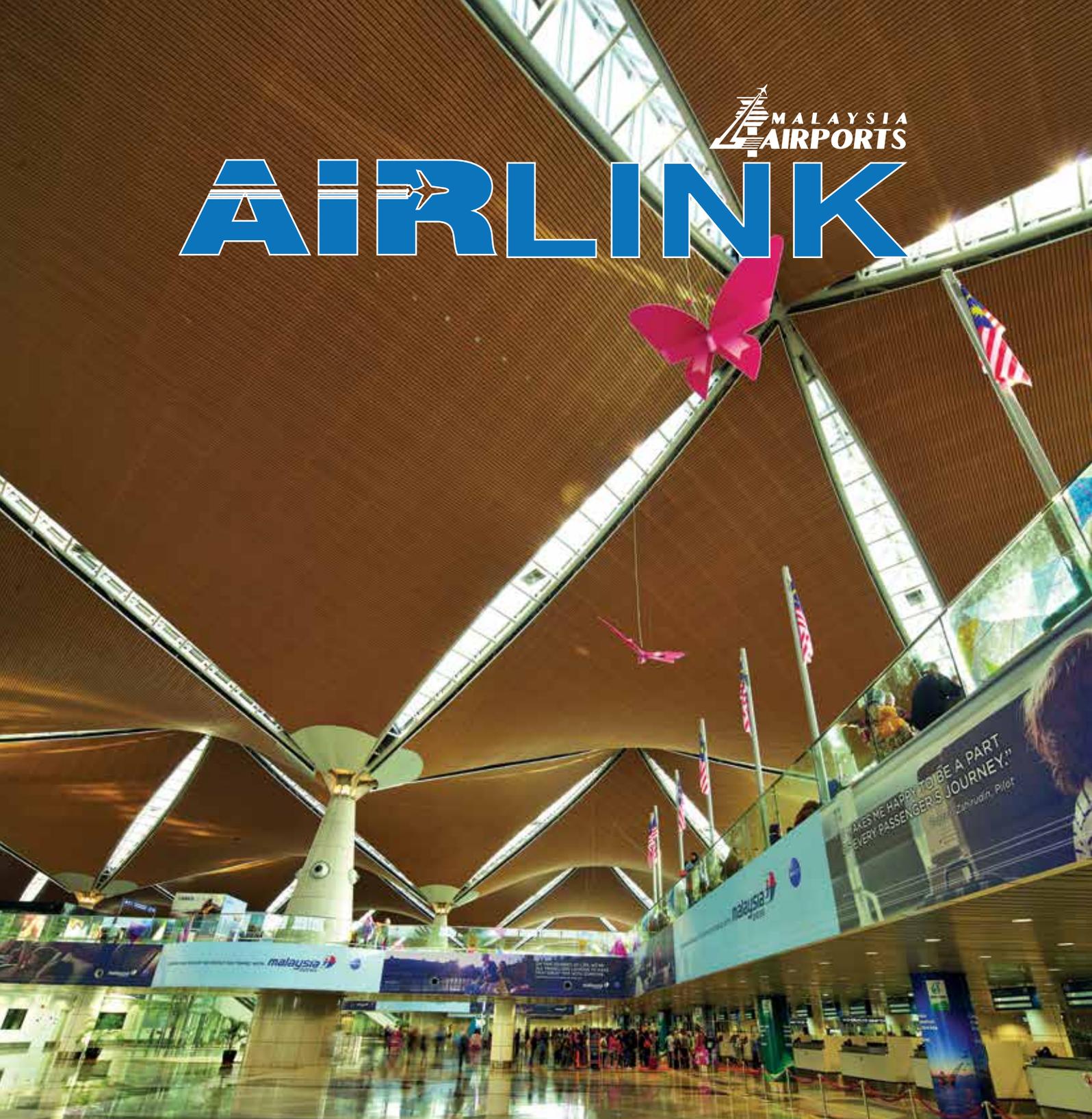


AIRLINK



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Airport 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 the airport operator is working hand in gloves with the country's tourism authorities to woo in more airlines and passengers ahead of the Visit Malaysia Year 2020 campaign. He also reiterates how the Group's focus areas for 2019 will be achieved via its strategic themes at its recent annual general meeting (AGM) with the shareholders.

Under the Joint International Tourism Development Programme (JITDP) with Tourism Malaysia, I am happy to announce that we signed a joint tactical campaign at the recent Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2019 with a new low-cost carrier, Air Arabia, which will be flying to KL International Airport (KLIA) on 1 July.

As the ninth airline from the Middle East, this will further enhance our flagship airport's position as the 12th busiest airport for international passengers, a recognition given to us by Airports Council International last year. Air Arabia's direct service will not only improve KLIA's connectivity but will also help to promote Malaysia as the preferred hub in this region.

As we have highlighted at our 20th AGM, for us to achieve our Group's focus areas in 2019, one of the strategic themes that we have identified is to be the Best-in-Class Hub. I am confident this new route development will help us achieve that as one of the features of a good hub is to have a good mix of full service and low-cost carriers. The other criteria include having high international flight frequencies, seat capacity and many international destinations.

This year, we are targeting 10 new airlines flying into Malaysia besides looking at more increased frequencies and new services. AirAsia, for instance, will be commencing its new seven times weekly Penang-Melaka new route in July while Qatar Airways will start its four times weekly Doha-Langkawi flights in mid-October. Meanwhile, Batik Air has extended its wings beyond Kuala Lumpur with its inaugural daily Jakarta-Penang flights on 29 May while Air Busan's maiden flights to Kota Kinabalu from Busan and Daegu in South Korea have landed respectively in May.

In comparison, we welcomed 13 new airlines last year with 50 new routes and 458 additional frequencies per week mounted by our airline partners, thanks partly to the attractiveness of our Airline Incentive Programme III.

These new airlines and the existing carriers contributed to the 43.6 million international passenger movements at KLIA in 2018. Of this, 84.5% of them were from Asia, which included countries such as Indonesia, China, Thailand, Singapore, India, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea. The remaining balance came from the Middle East (7.1%), Australia and New Zealand (6.1%) and Africa (0.2%). The Middle East market, which had shown positive growth, remains an important one for us, which you can read more about in our Airport Talk feature in this issue.

Another strategic theme identified for our Group's focus areas in 2019 is to deliver world-class service. In improving our service levels, we are doing major asset replacement exercises for our baggage handling system and aerotrains at KLIA, where we have also embarked on expanding its main terminal. All this are aimed at creating seamless and joyful experiences for our guests.

We are determined to meet the targets set under the Malaysian Aviation Commission's Quality of Service framework in our ongoing host culture transformation exercise so that we will live up to our objective of creating Happy Guests as a Caring Host. On this note, I would like to wish all our guests Selamat Hari Raya and safe travel during this festive season.



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Tapping Further Into the Affluent Middle East Market



Malaysia's 26th year of participation at the recent four-day Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2019 in Dubai marks its commitment to make the country a premier destination for tourists from the West Asia, whose market has rebounded by 25.3% to 315,937 arrivals last year.

The growth in its West Asian market was led by Oman (36.9%) followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KAS, 11.6%) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE, 9.7%). Tourist receipts also grew last year by 32.9% to RM3.1 billion from this region, which is referred to as the Middle East (ME) by the Europeans and Americans. They include countries such as Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Syria and Yemen.

Malaysia is not an unfamiliar destination to these countries, which have long established bilateral trade and tourism relationship with us. Continuing to show our keen interest in this market, the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi led a delegation comprising some 87 participants from 61 organisations from the public and private sectors to the ATM 2019 to promote our Visit Malaysia (VM) 2020 campaign.

The minister launched an Arabic version of Tourism Selangor Facebook page targeted at the West Asian market. According to Tourism Selangor Sdn Bhd promotion and event manager Khuzaimah Jamaluddin, the Selangor state government also took the opportunity to announce to the overseas travel agents at the ATM 2019 its Visit Sepang 2020 promotion, which will be held in conjunction with the VM2020.

She said the Sepang district has identified 66 tourism products and many activities together with the Sepang Municipal Council. Among them are the Sepang International Circuit, KL International Airport (KLIA), the Muslim-friendly Movenpick Hotel & Convention Centre KLIA and the Mitsui Outlet Park, KLIA, just to name a few of its attractions.

During the ATM 2019, Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi also launched in Arabic a Tourist Handbook 2019 about Malaysia and DalelMalaysia.com, a tourist digital platform about the country done by the Malaysian-based ASWAG magazine and Media Hub Connection.

Witnessing the signing of the Joint Tactical Campaign under the Joint International Tourism Development Programme by his ministry's marketing arm, Tourism Malaysia with Malaysia Airports and Air Arabia at the ATM 2019 on 30 April, he believed the joint promotion would help enhance more tourism traffic not only from Sharjah but also from Iraq, Egypt and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets, which comprised UAE, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Air Arabia, which will be starting daily direct Sharjah-Kuala Lumpur (KL) flights come 1 July, serves some 170 routes from four hubs in the UAE, Morocco and Egypt. Welcoming this move from the ME and North Africa's first and largest low-cost carrier (LCC) to our shores, the minister viewed the development as timely in improving Malaysia's connectivity, especially in the run-up to VM2020.

Concurring with him, Malaysia Airports Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Raja Azmi Raja Nazuddin said the new service by Air Arabia would provide passengers flying from Sharjah or via UAE to KLIA with more options and seats availability. Not only will it be the ninth airline from the ME operating at the KLIA, Air Arabia will also be operating its new Airbus A321 neo LR aircraft with a capacity of 215 seats for its Sharjah-KL route.

In fact, Air Arabia Group CEO Adel Al Ali admitted that the new aircraft has allowed them to expand its service to farther and newer destinations while remaining loyal to its low-cost business model, which it pioneered back in 2003.



Competing with the other existing Middle Eastern airlines that flies to Malaysia, Air Arabia's aircraft will be equipped with its new state-of-the-art cabin interior that was launched as part of its brand identity unveiled last October. Its new cabin interior includes new generation of seats providing extra comfort onboard while maintaining Air Arabia's known generous seat pitch.

In Malaysia, its general sales agent is Oscar Travel Services Sdn Bhd whose managing director Johnson Francis said a memorandum of understanding was signed between them in mid-January. "Upon receiving the approval from the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia in March, we started circulating the news about this new route and its sales campaign."

While Tourism Malaysia Director General Datuk Musa Yusof, one of the signatories of the Joint Tactical Campaign at the ATM 2019, said more details of the VM2020 will be announced in the third quarter of this year, he also reiterated that Malaysia remains as one of the safest destinations in Southeast Asia (SEA) for travellers from the ME besides its ample offering of halal and vegetarian food.

Consumer Travel Report 2018 Findings on the ME Market

Safety and security are crucial considerations for the Middle Eastern travellers as 57% of them travel with their families, according to the Consumer Travel Report 2018 – ME by Amadeus and Insight Out Consultancy DMCC.

In choosing flights, 31% of the respondents surveyed for this report said they selected the

airlines based on their reputation and safety records. Their preferred choice are airlines with direct flights.

Additionally, the report noticed that new airlines and increasingly new LCC routes are supporting the emergence of new destinations. LCCs are also more successful with business trips due to their focus on timing and cost.

Looking at the number of international passenger movements from the ME based on Malaysia Airports' annual report 2018, 6.1% out of the total 51,588,818 international passenger traffic received by its airports in Malaysia were from this region while the major contribution came from Asia.

While the number appears to be small, they make up a large part of the luxury market segment, which Malaysia is eyeing. According to the 13th edition of The Wealth Report 2019 by Frank Knight, the spread of private wealth across the ME is centred on the Gulf States with Saudi Arabia taking the top spot followed by UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain.

The number of millionaires from the ME has grown from 426,100 from 2013 to 459,937 in 2018. It is projected to increase to 541,311 by 2023, the report added. Among the existing ME airlines that fly into Malaysia are Emirates; Etihad Airways; Iraqi Airways; Mahan Air, a privately-owned airline from Tehran, Iran; Oman Air; Qatar Airways; Royal Jordanian and Saudia, Saudi Arabia's national airline, which connects Jeddah and Riyadh to KL.



Firefly Celebrated Its Return to Singapore via Seletar Airport

Firefly Airlines celebrated its return to Singapore with flight FY3126 which departed Skypark Terminal, Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS) Airport at 9.30am on 21 April 2019, and arriving at Seletar Airport at 10.30am. The flight was inaugurated with traditional water canon salute upon arrival.

Firefly Airlines' official delegation to Seletar Airport included Malaysia Transport Minister, Anthony Loke, Ministry of Transport Malaysia officials, Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia CEO, Ahmad Nizar Zolfakar, Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad Group CEO, Raja Azmi Raja Nazuddin, Firefly Airlines and the Malaysia Airlines Group senior management team.

The delegation was received by Singapore Transport Minister, Khaw Boon Wan, Counsellor Engku Puteri Suraya Engku Mohd Afandi who represented the High Commission of Malaysia in Singapore and other top-ranking officials from the Ministry of Transport and Health Singapore and Changi Airport Group. VIPs, other passengers and guests received a celebratory welcome, followed

by an official launch at the arrival hall. Commercial passengers received special goodie bags by Firefly Airlines and Changi Airport Group as they witnessed the official ribbon-cutting, momento exchange and speech at the reception site.



Philip See, CEO of Firefly Airlines said, "The service suspension has been challenging for Firefly as many of our customers flying to Singapore had enjoyed the convenience of Subang Airport. The airline which celebrates its 12th anniversary this month (April) is excited to return back into Singapore in particular to Seletar Airport. A door-to-door journey from Subang to Seletar in less than 2.5 hours, given a smooth traffic, customers will be at their meetings or family gathering on-time. Having beyond convenience services and experiences at both Subang and Seletar, customers will not be made to wait for hours before departure. This new airport is going to offer a hassle free and seamless experience for our customers at both ends of the journey as the proximity and the size of the airport enables customers to get to their journey much faster".

See added, "The airline will progressively add more points from Peninsular Malaysia and study the feasibility of the resumption of Kuantan, Ipoh and potentially Melaka. As the airline seeks to mount seasonal services in leisure markets and islands around Peninsular Malaysia, it will also look at introducing charters' operations. For those destinations that are slightly far flung for our turbo prop operations, a good connection service will be enabled to ensure seamless transit via the Subang hub".

The new service to Seletar Airport is operated by ATR 72-500 with six daily flights.

For more information, please call 03 - 7845 4543

KLM Charity Tulip Sale An Overwhelming Success

The 17th annual 'KLM Charity Tulip Sale' took place in KL International Airport recently in conjunction with Mother's Day, where KLM flew in over 5,000 stalks of tulips from the Netherlands to raise funds in support of palliative care for Hospis Malaysia.

Tulips are a distinctive icon to the Netherlands making this particular flower especially appropriate in demonstrating Dutch culture for expressing affection. The tulips were sold for RM6 for each stalk, and were all sold out within an hour.



KLM first started the tradition of the Annual Charity Tulip sale as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative in 1998, offering an opportunity for people to express their love as well as contribute to the less fortunate. This time, the sale was officially opened by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Malaysia, Karin Mössenlechner.

Estee Ng, Country Manager for Air France KLM Malaysia, commented, "This Mother's Day, it makes me proud that the sales proceeds from the KLM Charity Tulip sale, will go towards the support of palliative care at Hospis Malaysia. I appreciate the unconditional support from our partners Malaysia Airports and Sama-Sama Hotel towards this CSR initiative and thank Ambassador Mössenlechner for her time this Mother's Day to officially open the KLM Charity Tulip Sale".

Group Chief Executive Officer of Malaysia Airports, Raja Azmi Raja Nazuddin, "Airlines are the backbone of our airport ecosystem and we are always happy to support their initiatives. This charity drive by KLM to sell tulips to the public and donate all the proceeds to Hospis Malaysia resonate strongly with our aims to help the community. Not only are we collaborating with KLM in organising this drive, we are also buying 1,000 stalks of tulips to distribute to our passengers in conjunction with Mother's Day celebration at the airport today. It is one of our little ways to show appreciation to our passengers".

Meanwhile, Sama-Sama Hotel KL International Airport General Manager, Sundra Kulendra said, "Sama-Sama Hotel pledge in purchasing and presenting the Tulips to guests on the special day marks our continuous support of charity and community initiative by Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad. 400 tulips will be presented to all mothers at the hotel on Mother's Day (12 May); from diners at our weekend Hi-tea and Ramadan buffet dinner, to our female staff who



are working on the day to show our appreciation to the ones who have given life to the world", he said.

Tham Su Ming, Hospis Malaysia's Director, Strategy & Communications said, "Hospis Malaysia is grateful to KLM for organising this Tulip Sale, and to its partners MAHB and Sama-Sama Hotel for supporting this noble initiative. The funds raised will go towards our patient services, education and training platform. Every year, we treat and care for almost 2,000 patients in the Klang Valley, and train more than 700 healthcare workers from across the country and the region".

As mentioned, all funds raised will be donated to Hospis Malaysia, a charitable organisation that offers professional care to patients whom are terminally ill. Hospis Malaysia is not affiliated with any political, religious, governmental or private groups and collaborates closely with the World Palliative Care Alliance (WPCA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to fully integrate palliative care into every country's health care system.

For more information about KLM, please 03 - 7931 2822

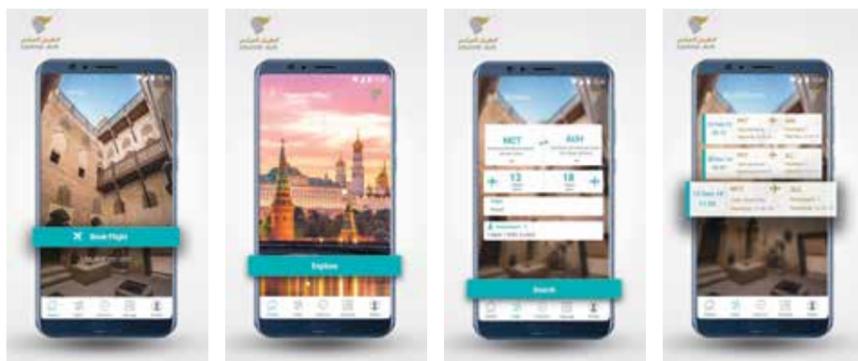
Oman Air Revamped Mobile App

Malaysian passengers flying to Muscat from Kuala Lumpur are now able to experience the revamped mobile application with Oman Air on iOS or Android smartphone. The revamped mobile application allows passengers to organise and manage their journey on the go.

Utilising the latest innovations, Oman Air's new app is a user-friendly platform with easy steps, providing guests with inclusive trip management capabilities like flight booking and purchase of tickets, online check-in, pre-selection of seats, flight status as well as information about Oman Air's latest offers.

The revamped app also enables guests to check their Sindbad miles balance, claim any missing miles, request for redemptions, keep track of tier progress, see their upcoming bookings on Oman Air, and much more.

For more information, please call 03 – 2145 6123



*The app is available in both English and Arabic.

KLIA Ekspres Tickets Available on Tripcarte.Asia

Passengers travelling on the Express Rail Link (ERL) between Kuala Lumpur and KLIA or klia2 can now purchase the KLIA Ekspres tickets on Tripcarte.Asia, a homegrown online travel platform that allows travellers to book tours, travel activities such as boat riding and cruise, theme park and attraction tickets and watersport activities across Malaysia and Singapore.

At the launch in April, ERL Chief Executive Officer, Noormah Mohd Noor said, "We are delighted to partner with Tripcarte.Asia to bring the very best of Malaysia to travellers from abroad. With Tripcarte.Asia, travellers abroad can now plan their holiday and book their travel arrangements, including KLIA Ekspres tickets, on a single platform."

Tripcarte's Chief Executive Officer, Parthiven Shan said, "We believe with this partnership, leisure and business travellers travelling to Malaysia



will find it extremely convenient to plan and make their bookings prior to their trip. KLIA Ekspres will be an ideal way to showcase the excellent connectivity Malaysia has to offer to travellers."

Tripcarte.Asia is a Malaysia based online activity platform which was founded in 2015. It has more than 300+ holiday activities, and travellers are able to book attraction tickets online.

For more details, please visit www.tripcarte.asia.

ANA Revealed New Boeing 787-10



All Nippon Airways (ANA) received the delivery of its new Boeing 787-10 aircraft on 31 March to become the only airline in Asia to operate the all-new, super-efficient family of Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Hideki Kunugi, Executive Vice President of ANA said, "ANA now has the distinction of being the only airline in Asia to operate all models (787-8, 787-9 and 787-10) of the 787 aircraft. The 787 fleet is known for its extremely low noise levels, excellent fuel

efficiency and in-flight comfort, all of which support ANA's mission to push the standards of air travel by investing in the latest technology."

Along with its new, more comfortable seats, the aircraft's Premium Economy and Economy Class feature a six-way adjustable headrest and the largest touchscreen personal seat monitor in its class. The seat monitors have been updated to include swipe-to-search ability and support for five additional languages - which brings the total to 11. The high capacity aircraft also offers the popular "Full Flat" seats, in the Business

Class cabin. Furthermore, the next-generation "ANA Flight Path" map will be added to the flights, using 3D mapping to provide tourism guides and restaurant recommendations from Japan's largest travel review site, 4 travel.

ANA plans to acquire a total of three 787-10s by the end of fiscal year 2020 and gradually introduce them to its Southeast Asian routes as part of its commitment to bring top-of-the-line aircraft and technology to travellers.

For more information, please call 03 – 2032 1331

China Airlines New Livery for 60th Anniversary

Celebrating its 60th anniversary in April, China Airlines has revealed its liveried aircraft on an Airbus A350-900 featuring the 60th anniversary logo for the first time for the flight between Taipei and Ontario, California.

The logo in the shape of "GO" and the infinity symbol "∞" are progressively applied to the A350-900, A330-300, 737-800, 777-300ER, 747-400 and 747-400F(freighter) fleets, inviting travellers around the world to join in sharing the 60 years of joy and growth at China Airlines. The number "60" in China Airlines' corporate identity colours of blue and red served as the inspiration for the 60th anniversary logo.

More products are launched by the airlines for its 60th anniversary. For example, the all-new amenity kits for Premium Business Class and Premium Economy Class have been very well-received by travellers.

The in-flight entertainment system has been upgraded in April in all A350-900 and 777-300ER cabin classes. Furthermore, a "Birthday Promotion Discount" has been launched by China Airlines via its website, where Dynasty members can log into the birthday special section in their birthday month to receive 5% off their fare for flights operated by China Airlines. Up to one travel companion on the same reservation code is eligible for the discount as well.

For more information, please call 03 – 2142 7344

Air New Zealand Receives Global Award for Economy Skycouch

In April, Air New Zealand was presented with the prestigious Crystal Cabin Award in Hamburg for the improvements to the Economy Skycouch.

The Air New Zealand designed Skycouch is a row of three Economy seats that convert into flat, flexible surface for rest, relaxation and play.

The improvements include introducing a dedicated infant harness allowing infants to remain lying down throughout the cruise phase of the flight, new infant pod, and modifications to the existing Skycouch that allows two children to share the Skycouch lying side by side.

The Crystal Cabin Award is the only international award for excellence in aircraft interior innovation, with Air New Zealand winning the Greener Cabin, Health, Safety and Environment category.

Air New Zealand General Manager Customer Experience Nikki Goodman said, "The Skycouch has always been popular with young families and it's fantastic to be recognised for the enhancements which



were designed to help make it easier for families to travel with young children".

Air New Zealand is represented by Discover The World as the General Sales Agent (GSA) in Malaysia.

For further information, please call 03 - 2715 5020

Air France Serves Exquisite Cuisine by Michelin-Starred Chef

From April 2019 to March 2020, the chef with two Michelin stars Julien Royer is designing a new tailor-made and regularly renewed menu for Air France customers travelling between Singapore and Paris-Charles de Gaulle.

At the Air France signature event, 'Oh, my chef!' on 9 April, Chef Julien Royer boarded Flight AF 257 from Singapore to Paris-Charles de Gaulle and shared the specially curated menu and interacted with passengers.

Nicolas Ricard, Country Manager for Air France Singapore said, "Air France is privileged to embark on this exciting partnership with Michelin-starred Chef Julien Royer of award-winning restaurant, Odette. This is the first collaboration of its kind in Singapore, and we believe that the 12 remarkable dishes he has created exclusively for Air France are testaments to our commitments to bring only the best of French offerings to our customers".

Chef Julien Royer said, "I truly appreciate the opportunity that Air France has afforded me to curate the menus for their Business and First Class passengers. It was an inspiring process working alongside the team, and I'm excited

to offer their guests a refined French dining experience in one of the most exceptional settings – up in the air".

Chef Julien Royer has designed a total of 12 exclusive main dishes – six dishes for La Première and Business Class respectively – which will be rotated every two months until March 2020.

Air France is also serving fine-dining on other long haul flights (and some medium haul from Paris), working with Michelin-starred chefs in both La Première and Business Class cabin.

For more information, please call 03 - 7724 8181



Avengers Assemble at KLIA and klia2!

Passengers and Marvel fans passing through KLIA and klia2 are having marvellous fun with life-sized Avenger figurines installed throughout the two terminals.

In the 'Marvel Super Heroes Have Landed' campaign launched in April by Malaysia Airports, together with The Walt Disney Company Malaysia and Maybank, travellers and fans can indulge in fun, interactive and exciting games and photo opportunities with the spectacular Avenger figurines until 16 June.

Malaysia Airports senior general manager of commercial services Mohammad Nazli Abdul Aziz said at the launch on 12 April, "We are delighted to bring such iconic Super Heroes to our airports and hope that these initiatives will further enliven our guests' airport experience, which is a key thrust in Malaysia Airports' Commercial Reset Strategy. We want to change the perception of what airports are traditionally known for, to what it could be. Through these initiatives, we believe we are inching closer in transforming our airports from merely being a transportation hub to a premier lifestyle and shopping destination. We must continuously strive to remain relevant and competitive in providing the best for travellers and guests at our airports".



Nazli added that moving forward, Malaysia Airports is confident in enticing its travellers even more with compelling campaigns, leveraging on both offline and online marketplaces, 'retail-tainment' concepts, digital innovations and outstanding support from retailers and partners.

The fun-filled activities and photo opportunities include, a scale model of the Avenger's Quinjet, Iron Man shooting range, Thor's Hammer Game as well as life-size figurines of Captain America, Iron Man and Thor.

The launch was also attended by Jon Tjin Kee, Director, Disney Media + ; Vichelle Woon, Head of Marketing, Cards Group, Community

Financial Services, Maybank; Chen Tien Yue, Executive Director, Royal Selangor Marketing Sdn. Bhd., alongside local personalities Ung Yiu Lin, Alif Satar and Daphne Iking.

As part of the campaign, shoppers spending a minimum of RM120 at the public transit area at any of the international airports operated by Malaysia Airports can enjoy attractive redemption offers on limited-edition collectibles. Maybank customers will rejoice as the same offers apply when they spend a minimum amount of RM100 with their Maybank Cards.

For more information, please visit www.malaysiaairports.com.my



ERAMAN Becomes Bigger, Better and Bolder

Malaysia Airports Niaga or better known as ERAMAN, is taking the next big step to bring themselves to the next level. ERAMAN will rebrand its duty free and duty paid retail stores as well as the F&B outlets to be better than ever before. In efforts to become bigger, better and bolder, ERAMAN will be realigning their product categories and revamping their stores' concept designs on top of enhancing guests' experiences through experiential marketing and innovative digitalisation.

This pivotal rebranding exercise is timely as ERAMAN reaches its 25th year, thus beckoning a stronger presence and awareness amongst domestic and international travellers. The initiative will also make ERAMAN superior and set apart from the competition. But more importantly, it places ERAMAN as the most preferred airport travel retail and duty-free player in Asia Pacific offering the most complete shopping experience through exceptional customer service.



Datuk Seri Michael Yam, chairman of ERAMAN stated that, "ERAMAN brand has become synonymous with Malaysia Airports Niaga. We want to strengthen its premier position in the travel retail & duty free shopping space in Malaysia. And unless we refresh, reinvent and future proof the franchise the brand, we may not be able to sustain for another 25 years. And hence to mark its 25th year of its birth, the Board had taken the opportunity to adopt a fresher, more contemporary & exciting approach in providing the complete retail experience for the benefit and convenience of our valued customers".

The chairman also stated that the opening of the dedicated monogram concept boutiques at Kota Kinabalu International Airport offering world-renowned perfumes, skin care and cosmetics brands such M.A.C, La Mer, Tom Ford, and Jo Malone were part of the preceding initiatives prior to the launch of this rebranding exercise as demonstrations of their laser-sharp commitment to improving the retail variation and introducing new retail formats. This also includes Malaysia Airports host culture transformation programme, 'Happy Guest, Caring Host', by setting mobile kiosks and food buggy service at various locations in Klia Main terminal.

The Deputy Minister of Transport, Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar spoke on behalf of the government, "We are supportive of such initiatives as airports are major gateways into our country, contributing to a lasting first impression for foreign visitors. We already possess world-class infrastructure at our airports. On top of which, the variety in international and local retail brands offered at our airports are the envy of our regional counterparts. Further enhancements to duty-free stores, redesigning of brand awareness elements and engagement with travellers are strategic steps that will provide a quantum leap in making Malaysia a first-world country".

On the other hand, Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad group chief executive officer YM Raja Azmi Raja Nazuddin was proud to say, "It is indeed a very exciting move as this is the first time in 25 years that Malaysia Airports (Niaga) is embarking on such an endeavour. From the beginning, Malaysia Airports (Niaga) through its brand ERAMAN



has been a crucial component in the group's business, contributing significantly to our non-aeronautical revenue. In 2018, ERAMAN recorded RM834.2 million in revenue, contributing about 20% to the group's total revenue".

He added, "Last year, our non-aeronautical revenue from our Malaysia operations rose to RM1.6 billion. Sales per passenger or SPP stood at RM27.80 with the highest recorded for KL International Airport (Klia) at RM37.50. Actually, Klia is still lagging behind in terms of SPP when compared to peer airports within the region. Their average SPP stands at twice or thrice that of Klia despite equivalent or smaller total retail space at the airport. This is mostly attributed to retail mix and lack of effective retail space zoning".

As part of the rebranding exercise, ERAMAN's new and stylised logo has the letter 'e' encapsulated within a hexagon representing a gift box with the 'e' formed by a ribbon that holds the gift. Coloured in

a vibrant purple palette, the design speaks to deliver its promise of excitement that in every path that a traveller takes, ERAMAN is there to give a welcome and to ensure every traveller will have a heartfelt gift be it for oneself or as a souvenir for loved ones.

Among other changes include enhancements to the facade of all ERAMAN outlets, as well as new modern contemporary designs for the staff uniforms. ERAMAN is confident that the rebranding exercise will strengthen and build brand awareness through elements that are engaging, meaningful, easily recognisable, and transferable to all its outlets which includes both merchandising, and F&B segments.

Operating in five international airports and one domestic airport in Malaysia, ERAMAN Duty Free outlets offer a wide range of world class and exclusive products such as chocolates, perfumes and cosmetics, liquor, fashion and accessories as well as tobacco products that are sourced globally.

AVIATION INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY LEONG

President of Malaysian Tourist Guides Council (MTGC)

Founded in 1967, MTGC's objective is to promote the highest possible standards for tourist guides and to provide exceptional tourist experiences for travellers of all nationalities. Jimmy Leong has been the president since 1999. Since then, he has been a significant spokesperson for ethical conduct among tourist

guides encouraging cultural narratives, promotional initiatives, discourse and more. Jimmy's keen eye and influence on the council keeps everyone in the industry accountable.

How important are tour guides for the industry and for touristic experience to travellers in general? How would you explain MTGC's role with tour guides all over Malaysia?

Tour guiding has an important and multi-faceted role in Malaysia's tourism industry. What tour guides present and interpret of our country affects the way in which their customers experience a place or attraction, understand the local culture and engage in local activities. Their roles and influences are key to making the programme a success

and attracting repeating visitors who may even bring along families and friends. In short, tour guides 'make' or 'break' a vacation.

The role of tour guides distinguishes itself by their potential to manage and orchestrate tourist experiences; enhances destination's reputation; promote and generate repeat visitations and to implement responsible tourism.

With this in mind, MTGC highly endorses the need to provide adequate effective training for tour guides in Malaysia, establishing needed standards, supervising practices, and above all, involving them in projects and activities at the destination level. Tour guides should be treated and motivated as for instance, stakeholders in Malaysia's tourism development so that the Malaysian government can make sure that they fulfil their obligation to build and maintain the framework to professional performances, behaviour, conduct and responsibilities that deserve the public's trust and support.

How important has it been for MTGC to form a strong relationship with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) and what have been the outcomes of this partnership?

In order to represent MTGC and the tourism community interests to the Ministry for mutual benefits, a two-way partnership is essential for the sake of a greater tourism strategy.

Meaningful partnerships are the foundation for both the Government and MTGC's success. MTGC defines this relationship as a mutual agreement between two or more parties in which all participants agree to work together for a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share responsibilities, resources, competences and benefits. Partnerships are what enable many tourism players to develop and grow sustainably.

We describe our relationship with the Ministry as strong but more can be achieved if more communication and meeting sessions are to be carried out to understand the tour guiding profession and the feedbacks we receive constantly on the ground level expressed by the visitors we handled to improve the industry.



Where do you draw your passion for the tourism industry?

Firstly, it has always been the people around me as a team. Secondly, it is experiences and knowledge that I acquired from other organisations that have continuously given me ideas and support to make changes, implement policies and to lead the industry to the next level. I have always reminded myself that success is a narrow path, but as a dedicated team that dares to forge ahead not waiting on guarantees; the right time never comes if we are waiting at the wrong place. Where any dream has a fighting chance, there's a way.

What are the current problems in the tourism industry that ought to be addressed?

The tourism industry urgently needs a government task force to oversee and address the crucial issues at the various land entry points in the country especially the CIQs (Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine) in Johor Bahru and the Secondlink as we can no longer afford to receive negative reporting from visitors facing delays in their clearances as well as filthy toilets facilities. There must be a completely reliable border control management to oversee these issues. Illegal MPVs fetching tourists, unlicensed tour operators and unlicensed tourist guides must be removed in order to develop the industry in the right track.

At the moment, the move by Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC) to dismantle the tour guiding fees schedule is doing more harm than good to the profession and the tourism industry as a whole. MOTAC should realise that without a fee structure, foreign language guide will not venture into the profession. The dismantling of this structure have also made difficult for tour operators to formulate quotation in their packages as the guiding fees fluctuate according to the supply and demand.

What is your vision for MTGC and its holistic contribution to the tourism industry as a whole?

The roles of tour guides have evolved and travellers' wants and needs require new skill sets, for example, better interpersonal relationships and intellect that enhances and enriches one's visit to our country. Travellers are globetrotting in smaller numbers, as less people are inclined to buy tour packages and join large groups. MTGC's proposal to MOTAC in 2005 predicted the change in travel habits, so we proposed for tour guides to drive tourism vans; this was already put in place in many ASEAN countries. This proposal is strictly for the extension of tour

guides services where tour guides can also drive a tourism vehicle and guide at the same time. All these services however, must be regulated by MOTAC as well as JPJ rules, regulations and conditions. MTGC strongly believes this move will create a holistic change to the tourism business environment.

Digitilisation has pervaded industries globally, has the Malaysian tourism industry caught up with this movement? In what ways is technology improving the lives of tour guides?

The tourism and economic landscape of Asia is undergoing a massive dynamic transformation to embrace the technological revolution. Portals such as Agoda, AirBnB, Grab and TripAdvisor has greatly changed the structure of the tourism supply chain in the past decade. Yet over the years in Malaysia we see very small numbers of projects usually involve digital business transformation. Tourism business owners fear the costs of integrating legacy systems. Even if a digitalisation project succeeds enterprises are afraid of becoming 'hostage' to a vendor, especially for the future upgrading costs of its systems.

On the other hand, the new age tourism market has seen growing numbers of FIT – free independent travellers who are both small groups and individuals, planning their own journey and experience using the Internet and using established websites to make their travel choices.

Through the Internet tour guides can now actively market their services on the many available online aggregators such as TripAdvisor, Viator, GetYourGuide, LokaLocal, Unscripted and many more.

These aggregators whom we term as travel tech firms have undeniably created work opportunities and visibility for tour guide's services. This directly have positive impact on the economy of the tour guides. The tour guides can express their creativity and quality services and yet be competitive. These aggregators are now viewed as partners to tour guides. Both the Internet and travel tech firms have impacted positively, the economy and opportunities for tour guides in Malaysia.

The airport is the first point of contact between the country's tourism industry and the traveller. In your opinion, what is the significance of an airport in the tourism industry and where do you see tour guides contributing to this relationship?

Airports play a significant role in the tourism

industry, providing clean and safe services closely monitored by international agencies that rank the airports according to strict benchmarks. Such detailed benchmarks are not consolidated for other forms of transportation hubs. Along with cleanliness, safety and security comes airport hospitality, which is expected to be exemplary for lasting positive impressions in the minds of tourists.

Therefore, airports and its facilities are significant to the growth, development, and capacity building on a country's tourism industry. The facilities, from basic CIQ requirements, to growing trends and needs of travellers like free, efficient technology e.g. Wi-Fi, good variety of food and beverage outlets, lounges, and international brands that cater to all levels of shopping, are critical to ensure that travellers, be it for business, pleasure or family visits, are made to feel welcome, the moment they arrive, and stay connected with their colleagues or their loved ones.

Tour guides are the first point of contact for tourist after arrival clearance formalities. They are the country's goodwill ambassadors and continue from the initial positive impressions by the clearing agencies to reassure visitors of a memorable stay in the country. The Malaysian tour guides are skilled in end-to-end service delivery, not only in airport environment but, for all modes of transport, meeting the high service standards set by the government.

Personally, what is your favourite aspect in travelling?

The best moment for most travellers is seeing new places and meeting new people but its about opening new horizon to experience completely different cultures and learning how to interact with different people to know their stories which can impact me on a greater level thus understanding oneself and igniting creativity.

Many of us Malaysians grow up with all the comforts of the modern world and had the opportunity to do many things we want to do. On the other hand, travelling to other countries, particularly those in the developing world can be a wakeup call to put our own life in perspective. Things that we may take for granted like having modern appliances and clean running water from the taps will probably come away with a new appreciation for everything we have.

My most memorable and adventurous trip was when I drove from Malaysia to London in the year 2016 by road across thirteen countries covering 18,500 kilometres. This experience made me see life differently.



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