

AIRLINK

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EVITATE

RASP NATURE

ING OF THE HILL

MORE THAN AN ISLAND, A GATEWAY TO LEGENDARY TREASURES.

LANGKAWI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, THE GATEWAY TO GETAWAYS

It all begins at Langkawi International Airport (LGK). Journey into the laidback archipelago of 99 islands and get lost in the wonders of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark. Plan your route to a world of rich experiences and natural splendour.

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 envisages the government's latest relaxation of the health standard operating procedures (SOPs) will boost air travel recovery. More international traffic is expected to pick up as other Southeast Asian countries have also reopened their borders and eased travel restrictions. Furthermore, Malaysia Airports has recently implemented facial recognition technology on certain flights at its flagship KL International Airport (KLIA) for passengers to enjoy more seamless travel. With more inbound travellers coming into the country, this will fuel further shopping at the Mitsui Outlet Park KLIA (MOP KLIA), a joint-venture project with Mitsui Fudosan Co Ltd, with the recent completion of its phase three expansion.

Dato' Iskandar Mizal Mahmood
Managing Director
Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad

We welcome the easing of various travel SOPs effective May 1 which will not only hasten Malaysia's economic recovery but will also make the travelling to our country less costly as Covid-19 pre-departure and on-arrival tests are no longer required for all fully vaccinated travellers and children. Covid-19 travel insurance is also not mandatory for inbound travellers to the country.

Moving in tandem with our initiative to deliver an easier and faster boarding experience for our passengers, I am happy to announce that our newly installed biometric system can scan your face as verification for your check-in and at the boarding gate instead of having to use a boarding pass. This new feature is currently applicable for adults only as children below 12 years old will still need to go through the manual check-in.

So far, we have introduced this facility to passengers flying with Malaysia Airlines to Langkawi via KLIA on selected dates. All they have to do is to register themselves at the Enrolment Totem near the departure level entrance with their boarding pass, MyKad or passport. Rest assured that the biometric data collected will be deleted three hours after your flight departure.

With the reopening of Malaysia's international borders, many airlines have announced the recommencement of their flights and increased their frequency to various parts of the country. For example, Royal Brunei Airlines will be flying into Kota Kinabalu, Sabah from May 6 with twice weekly flights. The East Malaysian state had received its first international flight from AirAsia on April 16 followed by its second international flight from Singapore's low-cost carrier Scoot on April 29.

With the majority of the Southeast Asian countries also reopening their borders and easing their travel requirements given the higher rate of vaccination that has been achieved, we expect to see passenger and aircraft traffic gaining traction.

The Labour Day holiday followed by Hari Raya festive season at the start of May, which are expected to see more flights being mounted within the country, will further give a fillip to both the tourism and aviation sectors which are on their path to recovery. The recent opening of five large concept stores at the newly completed phase 3 expansion of MOP KLIA will also be a bonus to both our local and foreign visitors. Happy travelling and shopping in beautiful Malaysia!



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Air Connectivity Key to Malaysia's Travel Recovery After Reopening

Amid the lingering impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic and shutdowns still being felt by the health and social-economic sectors, one of the major concerns raised by various governments and key industry players is the supply bottlenecks especially in aviation alongside issues such as rising inflation plus the massive loss of jobs and livelihoods. Offering destination insights into Malaysia, Singapore-based MasterCard Data and Services principal Andreas Spycher identifies the supply chain crunch in aviation as a "super constraining" factor affecting Asia Pacific's travel recovery over the next six to nine months.

Without the return of the corporate or business travellers on which long-haul travel is very dependent upon, Spycher says the airlines would either have to raise their ticket prices or reduce their frequencies and network. He expects the region's recovery to be driven by regional carriers, smaller aircrafts and low-cost carrier networks which are able to connect point-to-point.

With borders opening up around the world at the end of the first quarter, MasterCard's data reveal that airlines' business in Malaysia has picked up significantly. Coupled with the easing of travel protocols, it also shows Malaysians' travel spend has been increasing rapidly since January.

In line with the global shift towards digital, Malaysians are increasing their bookings directly with airlines and online travel agents. Following Malaysia's announcement on March 24 of its borders reopening in April, working with Mabrian, a travel intelligence platform for the tourism industry, MasterCard has detected "real interest in demand out there," Spycher shares.

While Malaysia's air capacity has yet to fully recover to pre-Covid levels, he says it is showing huge increases compared to last year with 2022 looking "very good" judging by the forward bookings for its second and third quarters.

MasterCard's latest number crunching tourism insights

Although April's capacity appears relatively weak with 1,836,349 scheduled seats coming through, the data shows 3,179,041 seats have been booked for August. This means Malaysia will have about three to four months to ramp up and reactive the small and medium-scaled enterprises that went bust as its tourism industry is expected to be very strong towards end-2022 once the air capacity comes through.

MasterCard's data shows Malaysia has 13.76 million scheduled seats in 2021 connected with 30 countries and 96 cities. Currently, with one out of six countries (or 17%) and one out of three cities (34%) still not connected to Malaysia, Spycher says the country's marketing strategies unfortunately would have to change as it is not going to see the same travellers returning since their origin locations are not serviced yet with air capacity.

Meanwhile, Tourism Malaysia, which announced its both its Strategic and Marketing Plans 2022-2026 on March 30, has been in full steam working with various carriers such as Malaysia Airlines and Turkish Airlines to organise familiarisation trips for travel agents and media to Malaysia. It also recently attended an international travel fair in Vietnam and the BIT trade show in Milan, Italy to woo tourists to Malaysia.



Looking at some key carriers of Malaysia's top source markets over the next three months, Spycher views Singapore as the backup hub for international tourists into Malaysia with Singapore Airlines and its low-cost carrier Scoot well geared up with their capacity.

He says Bangkok, which used to be a strong hub, will be unable to help Malaysia in the short-term in filling up its air capacity as Thai Airways has reduced the capacity of its international network. The same goes for Hong Kong, which is under lockdown, as Cathay Pacific has dropped its capacity. However, India, one of Malaysia's largest feeder markets, has been picking up in terms of volume with 371,862 seats registered last year.

According to Tourism Malaysia Senior Director of the International Promotion Division (South Asia & Africa), Manoharan Periasamy, who led a delegation in its six-city roadshow to India from April 17-30, there are now over 14,000 seats available weekly between India and Malaysia from Malaysia Airlines, Malindo Air, AirAsia, IndiGo and Air India Express. The flights between them have reached 76 weekly compared to about 200 flights weekly before pre-pandemic. Malaysia Airlines Group Chief Marketing and Customer Experience Officer Lau Yin May says the national carrier now flies to eight destinations in India. "We noticed a number of Myanmar visiting family and friends

coming in from India into Malaysia and enroute to Australia."

This clearly reflects the reconnection travel trend with loved ones whom they have been unable to see for the past two years. This new trend has gone beyond revenge travel. For Australia, which reopened its borders since February 21, she cites Sydney and Melbourne as the airline's top destinations. Internationally, Lau says London is its top destination and signature route with the flight frequencies now increased to 11 times weekly. "Come July, they will be back to 2019 level with its double dailies." For South Korea, which also reopened its borders in April, she adds that Malaysia Airlines is seeing slower traction but expect the numbers to grow in the coming months.

Although China is a key source market for Malaysia, Lau says it will not be on the airline's focus for the next six months due to its strict Covid-19 policy which does not allow the citizens to travel outbound. Optimistically, Malaysia Airlines is looking at the first quarter of 2023 or at the best scenario, the fourth quarter of 2022, for Chinese inbound travellers to return to Malaysia.

The airline's parent company, Malaysia Aviation Group Bhd (MAG), recently announced plans to increase aircraft capacity by an additional 15% on top of the 20% of pre-Covid-19 level projected for April in tandem with Malaysia's borders reopening. Domestically, she says MAG has also seen very strong demand in terms of forward bookings from Kota Kinabalu (KK) and Kuching with very high flight frequencies. "For KK, we have increased them from 45 times per week last November to 70 times weekly. With the commencement of Firefly jet operated flights from Penang to KK on April 11, we now have 77 times weekly flights into Sabah alone. So, there is a lot of traction in terms of air capacity."

Firefly Resumes Flights From Penang

Firefly has resumed its flight operations from Penang starting April 11 with the launch of ticket sales for flights to Johor Bahru, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu, said chief executive officer of Firefly Philip See.

"Fares can be as low as RM69 one-way on a Boeing 737-800 flight. This will begin with twice daily return flights from Penang to Johor Bahru, and one daily return flight from Penang to Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

"This will be raised to thrice daily return flights from Penang to Johor Bahru and twice daily return flights from Penang to Kuching and Kota Kinabalu starting April 25, 2022". Customers will have the flexibility and convenience of seat, insurance coverage and in-flight food selection.

As Firefly is part of Malaysia Aviation Group, the strong network and code-sharing arrangements with sister companies Malaysia Airlines and MASwings offer customers a seamless travel experience while also widening its reach from Peninsular Malaysia to Sabah, Sarawak, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore, he said.



"We are delighted that Firefly resumes its jet operations at this crucial time, and simultaneously begins servicing new routes that will significantly benefit connectivity for tourists and communities.

"This also marks our 15th year of operations, where we have since strengthened our foothold as a pioneer in short-haul flights within the region, offering convenience and comfort to all. The airline will continue to expand its connectivity within ASEAN, offering value bundle packages beyond convenience and regions," added Philip.

He said flight tickets are now available for bookings via the Firefly application and website as well as booking offices and travel agents. Customers may also make reservations on its latest flight offerings on the Malaysia Airlines website through a code-share arrangement with Firefly.

Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) chief executive officer Captain Izham Ismail added, "Firefly, together with its sister airlines Malaysia Airlines, MASwings, and AMAL, will continue to play its active role as carriers of the nation; prioritising the safety and wellbeing of its passengers as we welcome them back to experience Malaysia and reconnect with loved ones once again.

"As a Group, we look forward to the upcoming months as we continue to reinstate our pre-Covid operations and introduce new, exciting markets for passengers to Fly Malaysia and beyond."



Turkish Airlines Invites Passengers to Discover Unique Wonders of Istanbul



As the airline that flies to more countries than any other, Turkish Airlines offers the opportunity of discovering the world's connection center Istanbul and its unique wonders with stopover service for its passengers with lengthy transfer times.

Starting in 2017, stopover service drew great interest from passengers who were using Istanbul as their transfer center but the service was put on pause due to the pandemic. With the effects of pandemic are lessening, the flag carrier plans to continue this service as of 2022 in order to elevate passenger experience to a new level.

In order for passengers with long connection times to spend quality time in Istanbul, Turkish Airlines will provide 1-night stay in a 4-Star hotel for Economy Class and 2 nights stay in a 5-Star hotel for Business Class with the hotel voucher that is issued after the ticket purchase. In addition, passengers will also have the option of staying at contracted hotels with prices starting at 49 USD.

"We aim to show the Turkish hospitality and unique wonders of Istanbul to our passengers opting for stopover accommodation service while contributing to tourism in Turkey and increase the number of transfer passengers of Turkish Airlines. Passengers can also increase the length of their initial free-of-charge accommodations with better prices at contracted hotels and discover even more of Istanbul."

BILAL EKI
General Manager of Turkish Airlines



Over 57,000 transfer passengers from 42 countries and 108 cities experienced the privilege of discovering Istanbul with stopover service so far. Supporting tourism sector of Turkey, scale of project is being planned to be expanded with 15 new countries in 2022.

*42 countries (departure point): Algeria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Canada, China, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Ireland, India, Iran, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, Russia, Scotland, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States of America.

For more information, please visit www.turkishairlines.com

Korean Air Wins ATW Cargo Operator of The Year Award

Korean Air has been announced the winner of one of the most prestigious honors in the aviation industry, Air Transport World's (ATW) 2022 Cargo Operator of the Year. After being recognised as ATW's 2021 Airline of the Year, Korean Air has once again proved its position as one of the world's most successful airlines during the pandemic by receiving another ATW award for the second consecutive year.

Launched in 1974, ATW's annual Airline Industry Achievement Awards are known as the most coveted honor an airline can receive, comparable to the Academy Awards of the airline industry. This year's 48th awards ceremony will be held in Doha, Qatar in June 2022.

When making its decision for the Cargo Operator of the Year, ATW's global judging panel of editors and analysts cited, "the strong financial performance, its continued innovation and agility, its wider initiatives in humane disaster relief, and in animal/wildlife conservation". The judges also noted that "the airline's investment and application of technology & digitalisation is particularly impressive and it sets the bar for the air cargo industry".

“ We are honored to be a winner of ATW's renowned awards for the second consecutive year, especially in these difficult times.

This achievement was made possible by the efforts of not only our cargo teams, but by the concerted efforts of our company in its entirety. Korean Air remains committed to deliver excellence in service to our customers as a global leading airline.

EUM, JAE DONG
Senior Vice President and
Head of Cargo Business Division
of Korean Air

ATW Editor-in-Chief Karen Walker said, "To see Korean Air named the 2022 Cargo Operator of the Year after winning the ATW 2021 Airline of the Year really speaks to the consistently outstanding, all-round

performance of Korean Air. The industry's huge pivot to air cargo and importance to the global economy made this a very competitive category this year and we sincerely congratulate the Korean Air leadership and entire team."

Korean Air Cargo, with its 50 years of history, is one of the world's top five air freight operators and is a seasoned expert in every sector of the business. During the course of the pandemic, it placed additional focus on transporting perishables and pharmaceutical products requiring a cold chain and has committed to the urgent and timely transportation of vaccines, diagnostic kits and personal protection equipment.

For more information, please visit www.koreanair.com



airasia Super App and Google Cloud Forge Strategic Collaboration

Airasia Super App, the digital travel and lifestyle platform for everyone in Southeast Asia, and Google Cloud announced a five-year strategic collaboration to advance airasia Super App's vision of a co-innovation ecosystem that all businesses and developers can partake in to serve the daily needs of people in the region.

The app, which operates in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines, is part of Capital A's digital pillar. The platform offers flight and hotel bookings, e-commerce, food and parcel delivery, ride-hailing, financial and health services, on-demand education and more, anchored by an integrated rewards program and mobile wallet. Even as some services are being launched in various markets across Asean, the platform is already the lifestyle application of choice for 51 million users. Since its inception in 2020, airasia Super App has become one of three unicorns

headquartered in Malaysia, according to Credit Suisse.

"With Google's help, our ecosystem will not only be transactional, but be about building community, and enriching that community – not just the customers but partners like restaurants, airlines, hotels and drivers. I'm excited to reveal how airasia and all of Capital A's assets will transform Asean and deliver value, not only in transactions but in making Asean a smaller place. What we are doing is not evolutionary, but revolutionary. I'm going to enjoy the ride with Google," said Tony Fernandes, CEO, Capital A.

"To benefit everyone across Southeast Asia's heterogeneous communities, the airasia Super App must be simple and easy-to-use while underpinned by inclusive design, interoperability and personalisation," said Amanda Woo, CEO, airasia Super App. "It's therefore crucial that we leverage Google's



rich experience in building global platforms and ecosystems to equip and engage more talent, entrepreneurs and partners who can provide even more tailor-made solutions that fit users' lives. What we're announcing is just the beginning, and we look forward to exploring further co-innovation initiatives with Google, whether in digital travel planning, self-driving cars, cloud gaming, startup investment, or supporting frontline workers through Google Workspace."

For more information, please visit www.airasia.com

Air France to Return to Pre-Covid Activity in Summer



Air France ground staff and flight crews are ready to welcome their customers for all their summer travel plans. During the peak summer season, Air France will serve up to 196 destinations with a flight schedule representing on average 90% of the capacity deployed at the same period in 2019.

On the long-haul network, Air France's activity will be driven by buoyant demand for flights to North America, Africa, the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, regions that have proved resilient throughout the crisis.

Air France will also continue to increase capacity to and from the United States, the airline's leading long-haul destination. This summer,

it will operate close to 200 weekly flights to 14 destinations, i.e. 20% more than in summer 2019. Suspended since the beginning of the crisis, the service from Paris-Orly to New York-JFK reopened on March 27, in addition to the service from Paris-Charles de Gaulle. In total, Air France will be operating up to 7 daily flights this summer between the two cities.

In Africa, Air France will return to its pre-crisis levels of activity with the addition of frequencies to numerous destinations. There will be two daily flights from Paris-Charles de Gaulle to Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and the seasonal services to Zanzibar (Tanzania) and Banjul (Gambia) will be extended over the summer season.

Finally, Air France is maintaining almost its entire network in Asia with a reduced number of flights. Additional frequencies will be added to the flight schedule to India (Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore and Chennai) to accompany the country's reopening to international flights effective from March 27, 2022.

For more information, please visit www.airfrance.com

Indigo Resumes International Flight Schedule

IndiGo, India's leading carrier has announced the resumption of its international flight schedule from various destinations in India.

These flights operate from cities like Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Amritsar, Kozhikode, Kochi, Chandigarh, Tiruchirappalli, Thiruvananthapuram, and Mangaluru. The international destinations include Dammam, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Jeddah, Riyadh, Doha, Bangkok, Phuket, Singapore, Colombo, Dubai, Kathmandu, Maldives, and Dhaka.



Flights to these routes had earlier been operating under air-bubble agreements with the respective countries. Scheduled operations to destinations in Thailand have already commenced from March 27, 2022. The resumption of these flights bolster India's connectivity around the globe and aid in the acceleration of economic and tourist activities that had been impacted by the pandemic.

William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo said, "We are pleased to resume our scheduled international operations. Following the easing of restrictions, we are witnessing a huge demand for international travel. We hope that this enhanced connectivity with various destinations across the continent will provide a boost to the travel and tourism sector, while proving to be a catalyst for economic revival. As India's leading airline, IndiGo remains committed to play its part in helping the nation bounce back. We will do so via our signature on-time, courteous and hassle-free service at affordable fares, across an unparalleled network."

AVIAREPS is the General Sales Agent (GSA) for Indigo in Malaysia.

For more information, please call 03 – 2148 8033

SAUDIA Launches New Flight to Thailand

Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAUDIA), the national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, has announced the launch of flights connecting two airports in the Kingdom to Thailand. Guests were welcomed aboard the historic first flight from King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah to Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok on February 28, 2022.

The new route will operate three return trips weekly between the destinations, with a stop at King Khalid International Airport for guests departing and arriving in Riyadh. The launch of the flights comes in the wake of the recently strengthened bilateral relations between the two nations and reflects SAUDIA's strong commitment to connecting guests with the most in-demand travel destinations across the globe.

"We at SAUDIA are proud to open a new chapter in the recently strengthened bilateral relations between the Kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Thailand. The launch of this new route builds on our already strong operational footprint in Asia and will provide greater connectivity and convenience for guests. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the leadership of both nations for enabling SAUDIA to become a bridge between our great Kingdoms. We look



forward to welcoming guests from Thailand to Saudi Arabia as we continue to serve as the Wings of Vision 2030", said SAUDIA's Vice President of Marketing & Product Management Essam Akhonbay.

The addition of the route to Bangkok further enhances SAUDIA's connectivity with destinations across the Asia-Pacific region, with key cities including Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Guangzhou, and Manila.

For more information, please visit www.saudia.com

Qantas Connects Melbourne to Texas



Melbourne's post-Covid tourism recovery is set to accelerate with Qantas launching a new direct route from Dallas Fort Worth and significantly increasing flights from Los Angeles. From December 2, 2022, the national carrier will operate four weekly return flights between Melbourne and major US hub, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), with its Boeing 787 Dreamliners.

These are the first direct flights by any airline between the two cities and follows the success of Qantas' longstanding Sydney-Dallas Fort Worth route. Dallas Fort Worth is home to Qantas' partner American Airlines, providing seamless connections between Australia and over 200 cities across the US, Canada, Mexico and South America.

Additionally, Qantas is adding another four weekly return flights between Melbourne and Los Angeles with its 787s, up from four currently, to meet strong demand on the route. The airline's refurbished A380s will resume operating some of these flights to LA from December, marking the return of Qantas' superjumbo and reintroduction of First Class to Melbourne.

The aircraft have a reconfigured Business cabin, with 70 updated suites, an extended Premium Economy section with 60 seats (up from 35) as well as refreshed Economy and First cabins. The upper deck lounge (open to Business and First passengers) has been expanded and upgraded with booth style seating for 10 people, a self-service bar and an option to order signature drinks and snacks. Thirty Economy seats were removed to make room for more premium seating.

On the other note, the Qantas Melbourne International Business Lounge welcomed its first visitors since the start of the pandemic on March 28, 2022. The Melbourne First Lounge, which operated as a hybrid First/Business Lounge during the pandemic, has been reverted to the full premium offering.

Qantas Group Chief Customer Officer (CCO) Stephanie Tully said the airline was thrilled to be adding another new international destination out of Melbourne.

"No city in the world did it tougher during Covid than Melbourne, but no city is bouncing back as quickly. We are seeing really strong demand from Melburnians wanting to travel overseas for a holiday or business trip after two years at home, while inbound tourism is starting to pick up. Flights to the United States are particularly strong with Los Angeles bookings now exceeding pre-Covid levels."

STEPHANIE TULLY
Group Chief Customer Officer of Qantas

"As well as being a destination in its own right, Dallas Fort Worth is one of the biggest hub airports in the United States and is located less than a four-hour flight from every major US city. These new flights provide excellent connections for Australians visiting the United States and allow Melbourne to tap into an enormous inbound tourism market from cities like New York, Chicago, Boston, Houston, Washington DC, and Miami, as well as saving hours of travel time", she added.

For more information, please visit www.qantas.com

Mesfin Tasew Appointed CEO of Ethiopian Airlines

The Board of Management of Ethiopian Airlines Group has announced the appointment of Mesfin Tasew Bekele, as Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group, effective March 23, 2022.

Mesfin has 38 years of experience in airline management and operations in the areas of aircraft maintenance and engineering, procurement, information technology, flight operations, capability development, capacity building, development of corporate strategies, airline operation management, and corporate leadership. He earned Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from Open University in the UK, MSc degree in Electrical Engineering specialising in Communications Engineering from Addis Ababa University, and BSc degree in Electrical Engineering from Addis Ababa University.

Chairman of Ethiopian Airlines, Girma Wake said, "I would like to congratulate Mr Mesfin on his new appointment and I am fully confident about his capabilities. We believe that he will lead the airline to an even greater success, keeping it on the right track that will see it grow through many generations to come. I urge the 17,000 employees and the board members to stand with the new Group CEO to keep the airline flying high. We are also thankful for the remarkable contributions of the former Group CEO."

I am honored and humbled to be appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group which I have been serving for nearly four decades in various positions. My new role gives me the opportunity to carry on with the fast and profitable growth of our beloved airline and take it to the next level. I call on all my colleagues at Ethiopian to join hands and forge ahead for further success.



MESFIN TASSEW
Chief Executive Officer
of Ethiopian Airlines Group

In the different capacities he served during his 38 years of service, Mesfin has been a key player responsible for planning and execution of strategies that led the airline to shine in the African skies and beyond. He assumed responsibilities including but not limited to overall maintenance of Ethiopian fleet, capability and capacity development, leading the automation project of the Maintenance and Engineering Division and managing projects related to aircraft acquisition.

Mesfin has been serving as a Chief Executive Officer of ASKY Airlines since 2021 and has led the airline with a profitable growth strategy until the time of his new appointment. He has served as a Chief Operating Officer of Ethiopian Airlines from 2010–2021 and successfully led the operation of the airline in an efficient and cost-effective way by optimising processes and developing internal resources to cope up with the airline's growth strategy.

For more information, please visit www.ethiopianairlines.com or call 03 – 2141 2190.



Colours of Eid This Hari Raya at MOP KLIA



Themed 'Colours of Eid', Mitsui Outlet Park KLIA Sepang (MOP KLIA) is adorned with motifs of Songket and its vibrant colours depicting the Raya celebratory mood as it welcomes shoppers to shop for their Raya celebration.

In conjunction with the Hari Raya celebration, MOP KLIA is giving away four motorbikes – one unit of Yamaha Hyper Naked, two units of Honda Beat and one unit of Vespa Sprint to lucky shoppers when they spend a minimum of RM300 in a maximum of two receipts.

TJ Cheah, Deputy Managing Director of MFMA Development said MOP KLIA is also gearing up to welcome international visitors as the country's border has just opened.

"The Hari Raya celebration is a good time for international visitors to experience and learn about the Malay culture as well as savour some Raya delicacies. Here at MOP KLIA, visitors can expect to experience the Raya celebratory mood with traditional Malay performances lined up and our unique decorations," he said.



Apart from the 70 percent and more discounts that shoppers will enjoy when shopping at MOP KLIA, shoppers will also enjoy rewards, which include cash back when they spend a minimum of RM200, Spin & Win with a minimum spending of RM300, and more – all with a maximum of two receipts. In addition, HSBC card holders are also entitled to redeem a set of complementary Godiva Chocolate with a minimum spending of RM1,000 with a maximum of two receipts.

The Raya promotions at MOP KLIA will be ongoing from April 1 until May 8, 2022.

Several new brands have also opened up at MOP KLIA since January 2022. They include Shanghai Tang, Leather Avenue, Animation World, Cath Kidston, Pierre Cardin Women and My Mask Hub as well as Memang Meow, a new F&B outlet. Other international brands include Coach, Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Aigner, Hugo Boss, Polo Ralph Lauren, Victoria's Secret, Godiva, Steve Madden, Bath and Body Works and much more.

With product offerings ranging from high-end fashion apparel and accessories, shoes, handbags, kids wear, cosmetics & perfumes to household products, chocolates & confectionery, timepieces and jewellery, the outlet mall is the ultimate one-stop shopping destination.

MOP KLIA is strategically located within KLIA. Muslims can also enjoy *buka puasa* at any of the restaurants here and observe *solat terawih* at Masjid KLIA (Masjid Sultan Abdul Samad), which is just a mere 1 km away from the outlet mall.

For more information on upcoming offers, promotions and happenings at MOP KLIA, visit www.mitsuioutletparkklia.com.my or www.facebook.com/MOPKLIA.

“Aviation Interview with Ashwin Gunasekeran

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB)



An industry veteran with over 17 years of experience, Ashwin Gunasekeran, 42, brings to PCEB his accrued expertise in tourism and hospitality management, revenue analysis, yield management, turnaround strategy, business development and business tourism. His wealth of networks, built over the years, comes as a strength when our Penangite was appointed CEO to helm PCEB when it was started in 2016. His responsibilities include developing and growing the business event (BE) industry in Penang.

What are some of the milestones that PCEB has achieved thus far?

I am proud to say that BE @ Penang, birthed by PCEB, has grown over the past five years, featuring numerous expert speakers and hundreds of delegates from across the globe. Our goal is to position it as an internationally recognised and must attend conference by the BE fraternity.

PCEB's inaugural Penang Roadshow to India in 2018 marked our activation to one of Malaysia's largest travel markets. The roadshow has now become an annual event. Another milestone was when PCEB led a delegation from Penang to win the bid to be the first Asian destination to host the World Seafood Congress in September 2019.

The Penang International Travel Exchange (PITE), our homegrown BE tradeshow saw us successfully hosting travel agents and business owners from India as well as its leading travel product Global Panorama Showcase India during our first year in 2018. PCEB has since expanded its buyers' market to Asia Pacific, Europe and the United States. We aim to continue growing the market segments further.

When PCEB launched our first ever "Next Normal Guidelines for Business Events Penang" last July, we were the first state in Malaysia to establish a taskforce that comprised 29 industry partners to ensure that every safety and standard operating procedures in organising BE was covered. These guidelines prove that Penang is taking the recovery phase seriously and that we are ready to welcome back events.

Can you provide some insights into PCEB's new global marketing campaign BELong to position Penang as a preferred BE hub?

We play with the word, belong, which generally signifies having an affinity for a specific place or situation such as a sense of belonging. The campaign's goals include sending a positive message that Penang is open for business beginning 2022 while maintaining its destination awareness and increasing confidence in the destination's health and safety measures for corporate events, among other things.

PCEB aims to expand and strengthen its presence in new market segments such as Europe and the United Kingdom. Our strategy is also to position Penang as the leading destination for world-class conferences, especially in medical science and the pharmaceutical sector. While Penang has always been a predominantly incentive-driven market, PCEB is now actively engaged in the meetings sector.

In PCEB's recent joint collaboration with PATA Malaysia Chapter (PMC) to organise the Tourism Reconnect Conference, what were some of the activities organised to showcase Penang's potential as an incentive destination?

As a well-known incentive destination, Penang has always been reinventing new incentive programmes for delegates to experience the Pearl of the Orient at its best. In our hosted familiarisation tour for the PMC members, our objective was to give them an extraordinary experience of Georgetown. The group started from Penang Hill, which has been recognised by UNESCO as Malaysia's third biosphere reserve. The tour continued with a nature walk at The Habitat, which recently won the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award Urban Category 2022-2023.

We also gave the PMC members an experiential trishaw excursion, flagged off by Penang State Exco for Tourism and Creative Economy, Yeoh Soon Hin, which took them to many of the state's prominent attractions such as Khoo Kongsi along the streets of Armenian Street, Street of Harmony and Acheh Street, just to name a few. This familiarisation tour also marked the reactivation of Penang's tourism sector from the global Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years.

Now that Malaysia's international borders are open and as you have stressed, "Penang is ready" at PCEB's recent BELong campaign launch in Kuala Lumpur, what are your observations?

The news on our borders reopening on April 1 have been welcomed and celebrated by the players in the travel trade fraternity, conference owners in various associations and meeting planners from the corporate and education industry. Despite the pandemic, Penang has never shied away from its regional and global visibility and we have been constantly in touch with our clients to resume their international BE here when our borders reopened.

Please share with us an international event that will be taking place soon.

In June, Penang will be hosting SEMICON 2022, Southeast Asia's largest semiconductor and microelectronics trade show with 200 booths. Occupying entirely the SPICE Convention Centre and Arena, this event will be participated by Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Taiwan. Our industry players, including the immigration and airport, are prepared not only to assist with the participants' seamless journey but also to ensure that they benefit from the event and have a wonderful time in our state.

You mentioned 156 events were held in Penang in 2020 with delegates totalling 19,823. What was it like in 2021?

The disruption to the BE industry extended from 2020 into 2021 with interstate travel only resuming last October. As such, total events reported last year were relatively low compared to 2020. Many of the physical events held were transformed into either virtual or hybrid events, which represented a new reality, unlocking exciting possibilities for many organisations to leverage on the power of BE while also promoting the host destination.

How do you view the prospects for 2022 and beyond?

We are looking at staggered arrivals this year although Penang has been receiving many enquiries since the closure of the international borders in 2020. With the borders reopened, we are hoping for more business travellers, especially from Asia Pacific. Penang has many world-class conferences secured up to 2026. We believe we can return to our pre-pandemic days of glory slowly but surely.

While the BELong campaign places value on face-to-face meetings, you also believe that hybrid events will continue to thrive for the next five years. Care to elaborate on this?

While the pandemic has given birth to flexibility in event planning and management, we cannot deny that physical events will remain crucial for the benefit of the destination. Nevertheless, hybrid events will continue to dominate the BE landscape as our industry partners have heavily invested in the latest technology and platforms to facilitate the shift.

Hybrid events are here to stay as they cater to the needs of both the physical and virtual attendees, offering flexibility on how the audience can connect, how exhibitors can participate, how attendees can network with one another and how contents will be made available. They have many dimensions that can help event organisers and the host achieve their goals.

PCEB is also involved in the turtle conservation programme, promotion of batik and living heritage. How do you reconcile this with the BE industry?

Penang Turtle Cares is part of PCEB's corporate social responsibility programme where we partner with conference organisers to help the Penang Turtle Conservation Centre set up by Malaysia's Department of Fisheries to protect and conserve the dwindling turtles population due to rising development in the region.

As part of our efforts to promote Penang's creative economy, PCEB has been supporting locally made batik souvenirs and masks. For the past two years, I have been adorning batik to all events as a gesture of support.

How do you describe your style of leadership?

I believe in continuous engagement and destination presence strongly. Partnership and collaboration will remain at the heart of PCEB's initiatives and the BE industry can only get better from here.

Lastly, how do you unwind after a hard day of work?

I like to stargaze during clear, good weather and enjoy watching my reef tank, accompanied by a good drink. Life's simple pleasures bring me joy.



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