

AIRLINK

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Airport MD Speaks

Dato' Iskandar Mizal Mahmood returns to Malaysia Airports after almost 20 years with his wealth of experience gleaned from many multinationals and government linked companies to elevate and transform Malaysia Airports in the fast-changing aviation landscape with new travel norms and innovative technological advances.

This month, he shares his optimism on the recovery of the travel and tourism industry following the successful launch of the Langkawi pilot travel bubble project where the Langkawi International Airport plays a crucial role in welcoming both the fully vaccinated domestic and international tourists. The commencement of the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) between KL International Airport (KLIA) and Singapore's Changi Airport has not only witnessed more flights and increased frequencies from airlines but will also set the tone for other upcoming positive developments for the industry.

Dato' Iskandar Mizal Mahmood
Managing Director
Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad



Having joined Malaysia Airports in 1999 to lead in its IPO exercise and subsequent listing on Bursa Malaysia and returning now in my current capacity, I cannot help but notice the tremendous growth the Group has gone through over the years. It has sustained itself well through the ravages and onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic and survived by adopting rigorous cost and resource optimisation.

I certainly cannot wait for more travel restrictions to be lifted across our borders and to have travellers enjoying the upgraded amenities at our airports nationwide under the new norms of travel. These include our renovated washrooms and enhanced MyAirports app at KLIA, just to name a few, which are expected to be completed by the end of the year. The use of biometric facial identification to speed up airport processes and queueing time are among the other innovations that our passengers can expect. Our priority has always been to ensure that our passengers

have a seamless, safe and joyful experience at our airports.

The government's launch of the Langkawi pilot travel bubble project and lifting of domestic travel restrictions have a positive impact on our October domestic passenger movements across our network of airports nationwide, which saw a three-fold increase to surpass the one million mark to reach 1.18 million passengers for the first time.

We are optimistic of passenger traffic improving in the coming months and are committed to continue working hands-in-gloves with various parties such as the government agencies and ministries as well as the private sector to ensure that aviation and tourism, the two badly hit industries from the Covid-19 pandemic, emerge stronger and more resilient.

It was a joyous moment to not only see local carriers such as Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia and Malindo Air taking off to the skies but also to witness the return of Jetstar Asia,

Scout and Singapore Airlines to KLIA as we commence the VTL between KLIA and Singapore's Changi Airport to reactivate the demand for this once world's busiest route in 2018 and 2019.

We expect to see business travel pick up alongside the surge in demand for leisure travel from this air VTL arrangement and have the facility in place at KLIA to accommodate the business travellers. Together with our airline partners, we aspire to ensure a secured travelling experience for our passengers as the momentum for air travel gains strength.

We thus welcome the government's negotiations to establish other VTLs, including the upcoming travel corridor between Malaysia and Indonesia, as it would not only benefit the aviation industry but also our country's economy as a whole. As we wrap up 2021, which has been another challenging year for us, we wish all our passengers safe travel during this year-end holiday season.



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Domestic Tourism a Boon - Malaysia Awaiting to Welcome Foreign Tourists

As Malaysia's tourism industry gradually recover from the Covid-19 pandemic following the government's recent launch of the Langkawi's travel bubble project initially first to domestic tourists and subsequently to international tourists where both must be fully vaccinated as one of the main requirements, its industry players, particularly the travel agents, have been clamouring for direct flight connectivity to Langkawi to resume soon.

Currently, the foreign tourists have to fly into the KL International Airport (KLIA) first and then take the connecting flight to Langkawi. Lots of hope has been pinned on Qatar Airways, with its wide network, resuming their direct Doha-Langkawi flights since the airline had reportedly expressed interest to do so soon in June according to a statement from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC).

While Langkawi Development Authority (LADA), responsible for tourism promotion and investment in Langkawi, would want international flights to resume the soonest possible, it is simply not happening fast enough much to the dismay of many travel agents and tourism industry players who have been hard hit by the pandemic.

According to LADA Tourism division senior chief assistant manager Azmil Munif Mohd Bukhari, "We are slowly seeing more foreigners on the island who come via transit airlines and expect to see foreign airlines flying directly to Langkawi probably in February 2022."

Qatar Airways country manager for Malaysia and Brunei, Dato' Muzammil Mohamad tells Airlink, "We are monitoring the situation and will relaunch when the time is right," saying that those flying to Langkawi via KLIA could take advantage of Qatar Airways' 10 weekly flights to KLIA. "They can then connect to Langkawi on the flights of our codeshare partner, Malaysia Airlines."

Malaysia's national carrier has also been proactive in providing a travel advisory in English for foreign tourists on its website, www.malaysiaairlines.com on the Langkawi International Travel Bubble. It also provided links to MOTAC and the National Security Council websites although much more information contained in these two links are in our national language Bahasa Malaysia.

Malaysia Airlines Berhad group chief marketing and customer experience officer Lau Yin May says the national carrier, which has 35 flights weekly to Langkawi, will be recommencing its Johor Bahru-Langkawi flights on December 1.

Although Malaysia Airlines' international flights are relatively low and currently limited mainly to essential travel, she is confident of its readiness to resume more international routes as the airline did not retrench any staff during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We are waiting for the borders to reopen and fly again," quips Lau, who is jubilant over the commencement of the vaccinated travel lane (VTL) between KLIA and Changi Airport on November 29, where Malaysia Airlines is among the six airlines designated to fly this once busy route.

The others are AirAsia, Jetstar Asia, Malindo Air, Scoot and Singapore Airlines (SIA). Malaysia Airlines and SIA will reportedly be reactivating their codeshare arrangement for the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore and expanding it to include 15 domestic points in Malaysia, seven destinations in Europe and two South African cities.

Meanwhile, AirAsia says it will be operating a seven times weekly flight from klia2 and



Changi Airport from November 29 with more routes and frequencies added from other Malaysian destinations as travel demand grows.

Given the government's plans to establish a quarantine-free VTL for fully vaccinated travellers from the United Kingdom and vice versa, and to open Malaysia's borders by January 1, 2022, all this augurs well for the country's gradual traffic recovery for both its international and local sectors.

Return of MATTA Fair

The same is true of Malaysia Airlines and its sister company Firefly's offers of up to 35% discounts on domestic and international fares plus other travel deals at the recent 49th MATTA Fair, which returned after nearly 22 months of the pandemic outbreak.

Held on 20-21 November at World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, nine states comprising Sabah, Sarawak, Terengganu, Johor, Selangor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Kedah and Perak joined this consumer fair as Malaysia embarks on its recovery journey and moves into the endemic phase.

Selected as Malaysia's Favourite Destination for the third time at the MATTA Fair, Sabah not only came with a strong entourage by taking up 12 booths to showcase their tourism products but also had its Chief Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Hajiji Noor announcing at the fair's opening ceremony

that travellers entering Sabah will not need to do the swab test from December 1.

Affectionately known as The Land Below The Wind, he says Sabah has 226 weekly direct flights from Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Penang, Kota Bharu, Labuan and Sarawak with capacity totalling 43,000 seats by November.

"Within Sabah, there are 123 weekly flights with a total capacity of 16,720 seats connecting Kota Kinabalu, Lahad Datu, Sandakan and Tawau," adding that an extra 3,506 rooms are expected with the completion of 11 new hotel developments in 2022.

The state government has implemented the Sabah Tourism Recovery Plan and identified tourism as one of its three economic pillars under its development plan for 2021-2025. Sabah Tourism Board (Sabah Tourism), meanwhile, has also been collaborating with the tourism industry players via virtual engagements, travel exhibitions, promotions and destination updates.

It has also been working with airlines and assisting them to re-establish direct flights for both segments. Sabah Tourism chief executive officer Noredah Othman says, "We are also targeting the Middle Eastern airlines such as Turkish Airlines and Qatar Airways besides working closely with our local carriers such as AirAsia and Malaysia Airlines."

Barbara Benjamin Atan, Sarawak Tourism Board marketing director for ASEAN and the domestic market informs Airlink that Malaysia Airlines will be restarting its twice weekly Penang-Kuching services in early December. This will provide another fillip to domestic travel and more connectivity for travellers.

While domestic booths occupied WTC's Hall 4, participation from South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Turkey and the Philippines were housed in Hall 3 together with a few bigwig travel agencies promoting outbound travel.

Among them is SA America Travel Corporation Sdn Bhd whose managing director Brendon Chai is confident about the recovery of the tourism sector with the relaxation of travel restrictions by several countries.

"We have been receiving bookings for Turkey since January as the country has no travel restrictions," says Chai, who describes the current tourism recovery as "progressive" and yet "very fluid".

Market Recovery for Malaysia's Aviation Industry

According to Malaysia Airports' October data, domestic passenger movements rose by 99.7% to 1.2 million passengers from 591,000 year-on-year, surpassing the December 2020 holiday peak season, thanks to the lifting of the interstate travel ban on October 11.

Reflective of the pent-up demand for travel and resultant success from the higher vaccination rate achieved by the country, the airport operator anticipates a strong rebound in the coming months. The RM1,000 tax relief for domestic travel announced in Budget 2022 on October 29 is expected to fuel strong appetite to travel among the locals.

Malaysia Airports' latest data, however, shows marginal rise in international passenger movements despite the relaxation of travel for fully vaccinated Malaysians to go abroad. This is due to travel restrictions, quarantine mandates and border closures which remain in most of the countries in the region.

Malaysia Airports Managing Director Dato' Iskandar Mizal Mahmood is, however, optimistic the VTL between KLIA and Changi Airport, the Langkawi international travel bubble and upcoming travel corridor between Malaysia and Indonesia will further improve passenger traffic in the coming months.

He reiterates, "The government-to-government initiatives to facilitate safe international travel will certainly contribute to the recovery of the aviation industry that has been severely affected by the imposition of travel restrictions due to Covid-19.

"We are very optimistic that there is an inherent demand for travel, be it for business or leisure. On the part of the industry players, we have to ensure that safety measures are strictly implemented and adhered to so that passengers can travel with peace of mind and do not experience any deterioration in service level."

Malaysia Airlines Re-opens Domestic Golden Lounge with Festive Fair

Malaysia Airlines announced the re-opening of its Domestic Golden Lounge at KL International Airport (KLIA) on October 29, 2021. The airline's latest move comes after a steady growth in passenger volume and strong demand for lounge offerings following the relaxation of interstate travel ban and the upcoming year-end holidays.

Its two other flagship lounges at the Regional and Satellite terminals will be reopened in stages, after having been closed for more than a year to abide by the no dine-in rule imposed since the first Movement Control Order in Malaysia. Guests can look forward to their favourite meal from a wide array of authentic Malaysian cuisine including nasi lemak, chicken congee, laksa, Malay

kuih-muih and assorted desserts as well as teh tarik and barista style coffee, freshly prepared and made available through a contactless digital meal ordering service at the lounge.

Malaysia Airlines Group Chief Marketing and Customer Experience Officer Lau Yin May said, "We are delighted to reopen our Domestic Golden Lounge after a strong pick up in travel domestically and we are expecting further increase in demand with the upcoming year-end school holidays and festivity. We welcome guests to once again immerse themselves with our premium and warm Malaysian Hospitality before their flight. During the hiatus, we worked on making significant improvements to ensure everyone's safety is in accordance with the new normal."

"Our team continues to ensure that all measures are aligned and in full compliance to international best practices and recommendations, leading to the lounge's reopening. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our customers for their continued support during this challenging time and we look forward to welcoming all of you onboard again, offering our signature experience featuring authentic Malaysian cuisine and Malaysian Hospitality for the comfort and wellbeing of our guests," added Yin May.

The Domestic Golden Lounge will operate daily from 6am to 5pm subject to flight schedules and will adhere to the following operating guidelines in line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health, Malaysia (MOH) for customers who must be fully vaccinated with the approved vaccines by MOH. Unvaccinated infants and children up to 17 years old must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who are fully vaccinated.

For more information, please visit www.malaysiaairlines.com



Malaysia Poises to be Asia Pacific's Air Cargo Hub



Malaysia is poised to be Asia Pacific's preferred air cargo hub with the operationalisation of the Cainiao Aeropolis eWTP (electronic World Trade Platform) Hub since November 2020. The global e-fulfilment hub had arisen from the eWTP partnership between the Malaysian government and Alibaba Group, with the establishment of a joint venture company between Malaysia Airports and Alibaba Group. The hub will transform Malaysia into a regional distribution centre for e-commerce and is expected to generate a cumulative GDP of RM4.2 billion in the next ten years and support over 35,000 jobs.

YB Datuk Seri Ir. Dr. Wee Ka Siong, Minister of Transport Malaysia, said, "In 2020, the Malaysian freight and logistics market was valued at USD37.6 billion and is expected to reach more than USD55 billion by 2026, with the new economy being a strong contributing factor. The advent of e-commerce in recent years has proven to be a boon to air cargo growth as it is the single largest catalytic driver. The Cainiao Aeropolis eWTP Hub will be a game changer for Malaysia as the Asia Pacific hub for Regional Distribution Center (RDC) and e-commerce logistics with huge benefits such as its strategic location within the Free Commercial Zone with airside access where value-added activities such as break bulking and light assembly are also permitted. The hub is a growth engine for Malaysia, with projections to generate a cumulative GDP of RM4.2 billion in the next ten years and support over 35,000 jobs during this period."



Our aim is to gain leadership in e-commerce logistics and establish KLIA as a preferred regional distribution hub within Asia Pacific. Air cargo has shown great resilience in the past two years, which is a silver lining for us in the aviation industry in mitigating the impact of the pandemic. Therefore, the establishment of the eWTP Hub was indeed timely and we believe that it will also serve the aspirations of the 12th Malaysia Plan by enhancing the competitiveness of our transport and logistics sectors through its efficiency, connectivity, and smart supply chain and logistics technology. This will further contribute towards improving air cargo handling processes, increasing air cargo volume and enhancing cross-border trade for the nation. All these efficiencies will allow cargo volume at KLIA to double to 1.3 million metric tonnes within the next ten years.

**DATO' SERI DIRAJA
DR ZAMBRY ABD KADIR**
Chairman of Malaysia Airports

Wan Lin, CEO of Alibaba Group's logistics arm Cainiao Network ("Cainiao"), said, "Our role is to support businesses, especially SMEs, by providing an efficient and



comprehensive global logistics network that can serve a larger international customer base and reduce trade barriers. Together with our partners, we have created a global network of smart logistics hubs, starting here in Malaysia under the eWTP initiative. As a core component within the e-fulfilment ecosystem, the Cainiao Aeropolis eWTP Hub provides crucial logistics support for major events such as the upcoming 11.11 Global Shopping Festival, enabling Malaysian businesses and consumers to benefit from enhanced logistics efficiency and stability. We believe the hub will be a leading logistics and distribution centre in the region, and we are honoured to play a part in contributing to the economic development of Malaysia."

Since the commencement of the hub last year, Cainiao has onboarded freighter airlines such as Kargo Express to operate directly from the hub. This has culminated in the launch of more international and domestic routes for charter and scheduled flight operations, thereby enhancing air connectivity and air freight stability to support growing demand for air cargo transportation. GTR and Pos Aviation are also operating directly in the hub, improving cargo handling efficiency for both shippers and consignees.

AirAsia Resumes Flight to Bangkok and Phuket

Following the much-celebrated resumption of flights to Phuket from Kuala Lumpur on November 5, AirAsia announced another good news as the inaugural flight to Bangkok took off on November 8, with many exciting promotions and deals awaiting guests travelling to Thailand.

The inaugural service on an Airbus A320 aircraft departed klia2 at 10.50am on November 8 with a 65% flight load. Guests onboard AK0882, the first of two scheduled weekly flights from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok, were sent-off by Mai Yin Tan, AirAsia's Regional Commercial Head.

Meanwhile, the inaugural service to Phuket three days earlier utilised an Airbus A320 aircraft departed klia2 on November 5, the first of two scheduled weekly flights from Kuala Lumpur.

AirAsia celebrated its maiden flight from Kuala Lumpur to Phuket on November 5 under the Phuket Sandbox programme, signaling the resumption of international air travel to Thailand.

“

AirAsia would like to thank and congratulate the Thai government, first of all, for allowing fully-vaccinated travellers from Malaysia to visit the country. Encouraged by the robust demand for flights to Phuket and Bangkok, we look forward to mounting more flights to Thailand soon. As border restrictions are lifted, AirAsia wishes to assure its guests of the stringent health and safety protocols enforced on all our flights with our highly trained and fully vaccinated crew continuing to deliver the world's best service during the pandemic. We have prepared extensively to ensure all of our guests could travel safely and seamlessly with peace of mind.

”

RIAD ASMAT*Chief Executive Officer of AirAsia Malaysia*

Fully vaccinated travellers from Malaysia who wish to travel to Thailand must meet the requirements set by the Thai Government prior to purchasing their flights and upon arrival.

For more information, please visit www.airasia.com



Air France to Operate Eleven Destinations to the United States



As of November 8, vaccinated international travellers, including European citizens, will once again be able to travel to the United States. The announcement of the decision to lift travel restrictions in place for over 18 months has led to a significant increase in bookings at Air France, particularly on routes to New York, Miami and Los Angeles, for travel in November and over the Christmas holiday period.

To support the resumption of traffic on transatlantic routes, Air France will gradually increase its capacity during the winter season. Between now and the end of March 2022, the company plans to return to a capacity corresponding to around 90% of that of 2019, compared to 50% in summer 2021.

This will imply the addition of frequencies to certain destinations, including New York (from 3 to 5 daily flights), Miami (from 7 to

12 weekly flights) or Los Angeles (from 12 to 17 weekly flights). During this period, Air France will resume flights from Paris-Charles de Gaulle to Seattle, after suspending the service since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. It will also resume its usual Paris-Papeete route, via Los Angeles and inaugurate a new route between Pointe-à-Pitre and New York JFK.

In summary, Air France will serve 11 destinations in the United States – New York-JFK – the airline's largest international station, Boston, Washington DC, Detroit, Atlanta, Chicago, Miami, Houston, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles, with up to 122 weekly flights.

As part of its commercial policy, Air France is currently offering fully modifiable tickets for travel until 31 March 2022. Customers can modify their reservation free of charge or request a refundable credit voucher if they no longer wish to travel.

The health and well-being of Air France customers and staff are at the heart of the company's concerns. Air France is committed to providing its customers optimum health and hygiene conditions at each stage of their trip, upon arrival at the airport. On board the aircraft and throughout the duration of the trip, it is compulsory to wear a surgical mask. The air in the cabin is renewed every 3 minutes.

The air recycling system on board Air France aircraft is equipped with HEPA - High Efficiency Particulate Air – filters, identical to those used in hospital operating rooms. Air France has also reinforced aircraft cleaning procedures, notably with the disinfection of all surfaces in contact with customers such as armrests, tray tables and screens before each flight.

For more information, please visit www.airfrance.com

British Airways Upgrades Fleet with Club Suite

British Airways is continuing with the roll out of its newest business class seat, Club Suite, as it continues to retrofit the seat across its Boeing 777 fleet, with the roll out expected to be completed by the end of 2022. The airline already has retrofitted a number of its Boeing 777 aircraft with the latest seat and will be working with Collins Aerospace to ensure the rest of the airline's 777 aircraft are fitted with the new cabin.

The airline's sophisticated Club Suite was first rolled out in July 2019 on the first A350 and since then has been installed on the Boeing 787-10 aircraft. The seat offers direct-aisle access, a suite door for greater privacy and luxurious flat-bed seats in a 1-2-1 configuration. Boasting 40 per cent more storage, including a vanity unit and mirror, WiFi, enviable 18.5-inch inflight entertainment screens, high definition gate-to-gate programming and PC/USB power; every aspect of British Airways' Club Suite has been designed for today's customer.

As part of its commitment to the North Atlantic, all British Airways flights to JFK will be operated by an aircraft that has the airline's Club Suite product.

“

When we launched our Club Suite product, it was a huge hit with our customers who loved the privacy the new seat offers. We are focused on the roll out of this product and other cabin enhancements to ensure we deliver on our commitment to provide the very best British quality, style and comfort for our customers.

”

SAJIDA ISMAIL

*Head of Inflight Product
British Airways*



Trevor Skelly, General Manager Integration Engineering for Collins Aerospace, said: “The upgraded Club World cabin raises British Airways’ already high standards and provides commonality across their fleet of aircraft. Our Integration Engineering team has worked closely with British Airways designers for several years to bring the latest in business class comfort, style and privacy from concept to reality.”

As part of the upgrade, the airline's Club Kitchen is also getting a makeover with new Club chillers and built-in storage for snacks, drinks and other refreshments, allowing customers in Club World to help themselves to refreshments at their leisure.

The latest generation of the First cabin including the introduction of the First suite door will also continue to be rolled out across the airline's B777-300 aircraft. The First suites were meticulously designed based on customers' feedback, the cabin puts comfort at the heart of the experience and makes the very best use of the generous space designed for just a few customers at a time. The suite includes a fixed 23-inch high definition inflight entertainment screen that can be controlled with an integrated handset.

For more information, please visit www.britishairways.com or call 03 – 7712 4747

Qatar Airways Rolls Out New Corporate Rewards Programme

Qatar Airways has revamped its “Beyond Business” corporate rewards programme to offer benefits to more businesses. First launched in January 2019, “Beyond Business” catered mainly to the corporate travel needs of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). The new and improved “Beyond Business” caters to companies of all sizes, offering greater flexibility and tailored business travel solutions.

Soft-launched in July 2021, feedback on the new “Beyond Business” has been positive, and the updated programme is now officially launched and features five exclusive tiers, Elevate, Accelerate, Ascent, Advance and Achieve. Corporates have the flexibility of enrolling into the programme at the entry Tier Elevate level for free, without annual spend commitments or access to higher Tiers and tailored benefits with an annual minimum spend commitment.

Beyond Business members can earn Qrewards and redeem for flights and more, in addition to special savings and flexibility, while employees are concurrently entitled to earn personal frequent flyer points under Qatar Airways Privilege Club. The “Beyond Business” programme also features dedicated account management and online portal, priority baggage handling for employees traveling in



economy class, Privilege Club tier status offers and recognition for a seamless business travel experience.

“ The Beyond Business programme has been well-received since its launch in 2019. Qatar Airways is proud to be the first airline to roll out such unparalleled flexibility and tailored travel solutions for businesses worldwide. Qatar Airways strives to be the world’s best airline offering the best business travel solutions, and the revamped Beyond Business programme is set to be the best in category to all businesses alike. ”

AKBAR AL BAKER
Group Chief Executive Officer
of Qatar Airways

The national carrier of the State of Qatar continues to rebuild its network, which currently stands at over 140 destinations. With more frequencies being added to key hubs, Qatar Airways offers unrivalled connectivity to passengers, making it easy for them to change their travel dates or destination as required.

For more information, please visit www.qatarairways.com



Priority Pass and Sama-Sama Announces Partnership to Provide Premium Lounge Access

Priority Pass, the world's leading traveller experiences programme, owned and operated by Collinson, announced an exciting new partnership with Sama-Sama Hotels Group in Malaysia, owned and operated by Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) on November 15.

The landmark agreement will see Priority Pass Members gaining access to eight premium lounges and lounge experiences located across KL International Airport (KLIA) and klia2, both airside and landside. The Airport Lounge KLIA (next to Gate C5) is already available for Priority Pass Members to enjoy, with the remaining lounges and lounge experiences being increasingly added to the network over the coming weeks.

This partnership serves to further enhance Priority Pass's existing comprehensive network, which includes at least one experience in 94% of the top 100 busiest airports globally* – allowing Priority Pass Members to relax and enjoy access to calming, socially-distanced spaces in the most frequently traversed locations.

“

We are truly excited to announce this significant partnership to our Members, which will see the addition of eight lounges and lounge experiences across both terminals at KLIA, added to the Priority Pass programme – some of which were previously formal VIP lounges designated for Commercially Important People (CIP), meaning they're of exceptionally high quality.

We recognise that travel stress has increased due to the pandemic, but also that many frequent travellers are keen to get back to the skies. Our aim, by securing exceptional, high-quality partnerships such as this, which include additional perks such as a complimentary buggy service, is to greatly enhance our Members' journeys – turning travel from a worrying undertaking to the most memorable part of a trip.

”

TODD HANDCOCK

President (Asia-Pacific) of Collinson

Sundralingam Kulendra, General Manager of Sama-Sama Hotels Group said, “As a 5-star award-winning hotel hospitality services company, the Sama-Sama brand embodies the very best of modern, contemporary Malaysia. Through this partnership, Priority Pass Members can experience a joyful, personalised, and warm service that is part of the memorable Malaysian hospitality on their journey through KLIA. KLIA is recognised by Airports Council International in the world-leading Airport Service Quality programme, where Sama-Sama lounge facilities and fast track services make up some of the key touchpoints in the total airport experience. Our award-winning team is committed and ever ready to welcome Priority Pass Members to our lounges as soon as travel resumes.”

**Airport ranking based on 2019 flight numbers*



Food Garden at KLIA is Newly Renovated with Elevated Services



At the new Food Garden, customers will enjoy a variety of F&B brands such as Starbucks, O'Briens, PastaMania, I Love Yoo, Beverage & Dessert, Yong Tau Foo, Little Wok, Mixed Rice and Chicken Rice, among others. The Food Garden combines contemporary architecture and design that reflect Malaysia's unique cultural elements and comfortable dining ambience. The Food Garden occupies a floor area of 2,000 square metres and can cater up to 450 diners at one time. Currently, with the Covid-19 dining SOPs in place, it can cater up to 130 diners with strict health and safety practices such as the fully vaccinated status on MySejahtera, physical distancing, temperature screening, and mandatory usage of face masks except when eating. The Food Garden will house 14 outlets by Q2 2022.

Eraman is also introducing various initiatives at its F&B outlets such as self-ordering kiosks, as well as home and office delivery. One already implemented initiative was the contactless ordering via QR code by its F&B outlet, Marrybrown. As one of the Group's subsidiaries, this is part of Eraman's efforts to provide a digitally-driven dining experience that aims to promote a convenient and safe experience for all airport guests.



The Food Garden at Level 2 of KL International Airport (KLIA) has recently reopened after undergoing a major uplift and facility upgrade as part of Malaysia Airports' commercial reset strategy. Aimed at transforming airports into a one-stop destination for F&B, shopping and lifestyle, this similar concept has proven to be successful at the Langkawi International Airport (LGK) Food Garden which has been operating since March 2019. This all new KLIA Food Garden promises an exciting instaworthy dining experience featuring a one-of-a-kind electronic 'Ceiling Visualisation' that spectacularly showcases mother nature in 2D which is perfect for an instagram moment.

Operated by Malaysia Airports (Niaga) Sdn Bhd, also known as Eraman, diners can look forward to the open kitchen and scenic tropical garden concept as well as elevated services such as e-wallet payment system among others, to delight passengers travelling in the new norm.

“

We are pleased to reopen the KLIA Food Garden which will feature a diverse mix of local and international cuisines in line with our aim to improve the retailers' profile and brand variety offered at our airports. Apart from that, the focus on digitalisation adds more convenience and efficiency through automated services such as e-wallet payment gateways, while at the same time ensuring safety by reducing physical contact with the staff of the F&B operators.

”

DATO' ISKANDAR MIZAL MAHMOOD
Managing Director of Malaysia Airports

“ Aviation Interview with Dato’ Zainuddin Abdul Wahab Director General of Tourism Malaysia



With his top priority in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic being to steer the tourism industry to be back on track and at the same time drive digitalisation changes in line with the National Tourism Policy 2020-2030, Dato’ Zainuddin, 58, who hails from Selangor has a tall order to fulfill. Assisted by his team, his vast 37 years of experience in the civil service spearheading various divisions within Tourism Malaysia ranging from strategic planning, management to production, and the Islamic Tourism Centre, will stand him in good stead following his appointment on September 13 to help the tourism industry recover and reset.

Share with us some memorable highlights of your career and how they have helped you to be where you are today.

Notwithstanding the bittersweet moments in my career path, each experience has shaped my character development. I am grateful to be given the opportunity to work with different talents from various levels that include officers to top management staff. They have taught me valuable lessons that I cherish to this day.

How do you plan to reset the severely impacted tourism industry which is now on the path of recovery?

To keep our tourism industry on the right path towards recovery, we will continue to regain the tourists’ confidence by highlighting Malaysia as a safe holiday destination through the facts and figures of our current Covid-19 vaccination rate, where to date more than 95% of our adult population have completed their vaccination while over 80% of our adolescents have been fully vaccinated.

Simultaneously, we shall continue to strengthen the cooperation between government agencies and industry players in improving product quality and availability besides implementing promotional programmes through the digital platform to reach both the domestic and international markets.

Tell us more about Tourism Malaysia’s digitalisation plans which are expected to help realise the National Tourism Policy 2020-2030 objectives.

Over the past two years, Tourism Malaysia has amped up the use of social media and online platforms when the pandemic hit us. We will continue to leverage their effectiveness through marketing, dissemination of information and the use of local and international media, well-known brands, famous celebrities and influencers or key opinion leaders.

Soon, we hope to not only provide a platform for promotional purposes but also share promotional materials that will be easily accessible to our industry players through a user-friendly database. Earlier this year, we launched our Interactive Digital Brochures that are accessible to the public via our Tourism Malaysia's website, www.malaysia.travel

What are your new targets for 2022 in terms of market segment, tourist arrivals and revenue?

Our focus is on quality rather than quantity. Facilitating the recovery of the tourism industry, we need to consider many factors, especially since it involves the health and safety of everyone.

In terms of market segment, we are looking to restart tourism with our neighbouring countries in the ASEAN region. Our next target would be with the Asian, Middle Eastern and traditional European markets, including the United Kingdom.

By 2025, we aim to reach 24.3 million international tourist arrivals with a target revenue of RM73 billion from foreign tourists and RM100 billion from domestic tourists.

Kindly share Tourism Malaysia's 40th participation at the recent hybrid World Travel Market (WTM) in London.

Malaysia joined this year's WTM physically in ExCel London from 1-3 November and was connected virtually from 8-9 November via WTM London Virtual platform with other buyers and attendees. Tourism Malaysia, together with the Pahang state and local industry players represented the country.

We were excited to be reconnected with our partners and forged many new relationships at WTM, which remains an important platform for us where we highlighted Langkawi's reopening to the international market on November 15, where fully-

vaccinated tourists can visit this legendary island without any quarantine requirements.

Apart from providing the latest information on the prerequisites under the new norms of travelling to Malaysia, we also promoted our new and upcoming tourist attractions to the UK and European markets.

Please update us on the Langkawi travel bubble and the reopening of other domestic destinations to both the local and international markets.

We have seen tremendous response through the reopening of domestic tourism with Langkawi's pilot travel bubble, which was reopened to fully-vaccinated domestic tourists on September 16 this year. As of October 31, the island has welcomed 190,855 tourists.

Following the resumption of interstate travel within Malaysia on October 11, many of our locals benefitted from the various discounts, rebates and e-vouchers offered by the participating domestic airlines and hotels. We will continue to focus on Langkawi's pilot project before reopening other local destinations to international tourists.

The government's recent announcement of a Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) with our neighbour Singapore starting November 29 and its target to reopen our borders to international tourists by January 1, 2022 are good news for the industry, including the aviation sector.

Tourism Malaysia has been collaborating with Malaysia Airports in the past to promote the industry. What can we expect in 2022?

Tourism Malaysia's collaboration with Malaysia Airports through the Joint International Tourism Development Program (JITDP) in 2018 and 2019 was unfortunately put on hold in 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The JITDP witnessed partnership with both domestic and international airlines, which came under the supervision of Tourism Malaysia offices abroad. Among the domestic airlines we worked with were Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia and Malindo Air. Meanwhile, the international carriers included Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, China Airlines, Mahan Air, China Southern Airlines, Scoot Air, Air Busan, Pakistan International Airlines and Turkish Airlines.

With the reopening of our international borders, we look forward to work with Malaysia Airports again and not forgetting the airlines to create more connectivity next year.

What is your wish list for 2022?

Tourism Malaysia will be celebrating its golden jubilee or 50th anniversary next year. Spearheading Tourism Malaysia's efforts towards the rebound of our tourism industry with close collaboration with our industry players, I hope to meet the goals of our national recovery plan and see tourism regain its former stature before the pandemic.

On a personal note, how do you unwind and foodwise, what do you relish?

I love travelling and try to travel leisurely whenever I can with a free and easy schedule. Occasionally, I enjoy golfing or just relaxing with a good cup of black coffee. I cannot refrain from our delicious fried *ayam kampung*. As for international cuisine, I am a fan of Japanese cuisine, especially sushi.



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