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Routes Asia 2025, Another Impactful Event for Malaysia Airports

Routes Asia 2025 held in Perth, Australia, which concluded on 27 March, saw air connectivity expanded across the Asia Pacific (APAC) as this premier three-day aviation event brought together over 110 airlines and 160 airports from the region's route development community.

Malaysia Airports, which met with 18 targeted airlines to strengthen its network and connectivity, aimed to increase the number of airlines operating in Malaysia, particularly at its flagship Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), the country's busiest gateway.

Its Senior General Manager of Strategy, Megat Ardian Wira Mohd Aminuddin said the company also engaged in invaluable networking with both existing and potential airlines as well as gained insights into the latest market trends and challenges affecting the aviation industry from the conference.

Featuring international experts not just in aviation but also in tourism, the conference also saw Megat Adrian as one of the panel speakers in the session on Airport Development and Sustainable Design: Shaping Airports for Future Demand and Environmental Considerations.

According to Routes' Director of Events, Steven Small, airports in the previous host destinations experienced network growth of about 5.7% higher within three years.

"The event has made, and continues to make, a significant impact on the region's air connectivity. Over half of the region's air services in the past three years have been linked to meetings at the event."

Langkawi, the jewel of Kedah and host venue of Routes Asia 2024, not only posted higher total tourism numbers of 2.9 million last year and generating improved receipts of RM7.03 billion, but also saw its international arrivals of 1.7 million tourists, with tourism receipts of RM5.16 billion, the highest in 2024. They surpassed the 2018 records of 1.54 million international arrivals which brought RM4.64 billion to its coffers.

At Routes Asia 2025, Malaysia Airports' entry for the event's Marketing Awards saw KLIA and Penang International Airport (PEN) being shortlisted under the categories of more than 20 million passengers per annum (mppa) and 5 to 20 mppa capacity respectively.

Data from the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia on 19 January 2025 showed that PEN has risen to become the country's second busiest airport last year.

With aircraft movements totalling 64,507, PEN solidified its status as a key aviation hub for both tourism and business in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia in the post-pandemic era.

PEN's passenger volume totalled 7.67 million in 2024, up 13% from 6.97 million passengers in 2023. PEN also witnessed another milestone with its increased weekly flight frequencies of 565 597 in 2024, up from 523 in 2023. International flights rose 17.37% 21.2% higher to 304 314 flights a week in 2024 from 259 in 2023.

Two Airport Service Quality Accolades in 2024



KL International Airport (KLIA), which retained its top spot with 366,895 aircraft movements, has achieved a near-perfect score of 4.99 out of five, securing a spot among the world's top 10 airports in Airports Council International (ACI)'s 2024 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey for airports handling over 40 million passengers annually.

This recognition validates KLIA's ongoing efforts and commitment towards service excellence, innovation and operational efficiency in reinforcing its position as a leading global aviation hub.

Highlighting KLIA's consistent placement in the ASQ top 10 airports since 2022, Malaysia Airports Managing Director, Dato' Mohd Izani Ghani said this is a testament to the airport's commitment to continuous improvement to enhance passenger comfort and convenience.

"KLIA's strong performance reflects our focus on enhancing airport experience through innovative solutions and improved facilities. We also like to thank KLIA's dedicated airport community and stakeholders who are the driving force behind our progress."

Among the key elements that contributed to KLIA's success are a welcoming ambience, expanded seating area, upgraded charging stations as well as fast and reliable Wi-Fi.

Passengers also rated highly the airport's exceptional cleanliness, particularly in its washrooms, which enhances the travelling experience.

Beyond its amenities, KLIA's dedicated staff were praised for their warmth and attentiveness, showcasing Malaysia's hospitality at its best.

In preparation for Visit Malaysia Year 2026, KLIA is undergoing key upgrades to further improve passenger experience. These include expanded terminal seating, refurbished prayer rooms besides providing next-generation baggage trolleys.

Travellers can also look forward to improved buggy services, self-service check-in and bag drop kiosks. Likewise, new family-friendly features such as the Orangutan Playground Kids Zone, wheelchairs, baby strollers, heritage walls, and family parking lots.

He added, "With our new shareholders placing strong

emphasis on service excellence, we are confident these efforts will further elevate our standing in future global rankings."

ACI's ASQ serves as the leading, data-driven benchmark for airport excellence, measuring passenger satisfaction across key areas such as safety, services, facilities, and cleanliness.

The ASQ Awards, based on real-time passenger feedback, assess crucial aspects of the airport experience, including efficiency, cleanliness, comfort, and overall service quality.

Additionally, Langkawi International Airport (LGK) was named the Best Airport in APAC in the 2 to 5 million passengers category at the 2024 ASQ Awards by ACI for the fourth consecutive time.

LGK's consistent success reflects Malaysia Airports' strategic efforts to optimise passenger experience, accelerate digital transformation and uphold world-class standards.

Malaysia Airports Managing Director, Dato' Mohd Izani Ghani said, "This award reaffirms our commitment to creating exceptional airport experiences at key gateways such as LGK, which plays a vital role in driving Malaysia's tourism and economic growth.

"As a UNESCO Global Geopark and premier travel destination, Langkawi attracts millions of visitors, supported by strong air connectivity and government initiatives.

"We will continue investing in facility upgrades, digital innovations, and strategic partnerships to further enhance service excellence and strengthen Malaysia's aviation landscape."

Congratulating LGK's outstanding commitment to passenger satisfaction, ACI World Director General Justin Erbacci remarked, "Your airport is one of the best airports globally for customer experience—as chosen by passengers themselves. Keep raising the standards!"

In 2024, LGK recorded 2.5 million total passenger movements, reflecting a 1.8% increase from 2023. This growth was largely driven by a 27.9% surge in 280,601 international passenger traffic.

LGK currently serves eight airlines operating 198 scheduled flights weekly.

Dato' Mohd Izani remarked, "Looking ahead, LGK is poised to further expand its connectivity by leveraging the extensive global presence of Malaysia Airports' new shareholders.

This enhanced network potential positions LGK to attract new airline partners and unlock additional travel markets, ultimately reinforcing the island's status as a premier travel destination."

Through continued investments and collaboration, Malaysia Airports remains committed to strengthening the airport's role as a pivotal gateway to Malaysia's thriving tourism sector.



Green Light for Capital A to Complete Restructuring

Capital A Berhad's proposed Regularisation Plan has been approved by Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad, marking a significant step towards the company's exit from Practice Note 17 (PN17) status and setting the stage for a stronger and more sustainable future.

With the approval granted on 7 March 2025, Capital A is now poised to finalise the implementation of its plan, including capital reduction to set off accumulated losses and the reorganisation of its business units to unlock long-term value for shareholders.

"This is not just about numbers or regulatory approval, it is about resilience, proving that we can come back again, stronger than ever. The best is yet to come!"

TAN SRI TONY FERNANDES
Chief Executive Officer
of Capital A

Capital A, the parent company of AirAsia Malaysia (AK), recently announced it will relocate the low-cost carrier's domestic flights after seven months of operating at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (SZB) in Subang, Selangor to KL International Airport Terminal 2 (KLIA T2) on 7 April 2025.

This is to optimise the airline's capacity, improve its operational efficiency and elevate overall guest experience.

Dato' Captain Fareh Mazputra, Chief Executive Officer of AK said, "Given the increasing demand for our Kota Kinabalu and Kuching routes, consolidating our services at KLIA T2 is the optimal way forward.

"While SZB provided valuable proximity and easier access for city dwellers, KLIA T2's infrastructure supports connectivity needs at scale, particularly during peak travel periods.

It also offers the capacity required for continued growth as we mount more flights to serve the rising demand across East Malaysia routes.

DATO' CAPTAIN FAREH MAZPUTRA
Chief Executive Officer
of AirAsia Malaysia (AK)

He added, "To ensure a smooth transition, we will continue operating from SZB through the high-demand Eid week and also put in place comprehensive Service Recovery Options, including complimentary flight changes, credit accounts, or full refunds, to minimise any inconvenience.

"KLIA T2 has been instrumental in strengthening Kuala Lumpur's position as a leading regional mega hub, and we are proud to reinforce our presence there as the dominant carrier.

According to Capital A's financial year (FY) results for 2024, its total fleet stood at 224 aircraft, with 187 available for operations, including spares. This contributed to 63 million passengers carried in FY2024, up 28% year-on-year.

Moving in tandem with its aggressive expansion, AirAsia Aviation Group Ltd said it will be receiving 14 new aircraft deliveries in 2025, of which four are directly from aircraft manufacturer Airbus and the rest from lessors.

For more information, visit www.capitala.com



Dubai-based flydubai has been named Airline of the Year for the second time besides receiving the Trailblazer Award for Outstanding New Service Launch at the recent Aviation Achievement Awards 2025.

Francois Oberholzer, Chief Financial Officer at flydubai said, "We are dedicated to innovation and our focus remains on being customer-centric."

He was joined by Rashid Albashri, Vice President of Cargo at flydubai, and Diana Sinclair, Vice President of Inflight Experience at flydubai, who received the awards on the carrier's behalf at the awards ceremony held in Dubai.

The carrier recently reported its strongest annual results in its 15-year history with a record-breaking profit before tax of US\$674 million for the year ending 31 December 2024.

The new milestone was driven by the strength of flydubai's diverse network of 131 destinations across 55 countries, 97 of which were underserved markets, as well as its strong and agile business model.



"Its business model is built on solid foundations and an unwavering commitment to supporting Dubai's economic and tourism vision.

Forging invaluable air links to underserved markets has supported Dubai's thriving aviation hub, making Dubai one of the most accessible and connected cities in the world.

HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH AHMED SAIED AL MAKTOUM
Chairman
of flydubai

flydubai carried 15.4 million passengers in 2024, up 11% compared to 2023. Overall capacity, measured in Available Seat Kilometres, rose by 10%, driven by increased demand for both business and leisure travel around its network.

Its business class recorded an 18% uptake across its network, carrying almost half a million passengers in 2024.

Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai said, "Our record-breaking financial performance, for the fourth consecutive year, demonstrates our continued ability to grow our business and navigate difficult economic and geopolitical challenges through forward planning, drawing on our strength to adapt and evolve to the changing market and customer needs.

"Our collaborative approach with our key stakeholders and agility remain key drivers to this success, as well as the collective effort of our people who have been instrumental to it."

Served by 88 aircraft, with an average fleet age of 5.3 years, he added that flydubai will receive 12 new Boeing 737s in 2025 to continue growing its fleet, replace some of its existing aircraft and support its network expansion plans.

For more information, visit www.flydubai.com



Off-Airport Check-in Service in Makkah for Qatar Airways' Hajj and Umrah Passengers

Qatar Airways (QR) has partnered with Saudi Ground Services (SGS) to introduce off-airport check-in service in Makkah or also known as Mecca in the Western world, providing Hajj and Umrah passengers undertaking this sacred journey with a seamless and hassle-free travel experience.

Effective since 1 March 2025, this new service offers full check-in formalities, boarding pass issuance and baggage collection at Makkah Clock Royal Tower, a Fairmont Hotel.

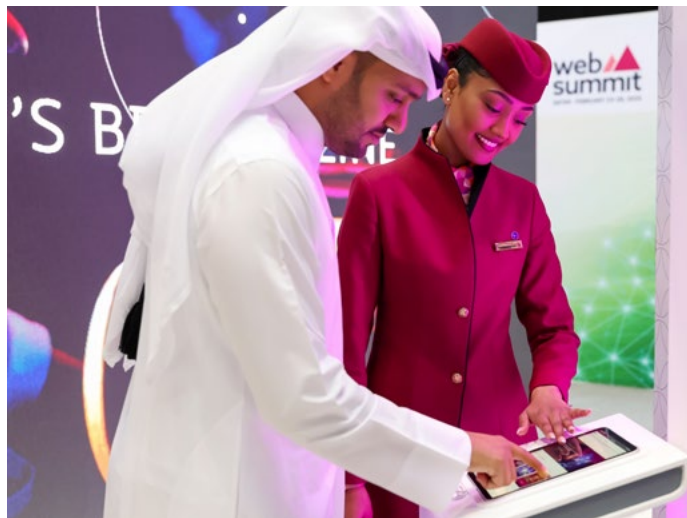
This service is part of QR's award-winning offerings to provide the highest levels of comfort, reliability, and care for passengers travelling from Jeddah (JED) in Saudi Arabia, where it has 35 weekly flights to this gateway for pilgrimages to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

As the World's Best Airline voted by Skytrax in 2024 for an unprecedented eighth time, QR remains committed to elevating every aspect of the passengers' travel experience.

As the sponsor of the recent Web Summit Qatar for the second consecutive year, the airline debuted revolutionary travel artificial intelligence (AI) tools and announced its four-year commitment as the Official Lifestyle and Travel Partner of this annual event.

Its Sama's AI Booking, a world-first AI booking experience with Sama, makes booking personalised as this AI-powered digital human cabin crew interacts with the travellers through voice and chat on flight queries.

Available around the clock, Sama can even curate a tailored itinerary or plan your family trip, offering family-friendly destination suggestions and refine your itinerary in real time.



Following Dream Destination – The Pulse, another of QR's innovations successfully launched at Web Summit Qatar 2024, the latest version of this world's first AI promptless experience can now interpret user emotions to assist travellers in discovering their ultimate holiday destination.

This significant advancement into the emerging field of emotionally aware AI complements previous innovations launched within the QR's digital ecosystem and in its Privilege Club loyalty programme.

Via QR's AI Menu Recommendations, another industry first by the airline, Sama can assist its business class passengers with recommendations, presenting the chef's specials and curating specific dietary meals, on the onboard menu before their flight by using QR application.

For more information, visit qatarairways.com



First Direct Route from Xinjiang to Malaysia by China Southern Airlines

The recent maiden arrival of China Southern Airlines' (CZ) flight from Urumqi (URC), the capital of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, with a stopover in Guangzhou (CAN) to Kuala Lumpur (KUL), marks a significant step forward in strengthening tourism and enhancing connectivity between Malaysia and China.

Operating twice weekly on Boeing 737 with 152 seating capacity, plans are afoot to expand this route to daily flights in April 2025.

Besides complementing CZ's existing five-times weekly CAN to KUL service, this new route from Northwestern China also allows Malaysians to connect to other parts of China.



IndiGo's Roadmap for Future Growth

India's biggest airline with a record market share of 65.2% in January 2025, IndiGo (6E) expects its long-term outlook to remain intact, led by its traditionally strong domestic network and increased international network expansion.

With strong passenger growth projected for the first three months of 2025, 6E management expects robust demand to continue in the coming months.

InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, the low-cost carrier's (LCC) operator, plans to add an aircraft a week until 2030, taking its total capacity to over 600 units.

Plans are afoot to expand 6E's international capacity from 25% to 40% by its financial year (FY) 2030 and to

According to OAG data, CZ remains the leader among the top 10 domestic airlines in China with 10.2 million seats in March 2025, enjoying a 15% share of the domestic capacity.

CAN is also the fourth busiest Chinese city by airline capacity with 3.1 million seats in March 2025.

Its international capacity to Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan has been recovering most strongly, OAG added.

Lauding CZ's new URC to KUL route with a stopover to CAN, Datuk Manoharan Periasamy, Director General of Tourism Malaysia said it elevated Malaysia's appeal as a top-choice travel destination, underscoring the country's commitment to strengthening its global tourism footprint and providing seamless travel experiences to visitors worldwide.

Aimed at reinforcing the relationships with the industry players in CAN and beyond, Tourism Malaysia's first consumer event, held from 7 to 9 March 2025 in CAN since the COVID-19 pandemic, represents part of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture's ambitious goal to attract seven million tourists from China in 2026.

Apart from maintaining the momentum leading up to Visit Malaysia 2026, this event also aimed to position Malaysia as a top, safe, and attractive travel destination for this key Chinese market.

For more information, visit www.csair.com or call **+603-2163 9977**

enlarge the airline's fleet with widebodies and extra long range aircraft by FYs 2025 and 2026 respectively. This will allow the LCC to take more international and mid long-haul routes and position itself as a preferred airline for international travellers.

Earlier this year, 6E earned the recognition as the World's Youngest Aircraft Fleet 2025 for the third consecutive year by ch-aviation among airlines operating over 100 aircraft. This achievement highlights its commitment to operational efficiency and environmental responsibility.

Currently, it has a fleet of 437 aircraft serving over 125 destinations. The airline was also ranked fourth in Asia for having a modern and efficient fleet with an average age of 4.38 years.

6E's roadmap for FY 2030 includes plans to carry 118 million passengers in FY 2025, with double-digit growth and expansion to 14 new domestic and international destinations in FY 2026

Meanwhile, India's Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Murlihor Mohol said 6E, which currently employs 5,463 pilots, will require over 11,000 over the next decade.

Armed with strong cash reserves, the airline will be able to invest in new ventures, digital transformation, global expansion and its people.

For more information, call **+603-2145 8533** or visit www.golndigo.in



Malaysia Airlines Teams Up with Hong Kong Tourism Board

Malaysia Airlines (MH) and Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) have joined forces in the national carrier's Time For destination campaign, inspiring travellers to explore Hong Kong's dynamic mix of modern attractions, rich cultural heritage and stunning cityscapes via its 14 times weekly direct flights from Kuala Lumpur.

Liew Chian Jia, HKTb Regional Director of Southeast Asia said Hong Kong, which welcomed 405,508 arrivals from Malaysia in 2024, is enhancing its appeal as a Muslim-friendly destination.

She told the media and travel agents in Kuala Lumpur that Hong Kong has 153 halal-certified and Muslim-owned eateries and 55 Muslim-friendly hotels as of 7 March 2025.



Additionally, three attractions and two MICE venues have obtained the accreditation rating for their Muslim-friendly services and facilities.

In the Global Muslim Travel Index 2024, Liew added that Hong Kong ranked second in terms of safety for Muslim women travel and fourth among the top 20 non-Organisation of Islamic Cooperation destinations.

Dersenish Aresandiran, Chief Commercial Officer of Airlines from Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) said, "We are excited to showcase Hong Kong's vibrant attractions while delivering enhanced value to our customers with tailored products and exclusive promotions."

Strengthening its role in enhancing regional connectivity across key markets, MAG recently announced the acquisition of 30 new aircraft from The Boeing Company as part of its fleet modernisation strategy.

The order includes 18 Boeing 737-8 and 12 B737-10 powered by the CFM International's LEAP-1B engines, with an option to purchase 30 more B737 aircraft circa 2027.

The introduction of the B737-10 marks a significant milestone as it will be the first narrowbody aircraft in MH fleet to feature lie-flat business class seats, aimed at elevating the premium travel experience on regional routes.

With these new additions, MAG will gradually phase out the older generation B737 800 aircraft operated by MH, aiming for a modernised narrowbody fleet of 55 B737-8 and B737-10 aircraft by 2030.

"These next-generation aircraft offer greater fuel efficiency, extended range and enhanced passenger comfort. They also enable us to future-proof our fleet, ensuring we remain competitive, adaptable and well-positioned for sustainable growth."

DATUK CAPTAIN IZHAM ISMAIL
Group Managing Director
of Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG)

MAG has an existing order for 25 B737-8 aircraft via a long-term lease with Air Lease Corporation, with 11 already delivered and the rest scheduled for delivery by 2027.

The Group's current fleet of 113 aircraft includes 42 B737 800s under MH and five under Firefly (FY).

For more information, visit www.malaysiaairlines.com



Busy 2025 for Etihad Airways with New Route Launches

Etihad Airways (EY) recorded a strong performance for its full year 2024 results with its US\$476 million of profit after tax (PAT) driven by US\$5.7 billion of passenger revenue and US\$1.1 billion of cargo revenue alongside significant operational efficiency improvements.

This was the third consecutive year of profitability for the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, with its PAT more than three times that of 2023.

EY carried 18.5 million passengers in 2024, a 32% increase from 2023, reflecting sustained demand across its network of 80 destinations.

This growth was supported by a 28% year-on-year (YoY) increase in Available Seat Kilometres and an improved passenger load factor (LF) of 87% compared to 86% in 2023.

EY's latest traffic results for February 2025 saw 1.6 million passengers carried, up from 1.4 million YoY, from its operating fleet of 98 aircraft.

"Our passenger numbers in February saw a strong 14% growth compared to the same period last year as we continue to be among the world's fastest-growing airlines."

"As our capacity continues to grow, we maintained a robust passenger LF of 89% year-to-date as we prepare for a busy 2025 with the launch of 14 new routes."

ANTONOALDO NEVES
Chief Executive Officer
of Etihad Airways (EY)

They include Southeast Asian destinations such as Chiang Mai and Krabi in Thailand, Medan in Indonesia and Phnom Penh in Cambodia.

He added, "I am delighted to report continued growth in guest approval, with February setting another new record for customer satisfaction."

EY's largest-ever approved retrofit programme in 2024 is expected to further elevate cabin comfort and inflight experience, among other things.

Leveraging artificial intelligence to boost productivity, the airline's dedicated premium call centre managed to deliver faster and more personalised service for premium travellers.

Over 200 enhancements were also made last year to EY's website and app to further improve the guest experience, resulting in its loyalty programme, Etihad Guest, reaching a milestone of 10 million members.

Meanwhile, EY's Abu Dhabi (AUH) to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) was among its top 30 busiest long-haul routes in 2024, with a 6.5 Market Outlook and eXpansion Index (MOXI) score, having gained 101,000 segment passengers and maintaining 100% share.

Its other top routes were led by AUH to Phuket (HKT) with a MOXI score of 7.2 followed by Bangkok (BKK) and Jakarta (CGK) with a MOXI score of 7.1 and 6.9 respectively, showing how significant its Middle East (ME) to Asia segment is with 34% market share after ME to Europe, which garnered 37% market share.

For more information, visit www.etihad.com



Emirates' Impact at ITB Berlin 2025

At the recently concluded ITB Berlin 2025, Emirates (EK) had a successful run with 11 strategic agreements signing with national tourist organisations (Austria and Malta), cruise liners and online travel agents.

The airline also held 270 high-level meetings and received during 6,000 visitors at its stand over the three-day event.

Additionally, EK showcased its latest-generation A350 business class seat and other cabin products, including the signature Onboard Lounge and Shower Spa as well as its sustainability initiatives, reinforcing the airline's commitment to the world's largest travel trade show.



Earlier, on the sidelines of Aviation Festival Asia 2025, Dr Nejjib Ben Khedher, Divisional Senior Vice President of Emirates Skywards and Ima Rahmaniar, Miles and Ancillary Group Head of Garuda Indonesia (GA) signed an agreement to expand their partnership to offer reciprocal loyalty benefits.

A joint loyalty programme, unlocking new benefits for the frequent flyer members of both carriers across their combined network of more than 200 destinations, was launched.



With more than 34 million members worldwide, Emirates Skywards members can earn and redeem Miles while travelling with GA across 37 destinations in the archipelago and to more than 15 destinations worldwide.

EK operates double daily flights to Jakarta and Bali in Indonesia with its Airbus A380 and Boeing 777 aircraft, connecting Indonesian customers to more than 140 destinations across six continents.

Its loyalty programme offers four tiers of membership - Blue, Silver, Gold and Platinum - where members can also earn Miles with partner hotels, car rentals, retail, lifestyle and more globally.

Miles' reward redemptions include flight tickets on partner airlines, flight upgrades, gift cards, hotel stays, hospitality at sporting and cultural events, tours, and money cannot buy experiences.

EK's loyalty programme was recognised as the World's Leading Airline - Rewards Programme at the World Travel Awards 2024, an accolade it won for the last 11 years out of 13 years. It also won the Best Earning and Redemption Ability at the 2023 Frequent Traveler Awards.

For more information, visit www.emirates.com



Batik Air Malaysia Plans for Increased Presence at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the government's Subang Airport Regeneration Plan, Batik Air Malaysia (OD) is seeking prompt cooperation from airline regulators to consider expediting the allocation of additional flight slots at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (SZB) in Subang, Selangor.

These regulators include the Ministry of Transport, Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia, Malaysian Aviation Commission and Malaysia Airports.

Supporting the government's efforts to transform SZB into a premier regional hub for both business and leisure

travellers, OD plans to expand its presence by increasing flight frequencies and launch more routes in the coming months.

OD Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Chandran Rama Muthy said, "SZB holds immense potential as a modern city airport. Facilitating this process would allow us to enhance connectivity, introduce more services efficiently and contribute to its continued development.

"OD is fully committed to its transformation. Our expanded presence will offer travellers greater choice besides strengthening Malaysia's aviation ecosystem."

Since taking to the skies in March 2013 with domestic flights in Malaysia, the airline has spread its wings to Asia, Australia, Central Asia and the Middle East, operating 1,400 weekly flights.

To boost travel between Australia and Malaysia, and expand access to other Southeast Asian countries, OD will be turning its seasonal flights to year-round services between Melbourne (MEL) and Kuala Lumpur (KUL), its other main hub.

Operating four-times weekly on the 377-seater Airbus 330-300, which has 12 business class and 365 economy seats, Airlink was informed that OD's MEL to KUL year-round service will start on 12 July.

Besides six A330-300 aircraft, OD fleet also includes 46 Boeing 737-8/800 NG aircraft. The airline carried 6.6 million passengers last year, up from 4.5 million in 2023.

For more information, visit www.batikair.com



Menzies Aviation Malaysia to Bring International Elements to Its Operations

A key part of the operations at KL International Airport (KLIA), United Kingdom-based Menzies Aviation Ltd's joint-venture (JV) ground handling company in Malaysia with MMAG Sky Services, is serving more than 30 flights weekly in 2025.

Its first customer is a private aviation company, MJets. Established in August last year, Menzies Aviation Malaysia was granted a 12-month ground handling licence from the Malaysian Aviation Commission (Mavcom) effective Nov 1, 2024 to deliver passenger, ramp and cargo services at KLIA.

Its JV partner, MMAG Sky Services, is a wholly owned subsidiary of MMAG Aviation Consortium Sdn Bhd, the

aviation arm of MMAG Holdings Bhd, a supply chain management company.

At the recent launch ceremony of Menzies Aviation Malaysia, Transport Minister Anthony Loke said, "Menzies Aviation is a company with a long history. We hope they can bring international elements to our aviation sector. We also look forward to their business growth here and the improved services they will bring."

Established in 1833, Menzies Aviation, whose services include air cargo management and aircraft fuelling, operates in over 265 airports across 55 countries, serving more than 500 customers globally.

Menzies Aviation Executive Vice President for Oceania and Southeast Asia, Darren Masters said the company would be investing in new equipment at KLIA to provide more consistency across its network.

On the expansion of its operations here, he said Malaysia stood out as one of the Tier 1 countries because of its good infrastructure, language capabilities, skilled workforce and the positive attitude of its people.

Menzies Aviation Group Chief Executive Officer, Phillip Joeinig said its Malaysian operation underscores the Group's determination to increase its presence in Southeast Asia while delivering high quality and safe aviation service standards.

For more information, visit www.menziesaviation.com



ASEAN Tourism Forum 2025: Building Bridges Across Borders

Having emerged as one of the world's most dynamic tourism markets, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) aspires to be a quality tourism destination offering a unique, diverse regional experience by 2025 via its commitment to responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development.

ASEAN is a regional bloc of 700 million people and it is expected that an ASEAN Leader's Declaration on Quality Tourism will be adopted at the 47th ASEAN Summit to be held this October.

With Malaysia as the ASEAN Chair this year adopting the theme, Sustainability and Inclusivity, ensuring that the values of being environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive are integrated into the economic and social initiatives of a broader collaboration among the 10 member countries takes on greater significance.

Hosting the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2025, which returned to Malaysia after it was first organised here in 1981, this annual event was earlier scheduled to be from 19 to 25 January at the proposed Forest City in Johor before its change of dates to 15 to 20 January.

The forum's theme this year is Unity in Motion, Shaping ASEAN Tourism Tomorrow.

“Events like this provide an invaluable opportunity to build bridges and strengthen ties across borders, aligning our collective efforts for a brighter tourism future.”

DATO SRI TIONG KING SING

Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture

A key component of ATF 2025, the ASEAN Travel Exchange (TRAVEX) took place at the Persada Johor International Convention Centre (JICC) from 15 to 17

January, participated by 221 sellers-cum-exhibitors showcasing the best of ASEAN tourism offerings, 323 buyers from 42 countries, as well as 100 foreign and local media from 35 countries.



Singapore Tourism Board had a destination update and networking session at the start of the three-day ASEAN Tourism Conference (ATC) 2025, which was held concurrently with TRAVEX.

With topics touching on tourism trends affecting the region, sustainable practices, artificial intelligence, and more, the conference was attended by over 250 participants, comprising policymakers, key industry leaders and academicians.

This year's TRAVEX and ATC were organised by the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA) in partnership with Tourism Malaysia, the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents and the Malaysian Association of Hotels.

ASEANTA President, Eddy Krismeidi said, “ATF 2025 demonstrated the power of collaboration in achieving remarkable results for ASEAN tourism,” adding that TRAVEX saw 10,000 business appointments conducted, fostering intra-ASEAN and global collaborations.

High-level Meetings

Besides Persada JICC, DoubleTree by Hilton Johor Bahru Hotel was the other venue used, mainly for tourism ministerial and national tourism organisation (NTO) high-level discussions.



They include the 61st ASEAN NTOs Meeting, 46th ASEAN Plus Three NTOs Meeting with China, Japan and South Korea, 28th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) and other related meetings, including with Russia for stronger tourism ties.

At the 61st ASEAN NTOs meeting chaired by Malaysia on 16 January 2025, the report said the ASEAN tourism sector showed 30.6% year-on-year growth in 2024, welcoming over 123 million visitors.

Reaffirming its commitments to the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016-2025, with 64% of its activities completed, the 28th M-ATM on 19 January 2025 discussed plans for 2026-2030 focusing on sustainability and resilience.

The meeting also proposed standardising ASEAN tourism performance metrics using visitor data to generate a more accurate and comprehensive analysis of its economic contributions.

To strengthen the growing ASEAN-Australia relationship over the past few years since the COVID-19 pandemic, Malaysia suggested establishing a structured ASEAN-Australia Tourism Mechanism to boost further growth, enhance visitor experiences and create investment opportunities in tourism infrastructure, among other things.

The formal adoption of this mechanism, which also aims to drive socio-economic recovery and cultural exchanges, is expected during the 29th M-ATM in January 2026.

During the 12th Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers on 20 January 2025, the discussion touched on air and maritime links, cruise tourism and sustainable tourism, with the preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of community-based tourism as key priorities highlighted by the ministers.

This year marks the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism, aimed at strengthening cultural ties and connectivity. To determine the connectivity gaps in ASEAN's second and third-tier tourist spots, the ASEAN NTOs will work through the ad-hoc task force on tourism and transport. India's US\$5 million support for the ASEAN-India Tourism Work Plan 2023-2027 was acknowledged during the meeting.

During ATF 2025, dialogues were also conducted with international tourism bodies such as the United States-ASEAN Business Council to discuss policy frameworks, share insights on best practices and explore new ways to strengthen regional tourism cooperation.



Meanwhile, four projects have been proposed to be implemented in 2025 using the ASEAN NTOs Fund. Among them is the development of a handbook for rebuilding rural tourism in ASEAN using regenerative tourism by Malaysia.

Other key priorities this year include developing the ASEAN Tourism Sectoral Plan 2026-2030, which will be done by the Philippines, the host of the next ATF, with support from the Asian Development Bank. This plan will be adopted at the 29th M-ATM next year.



Moving towards 2030, the ASEAN NTOs will address key challenges such as connectivity limitations and inadequate infrastructure affecting the tourism sector, a skilled labour shortage, climate change and sustainability concerns.

ASEAN member states are recommended to invest in modernising their transportation infrastructure and reskilling of manpower besides encouraging public-private partnerships for sustainable accommodation.

To prevent overtourism in the region, which exacerbates environmental issues, the ASEAN NTOs also united in calling for the implementation of an Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism.

Ensuring that tourism remains a driving force for prosperity and cohesion among its members, ASEAN will balance economic development with environmental stewardship and social equity under Malaysia's stewardship.



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