

AIRLINK

CONTENTS - OCTOBER 2019

Airport Talk

- Airport CEO Speaks 55
- Malaysia at the Centre of LCC Phenomenon 56

Aviation News

- Qatar Airways Flies to Langkawi 58
- Tourism Malaysia Collaborates with Expedia for Promotion and Digital Innovation 59
- British Airways to Revolutionise In-Flight Entertainment with Virtual Reality 60

- Lion Air Received Its First Airbus A330-900neo 61
- New Airline STARLUX to Begin Operation in January 2020 61
- Star Alliance Partners with NEC Corporation for Biometric Data Recognition Technology 62
- Royal Brunei Airlines Flies to Beijing's New International Airport 63
- Citilink Achieves Milestone with Australian Route 64

- Qantas To Operate "Project Sunrise" Research Flights 64

Aviation Shopping

- Travelex Opens Five 'Retailtainment' Concept Currency Exchange at KLIA 65

Aviation Interview

- Aviation Interview with Mohammad Zaim Mohammad Nashir Acting General Manager of Tourism Selangor 66





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Royal Dutch Airlines



In focusing our business continuity plans towards realising our Airports 4.0 goals, we will be reviewing our initiatives timeline under the Digital Transformation programme, which we kickstarted in 2018.

We will also be uplifting the Total Airport Management Systems (TAMS), a key component area in helping us integrate information flows for operations, management and security. Our target is to achieve a 40% increase in operational efficiency and productivity by 2022. Ultimately, we aspire to monitor the operational functions in real time for all our airports anywhere, anytime via a mobile device.

MAHB plans to upgrade MYairports mobile application, pilot and implement single token facial recognition and introduce more interactive digital displays at our terminals are underway so as to provide a seamless processing experience for our passengers and better connectivity.

We also look forward to Qatar Airways' four times weekly service between Doha and Langkawi via Penang on October 15th, which subsequently be increased to five times weekly starting October 27th. This new route will certainly boost our cause to market and promote Langkawi as an attractive destination, in line with our launch of RM5 million Langkawi International Tourism Promotional Fund early this year.

Meanwhile, Royal Brunei Airlines has announced its flights expansion from Bandar Seri Begawan to Sandakan, Bintulu, Tawau and Sibul on 28 October and 5 to 14 November respectively. I am indeed very pleased to see that our efforts in making Malaysia the preferred destination in Southeast Asia are bearing fruit.

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 updates on the airport operator's business continuity plans involving its digital transformation initiatives, new routes and strong growth in terms of financial performance as well as growth in passenger and aircraft movements.

Based on our August 2019 statistics, the 12-month basis figure indicates our total network of airports, including Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport, grew by 4.1% to 137.5 million passengers while overall aircraft movements rose by 4.5%.

For the half year ended 30 June 2019, Malaysia Airports reported higher earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation of RM1,169.7 million while revenue rose 6% to RM2,513.5 million on the back of strong passenger growth.

At the recent World Routes 2019 Marketing Awards held in Adelaide, Australia, three new award categories were being introduced and we are proud that our General Manager of Airline Marketing Division, Mohamed Sallauddin Mat Sah, had been shortlisted as one of the five candidates under Individual Leadership. The recognition of his achievements within the route development tight-knit community is an honour for us.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our guests and readers Happy Deepavali and safe travels!



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Malaysia at the Centre of LCC Phenomenon

Twenty years ago, there were only two Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) operating in Asia Pacific- Cebu Pacific from the Philippines and Freedom Air from New Zealand. Cebu Pacific embarked on her first flight in 1996; while Freedom Air launched in 1995, they suspended operations in 2008. By then, LCCs had already captured significant market share in Europe and North America.

Today, LCCs such as AirAsia, Lion Air and Vietjet are the largest LCC groups in Asia. Despite being late to the scene, the LCC penetration rate in Asia-Pacific is now almost as high as the global LCC penetration rate. In 2018, LCCs globally accounted for 33% of domestic seat capacity and 13% of international seat capacity. In fact, LCC capacity in Asia-Pacific has more than quadrupled over the past decade: LCCs flew nearly 600 million seats within Asia-Pacific in 2018, compared to approximately 130 million seats in 2008.

Remarkably, since 2008, Malaysia's international LCC penetration rate has been the highest in the top 20 markets in Asia-Pacific. Currently, Malaysia stands at a 59% international penetration rate as of 2018, and 57% for domestic penetration rate in the same year.

The International Air Transport Association estimates that the region will experience an additional 2.35 billion annual passengers by 2037, for a total market size of 3.9 billion passengers. The Airport Council International predicts that by 2040, the Asia-Pacific region will contribute more than 42% of all international air travellers.

With the advent of aggressive LCC capacity expansion and the introduction of new LCCs into the fray such as Tigerair Taiwan, Scoot and ZIPAIR Tokyo, it is all the more important to investigate the growth story of the LCCs of Asia-Pacific and how it has changed the aviation landscape in the region for the past 10 years.

But firstly, what is it that makes an LCC different

from their full-service counterparts? The answer lies in their core ticket price. The manipulation of their core ticket prices is based on the fundamental principles of revenue-management. This means that LCCs are able to drastically reduce their core ticket prices by maintaining low operating and labor costs. This includes, flying newer and more fuel-efficient planes that can travel farther without refueling, executing shorter plane turnaround period to maximise flying time, avoiding expensive airports in big cities, selling tickets online and other cost-saving initiatives.

Moreover, airlines are increasingly relying on ancillary sales to determine their revenue, such as checked baggage, onboard food, premium seat selection and extra legroom. In these cases, LCCs often adopt tactics in product bundling, product suggestions and dynamic pricing to encourage additional purchases by travellers, both at the original point of sale and over the course of the travel journey.

It was then in 2006, right in the middle of the LCC emergent movement, that Malaysia Airports built the Low-Cost Carrier Terminal (LCCT) catering to the demand of increasing passengers of LCCs. Built with 36,000 square metres, the terminal was designed and built in accordance with the low-cost carrier business model with limited terminal amenities. Its function and usage however, was only temporary as in May 2014, Malaysia Airports finally built a superior terminal that would be much better equipped than its predecessor.

This time, the LCCT was replaced with a 258,000 square metres terminal featuring a skybridge that connected the main terminal of the building with its satellite piers, making it one of the first terminals in the region to have this facility.

Exponential growth in low-cost travel equates a proportional growth in retail demand, thus klia2 was also built with an integrated shopping complex in mind. Called 'Gateway @klia2', the shopping complex is connected to the main terminal building and features 35,000 square feet of retail space spanning over four levels. The airport features a plethora of retail, entertainment, food & beverage and transit hotel outlets that puts on a grand



show for new and return travellers alike. By that token, Malaysia Airports is constantly improving the services of their airports for travellers by consistently introducing digital innovation to the airports in order to increase fluidity of the passenger experience.

Despite the expanding growth of the region's aviation industry, the operations of the airlines do not come without its challenges. Over the recent years, jet fuel prices have increased and not to mention fluctuating currency conversion rates make it tricky for airlines to keep their operational costs low. Fuel accounts for about 25% of an airline's operation costs, according to the International Air Transport Association. One example of overcoming this problem is the hedging of jet fuel prices; this means that an airline locks in a specific price for operations in the near future.

Matt Driskill, editor of Asia Aviation, explains the risks of fuel hedging in a simple fashion, "In bad times that's a good thing, but it can come back to hurt you. If you hedge at US\$50 a barrel and it goes down to \$35, you're losing money".

In addition, airlines have been needing to cope with the intense level of competition, as airlines compete for load factor in the most saturated of routes. Brendan Sobie of CAPA stated, "airlines have struggled to increase fares, which keeps going down despite an increase in demand. And they weren't able to increase fare prices when fuel went up".

Executives from full-service airlines to low-cost carriers have had their fair share of struggles as Kritaphone Chantalitanon, vice-president of commercial strategy at Thai Airways said, "We

have to become leaner, become even more efficient. We need to look, left right and centre of new markets to sustain ourselves".

Goh Choon Phong, CEO of Singapore Airlines describes a more optimistic outlook, "We still see demand in various points in Asia-Pacific. Of course, it's a relation between capacity and demand and that is where we have to watch - whether there is excess capacity or not".

Core to the expansion of LCCs in the region is the spread of these low-cost options into long-haul routes. Peter Harbison, executive chairman of CAPA calls this the, "the biggest change which is transforming the way the international airline market works". Long-haul routes are defined by CAPA as any flights longer than 4,100km to which has increased by 415% from 2008 to 2018. In comparison, a long-haul flight from Singapore to Osaka is about 4,900km. The advent of more fuel-efficient aircraft types such as the Airbus A321neo instrumental to the operating of long-haul flights has helped them to fly longer at lower operating costs.

In fact AirAsia, the largest airline in Malaysia by capacity and major partner of Malaysia Airports is set to introduce 30 new Airbus A321XLR and the A330neo for their future long-haul fleet. AirAsia said, "The A321XLR also gives AirAsia X an advantage when it comes to exploring opportunities to operate non-stop flights between Southeast Asia and secondary cities in countries like Australia, China and Japan".

Additionally, in September 2019, it was announced that AirAsia and Airbus is leading research into aviation biofuel that would be

essential to the production of alternative and sustainable aviation biofuels in Malaysia. If this milestone were to be achieved, it would cut the airline's jet fuel cost and reduce carbon emissions.

As indicated earlier, the LCC growth story and how it has reshaped the aviation market in the Asia-Pacific region is certainly compelling. And right at the centre of gravity of this phenomenon is Malaysia's aviation industry. In early September, Airbus announced that they would invest a total of RM505million in several initiatives such as the participation in the Aerospace Malaysia Innovation Centre (AMIC) in joint research programmes and sustainable aviation biofuels as well as the expansion of the company MRO facility and the establishment of the Airbus Malaysia Digital Initiative.

"These initiatives will significantly enhance our presence in Malaysia, which is one of our most important markets in Asia," said the CEO of Airbus, Guillaume Faury. He also said Airbus' initiatives would also strengthen its win-win partnership with Malaysia, contributing to the development of the Malaysian aerospace sector and enabling the company to benefit from the competencies and skills available in Malaysia.

Although there may be headwinds for airlines in the current market, there is certainly much to capitalise on in a market that has an exponentially growing middle-class with a higher discretionary income. Thus, there is much to be excited for the industry, as the limits of innovation are boundless. This ultimately spurs great prospects for Malaysia Airports and Malaysia's aviation industry, soaring to greater heights.

Qatar Airways Flies to Langkawi



Qatar Airways is making Langkawi its third destination in Malaysia after Kuala Lumpur and Penang. The airline will initially start with four times weekly Langkawi tag services via Penang with an increase up to five times weekly services from 27 October 2019.

For the route, Qatar Airways is operating the state-of-the-art Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, featuring 22 seats in Business class and 232 seats in Economy class, with spacious cabins and specially-designed interiors.

At the announcement in Kuala Lumpur in August, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer, His Excellency Mr Akbar Al Baker said, "Langkawi is one of the most highly sought-after destinations in Malaysia and I am certain our flights will help increase accessibility and boost inbound tourism to this beautiful archipelago".

He continued, "With five weekly flights to Langkawi, our service offers a gateway for passengers to travel and experience Langkawi's magnificent offerings. We also aim to offer greater connectivity for passengers travelling from Malaysia to our extensive global network of over 160 destinations. Our new flights reflect our commitment to growing our presence not just in Malaysia, but in Asia as well".



Chief Minister of the State of Kedah, Dato' Seri Mukhriz Tun Mahathir said, "I'm thrilled to know that Qatar Airways' service expansion now includes the magnificent Langkawi as this will definitely lead to greater opportunities not only for Malaysia's burgeoning tourism industry, but for Kedah as well. Qatar Airways' service to Langkawi will soon bring the world right to the doorstep of the island, allowing them to experience the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark in all its majesty".

Chief Executive Officer of Langkawi Development Authority (LADA), Dr Hezri Adnan Said, "The launch of Qatar Airways' direct services to Langkawi certainly bodes well for the island and goes in line with our plans of further cementing its position as an international tourist destination. Not only that, it also augurs well for Langkawi's economy and

tourism industry as we get ready to welcome visitors from across the globe to experience the island's distinctive culture and scenic views at one of the finest tropical gems in Malaysia."

Qatar Airways can seamlessly connect passengers from Malaysia to more than 160 destinations across six continents via its award-winning Hamad International Airport in Doha.

Qatar Airways was named 'Airline of the Year' for the fifth time by the 2019 World Airline Awards, managed by Skytrax. It was also named 'World's Best Business Class', 'Best Business Class Seat', and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'.

For more information, please call 03 - 2118 6100

Tourism Malaysia Collaborates with Expedia for Promotion and Digital Innovation



Tourism Malaysia and Expedia Group inked two agreements in August to promote tourism to Malaysia for the coming years with digital innovation.

The first agreement is a Memorandum of Collaboration to promote Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination by showcasing the country's unique wonders, attractions and cultures as well as supporting the tourism industry's digital innovation.

The second agreement see both parties embark on an Expedia Media Solutions global campaign to promote inbound travel from Australia, Japan and the United States to Malaysia. The joint campaign will spotlight Malaysia's unique tourist attractions, as well as promote the variety of accommodations to Expedia Group's 750 million monthly visitors globally.

This strategic collaboration aims at achieving 30 million tourist arrivals and RM100 billion in tourist spending, set for the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign.

Present at the ceremony were YB Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi, the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, Director General of Tourism Malaysia, Datuk Musa Yusof and Greg Schulze, Senior Vice President, Commercial Strategy and Services Expedia Group.



Greg Schulze said, "Tourism is an important contributor to Malaysia's economy, accounting for almost 14.9 percent of the GDP and 3.4 million jobs. As the world's travel platform, Expedia Group is proud to be the first online travel tourism partner to Tourism Malaysia, connecting Malaysia's tourism industry to millions of travellers in Expedia Group's worldwide network".

Datuk Mohamaddin Ketapi added, "Through sharing our travel insights, as well as joint capacity building, digital marketing and corporate responsibility efforts together with Expedia Group, we aim to be a force for good, especially in sharing the benefits of tourism with communities across Malaysian cities".

Datuk Musa Yusof said, "The announcement highlights Tourism Malaysia's commitment towards greater cooperation and close relationship with Expedia Group. We hope that Expedia Group will continue to play a key role in advancing Malaysia's tourism ambitions to promote itself as a unique and culturally diverse tourist destination for travellers all around the world".

British Airways to Revolutionise In-Flight Entertainment with Virtual Reality



Virtual reality is now brought to the skies by British Airways with exclusive trials using virtual reality headsets.

From August until the end of 2019, customers travelling on selected flights in First Class from London Heathrow to New York JFK are able to enjoy a selection of award-winning films, documentaries and travel programmes in 2D, 3D or 360° formats.

Sajida Ismail, Head of In-flight Product at British Airways, said: "We are always looking at the latest technology to enhance our customers' experience on the ground and in the air. Virtual reality has the power to revolutionise in-flight entertainment and we're really excited to trial these new glasses as they should create a unique and memorable journey for our First customers".

The headsets from VR eyewear specialists, SkyLights, allow customers to fully immerse themselves in 3D view regardless of the position they are sitting in. The experience even works when they are lying fully flat.



British Airways is the first UK airline to trial the technology and has worked with experts to select a range of therapeutic programmes, including guided meditation and sound therapy, specifically designed for customers who have a fear of flying.

Earlier this year, British Airways tested the technology at Heathrow Terminal 5, giving customers a glimpse of the Club World cabin through virtual reality.

British Airways is investing £6.5 billion for its customers over five years, including the installation of the best quality Wi-Fi and power in every aircraft seat, fitting 128 long-haul aircraft with new interiors and taking delivery of 72 new aircraft. The airline has introduced its Club Suite, a new business class seat with direct aisle access. British Airways is also hosting a range of activities and events throughout the year to explore the future of sustainable aviation fuels and the aviation careers of the future.

For more information, please call 03 – 7712 4747

Lion Air Received Its First Airbus A330-900neo

Lion Air marks a major milestone for its long-haul flights when the airline received its first A330-900 in July, the first of 10 A330neos set to join the fleet. With the delivery, Lion Air is the first airline from the Asia-Pacific region to fly the aircraft.

Currently, Lion Air operates two Airbus A330-900neo with aircraft registration PK-LEI AND PK-LEJ.

The A330neo, Airbus' new generation A330 aircraft, will be used by Lion Air for non-stop long-haul services from Indonesia. These include pilgrimage flights from cities such as Makassar, Balikpapan and Surabaya to Jeddah and Medina in Saudi Arabia. The flight time for such routes can be up to 12 hours.

The A330neo is the true new-generation aircraft building on the most popular wide body A330's features and leveraging on A350 XWB technology. Powered by the latest Rolls-Royce Trent 7000 engines, the A330neo provides an unprecedented level of efficiency

– with 25% lower fuel burn per seat than previous generation competitors. Equipped with the Airbus Airspace cabin, the A330neo offers a unique passenger experience with more personal space and the latest generation in-flight entertainment system and connectivity.

Lion Air currently operates a fleet of 116 aircraft, four of which are widebodies. In addition to the new delivery, it also flies three older generation A330s.

For more information, please call 03 – 7841 5333



New Airline STARLUX to Begin Operation in January 2020

STARLUX Airlines Co Ltd, which was founded in May last year by Chang Kuo-wei, EVA Airways Corp's former chairman is planning to begin operations on January 23 next year with flights to three destinations in Asia for the Lunar New Year holiday.

At the announcement in September, STARLUX spokesman Nieh Kuo-wei said the airline will begin services the day before Lunar New Year's Eve, offering daily flights from Taiwan to Macau; Penang, Malaysia; and Da Nang, Vietnam.

The inaugural flights are aimed at taking advantage of strong demand during the



Lunar New Year holiday, a traditional peak season for Taiwan's travel industry.

Nieh said that STARLUX plans to gradually extend their service to other destinations in Southeast and North Asia. The airline would initially focus on routes within Asia before expanding to North American destinations from 2022, targeting high-end travellers.

It is leasing 10 A321neo aircraft, the first of which is to be delivered by the end of October. The carrier expects to build a fleet of 27 aircraft, comprising 10 Airbus A321neos and 17 A350XWBs.

For more information, please visit www.starlux-airlines.com

Star Alliance Partners with NEC Corporation for Biometric Data Recognition Technology



Star Alliance, the world's largest airline alliance, and NEC Corporation, global leader in IT, network and biometric technologies signed a partnership agreement in July to develop a biometric data-based identification platform.

The service is made available to customers who are enrolled in one of the Star Alliance frequent flyer programmes and who have authorised the use of their biometric data.

These customers will have a seamless and hands-free passenger experience, allowing them to pass through curb-to-gate touch-points within airports, such as check-in kiosks, bag-drop, lounges, and boarding gates, which traditionally require both a passport and boarding pass, by using a secure identity management solution featuring facial recognition technology.

Moreover, the platform will help airports and the Star Alliance member airlines to increase operational efficiency.

Jeffrey Goh, CEO Star Alliance said: "In NEC, we have found a strong partner who shares our vision of a seamless travel experience for air travellers. At Star Alliance we are committed to making the customer journey better, and this strategic partnership with NEC will help us make the way from curb to gate to aircraft a much simpler, yet innovative experience for our customers".

Takashi Niino, President and CEO of NEC Corporation, added: "NEC is pleased to join forces with Star Alliance to bring an improved cross terminal customer experience. Facial recognition is truly revolutionising the airline industry and making flying more enjoyable, just as it



was always intended. In support of this partnership, similar to our implementations in United States, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan, NEC will mobilise its global resources and provide local assistance to each of the member airlines to leverage this secure, interoperable platform and rapidly bring our common vision to reality".

Star Alliance and NEC aim to introduce the first biometric solution at a Star Alliance airport hub by the first quarter of 2020.

The member airlines of Star Alliance are: Adria Airways, Aegean Airlines, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, Avianca, Brussels Airlines, Copa Airlines, Croatia Airlines, EGYPTAIR, Ethiopian Airlines, EVA Air, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, SWISS, TAP Air Portugal, THAI, Turkish Airlines and United.

For more information, please visit www.staralliance.com

Royal Brunei Airlines Flies to Beijing's New International Airport



In October, Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) resumes flights to Beijing by becoming one of the first international airlines selected to operate to the state-of-the-art Beijing Daxing International Airport in phase one of the new airport, as ticket sales commenced in September 2019. The first flight is scheduled on Sunday, 27 October 2019.

The four times weekly flights to Beijing is part of RB's efforts to grow its footprint in China, the number one tourism source market for Brunei. In addition to RB's strong presence in Shanghai and Hong Kong, they also introduced flights to Haikou, Hangzhou and Changsha. RB plans to increase the flight frequency to Beijing Daxing to daily operations from 14 January 2020. Thus, by next year, RB will serve nine cities in North Asia in contrast to only two not so long ago.

Karam Chand, Chief Executive Officer of RB said, "We are delighted to provide the key capital city to capital city connection to fulfill our promise to connect Brunei and Beijing once again. As Brunei's national carrier, the reintroduction of Beijing flights supports our network development and builds on the strong bilateral relationship between the two countries. Beijing presents a huge opportunity for us in one of the fastest growing markets in the world and hence our plan to increase to daily flights around the Chinese New Year 2020. The new service will



serve the government, corporate and leisure guests well who have been seeking a direct link and this has been made possible with the best in the class A320 NEO aircraft. We are grateful to the Chinese Government for the opportunity to connect our cities at the earliest opportunity and further facilitating tourism, and trade between China and Brunei. We are exploring options to have a Chinese airline collaborate with us via codeshare agreement on this route".

He continued, "The China market has fundamentally changed in the recent past with high growth in free and independent travellers. These potential customers do their own research and generally book online including airline websites. We have made

significant investment in launching a Chinese language website and are introducing both AliPay and WeChat as payment solutions for our guests. We are doing everything to ensure Brunei and RB information is readily available and the booking process is seamless for our guests".

Effective 27 October 2019, flights between Brunei (BVN) to Beijing (PKX) will operate four times weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. By 14 January 2020, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday flights will be added.

For more information, please call 03 – 2070 7166

Citilink Achieves Milestone with Australian Route

Citilink is set to become the twelfth Asia Pacific low-cost carrier (LCC) operating the widebody aircraft in the fourth quarter of 2019 as it takes delivery of two A330-900neos. With the ability to take on a 13,000-km-long journey, the aircraft is said to be able to accommodate 42 premium economy and 323 economy class seats.

Citilink is planning to add their first Australian route connecting Denpasar and Perth in late October 2019, to operate daily using the A320-200 aircraft. In the future, the airline will open new routes to other cities in Australia such as Gold Coast.



Moreover, Citilink is planning to launch its fourth route to Kuala Lumpur, which will be from Denpasar. Previously Citilink has operated flights to Kuala Lumpur from three cities in Indonesia namely Jakarta, Surabaya, and Banyuwangi. In this new development, passengers from Malaysia transiting at Denpasar will have a new low-cost option to Perth.

The airline currently operates 43 A320-200s, eight A320-200neos, and four ATR 72-600s in their fleet.

For more information, please call 010-4226 294.

Qantas to Operate "Project Sunrise" Research Flights



Qantas has announced research flights scheduled for October, November and December for the purpose of gathering new data about in-flight passengers, crew health and well-being on ultra long-haul flights. These flights are part of 'Project Sunrise', with the goal to operate regular, non-stop commercial flights from the east coast of Australia (Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne) to London and New York.

The three flights over three months will use new Boeing 787-9s and re-route their planned delivery flights.

Each flight will have a maximum of 40 people, including crew, in order to minimise weight and give the necessary fuel range. Carbon emissions from the flights will be fully offset.

People in the cabin – mostly Qantas employees – will be fitted with wearable technology devices and take part in specific experiences at varying stages of the approximately 19 hour flights. Scientists and medical experts from the Charles Perkins Centre will monitor sleep patterns, food and beverage consumption, lighting, physical movement and in-flight entertainment to assess impact on health, wellbeing and body clock.

Qantas' other partner, Monash University's researchers will work with pilots to record crew melatonin levels before, during and after the flights. Pilots will wear an EEG

(electroencephalogram) device that tracks brain wave patterns and monitors alertness. The aim is to establish data to assist in building the optimum work and rest pattern for pilots operating long haul services.

This represents the world's first flight by a commercial airline direct from New York to Sydney and only the second time a commercial airline has flown direct from London to Sydney.

Qantas Group CEO Alan Joyce said, "Ultra-long haul flying presents a lot of common sense questions about the comfort and wellbeing of passengers and crew. These flights are going to provide invaluable data to help answer them".

In Malaysia, H Travel Sdn Bhd is General Sales Agent (GSA) for Qantas Airways.

For more information, please call 03 – 2713 3911

Travelex Opens Five 'Retailtainment' Concept Currency Exchange at KLIA



The world's leading foreign currency exchange provider, Travelex has opened five 'retailtainment' and 'open concept' currency exchange stores at KLIA in August, featuring digital and interactive technology for more engaging and fuss-free service to travellers.

Malaysia Airports General Manager of Commercial Business, Hani Ezra Hussin said, "Travelex's vibrant and interactive setup allows fun additions such as quizzes, where guests can partake and redeem prizes while fulfilling their travel needs. This move aligns perfectly with our transformative plans and commercial reset strategy to profile Malaysia Airports as a lifestyle destination".

Travelex is redefining currency exchange with extraordinary value-added services. Travelex chairman Tan Sri Dato' Seri AP Arumugam said, "The company designed its stores to provide hassle-free and digital-friendly currency exchange experience to customers. We want travellers to relax while Travelex takes care of their travel money needs."

Asia Pacific commercial director of Travelex, Cameron Hume said, "Travelex aims to offer more than just exchange experience to travellers, and our 'order-online-and-pick-up-in-store' services bring utmost convenience to travellers. Also, travellers can access Travelex's interactive currency exchange through our travel guide and fun quizzes while waiting for their flight. We bring the total airport experience to travellers."

Travelex is also collaborating with Eraman, Malaysia Airport's duty-free retail arm to offer its customers exciting rewards and greater access to Travelex's value-added promotions.

Eraman general manager Zulhikam Ahmad said, "Our collaboration with Travelex is a perfect match as our Eraman Privilege Card members now get to enjoy a special rate by flashing their card. When we launched our new identity and membership card in April, our aim was to elevate the Eraman experience and you will see more of that in future, when we launch more and exciting partnerships. Our Privilege Card can be used in all our stores, from retail to F&B and this makes the experience more valuable as we introduce more brands and products in the coming months"

The trading director for South Asia & country general manager Malaysia of Travelex, Rakesh Aravind said, "The new transformation of currency exchange store concept, which is in line with Malaysia Airports' commercial reset strategy, will offer exceptional currency exchange experiences to travellers, including rewarding shopping experiences through its partnership with Eraman."

Travelex offers 0% commission fees on more than 42 currencies, benefitting its customers. Malaysians may enjoy a special resident rate while transacting at Travelex KLIA stores; two of the new Travelex stores are located at the departure area on Level 5 of the main terminal building while three are in the arrival area on Level 3 of the main terminal building, satellite building and domestic contact pier.

For more information, please call 03 – 2281 3006

AVIATION INTERVIEW WITH MOHAMMAD ZAIM MOHAMMAD NASHIR

Acting General Manager of Tourism Selangor

Mohammad Zaim, with his accounting background, finds the tourism sector to be interesting and very challenging after joining Tourism Selangor. He had started his career as an auditor before moving on to become a finance officer in a property development company and later in an oil and gas company. The 34-year-old wants to position Selangor, Malaysia's most developed state with the highest gross domestic product of RM321,069 million in 2018, as the country's preferred destination and make its tourism sector stand out in terms of investment, product offerings and services.



How long have you been involved with tourism in Selangor and when were you appointed as Acting General Manager?

I have been with Tourism Selangor for almost five years now after joining in 2015. Prior to this, I was its Finance and Administration Manager. I was appointed to my current position in March 2019.

What are the main challenges in promoting tourism in Selangor as the state government's tourism arm?

Sustainability is one of our main concerns. While ecotourism, agrotourism, sports tourism, medical tourism and cruise tourism are significant contributors to Selangor's sustainable tourism, we need to come up with initiatives on how to protect or legalise our product offerings, ensuring that they comply with the regulations.

A step in this direction is Selangor's tourism purification programme (Program Pemurnian Pelancongan Selangor or P3S in short) launched earlier this year to identify illegal products in the market and assist operators to obtain a proper license to run their business. We kickstarted P3S with the Hulu Selangor district council on 8 July and will proceed next with the Kuala Selangor district council and Petaling Jaya City Council.

Sustainable tourism calls for low impact on our natural environment and local culture. Looking at attracting tourists to visit all the nine districts in Selangor, we work closely with the state government to ensure that the state's tourism products are developed and preserved in each district. At the same time, we also make sure that the benefits derived from tourism are cascaded down to the grass roots level.

What do you notice about the current market's demands?

Tourism market surveys show that travellers are more interested to visit new tourist destinations. Tour operators are receiving requests for unique once-in-a-lifetime experiences from travellers. This is becoming more common among the millennials who are keen to explore the world and share their stories with others.

Additionally, 'instagrammable' destinations that have the potential to go viral on social media make it easy for us to market our tourism products.

What are some initiatives undertaken by Tourism Selangor this year to increase tourists to the state?

Under the State Budget Planning for 2019, Tourism Selangor has identified potential ecotourism areas such as Kuala Selangor, Sabak Bernam and Hulu Selangor besides growth opportunities in new and emerging markets such as Russia, Japan and Taiwan.

We are also looking at increasing accommodation capacity in Selangor and have specialised training programmes for the locals to become recognised as the "local community host" and "story teller" of our local places, heritage and culture to visitors and tourists.

Tourism Selangor has developed a global marketing initiative to support these promotional activities and increase their awareness both locally and internationally. #TakeMeAnywhere, our new promotion campaign and fresh branding exercise, uses digital marketing and social media to reach a wider audience.

Other initiatives complementing this campaign include introducing new products, corporate

service responsibility-based tourism related events and international roadshows.

Markets we have earmarked include Australia, China, India and European countries such as Germany.

What sort of tourist arrivals and receipts are Tourism Selangor targeting for 2019 and 2020?

Our target tourist arrivals for 2019 is 7.7 million, up from RM7.23 million in 2018, while receipts are expected at RM5.64 billion. As at June 2019, we have received 3.48 million tourist arrivals and are confident of achieving our target for the remaining of the year. For 2020, we are targeting 7.9 million tourist arrivals and total receipts of RM5.8 billion.

Visit Sepang 2020 was announced earlier this year in conjunction with the country's Visit Truly Asia Malaysia 2020 campaign. Why was this district selected to be the focus for next year?

Besides its sightseeing attractions, Sepang is also known for its ecotourism, agrotourism, education tourism, culture and heritage. It is also an international sports and event venue besides housing the KL International Airport.

What are the plans and major events drawn up for Visit Sepang 2020? How will they complement the country's campaign next year?

Tourism Selangor, in close collaboration with the Sepang Municipal Council, has drawn up a comprehensive plan to further strengthen the state's tourism industry.

Our good relationship with the local tourism players such as travel agencies, airlines and hoteliers has enabled us to introduce tour packages featuring various attractions in Sepang. We also initiated tie-ups with international travel agencies to launch special



travel packages based on market demand.

Through our campaigns, "Discover Selangor, Heart of Malaysia" and #TakeMeAnywhere, we hope to raise awareness and market demand, and subsequently create a benchmark for quality tourism products and services in the state.

How do you see Selangor's tourism industry transform into in five years' time?

As one of the most developed states in Malaysia, I believe Selangor will continue to remain popular and will be standing tall among other developed states catering to tourists' needs and offering world-class facilities.

What are your hobbies and what is your dream destination?

Football and swimming. I was the captain of Tourism Selangor futsal team where we emerged champion in this friendly game held among the government-linked companies in Selangor earlier in May. If time permits, I would like to travel to Istanbul in Turkey to explore its rich culture and architecture.



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