keeping true to our brand promise of making meaningful connections, having a merger of the festivals and a well-known international event allows each of the hotel staff the opportunity to act as mini-ambassadors of Malaysia".

One of the guests, Yulia, 25, a Russian flight attendant said having cultural festivity decorations is perfect for tourism and hospitality businesses, and to educate travellers about the country.

She continued, "I like it. Being in the clouds up in the sky most of the time, Malaysia has been one of my favourite stopovers. Having decorations celebrating the festivities is important for me as I feel that I am connecting with a country's tradition and culture".

Strategically located beside the main terminal building of KLIA, Sama-Sama Hotel coincidentally acts as the first touchpoint for many travellers passing through Malaysia.

## Happy deepavali



In conjunction with the 2018 MotoGP, Sama-Sama Hotel also had a cultural show at the Grand Lobby featuring the Malay Gamelan as a welcoming treat for guests. The five piece ensemble serenaded the hotel guests with soothing melodies throughout the weekend of the MotoGP.

# Malaysia Airports Ups Their F&B Game



**On 8 November, Malaysia Airports launched their annual one-month long KULinary campaign with KULinary Top Food Outlet Award 2018, in recognition of their Top 20 food outlets at KL International Airport (KLIA Main and klia2) for their outstanding performance in food quality and overall dining experience.**

For the third year running, Malaysia Airports collaborates with Fried Chillies, an independent and reputable Online Food Media Company to make anonymous reviews of more than 100 food outlets and evaluate not only the dishes served but also the total dining experience, which includes the ambience and restaurant services. With this dining discovery campaign, KULinary aims to highlight many hidden 'gems' that can be found in the airport for travellers and food lovers alike. From the 20 winning restaurants of the KULinary Top Food Outlet Awards, this year sees a new special category of Judges Choice awards being introduced.

Malaysia Airports' senior general manager for Commercial Services, Nazli Aziz, said, "We are proud to bring you our latest edition of KULinary campaign as it showcases our commitment in creating enjoyable dining experiences at airports as well as making airports a preferred destination for all food lovers out there. This campaign is also very much in line with our mission to future-proof the Total Airport Experience by raising the food & beverage (F&B) dining experience as it takes visitors through a culinary multi-sensory experience that blends the traditions of many cultures and influences".

In addition, "Through our Commercial RESET Strategy, we want to change the current perception towards airports – we want to promote airports not merely as transportation hubs but as destinations for everyone to enjoy. In terms of elevating the F&B footprint at the airport, it is in line with a significant trend, where eating is now the new shopping. Apart from meeting the expectations of our airport guests, our Commercial RESET Strategy also involves Business-to-Business (B2B) engagement, aimed at improving stakeholders' performance. To amplify exposure, we brought some of our past KULinary winners to the recent Malaysia International Gourmet Festival (MIGF) to enable them to showcase their dishes to international F&B players and prove that our airport cuisines are indeed at a world-class level", said Nazli.

On the other hand, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Fried Chillies, Mohd Adly Rizal said, "Judging this year's KULinary was both an exciting and challenging experience. We needed to ensure the Top Outlets serve only the best for travellers and visitors at the airport and we are glad that we discovered several hidden gems along the way too. Undoubtedly, KULinary has become a significant campaign for these food outlets in elevating their food and beverage game that helps airports, in this case KLIA and klia2, to create memorable experiences for everyone".

The five winners of the Judges Choice Award are Sama-Sama Express (klia2), Flight Club, Grandmama's, The Green Market and Bumbu Desa.



Meanwhile, the KULinary Top 20 Food Outlet Award 2018 in KLIA Main:

1. Coffee Sandwich Revival
2. Flight Club
3. Fukuya
4. Grandmama's
5. Mamak Nasi Kandaq
6. Nooodles
7. Old Town White Coffee
8. Pantai Timur
9. Sama-Sama Express

And in klia2:

1. Bibik Heritage
2. Bumbu Desa
3. Dim Sum
4. Little Café
5. Popeyes
6. Sama-Sama Express
7. Tampopo
8. The Bar
9. The Green Market
10. The Living Room
11. Wincaa



# Interview with Mr Takehito Fukui

## Managing Director, MFMA Development Sdn Bhd (MFMA)

Hailing from Japan, Mr Takehito Fukui is the current Managing Director of MFMA, Mitsui Fudosan (Asia) Malaysia Sdn Bhd and MFBCC Retail Mall Sdn Bhd in Malaysia. His role in Mitsui Fudosan and their Joint Venture with Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) in MFMA has been instrumental in the hugely successful Mitsui Outlet Park KLIA Sepang (MOP). Airlink was provided the opportunity to find out why the outlet mall has done so well.

### The final phase of MOP development is to be completed by 2021, how were you and the company able to achieve such a feat?

We opened the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase of MOP in 2015 with 130 stores, and launched the 2nd Phase in 2018 with another 70 stores. Now, it is the largest outlet mall in Southeast Asia (SEA) with a total of 200 stores. For an outlet mall, it has the perfect location. Firstly, it's only an hour driving distance from the Kuala Lumpur (KL) city centre, while offering prices at a significant discount. At the same time, it's close enough to the KLIA and klia2 terminals, also allowing easy access for airport passengers. This project site has been highly evaluated by Mitsui

Fudosan, Commercial Department since the beginning stage of our SEA expansion.

Because of our extensive experience and wherewithal

in developing outlet malls, we have been successfully awarded in the land bidding competition, held by MAHB in 2012. After which, we set up a joint venture company with MAHB to drive the project. The joint venture company – MFMA is 70% owned by Mitsui Fudosan, 30% owned by our partner MAHB.

An outlet mall is a place where manufacturers offer their excess inventory or damaged stock at a low price. Usually stores are operated by brand owner or authorised distributor, so customers are able to buy first class products with a good price from a trusted source.

However, to avoid 'cannibalisation' from the tenant's full price store, a good distance from the city centre is necessary for outlet business. So again, the project's location, visibility and accessibility are excellent for our outlet mall.

After the opening, we have received millions of customers and the sales are increasing.

### What were the ideas and driving factors behind the inception of MOP?

Based on our investigation, Malaysia's retail market is rather mature and plenty of brands need an outlet to clear their stocks. In addition, their income level is quite high. Thus, the population who can afford luxury goods are large enough; hence we felt that an outlet business could be successful here. Before our opening, there was no proper outlet mall in KL. At that time, we were quite confident that by using our expertise, we could make the outlet attractive for both local customers and tourists.

The development was conducted and completed by the Mitsui Fudosan commercial department. The building design features tropical resort theme with a two-story enclosed structure. It is fully air-conditioned on account of the tropical climate, creating a comfortable shopping space. Our tenants have a wide variety including leading luxury brands like Ermenegildo Zegna, Hugo Boss, Bally, Ralph Lauren; international brands like Hackett, Oakley; sports brands like Nike, Adidas, Puma, Under Armour; accessory brands like Swarovski; watch brands like G-Shock, Citizen; and other brands like Royal Selangor and Lego. For F&B, we offer international cuisines including Thai, Chinese and Japanese.

### How has the response of Malaysians been for Japanese food and culture?

We believe Malaysians are increasingly interested in Japanese culture and food. In 2007, only 100,000 Malaysian tourists visited Japan. Since then, the number has

increased to 440,000 in 2017, more than 4 times compared to 2007. More and more Malaysians have tested authentic Japanese food and experienced Japanese culture in Japan, bringing good news back home, in turn igniting sparks of curiosity of their compatriots. As a Japanese developer, we hope Malaysian people can enjoy Japanese product, food and culture to its fullest.

### Do you have any other ongoing projects in Malaysia? If so, how do you foresee their performance?

At the moment, Mitsui Fudosan is conducting the development of Bukit Bintang City Centre project, located at the centre of KL city. It's a mixed-use development integrating office buildings, apartments, hotels and a retail shopping mall. Our company is developing the centrepiece of this project – the retail mall. We are the major shareholder, while our partners, Eco World, UDA and EPF are holding a minor share. The name of the retail mall will be "LaLaport" which is a brand name we use for our shopping malls in Japan. We plan to make it a new lifestyle mall for people to relax and enjoy. We are aiming for the grand opening to take place in 2021.

### What are your hopes and vision for MOP as Managing Director?

It has been 3 years after the opening of MOP and we have recently completed the renewal with our Phase 1 tenants. We are proud that both tenants and customers are happy with our performance. In the future, we will continue to focus on bringing good and strong brands, organising events and promotions to satisfy local and tourist customers. Our target is to become an outlet mall loved and received by more and more customers.

### Your collaboration with MAHB has brought many fruits. Do you foresee any further collaboration with them on future projects?

We have had wonderful achievements in our collaboration with MAHB. We are holding the major share as well as being in charge of the main development. In the area of getting approval from the authorities, Mitsui and MAHB are working together very closely. We are proud to say that we have contributed significantly to the development of this airport area. We certainly hope to continue our collaboration with them.

### Life must be very hectic for the Managing Director of MFMA. How do you spend your free time?

I travel a lot for business trips, even during the weekends. But when I have my free time, I like to walk around shopping malls. I also enjoy golfing and reading to refresh my mind.





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