

# AIRLINK



## CONTENTS - JANUARY 2021

### Airport Talk

Airport GCEO Speaks **41**

Technological Innovations Driving the Aviation Industry in 2021 and Beyond **44**

### Aviation News

Cathay Pacific Celebrates Return to KUL **46**

Korean Air Achieves Prestigious 5-Star Recognition **47**

Abu Dhabi Launches The Hope Consortium **48**

American Airlines, British Airways and **oneworld** Launches Transatlantic Covid-19 Testing Trial **49**

Garuda Indonesia Unveils Let's Wear Masks Campaign **50**

Delta Launches First Quarantine-Free Travel to Europe **51**

Scoot Launches New Inflight Portal in Preparation for New Normal **52**

Royal Brunei Airlines Wins World's Leading Cabin Crew 2020 **53**

### Aviation Interview

Aviation Interview with Sundralingam Kulendra General Manager Sama-Sama Hotels KLIA **54**







FlyKLIA.com

YOUR GATEWAY TO INSPIRING WANDERLUST.

It all begins at FlyKLIA.com, the social network for travellers by travellers. Share your never-ending stories on must-visit places. Brag about your most unforgettable experiences, and find inspiration for your next travel goal. Join the community at FlyKLIA.com today.



Post, read and share  
travel reviews



Plan a bespoke  
travel itinerary



Book flights  
and hotels

 **FLYKLIA**  
GATEWAYS TO GETAWAYS

Powered by

 **MALAYSIA  
AIRPORTS**

## Airport GCEO Speaks

**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 salutes the start of another new year with recent achievements bagged by Malaysia Airports such as the British Standards Institution's (BSI) latest certification ISO45001:2018 and International Customer Experience Awards (ICXA) 2020. They also include the milestone made by its Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport (ISGIA) with the entry of Dufry, one of the world's leading organisations in the field of travel retail.**



**W**e are honoured to obtain BSI's new certification, especially given our role as the country's main gateway and host in providing joyful connections within a safe travelling environment. Our ability to meet such global standards serves as a strong testament of the emphasis we place on our passenger and airport community's safety, particularly when the world at large is still grappling with the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic after its onset almost a year ago.

In curbing Covid-19 at KL International Airport (KLIA), we have adopted the latest ultraviolet (UV) disinfection technology that can interrupt the transmission of airborne infectious pathogens with the installation of UV Chamber devices in our toilets. We are grateful that the low travel period has enabled us to speed up our toilet refurbishment with minimum disruption to our airport operations. Now in its final phase involving 94 toilets, this project is expected to be completed in June.

At the recent prestigious ICXA 2020, where

Malaysia Airports was the sole Malaysian nominee, we clinched the Silver Award for our Host Culture Transformation programme aimed at uplifting the standards of customer experience based on our service philosophy of 'Happy Guests, Caring Hosts'. It is important to keep this momentum going so that we can continue to deliver our promise to host joyful connections, especially with more flights expected to resume or commence this year.

We look forward to welcoming Starlux Airlines' inaugural flight from Taipei to Kuala Lumpur on 5 January at KLIA. The Taiwanese carrier will be operating a two-weekly service on this route, which will be an addition to its Taipei-Penang service which started in early 2020.

At Penang International Airport (PIA), Indonesia AirAsia was the sixth foreign airline to resume its operations with its Kuala Lumpur-Penang service that recommenced on 5 December. In addition, Firefly will be using PIA as its second hub when it introduces new Boeing jet services

from Penang to Kuching, Kota Kinabalu and Johor Bahru respectively in January by utilising the B737-800 aircraft.

As for our fast-growing ISGIA, it recently welcomed Dufry, the world's largest airport duty-free operator with its diverse range of retail offerings and state-of-the-art shopping experience that incorporates digital technology. We remain confident of the recovery in the airport retail business with travel gradually picking up in 2021, not only in Turkey but also in Malaysia considering several measures that have been unveiled recently to help them survive the Covid-19 crisis.

They include our new customised relief package which offers 100% rental rebates from July to December 2020 to our local airport retailers with a special rental tied to the passenger growth rate starting from this January in lieu to the pandemic's prolonged impact on passenger traffic recovery. I would like to reiterate that we are committed to ensure the airport community survives this crisis together.





A Monthly Publication Of MALAYSIA AIRPORTS © Aviation Marketing and Development Division

#### Advisor

Dato' Mohd Shukrie Mohd Salleh

#### Managing Editor

Mohamed Sallauddin Hj. Mat Sah

#### Editorial & Concept

Octagon Creative

[melisa.fly@octagon.com.my](mailto:melisa.fly@octagon.com.my)

#### Advertising & Production

Noor Hafiza Ruslan

[hafiza@malaysiaairports.com.my](mailto:hafiza@malaysiaairports.com.my)

Mohd Faizal Md Haris

[faizalmd@malaysiaairports.com.my](mailto:faizalmd@malaysiaairports.com.my)

#### Design & Distribution

Mediate Communications Sdn. Bhd.

#### MALAYSIA AIRPORTS HOLDINGS

BERHAD (487092-W)

Airline Marketing Division

Level 3, Arrival Hall (Domestic)

Main Terminal Building

KL International Airport

64000 Sepang

Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Tel : 603-8776 4949

Fax : 603-8776 4040

Email : [marketing@malaysiaairports.com.my](mailto:marketing@malaysiaairports.com.my)

# Technological Innovations Driving the Aviation Industry in 2021 and Beyond

After going through a very challenging and unprecedented 2020 with the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic disrupting many industries globally, including aviation, much concerns have been raised on their economic recovery and what will be their enablers.

On a positive note, the Covid-19 crisis has been attributed as an accelerator for many new innovations and technologies affecting air travel and other related sectors such as tourism, retail and hospitality.

They include the use of contactless person screening, heightened digitalisation of supply chains and a greater move towards a greener and more sustainable environment worldwide.

Remote and safer processing will gain significance in 2021 between air passengers and staff from airports, airlines, retailers or immigration departments as the pandemic persists.

The months ahead will also see the aviation sector leveraging on the use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), block chain, digital identity and biometric

processing for face, fingerprint and iris scan.

Airbus AI Fast Track leader Romari Redon says data driven AI will lead to better performance and help boost its competitiveness. "We are investing in research with other partners to become a world leader in safe and trustworthy AI.

The increasing use of digital identity management, automation and robotics in order to create an interactive experience for passengers and airport/airline staff is expected to gain traction in 2021.

Digital identity will not be limited to check-in, document check, self-service bag drop, access to security check points, border control, risk assessment and boarding but will also cover lounges, according to a spokesperson from New Experience Travel Technologies (NEXTT), a joint initiative by Airports Council International and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Mindful of the need to regain passengers' confidence and remind them that air travel is safe, investment into technologies such as touchless or digital kiosks that eliminate





the traditional check-in process will be encouraged. Likewise, the creation of an array of data points for predictive analysis to be carried out by airports in order to mitigate crowding risks.

### Travel app solutions

Responding to the gradual opening of the aviation industry, various companies and organisations have come up with innovative solutions. Atlantic Labs' Travizory Border Security SA app, which deploys next-generation biometric travel authorisation and eVisa systems for enhanced advance screening and vetting of travellers, is one example.

SimpliFlying founder and chief executive officer (CEO) Shasank Nigam, who released The Rise of Sanitised Travel last April, believes in a common pass that allows for a single certification to be used across multiple airlines and governments.

This will not only save a lot of confusion, especially for first-time travellers, but will also help in the continual growth of the aviation and travel industries. A digital or e-passport that includes the Covid-19 test results may be another solution.

Meanwhile, IATA has come up with its own travel pass or mobile app that put travellers in

control of their personal information for top level data security and data privacy.

Its director general and CEO Alexandre de Juniac says, "The IATA Travel Pass is a solution both travellers and governments can trust as it is being built with data security, convenience and verification as top priorities."

When ready, the pass will accommodate new global standards recognised by governments that ensure verified identity and test or vaccine information. Recommendations for biosafety include the use of contactless travel processes to reduce the risk of virus transmission when documents need to be exchanged in the travel process.

According to IATA research, contactless processes will be popular with travellers with 70% of them saying they have concerns about handing over their passport, phone or boarding pass to airline agents, security staff or government officials at the airport.

In the same survey conducted in September 2020, 85% of the travellers indicated that touchless processing throughout the airport would make them feel safer while 44% of them say they are willing to share personal data to enable touchless processes.

### Cloud and Drone Technology

To support the aviation industry's recovery, cloud-based air traffic flow management system is viewed as the answer to the

challenges posed by the new normal arising from Covid-19 since very accurate demand forecast and comprehensive situational awareness are crucial.

Cloud solutions are expected to help break the silos between stakeholders in the aviation ecosystem. Airlines can benefit from correct forecast and higher transparency for better collaboration while airports stand to reap from the precise sharing of information such as the situation on the runway, weather conditions and its capacity.

Additionally, drones have been seen as promoting the future growth of aviation. They are currently used in the agricultural, defence, filming, food and beverage, logistics, real estate and recreational industries.

According to the Drone Market Report 2020-25, the global drone market is expected to grow to over US\$42.8 billion in 2025 from US\$22.5 billion in 2020, with Asia being its largest regional market.

Indeed, the use of innovative technologies will continue to play a key role in overcoming the challenges posed by the current pandemic, which has also been viewed as a catalyst for change. Covid-19 has forced the global aviation sector to address public health-related issues, manage queues and crowds with more stringent measures as well as optimise the use of resources with greater use of automation and digital solutions.





**C**athay Pacific announced that it resumed its route from Hong Kong (HKG) to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) from 24 November after a three-year hiatus, capping off a tough year for the aviation industry with a celebratory return for Hong Kong's premium flag carrier to KUL.

The airline currently operates flights between KUL and HKG on a weekly basis every Tuesday.

“2020 has turned out to be one of the most challenging years, if not the most challenging year, for the Cathay Pacific Group in its 74-year history. Front and centre, the safety and well-being of our passengers and people will continue to be paramount to our operations, and we will not waiver on this commitment. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Cathay Pacific introduced our very own Cathay Care programme, which is a commitment to our passengers' well-being. Commitments are backed up not by words, but by actions. On this front, we have rolled out a series of enhanced measures across every stage of the journey from check-in to the cabin – in order to win our customers' confidence and trust.”

**Roger Li,**  
Country Manager of  
Cathay Pacific to Malaysia



## Cathay Pacific Celebrates Return to KUL

In response to Covid-19, Cathay Pacific has introduced a range of measures to keep its customers safe such as the free Covid-19 insurance, which is automatically applied to all trips commenced between 7 December 2020 to 28 February 2021. When customers fly, they will be covered for medical expenses relating to a Covid-19 diagnosis. This measure by the airline is amongst the first in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Country Manager added, “In the short to medium term, we remain agile in our plans for the Malaysian market. We will meticulously monitor demand with the view to steadily increasing capacity to our pre Covid-19 levels. However, the trajectory of these efforts will have to go hand in hand with external factors beyond our control, such as the pace of the Covid-19 vaccine deployment, as well as the easing of border restrictions and quarantine requirements around the world. The fluidity and the dynamism of the Covid-19 pandemic means it is difficult to make a precise

forecast on future demand with any degree of reasonable certainty. Nonetheless, should the opportunity arise, we are constantly on the lookout for new market opportunities.”

Cathay Pacific has a long history in Malaysia, having operated services to the country since 1957. With such historical ties, Cathay Pacific remains steadfast in its commitment to the Malaysian market, and the airline maintains a loyal customer base that are eagerly awaiting to travel again to Hong Kong and beyond.

With the recently resumed passenger service to Hong Kong, the airline commends Malaysia Airports for being greatly supportive of the efforts to resume this route after three years and the airline is looking forward to welcoming new and returning passengers alike onboard again.

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





## Korean Air Achieves Prestigious 5-Star Recognition



**K**orean Air has achieved top global recognition by being certified as a 5-Star Airline by international air transport rating agency, Skytrax.

Korean Air joins 10 other international airlines in this exclusive 5-Star Airline group. Skytrax completed the Korean Air audit assessments during February 2020 before the global travel shut down, deferring this 5-Star announcement.

Korean Air President & CEO, Woo Kee-hong, said: "We're excited to receive a 5-Star Certification from Skytrax, the world's most prestigious and recognised customer service experience and airline ratings organisation. It's positive and meaningful news during this challenging time, and I'm sincerely proud of all our Korean Air employees who make this achievement possible. We established and have run our Service Improvement Committee since 2013 to monitor our service,

evaluate customer satisfaction, and implement the industry's best practices. We also continue to upgrade our aircraft and equipment to improve our customers' experience and ensure safe and clean flights. Korean Air is ready for the new, post-COVID era."



This 5-Star Airline rating for Korean Air was due to have been released earlier this year, but due to Covid-19 we had delayed certification to a time when it was more appropriate to announce and acknowledge this achievement. A key determinant in awarding this 5-Star Airline status to Korean Air is the high level of quality consistency delivered to customers, with an excellent onboard product across First, Business and Economy class, which combine with very efficient and sincere staff service.



*Edward Plaisted of Skytrax*

Korean Air operates from Terminal 2 at Incheon International Airport in Seoul which is one of the world's newest and most technologically advanced terminal facilities. In addition to a high-level of automation for check-in and bag-drop, Korean Air benefits from quick and efficient baggage delivery and priority handling systems, plus smooth flight connections amongst SkyTeam partners.

Onboard, Korean Air has a modern fleet of aircraft, including the A380, Boeing 747-8, Boeing 787 and A220. An important factor in the high rating for onboard product is the industry leading 33 to 34-inch personal space in Economy Class on widebody aircraft, and the quality and consistency of the suites provided to customers in First Class and Prestige Business Class on long haul flights.

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

# Abu Dhabi Launches The Hope Consortium



Amid an anticipated surge in vaccine logistics demand, Abu Dhabi is poised to cement its position as the global logistics hub to facilitate Covid-19 vaccine distribution across the world, after spearheading the launch of the Hope Consortium.

Comprising leading Abu Dhabi and global entities, the Hope Consortium represents a complete supply chain solution to address vaccine transport, demand planning, sourcing, training, and digital technology infrastructure, and facilitate vaccine availability across the world.

The news follows Hope Consortium member Etihad Cargo and the consortium transporting five million vaccines in November on behalf of the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi, which is spearheading the consortium and will oversee regulatory compliance, full chain expertise and scientific insight. The consortium also includes Abu Dhabi Ports Group, Rafed, the healthcare purchasing arm of Abu Dhabi-based ADQ, and Switzerland's award-winning SkyCell, which develops next-generation, temperature-controlled logistics containers for the pharmaceutical industry. As part of the Hope Consortium, SkyCell will establish a regional service and manufacturing centre in Abu Dhabi.

The Hope Consortium has pooled its collective expertise to garner a multi-faceted capability to provide logistics services to handle over six billion doses from the vaccines being developed and manufactured around the world – whether in single or multi doses – in cold and ultra-cold conditions in 2021, rising to over three times more doses by the end of next year – the largest capacity and logistics capability regionally and one of the largest globally.

"Consortium partners already have extensive expertise in the global delivery of millions of Covid-19 related items, such as



personal protective equipment, diagnostics consumables, vaccines and pharmaceuticals. As we progress talks with vaccine manufacturers to apprise them of our global distribution capabilities, the Hope Consortium will harness the united expertise of various Abu Dhabi and UAE stakeholders to provide a fully-fledged, end-to-end solution specifically for Covid vaccine distribution needs."

"With two thirds of the world's human footprint within a four-hour flight of Abu Dhabi, the UAE capital's investment in technological expertise and world-class infrastructure facilities means we can serve as a global logistical hub to, and for, the world," explained Tony Douglas, Group Chief Executive Officer, Etihad Aviation Group.

"Etihad Cargo's role in the consortium will leverage our outstanding pharmaceutical logistics expertise and specialised pharma and healthcare service, PharmaLife, the IATA CEIV Pharma certified product capable of facilitating temperature-sensitive cargo between +25°C and -80°C. Our network reach across key destinations will be supported by the utilisation of our charter operations to meet global demand for swift and secure Covid-19 vaccine shipments."

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



# American Airlines, British Airways and oneworld Launches Transatlantic Covid-19 Testing Trial



American Airlines, British Airways and **oneworld**® announced on 17 November that they have launched an optional Covid-19 medical-based testing trial on selected flights from the United States (US) to London Heathrow (LHR), in a combined efforts to scientifically demonstrate how Covid-19 testing can reopen international travel and remove the need for passengers to quarantine on arrival.

The free tests were offered to eligible customers booked on American Airlines flight

AA50 departing Dallas/ Fort Worth (DFW) to LHR; British Airways flight BA114 departing New York's John F. Kennedy Airport (JFK) to LHR; and British Airways flight BA268 from Los Angeles (LAX) to LHR since 25 November. The test will be expanded to American Airlines flight AA106 from JFK to LHR.

Eligible customers booked on flights that are part of the trial will be contacted by American Airlines and British Airways with instructions on how to volunteer. Each customer participating in the trial will take three tests in conjunction with the journey. If a customer tests positive, they should reschedule or cancel their travel.

The first test, to be taken 72 hours before departure from the US, is a convenient at-home RT-PCR test provided by LetsGetChecked. Customers will self-collect a nasal sample, under the supervision of medical professionals via a virtual visit.

After landing at LHR, participating customers will proceed to their second test at the airport. The LAMP test, provided by Collinson, involves the collection of a nasal sample by a medical professional. After the test is completed, a test kit for the third test will be provided to the customer. The test kit offers an at-home testing option, through the self-collection of a saliva sample which is taken three days after arrival in the United Kingdom (UK).



The three-test approach aims to validate a customer's negative status for Covid-19 throughout the travel journey and will provide insight into the most effective and practical testing interval. The third test is intended to further confirm the results of the first two tests, to demonstrate that one or two tests will be sufficient to allow travel to safely restart.

A task force comprising **oneworld** member airline representatives and independent medical experts are overseeing the implementation of the trial. The task force will share aggregated results with the US and UK Governments and other stakeholders to demonstrate the essential role that Covid-19 testing programmes can play in safely restarting travel.

“

We believe that Covid-19 testing will play an important role in safely restarting international travel. A comprehensive testing programme will provide governments the confidence to reduce or waive quarantine requirements and safely reopen their economies to international visitors, while further assuring customers that their health and well-being are protected.

”

**Rob Gurney**  
Chief Executive of **oneworld**

# Garuda Indonesia Unveils Let's Wear Masks Campaign



Garuda Indonesia has become the latest airline to introduce a new "masked" aircraft livery in keeping with the times. The national flag carrier painted a special mask design on one of its Airbus A330-900 Neo in support of the Indonesian government's "Let's Wear Masks" campaign on 12 October, which aims to curb the spread of the Covid-19 infection.

The airline noted that it took 60 people and 120 hours to put the blue surgical mask onto the nose of the aircraft.

On 3 December, the aircraft made its first landing at KL International Airport (KUL) from Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (CGK) at 11:50AM.

Garuda also announced that at least four more aircraft will be sporting face masks designed by the public through an online contest dubbed "Fly Your Design through the Sky."

President & CEO of Garuda Indonesia Irfan Setiাপutra said that "The 'Fly Your Design Through The Sky' competition is aimed to encourage everyone to be actively

participating in raising awareness towards the importance of wearing mask especially during this pandemic, by expressing their voice through creativity that put into the design of masks that will be gradually painted on four Garuda Indonesia aircraft.

"On this occasion, we also express our appreciation to the Artha Graha Peduli Foundation for supporting the campaign of wearing masks through the Garuda Indonesia livery mask program.

"We certainly realise the efforts to socialise the implementation of health protocols specifically to wearing masks, need full support as well as participation from any other parties. Furthermore, we also invite all parties who wish to participate and support the "Ayo Pakai Masker (Let's Wear Mask)" campaign through collaboration on the mask livery program with Garuda Indonesia, as we recently did with the Artha Graha Peduli Foundation" said Irfan.

"This fourth mask livery design would be our last mask livery as well as the closing of our "Fly Your Design Through the Sky" competition that has started in October 2020.

"As we received hundreds of submissions during the competition. We would like to thank everyone for the enthusiasm in taking part to support the Government's program in mask-wearing campaign — "Ayo Pakai Masker" to raise public awareness about the importance of health protocol within daily activities, through its collaboration and creativity which appeared on Garuda Indonesia's mask livery.

"We also would like to express our appreciation to Pertamina for its support in realising the synergy of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that prioritises the implementation of health protocols for all business lines through this mask livery program. We sincerely hope the synergy would fully support the Government's effort in handling Covid-19 outbreak that will contribute to accelerating the national economic recovery".

Irfan expressed his appreciation to all parties who have supported the success of organising the "Fly Your Design Through the Sky" competition, namely Artha Graha Peduli Foundation, Pigeon Express, and Pertamina. Not to forget, appreciation were also conveyed by Irfan to the 4 (four) winners of the mask livery design, namely: Jailani Sidik (mask livery with the "Indonesian Pride" theme); Helena Calista (Terbang Tinggi dan Tetap Terlindungi = Fly High and Stay Protected); Rainhard Budi Susanto (Sekar Jagat Nusantara); and Johana Angelia Christian (Bersama Membangun Masa Depan Bangsa = Together Building the Nation's Future).

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



# Delta Launches First Quarantine-Free Travel to Europe

**D**elta Air Lines announced on 26 November that the Aeroporti di Roma and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport have joined in a first-of-its-kind trans-Atlantic Covid-19 testing program that will enable quarantine-free entry into Italy, in accordance with a decree expected to be issued soon by the government of Italy.

"Carefully designed Covid-19 testing protocols are the best path for resuming international travel safely and without quarantine until vaccinations are widely in place," said Steve Sear, Delta President – International and Executive Vice President – Global Sales. "Safety is our core promise – it's at the center of this pioneering testing effort and it's the foundation of our standards for cleanliness and hygiene to help customers feel confident when they fly Delta."

Delta has engaged expert advisors from Mayo Clinic, a global leader in serious and complex healthcare, to review and assess the customer-testing protocols needed for Delta to execute a Covid-tested flight program.

"Based on the modeling we have conducted, when testing protocols are combined with multiple layers of protection, including mask requirements, proper social distancing and environmental cleaning, we can predict that the risk of Covid-19 infection – on a flight that is 60 percent full – should be nearly one in a million," said Henry Ting, M.D., M.B.A., Chief Value Officer, Mayo Clinic.

Delta has also worked closely with the Georgia Department of Public Health to develop a blueprint for governments to reopen important international travel markets.

"The State of Georgia and the Italian government have demonstrated leadership in testing protocols and practices that can safely reopen international travel without quarantine requirements," Sear added.

From 19 December, Delta's dedicated trial tested customers and crew on newly relaunched flights from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to Rome-Fiumicino International Airport. The tests will exempt all U.S. citizens permitted to travel to Italy from quarantine-on-arrival, as well as all European Union and Italian citizens. This applies to travel for essential reasons, such as for work, health and education.

To fly on Delta's Covid-tested flights between Atlanta and Rome, customers will need to test negative for Covid-19 through a Covid Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test taken up to 72 hours before departure; a rapid test administered at the airport in Atlanta before boarding; a rapid test on arrival in Rome-Fiumicino; as well as, a rapid test at Rome-Fiumicino before departure to the United States.

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





## Scoot Launches New Inflight Portal in Preparation for New Normal

To better meet customer expectations in the post-Covid world, Scoot launched a new inflight portal, ScootHub, to serve as a one-stop shop for all customer needs inflight.

ScootHub, which can be easily accessed from customers' own mobile devices, will be the first of its kind in the region to offer such diverse functionalities.

Launching in phases that commenced in December 2020, Scoot customers will be able to order food and beverages from ScootCafé, shop for duty-free items from KrisShop, play games, browse inspirational travel content and more, all from the convenience of their own device.

This transition from physical to digital inflight menus, duty-free catalogues and magazines reduces surface contact and physical interactions between customers and crew, giving customers peace of mind about their health and safety on board. This reduced interaction also allows Scoot to resume some inflight services, such as buy-on-board food, which had been temporarily suspended.



In ScootHub's second phase, scheduled for April 2021, customers will be able to book ground activities and attractions while inflight. They can also sync their Krisflyer membership to earn or redeem miles when they purchase items via KrisShop or activities and attractions via Pelago, the SIA Group's new platform for destination inspiration and content. Scoot has a roadmap of additional features to be deployed in subsequent phases.

Campbell Wilson, Scoot's Chief Executive Officer, said, "We know that health and safety is at top of customers' minds these days, and that regulatory requirements have changed the inflight experience.

"Scoot enables auto resume valued services in a safe, low-touch manner, improving customer's experience and – through reduction in paper-based collaterals – improving our environmental sustainability too.

"Our investment in this portal is part of Scoot's comprehensive digitalisation programme, both internal and external, which also includes health-focused initiatives such as touchless check-in kiosks and bag-drop facilities, enhanced online and mobile check-in capabilities, and real-time information on travel requirements."

**ScootHub**  
Your Solution for a contactless inflight experience

Get your inflight fix while you're 35,000 feet high! Order your meals and shop our exciting catalog from your own device by accessing our new ScootHub

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



## Royal Brunei Airlines Wins World's Leading Cabin Crew 2020

**R**oyal Brunei Airlines (RB) has won the World's Leading Cabin Crew 2020 category at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual World Travel Awards (WTA) grand finale held virtually on 27 November. The prestigious title was awarded to RB after the national airline of Brunei Darussalam received the most number of votes in a world-wide poll of guests, travellers and travel professionals across the globe.

It comes just a month after RB was awarded the Leading Cabin Crew honour in the WTA Asia Awards. The prestigious accolade was awarded to RB from a field of 17 airlines competing for the title, including world's leading airlines.

Karam Chand, RB's Chief Executive Officer, said: "The award of the World's Leading Cabin Crew and Asia's Leading Cabin Crew by the prestigious World Travel Awards

is well earned and a reflection of our service strategy and single mindedness to establish RB as a well-respected global brand. The award demonstrates we have won the hearts and minds of our guests and travel professionals worldwide and a stamp of approval of our hard work, dedication and world class service over a number of years.

"Winning the World category as global leader in cabin crew marks a new chapter in our proud history and more recently as a boutique airline standing above the much bigger and well-resourced global airlines. Being a boutique airline requires us to clearly differentiate ourselves from others and there is no better way than with the Bruneian hospitality that comes from the heart combined with our service vision through the thought of the little things we do and one that cannot be duplicated by the competitors."

Chand added: "I would like to congratulate every Cabin Crew member, Cabin Crew management and staff, the trainers, the project team behind this award and Team RB."

Graham E. Cooke, Founder, World Travel Awards, said: "Congratulations to Royal Brunei Airlines for being voted 'World's Leading Cabin Crew'. The entire team possesses an incredible passion for raising inflight service to an entirely new level, and I am delighted that this has been acknowledged by both the travel trade and consumers."

For more information, please visit [www.flyroyalbrunei.com](http://www.flyroyalbrunei.com) or call 03 – 2070 7166 for H Travel Sdn Bhd – Royal Brunei's General Sales Agent in Malaysia.





## Aviation Interview with Sundralingam Kulendra

General Manager  
Sama-Sama Hotels KLIA

Managing three of Malaysia Airports' hotels under the Sama-Sama brand is no tall order for Sundralingam Kulendra, known for the passion he pours into his work. Having graduated with a Master's Degree in Hotel Management and worked overseas for 12 years, he returned to Malaysia in 1996 and there has been no turning back. The 56-year-old GM also lectures and is actively involved with other tertiary institutions, certifying potential newbies into the hospitality field.



**Having been involved with Malaysia Airports' hotel properties since February 2011, please share with us your career highlights with the group.**

I was privileged in 2012 to be part of the rebranding of its flagship Sama-Sama Hotel KL International Airport (KLIA), formerly Pan Pacific Hotel, which is sited adjacent to KLIA. This was followed by its 442-room refurbishment the subsequent year. 2013 also saw my involvement in the rebranding exercise of Malaysia Airports' airside transit

hotel, Sama-Sama Express KLIA. Another highlight for me was the launching of Sama-Sama Express klia2 in 2014. The Airport Fast Track Service launched in 2016 was also memorable for me.

**You were promoted to your current role in March 2018. How is it like managing Malaysia Airports' three hotels of different categories, especially during the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic? Going forward through this most challenging**



time, one of our strategies we adopted is to think out-of-the-box, be it managing the hotels' operational expenses or exploring business opportunities. We targeted the oil and gas industries and those from the embassies or High Commission offices.

Amidst taking care of our staff's healthcare and guests' welfare with sanitisation and other safety measures that abide by the government's standard operating procedures, our primary goal during the Covid-19 crisis is to maintain our guests' experience with quality standard of service.

With most of the countries' borders still closed, we explored ways to encourage locals to stay at our hotels. Besides working closely with our senior management team in handling the hotels' cost and expenses, I was also mindful of maintaining its profits and earnings before interest, taxes, and amortisation.

**How many hotel staff do you oversee and what are the challenges?**

I am in charge of a total of 370 hotel staff. Operating now with a minimum workforce, we managed to achieve average occupancy of 60% compared to 80% before the pandemic. Our priorities are to maintain the current local staff while reducing the foreign contractual workforce. At the same time, we encourage multiskills and cross-department teamwork among our staff.

**Malaysia Airports' five-star Sama-Sama Hotel KLIA has been undergoing renovation since December 2019. What is its progress to-date? Is it on track to complete it with the targeted 10 to 12 months?**

The first phase, which took less than 10 months, has since been completed. The renovation included the hotel's ballrooms and functions rooms on level 1, Equator, a new private dining and event venue as well as the Palmz lobby lounge.

Phase two was delayed due to the Conditional Movement Control Order but work has since resumed. It is scheduled to complete by first quarter of 2021. The hotel's all-day dining restaurant Degrees will be rebranded into an all-day-dining hub called Continents. Other affected hotel areas include the functions rooms on level 2, lobby, reception, concierge and washrooms.

Phase three will cover the new staircase on level 1, guest-lift cars or elevators and walkway to the sky bridge linking the KLIA's Main Terminal Building. There will also be more washrooms available at the hotel.

**What are some of the new technological innovations being introduced as part of its renovation?**

We will have two large LED screens measuring 10 ft by 20 ft each at our new Gateway Ballrooms while our hotel rooms will have a new door locking system. We will also have an energy saving INNcontrol system for room temperature control using movement sensors connected to our front office. Other new systems involve our point of sales, fire alarm and building management.

**Sama-Sama Hotel KLIA's Staycation package launched during Covid-19 was a resounding success. Can you share the package's uniqueness and will it be offered again in the near future?**

It is targeted as a short retreat for families with activities organised in a clean and safe environment. The staycation package will be back in 2021 with more exciting stay, dining and recreational activities in the hotel as well as excursion activities at KLIA working with Malaysia Airports and its aviation-related partners. Our aim is also to promote KLIA as a tourism destination.

**How do you view the current hotel service standards in Malaysia? Is there room for improvement? If yes, in what areas?**

Lots of room for improvement in our country's hospitality service industry are required. They include inculcating professionalism, character building and thinking "out-of-the-box" in order to exceed guests' expectations.

We need to imbue the younger generation joining the hotel line with qualities such as passion and a positive attitude. Besides providing good service, they must be willing to learn and upgrade their skills with technology trends constantly evolving in the service industry.

At Sama-Sama Hotels, we provide staff opportunities to grow through cross exposure between departments and going for training and development programmes to sharpen their skills, including in management areas. Apart from these educational opportunities, they are also encouraged to share their ideas.

**The life of a hotelier means 24 hours on call. How then do you balance your work and family life? Away from work, how do you unwind?**

I am grateful for my family's understanding and their full support of my career path in hospitality. At home, I am the handyman and love tinkering with my equipment besides tending the organic garden with my wife. I also take time to meet up with old schoolmates to share the good old times of growing up together.

**What is your wish list for 2021?**

Hopefully, with most of the countries' borders gradually reopening, we will benefit from the business opportunities arising, especially for cross-border tourism. With the Covid-19 vaccines available in the near future, I look forward to a new chapter with the newly refurbished Sama-Sama Hotel KLIA as a preferred choice for international transit passengers. I also wish my hospitality industry colleagues and friends who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic will have the chance to return to work soon.



REATHE EASY



ISS THE SKY



NDULGE



# MORE THAN NATURAL WONDERS, A GATEWAY TO EPIC EXPEDITIONS.

KOTA KINABALU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, THE GATEWAY TO GETAWAYS

It all begins at Kota Kinabalu International Airport (BKI). Make an aquatic friend, conquer Mount Kinabalu, and discover a world so exotic with more than 6,000 plant species, even the first season of reality TV show Survivor was filmed there. Plan your route to countless new adventures.