

Dr Hezri Adnan
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
of the Langkawi Development
Authority (LADA)

Perlepasan Dalam Negeri
Domestic Departures

Stairs
Toilets
Surau
Muslim Prayer Room

Perlepasan Antarabangsa
International Departures

DEPARTURE

FLIGHT NO	TO	STATUS	TIME
MA603 DA 0144	Kuala Lumpur	A	0720
MA603 DA 7000	JOHORE	F	0720
MA603 PT 7000	KL, Kuala Lumpur	B	0720
MA603 DA 0000	Bandar	B	0720
MA603 DA 0200	Bandar	B	0720
MA603 DA 0300	KL, Kuala Lumpur	J	0720
MA603 DA 0300	KL, Kuala Lumpur	B	0720
MA603 DA 0300	JOHORE	B	0720
MA603 DA 0007	Singapore	B	0720
MA603 DA 0000	Bandar	C	0720
MA603 DA 0000	Penang	B	0720
MA603 DA 0000	Singapore	B	0720
MA603 DA 0000	Singapore	E	0720
MA603 PT 0000	P. Langkawi	B	0720
MA603 DA 1100	Thong King	B	0720
MA603 DA 7000	Thong	B	0720
MA603 DA 7000	Bandar	B	0720
MA603 PT 0000	JOHORE	A	0720
MA603 DA 0000	Bandar	B	0720

DEPARTURE

FLIGHT NO	TO	STATUS	TIME
MA603 DA 7000	Penang	B	0720
MA603 DA 0001	JOHORE	B	0720
MA603 PT 7000	KL, Kuala Lumpur	B	0720
MA603 DA 7000	JOHORE	B	0720
MA603 DA 0400	Singapore	L	0720
MA603 DA 0000	KL, Kuala Lumpur	B	0720
MA603 DA 0100	Bandar	J	0720
MA603 DA 0000	Singapore	L	0720
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MORE THAN UNTAMED BEAUTY, A GATEWAY TO UNTOUCHED CULTURE.

KUCHING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, THE GATEWAY TO GETAWAYS

It all begins at Kuching International Airport (KCH). Rainforest millions of years old, wildlife in its true element, 240 ancient caves, and a culture preserved in time. Plan your route to a legendary site like nowhere else on the planet.

 **CURIOSITY**

 **HERITAGE**

A corporate leader with diverse experience, he is harnessing the latest technological advances to spur Malaysia Airports to greater heights as a smart aviation regional hub.

This month, Dato' Mohd Shukrie Mohd Salleh shares the increased safety measures adopted by the airport operator in tandem with the government's efforts as the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) poses to be a common challenge facing countries worldwide, causing disruptions to travel, businesses, tourism activities and events.



Airport GCEO Speaks

Rest assured that our airports remain open despite the government's implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) from 18 March to 14 April in a bid to flatten the curve in the spread of Covid-19 as airports are considered as essential services. For the passengers, they can still buy their essential items at the pharmacies, convenience stores and supermarkets as well as order take-aways at the food and beverage outlets at our airports under the MCO.

To up the ante of safety measures at our airports, we have recently started temperature screening for departing passengers, staff and crew. Those found with a body temperature of above 37.5°C will not be allowed to go beyond the check-in areas and will have to undergo further health screening by the Ministry of Health (MOH). To further ensure the MCO's effectiveness, we have placed markers of a metre gap each on the floors at the check-in, immigration and customs queueing areas to promote social distancing around the airports.

Likewise, we have also introduced similar gaps in lifts and at the airport seating areas. Anticipating questions arising from the MCO, we have created a Frequently Asked Questions page on our website to address Covid-19 concerns and other travel related matters which the public can easily access.

We have sufficient airport staff to ensure that the service level at our airports is not compromised during this period. I would like to thank our airport stakeholders such as the Immigration Department of Malaysia for the strict enforcement of the travel prohibitions outlined under the MCO for our departing and arriving passengers. The MOH, which receives our full support in conducting the temperature screening through their health workers at our airports, should also be commended for vigilantly monitoring Covid-19 in our nation via the issuance of up-to-date information and health advisory.

As shown by our latest statistics, the drop in air traffic performance experienced during the last week of January 2020 heightened in the following month, down 16.7% to 8.9 million

passengers. The international sector saw a decline of 1,380 flight movements compared to February 2019, with the overall average load factor falling to 59.2%.

Latest global data released by the International Air Transport Association confirmed how grim the Covid-19 pandemic has become with February figures showing the steepest passenger traffic decline of 14.1% since 9/11 tragedy while capacity fell 8.7% as air traffic were trimmed, resulting in load factor falling to 75.9%. Air cargo demand worldwide also slumped by 1.4% in February. The situation in Asia Pacific for air passenger and freight cargo is no better.

To weather this storm, I would like to assure our stakeholders and shareholders that we have taken the necessary measures to brace ourselves for the long haul and looked at how to sustain our operations during such extraordinary times. We remain fully committed to be a leader in our aviation industry and to continue delivering world-class and customer-centric services. In the meantime, stay strong, safe and healthy.



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Navigating Covid-19's Uncharted Territories

As the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) widens its reach beyond China to other parts of the world, the World Health Organisation has declared it to be a global pandemic on 11 March, calling for greater cooperation among world leaders.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA), which represents some 290 airlines comprising 82% of global air traffic, has estimated the world's airline industry could be impacted up to US\$113 billion in revenue losses from passengers in 2020.

IATA's latest estimate as of 2 March supersedes its previous analysis issued on 20 February which places lost revenue at US\$29.3 billion based on a scenario when COVID-19's impact was largely confined to markets associated with China.

As of 13 March, 134,098 confirmed cases of people infected with Covid-19 with 4,964 deaths have been reported. This is more than 8,437 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) cases in 2003. Since its outbreak in late January, this new virus has spread to over 114 countries, severely impacting forward bookings on routes beyond China.

IATA's Director General and CEO Alexandre de Juniac remarks, "The turn of events as a result of COVID-19 is almost without precedent. In little over two months, the industry's prospects in much of the world have taken a dramatic turn for the worse.

"As governments look to stimulus measures, the airline industry will need consideration for relief on taxes, charges and slot allocation. These are extraordinary times".

He says many airlines experiencing serious declines in demand have been cutting capacity and taking emergency measures to reduce costs in order to stay afloat.



In recent weeks, major financial markets, including the New York Stock Exchange, have been shaken with airline share prices falling nearly 25% since the Covid-19 outbreak began. Some are said to be 21 percentage points greater than the decline that occurred at a similar point during the SARS crisis, according to IATA.

A large fall in airline profits globally, far beyond the SARS impact, is also anticipated in the financial markets. While Brent oil prices, which have been dropping since the start of 2020 to hit its lowest level year-to-date at US\$52.22 on 9 March, could provide some relief for airlines, IATA believes it would not be able to significantly cushion the devastating impact that COVID-19 is having on demand.

Bloomberg Intelligence Asia Pacific Transportation Senior Analyst James Teo believes that low demand for travel poses the bigger problem and the net impact for airlines will be negative.

Anticipating domestic travel to recover faster than international travel given the travel restrictions which will take some time for them to be removed, Teo thinks that successful containment of Covid-19 in key markets is one area of concern that we should be looking at.

Not just limited to sectors such as tourism, retail and aviation but the global economy at large as the pandemic spreads, Bloomberg Economics projects US\$2.7 trillion in lost output, adding that US protectionism slowed global growth to 2.9% in 2019.

Based on its calculations, the global economy for 2020 could be reduced to 2.3% in a scenario of isolated outbreaks causing localised disruptions. This figure could slide to 1.2% with widespread contagion and in a global pandemic, zero growth is possible.

While the number of Covid-19 cases are reportedly tapering in China, they are rising in the major hotspots of South Korea, Italy and Iran. With widespread travel restrictions this time around compared to the SARS outbreak, Bloomberg Intelligence Asia Pacific Infrastructure industry analyst Denise Wong anticipates the recovery will be much slower in 2020 with airports being a major casualty.

Categorising the travel restrictions into three levels, high, medium and low, she places Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong and Macau under "medium" for banning entries from Hubei, tightening visa approvals and imposing quarantine requirements for entries from China.

This was prior to the latest announcement by Malaysia's newly appointed Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba that nationals from South Korea, Italy and Iran have been banned from entering Malaysia effective 13 March while foreigners who had visited these three countries would also be prohibited from coming into the country.

Meanwhile, with the Movement Control Order announced by the Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on 16 March to tackle the pandemic from spreading, Malaysians have been barred from travelling overseas while foreigners are banned from entering the country effective 18 March until 31 March 2020. The number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Malaysia has jumped to 673 as of 17 March with 49 people fully recovered and two deaths.

Elaborating on Covid-19's impact on airports, Wong expects those with the highest international passenger mix to be hit the most, citing Singapore Changi Airport and Hong Kong International Airport as examples.

She anticipates duty-free operators at airports and local retailers will also be hurt, taking



a bigger hit of three to five times more, especially for airports that usually receive high numbers of Chinese travellers, who have now been banned from travelling outbound by their government after the Covid-19 outbreak as well as travel restrictions from other countries.

Mitigating its impact

While no one knows when the current situation will normalise, the aviation industry, which has taken a beating from Covid-19 has seen airlines implementing cost-cutting measures and introducing innovative marketing promotions to get their hands on some revenue to tide over this period.

On the home front, budget carrier AirAsia X, which has 22.8% international seat capacity to and from China, came up with an unlimited flight pass at RM499 with a year's validity. AirAsia Group Berhad's temporary measures also included a pay cut, restricting duty travel unless necessary and replacing it with the use of voice or video conferencing.

Owned by Indonesian discount carrier Lion Air Group, Malindo Air was the first Malaysia-based airline to slash a 50% pay cut across the board while Malaysia Airlines

Berhad implemented a 10% salary cut for its senior management starting March.

The Malaysian government, on its part, recently unveiled a RM20 billion stimulus package to offset the fallout from Covid-19.

Despite the virus disruption, Teo from Bloomberg Intelligence believes there is hope for economic growth picking up at the epicentre of the Covid-19 outbreak with China's manufacturing plant expected to go back to normal production by end-March.

He anticipates 300 million of China's stranded migrant workers who had returned to their hometowns for the Chinese New Year will be transported back by that time, thus providing the necessary boost for the airline companies in the coming months.

Teo also expects another 100 million of returning Chinese students to provide more air traffic and coming to the rescue to provide such relief services will be charter flight operators since two-thirds of the flights in China have been grounded since the outbreak. Leading the recovery will be China Southern Airlines with its higher domestic seat share of 83%, he adds.

Malaysia Airlines Launches Flight to Kertajati



Malaysia Airlines launched its inaugural Kuala Lumpur-Kertajati service, being the first Malaysian carrier to fly direct to Indonesia's second-largest airport, West Java International Airport, Kertajati on 14 February 2020.

Located in Majalengka regency in West Java province, Kertajati is a strategic gateway for Malaysia Airlines passengers from across the world to explore deeper into Indonesia's iconic destinations.

To commemorate the new service, an event was held in Kertajati graced by CEO of Amal by Malaysia Airlines, Hazman Hilmi Sallahuddin; Head of Subdivision for Standardization of Aviation Safety, Dwi Apriyanto; Public Information and Communication Bureau of Ministry of Transportation Indonesia, Sutriyono as well as senior local Indonesian government officers.

Flight MH845 departed Kuala Lumpur on 13 February 2020 at 6.20 pm and arrived in Kertajati at 7.45 pm. The return flight MH844 departed Kertajati at 8.25 pm and arrived in Kuala Lumpur at 12.10 am the next day.

Malaysia Airlines Group Chief Executive Officer, Captain Izham Ismail said, "We are delighted to add Kertajati to Malaysia Airlines' network as it provides greater connectivity between Indonesian cities to the rest of our network. This provides opportunities for our passengers to experience the beautiful attractions that Kertajati has to offer. At the same time, we are also able to play our part in supporting economic growth and tourism in West Java".

The Captain added, "Also in line with our Fly Malaysia campaign, this service will further support the Visit Malaysia 2020, encouraging visitors to explore Malaysia's natural attractions and iconic landmarks

suitable for a long vacation or a short stopover. Besides leisure travel, this connectivity provides a choice for passengers to travel to Malaysia for business or to seek premium healthcare services in Malaysia. Kertajati marks Malaysia Airlines' seventh destination in Indonesia, further reaffirming our longstanding relationship with our ASEAN neighbour, the Indonesian government".

The twice-weekly service is operated by the B737-800 aircraft with a passenger capacity of 160 seats, comprising 16 Business Class seats and 144 Economy Class seats.

Malaysia Airlines currently connects Kuala Lumpur to six other Indonesian destinations – Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bali, Pekanbaru, and Solo.

For more information, please visit www.malaysiaairlines.com

Etihad Launches TravelPass Technology

Etihad Airways has announced a partnership with Norwegian technology developer Braathens IT, to develop TravelPass, an innovative travel solution initially aimed at corporate and frequent travellers which will launch later this year.

The new TravelPass technology provides a subscription-based travel solution, allowing Etihad to offer its frequent guests complete flexibility and ease with their regular and recurring travel arrangements. Customers can purchase a TravelPass for a set number of trips or a particular travel period instead of purchasing flights one by one.

Subscription-based travel is good news for the aviation industry as it provides customers with the choice between prepaid trips and pay-as-you-fly options, meeting the demands of flexibility, ease of booking and cost-efficient travel management.



Robin Kamark, Chief Commercial Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, said: "The innovative TravelPass technology offers a revolutionary booking experience for corporate and frequent clients who will also be enrolled into our award-winning Etihad Guest frequent flyer programme. By simplifying the travel process to just a few clicks, our guests have a seamless transaction through a platform that holds all your details in one place, gives you the flexibility to make changes to your bookings without fees and gives you the choice to pay later. We know our corporate clients are time-poor and believe this

innovative addition to our digital offering will improve the travel journey for subscribers".

The Etihad TravelPass will be available to book on the Etihad website on a desktop or mobile, offering customers an enhanced digital experience that saves time by avoiding repetitive tasks involved in managing each booking, leading to improved customer satisfaction.

For more information, please call 03- 2687 2222

Airbus Delivers First A350 with Touchscreen Cockpit Displays

Airbus has started deliveries to airlines of the first A350s equipped with Thales touchscreen flight deck displays. Of the six large screens in the A350 cockpit, three can now become touch capable: the two outer displays plus the lower-centre display. These displays offer touchscreen capability for the pilots when presenting Electronic Flight Bag (EFB) applications.

The new technology facilitates 'pinch-zooming' and panning gestures and will facilitate more flexibility and better interaction between both pilots, particularly during these scenarios: Before take-off (for computing take-off performance while entering data into the flight management system "FMS"); In-flight/cruise (for accessing en-route navigation charts); and during approach preparation (for consulting the terminal charts before entering FMS data).



In December, China Eastern Airlines took delivery of the first A350 equipped with the new devices, which are designed to aid crew interaction, cockpit symmetry, and smoother information management. Some 20 airlines have selected the option for their new A350s. The touchscreens received EASA certification in November 2019.

Head of Airbus' A350 XWB Programme, Patrick Piedrafita said, "Airbus continues to set the industry trends in aircraft cockpit design with these new interactive touchscreen displays in the A350. With our partner Thales, we are very proud to bring this technology to our customers, to enhance their aircrews' operations".

SIAEC Invest in Pos Aviation Engineering Services



SIA Engineering Company Limited (SIAEC) announced that it has entered into an agreement with Pos Aviation Sdn Bhd (Pos Aviation), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Pos Malaysia Berhad (Pos Malaysia) on 13 February 2020, to acquire a 49% stake in Pos Aviation Engineering Services Sdn Bhd (PAES).

Under the agreement, Pos Aviation will retain the remaining 51% stake. The indicative consideration for the acquisition of Pos Aviation's 49% stake is MYR10.087 million in cash. This was arrived at after arm's length negotiations on a willing-buyer, willing-seller basis, and after considering, inter alia, the net asset value and financial performance of PAES.

PAES has operations in KL International Airport and nine other stations in Malaysia. These stations will complement SIAEC's

existing network of Line Maintenance International stations, which will grow to 46 airports in nine countries including Singapore.

Png Kim Chiang, Chief Executive Officer of SIAEC, said: "We are delighted to establish this partnership with Pos Aviation. With the combined strength of both parties' capabilities and experience, we are confident that this strategic partnership will deliver a high level of dispatch reliability and quality engineering services to international airline customers in Malaysia".

Syed Md Najib Syed Md Noor, Group Chief Executive Officer of Pos Malaysia Berhad, said: "This strategic partnership marks the entry of a Malaysian brand into the global MRO market, an important milestone for Pos Malaysia. We foresee an increase in our customer base and expansion of

our market segments through enhanced product offerings, and this will contribute to the future growth of our revenue stream. SIAEC's expertise in maintenance and fleet management, along with our experience in serving various commercial airlines in Malaysia allows the strategic partnership to offer a complete MRO solution to customers across the region".

"We are undoubtedly excited about the future prospects and very confident that this strategic partnership shall exceed all expectations," he added.

Pos Aviation is a world-class aviation ground services provider offering ground handling, cargo handling, inflight catering, aircraft maintenance and engineering services to inbound and outbound international commercial airlines, with presence in nine airports in Malaysia.

Star Alliance Offers Free Upgrade to Gold Members on Heathrow Express



Star Alliance and Heathrow Express offer Star Alliance Gold Card holders a free upgrade when travelling on the Heathrow Express from 9 March 2020 onwards. This promotion is open to all frequent flyers holding Gold Status in any of the 20 Frequent Flyer Programmes offered by the Star Alliance member airlines and will run until further notice.

Heathrow Express is the dedicated non-stop train service between Heathrow Airport and downtown London Paddington station. The service, which carries 17,000 people a day on its fleet of fully electric trains has a journey time of only 15 minutes.

Making use of the offer is simple. Customers purchase a standard class single or return ticket. On the train, customers choose any

available seat in Business First Class and show both their train ticket and Star Alliance Gold Card to the attendant. Amenities in Business First include complimentary newspapers and magazines, more leg room, wider seats, a personal table, a power socket at each seat and on-board TV.

Les Freer, director at Heathrow Express, said: "We are pleased to welcome Star Alliance Gold members on Heathrow Express, and with a complimentary upgrade they can enjoy our fast and frequent service in style".

"We are grateful to Heathrow Express for providing our most valued flyers this upgrade benefit. It is another example of the local and regional partnerships we continue to explore in order to further enhance the value of Star

Alliance Gold status", said Renato Ramos, Director Loyalty for the Alliance.

Star Alliance Gold customers can also make use of the dedicated Gold Track lane when clearing security and relax in any of the four different lounges, operated by Air Canada, Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines and United.

The Star Alliance network currently has eight airlines serving KL International Airport (KLIA): Air China, All Nippon Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, EVA Air, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Thai Airways.

For more information, please visit www.staralliance.com/en/heathrow-express

Citilink Launches Route to Bandung

Citilink Indonesia, a subsidiary of Garuda Indonesia, has launched its new international route from Bandung - Husein Sastranegara International Airport to KL International Airport on 8 February 2020.

Citilink President and CEO, Juliandra Nurtjahjo said, "Bandung has been one of Malaysia's favourite destinations when visiting Indonesia. By launching this new route, we hope there will be more foreign tourists coming to both countries which can contribute to the growth of national economy and tourism".

According to the National Statistics Agency (BPS), Malaysians are at the top of Indonesia's foreign tourist list in 2019 with a total of 2.98 million visits, which increased 18.51% compared to the year 2018.

Malaysia Airports General Manager of Airline Marketing, Mohamed Sallauddin Mat Sah said, "We would like to congratulate Citilink Indonesia on their new route to KUL from BDO. This marks their 4th international flight route to KUL. Last year, we welcomed their flights from Jakarta, Surabaya and Denpasar. The addition of yet another new route from



KUL signifies the confidence that Citilink has in KUL contributing to their growth.

"Last year, we saw a 2.6% growth to more than 370,000 of passengers from Bandung. We hope to further strengthen the growing demands between these two destinations and enhance the passenger journey".

According to the schedule, the Bandung-Kuala Lumpur flight, or QG 538, will

depart from BDO at 5:50pm local time and arrive at KUL at 9:15pm local time.

Meanwhile, the QG 539 return flight from KUL will depart at 3:20pm local time and arrive at BDO at 4:45pm local time.

MS Elite Global is the appointed GSA for Citilink Indonesia in Malaysia.

For more information, please email to gsa.malaysia@citilink.co.id



Air New Zealand's Unveils the Prototype of Lie-Flat Economy



The Economy Skynest by Air New Zealand is the result of three years of research and development, with the input of more than 200 customers at its Hangar 22 innovation centre in Auckland. The airline has filed patent and trademark applications for the Economy Skynest which provides six full length lie-flat sleep pods.

Air New Zealand Chief Marketing and Customer Officer Mike Tod says that as the airline operates some of the world's longest flights, such as the upcoming Auckland-New York service at up to 17 hours 40 minutes one way, it is committed to putting more magic back into flying.

"We have a tremendous amount of development work underway looking at product innovations we can bring across all cabins of the aircraft. A clear pain point for economy travellers on long-haul flights is the inability to stretch out. The development of the

Economy Skynest is a direct response to that challenge," he added.

Air New Zealand will make a final decision on whether to operate the Economy Skynest next year after it has assessed the performance of its inaugural year of Auckland-New York operations.

General Manager of Customer Experience, Nikki Goodman says customer and cabin crew feedback on the Economy Skynest during its final phase of development has been outstanding with significant partners also keenly involved.

"We see a future flying experience where an economy-class customer on long-haul flights would be able to book the Economy Skynest in addition to their Economy seat, get some quality rest and arrive at their destination ready to go. This is a game changer on so many levels,"



"We're so excited to be sharing this product development with our customers. This is one of the highlights of three years' intensive work centred on customer wellbeing. We're sure this innovation is going to be a game changer for the industry and bring significant improvements to long-haul flying. We expect other airlines will want to explore licensing the Economy Skynest from us just as they have with the Economy Skycouch."

For more information and reservation, please call 03- 2715 5020 or email airnz@discover-kul.com



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Finnair's Anti-Carbon Program Lifts The Ambition-Level in The Aviation Industry



Finnair has today revealed the most ambitious sustainability strategy in the aviation industry to banish carbon from its operations. Finnair intends to reduce its net emissions by 50% by the end of 2025 from the 2019 baseline and achieve carbon neutrality latest by 2045. The plans clearly exceed the industry's common targets.

The new strategy includes a holistic approach to transform Finnair's operations to bring the company's climate footprint dramatically down. The main actions to tackle the carbon challenge include a 3.5-4.0 billion euro investment in the fleet during 2020-2025, reducing emissions in Finnair's European traffic by 10-15%. Which includes investing 60 million euros in sustainability during the strategy period of 2020-2025.

Additionally, the new strategy reduces weight onboard every flight, including ending in-flight travel retail sales within the EU on April

29 and focusing on pre-order travel retail. This will drive operational efficiencies to improve the fuel efficiency of every flight.

Finnair will also engage in a new partnership with Neste to increase the use of sustainable aviation fuels in Finnair operations, offsetting carbon emissions of corporate customers' flights. This initiative will invite customers to make sustainable choices and match their offsetting and biofuel contributions with biofuel.

And last but not least, the airline is committed to reduce single-use plastics by 50% by the end of 2022 as well as reducing food waste in catering operations by 50% by the end of 2022.

"Aviation is a fast-paced industry subject to many changes, and everything impacts it. Maintaining a long-term perspective at all times, in all market situations is key. The

plans we announced today prepare us for the next 100 years of Finnair's future", says Topi Manner, Finnair CEO.

"Our number one goal is to reduce our own CO2 emissions by investing in new aircraft technology, by flying fuel-efficiently, by decreasing aircraft weight and by increasing the use of sustainable aviation fuels. We are also investing in innovation and research to create future solutions that support our long-term target of carbon neutrality", the CEO added.

Finnair connects 19 cities in Asia with over 100 destinations in Europe on the fast Northern route - the shortest path between Europe and Asia. In Malaysia, Finnair is represented by Worldwide Aviation Agencies as their General Sales Agent (GSA).

For more information, please call 03- 2145 1155

AVIATION INTERVIEW WITH DR HEZRI ADNAN

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA)

A passionate development specialist and author of over 100 publications, who is highly experienced in offering his consultancy to various international organisations ranging from natural resources to sustainability issues, Dr Hezri Adnan now deploys his vast experience into research on green economy and policy advocacy into practise in Langkawi, populated by over 111,500 people.



You worked previously with the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia as its senior director of research. How has your experience help you in spearheading LADA?

We were in the business of listening to different views at ISIS and coming out with policies and solutions. With LADA, I am now on the other side of the court but still listening to what the community and industry players have to say. My first six months on the job was to understand the issues and challenges they faced, synthesise and package them accordingly. Essentially, I do not have to wait for the government to act as I am part of that process now.

The difference between ISIS and LADA is huge as the reality of managing or running in an environment like this can be critical at times and with so many vested interests of the industry to consider. In order to move forward, we established some ground rules of no moaning and groaning in our discussions with its industry players from the various sectors. Instead, we have been focussing on finding solutions collectively with the tourism players here. On the commercial side, we had to give some electric shocks to Langkawi's economy as its investments has been rather dormant in the past few years.

Tell us more about LADA and the role it plays in the development of Langkawi's tourism industry.

Since its inception in 1990, LADA has played a significant role in progressing Langkawi's tourism industry via numerous development and tourism projects. Accommodations, restaurants, entertainment and attraction facilities have been improved significantly

over the years. The public and private sectors have also invested millions of Ringgit in the construction of new public amenities and infrastructure.

Additionally, we have recently revamped LADA's website to provide updates, for instance, on our engagements with the community such as the tourism town hall sessions. One of our challenges is to get more impactful sports and cultural events out and do better in publicising them. Many tourists know Langkawi for its magical islands but our folklores are not polished enough to meet the international standards.

I strongly feel Langkawi's tourism potential is not fully tapped yet although the island is now at its fifth stage of development. While its tourist numbers are good, when it comes to benefitting the local economy, the people are complaining. To jumpstart the economy again, we brought in some new investments recently so that money can once again circulate on the island and reach everyone.

For those unfamiliar with Langkawi, how would you describe the island and its offerings?

Langkawi is a tropical gem in the Andaman Sea, comprising a mixture of picturesque paddy fields, jungle-clad hills, valleys and sandy beaches. Most importantly it is an ancient place with rock formation dating back 500 million years. Langkawi is also recognised as a diving spot besides being a treasure trove of exciting holiday experiences and duty-free island of kitchenware, chocolate and tobacco products.

Ecotourism is driven by ideas concerning local livelihoods and the conservation of natural and cultural environments. Can you elaborate on its importance to Langkawi?

Ecotourism, as a subset of sustainable tourism, is a vast and growing industry because of people longing for nature, a getaway from the bustling modern life in cities. Langkawi is one of those rare tourists' islands where natural forests still constitute over 60% of the land use. LADA has been instrumental in developing tourism products that combine local livelihoods with the rich natural endowments. The Kilim Geoforest Park and the Kubang Badak geo-trail are a case in point, both receiving more than 300,000 visitors yearly.



You have seen some early successes, with Qatar Airways' new service to Langkawi last year as a recent example. How much further can tourism in Langkawi grow?

Langkawi's developments since the 1990's have contributed significantly to the tourism industry, which has brought economic benefits, including increase in employment, business opportunities and improved infrastructure. While tourism remains to be its mainstay of economic growth for years to come as it has improved the quality of life of its residents and provided business opportunities to investors, we need to diversify and explore new areas of growth. We are exploring the possibility of mainstreaming new agriculture for instance by using 5G technology to plant high-value vegetables.

Langkawi is filled with unique and colourful encounters. What are your favourite parts of the island?

Its night market in Kuah is ideal for those wishing to taste some of the most authentic and affordable food on the island, including

the Malay sweets and street dishes. Arts and craft, textiles and souvenirs are also sold here. Langkawi's many islands with their appealing tropical rainforests and mesmerising cliff tops are also the perfect locations for island hopping, be it on boats or jet skis, sunset cruises and to discover its flora and fauna. Langkawi is home to an abundance of extraordinary wildlife, including 200 bird species. My favourite part has to be the 2.8km long beach of Tanjung Rhu. Being there is simply divine.

Lastly, if you were to give a piece of advice to someone visiting Langkawi, what would it be?

There are plenty of opportunities to experience a guided tour of the island, explore its traditional Malay houses and gain local insights on the island's flora and fauna. It is easy to spot the eagles and hornbills flying above you. As one of Malaysia's most beautiful and breathtaking islands, Langkawi has something for everyone, ranging from its rich culture, food and varied attractions. Indeed, this is a paradise not to be missed.

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