

AIRLINK

CONTENTS - JULY 2022

Airport Talk

Airport MD Speaks	37
Airlines' Profitability to be Rebuilt by Air Travel Recovery	38

Aviation News

Malaysia Airlines Flies First Passenger Flight with SAF	40
Lanmei Airlines Connects Malaysia with Cambodia	41

Batik Air Reinstates KL to Bali Route	41
STARLUX Launches New A330neo	42
AirAsia Resumes Flights Between Kota Kinabalu and Manila	43
Ethiopian Airlines Announces Order for Five 777 Freighters	44
Etihad Airways Wins APEX Passenger Choice Award	45
EVA Simplifies Checked Bag Allowances	46

Turkish Airlines Provides Uninterrupted Internet Experience	47
Korean Air to Restore Long-Haul Network Destinations in July	47

Aviation Interview

Aviation Interview with Datuk Rosmawati Lasuki, Justice of Peace Chief Executive Officer of Sabah International Convention Centre	48
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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 is elated that Malaysia Airports has continued to be resilient despite the Covid-19 pandemic by achieving higher RM220.3 million earnings before tax, interest, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) and improved net operating cash generation of RM271.1 million for the financial year (FY) 2021. Besides adopting bold measures to succeed in the new normal, the airport operator will at the same time continue to uphold aviation safety and security as well as enhance its airports capacity and operational efficiency as more airlines expand their routes and increase their flight frequencies.

Dato' Iskandar Mizal Mahmood
Managing Director
Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad

I am happy to announce that our pandemic mitigation initiatives have reduced our core operational expenses by RM723.3 million over the past two years besides increasing our cash and funds to RM2.31 billion for FY2021. The group as a whole posted total revenue of RM1.67 billion and 36.1 million passenger movements across its network of airports.

For the first quarter of 2022, our group continued to register strong EBITDA of RM186.9 million after a negative RM16.2 million over the previous corresponding period, thanks to air traffic recovery for its operations in Malaysia and Turkey.

Our cost-efficient measures and improved operations at Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport are mainly responsible for enabling us to achieve 70.6% of our pre-Covid passenger traffic. This has helped us to retain our AAA and A3 credit ratings by RAM Holdings Bhd and Moody's amid the headwinds posed by the pandemic. The replacement of our aging assets is also taking shape as planned to ensure that our passengers continue to enjoy a safe and seamless experience at our airports.

We are looking at new revenue streams and exploring growth opportunities, among other connectivity as global air travel gradually recovers. We have been recording an average of 30,000 international passenger movements daily since Malaysia opens its borders on April 1.

We are pleased that to see Batik Air, formerly known as Malindo Air, had reinstated its four times weekly Kuala Lumpur-Denpasar direct flights on June 2, and further increased it to twice daily from June 25. The airline also resumed its service to Batam, Indonesia from Sultan Abdul Aziz Airport, popularly known as Subang Airport on June 24.

We are likewise delighted Firefly had resumed its twice-weekly flights from Subang Airport to Singapore's Seletar Airport effective June 13 after more than two years of suspension due to the Covid-19 pandemic and borders closure. The airline is partnering with Tourism Malaysia to encourage domestic tourism via livery advertising and the recent launch of the #GoJalanlah campaign.

Our international airports have also shown significant passenger movement improvements

of late. For example, Penang International Airport (PIA) recently saw the resumption of 10 direct international service to destinations such as Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan. PIA witnessed Indonesian low-cost carrier (LCC) Citilink's new daily Medan-Penang service on June 10 and Lion Air's resumption of its Medan-Penang route on June 17.

Kota Kinabalu International Airport (KKIA), which saw the reinstatement of Jin Air's Incheon-Kota Kinabalu flight on May 27, had two more Korean carriers, Air Busan and JejuAir, returning to KKIA from Incheon International Airport on June 24 and June 29 respectively. We expect to see more flight resumptions from other countries soon.

One of our primary aims is to strengthen more routes and our market development efforts while enhancing our engagement with the airlines. I am certain that in years to come, Malaysia Airports will continue to innovate and initiate in order to constantly improve the high standards of excellence we have set for ourselves, to be the premier aviation hub of choice.



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Airlines' Profitability to be Rebuilt by Air Travel Recovery

As the pace of recovery from the Covid-19 crisis quickens, the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) has upgraded its outlook on the airline industry's 2022 financial performance, expecting the industry to cut losses to US\$9.7 billion.

This is an improvement from its earlier October 2021 forecast of \$11.6 billion losses, says the association, which represents some 290 airlines comprising 83% of the global air traffic.

Despite rising labour and fuel costs, with the latter driven by 40% plus increase in the world oil prices, IATA says efficiency gains and improving yields will help airlines to reduce losses, with industry-wide profitability projected to be within reach in 2023. Its director general Willie Walsh believes, "It is a time for optimism even if there are still challenges on costs, particularly fuel, and some lingering restrictions in a few key markets."

The airline industry's optimism and commitment to emission reductions will be evident in the expected net delivery of over 1,200 aircraft in 2022.

The strong pent-up demand, lifting of travel restrictions and low unemployment in most countries as well as expanded personal savings are fuelling a resurgence in demand that will see passenger numbers reach 83% of pre-pandemic levels in 2022, according to IATA.

The challenge for 2022 is to keep costs under control as the industry ramps up. Walsh quips, "The improvement in the financial outlook comes from holding costs to a 44% increase while revenues increase 55%.

"Our suppliers, including airports and air navigation service providers, need to be as focused on controlling costs as their customers to support the industry's recovery."

Regional round-up

Breaking down the airline industry's financial performance in terms of region, IATA expects North America to remain as the strongest performing region and the only region to return to profitability this year.

It expects the region's airlines to deliver US\$8.8 billion profit, supported by the United States' large domestic market and the reopening of international markets, including North Atlantic.

While traffic volumes in Latin America have recovered robustly in 2021, propped also by domestic markets and relatively fewer travel restrictions in many countries, IATA says the financial outlook for airlines from this region remains fragile and has projected a net loss of US\$3.2 billion this year.

With the Middle East's reopening international routes and long-haul flights particularly this year, the association believes this will help the airlines narrow their net losses to US\$1.9 billion from US\$4.7 billion last year.

Meanwhile, with the lower vaccination rates in Africa, IATA says the region's air travel recovery has been dampened. "However, some catching up is likely this year, which will contribute to an improved financial performance."

For the Asia Pacific airlines, given the strict travel restrictions, notably in China, and the uneven vaccine rollout, IATA says the region's



air travel recovery is still lagging compared to the other regions.

It anticipates more easing of the Covid-19 restrictions globally in the second half of 2022 and opines that an earlier move away from China's zero Covid policy would improve the outlook for the airline industry. As travel demand picks up, IATA forecasts Asia Pacific airlines' net losses in 2022 will drop to US\$8.9 billion, with revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) expected to reach 73.7% of pre-crisis 2019 levels, and 81.5% in terms of capacity.

With the Russian airspace closed to many operators, mostly on long-haul routes between Asia and Europe or North America as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war, this means significantly higher rerouting costs for the affected carriers.

As the war continues to disrupt travel patterns not only within Europe but also between Europe and Asia Pacific, this has impacted European arrivals. This is true for Sarawak, whose adventure tourism has a strong appeal among those from Germany and France.

Return of the legendary RWMF draws tourist arrivals

Sarawak's recently concluded three-day Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF), which is supported by Malaysia Airlines as the official carrier, has returned with a bang after the pandemic with a physical and hybrid show to achieve its modest target of 12,000 visitorship viewing over 60 local and international acts.

Prior to the pandemic, its last physical show in 2019 had 23,000 visitors. With China and some of the countries from the African continent not opened for international travel yet, it was quite challenging for the RWMF organiser, Sarawak Tourism Board, to source for international bands to perform in the 25th edition of the RWMF, themed Legendary Rainforest Celebration, in the Land of the Hornbills.

Sarawak Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah says the RWMF saw physical participation from 41 countries.

Of this, 16 each were from the continents of Europe and Asia, three each from

North America and South America (Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina) and two each from Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) and Africa (Nigeria and Ghana).

Apart from Malaysia, Abdul Karim points out that the top five countries for physical attendees to the RWMF were from Singapore, Indonesia, Australia and the United Kingdom while the virtual tickets were mainly sold to Australia, China, Japan, Philippines, Sweden, the United States and the Malaysian states of Selangor and Sabah.

Foreigners' participation in this year's iconic event made up 8% of the total visitorship compared to 40% before the pandemic in 2019.

Expressing his satisfaction with the visitorship results to the RWMF, he says weekly flights to Sarawak has returned to pre-pandemic numbers, at 619. Plans are underway to increase them further.

"We are focusing on Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore, where we even have a trade and investment office in the republic."



Malaysia Airlines Flies First Passenger Flight with SAF

In conjunction with World Environment Day, Malaysia Airlines, the national carrier of Malaysia, operated its first passenger flight on June 5 using Neste MY Sustainable Aviation Fuel™ (SAF) on flight MH603 from Kuala Lumpur (KUL) to Singapore (SIN).

The historic flight was operated with a Boeing 737-800 aircraft fuelled by a blend of conventional jet fuel and Neste's SAF, which is produced from 100% renewable waste and residue raw materials, such as animal fat waste that was used for the SAF fuelling on this flight.

“

MAG aims to be a pioneer in using SAF for flights in Malaysia as part of our commitment to achieving socio-economic development and reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. We have taken proactive measures in minimising our carbon footprint from the ground up through measures taken within our operations, including fuel efficiency programmes such as SAF.

With the commencement of our first passenger flight using SAF, we encourage passengers to join us on this journey as we take the necessary steps to minimise our environmental impacts and plan for more flights powered by SAF; for the betterment of the industry, nation, and future of our planet. Moving forward, we will look to make SAF the cleaner and more viable energy option for our regular flights by 2025.

”

PHILIP SEE

*Group Chief Sustainability Officer of
Malaysia Aviation Group*

Azrul Osman Rani, PDB's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer said, "In line with PETRONAS' commitment towards achieving Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050, exploring the supply of SAF at KLIA is a natural progression for us with aviation fuel being one of our key products. With two proven flights, PDB has demonstrated its capabilities and infrastructure readiness in supplying SAF in KLIA from now onwards to support the aviation industry's sustainability agenda."

Neste is committed to support aviation reach its ambitious emission reduction goals and is currently expanding its global SAF production capacity to 1.5 million tonnes by the end of 2023. In neat form, Neste MY Sustainable Aviation Fuel reduces greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80% over the life cycle, compared to fossil jet fuel. Neste-produced SAF is made from 100% renewable and sustainably sourced waste and residue raw materials.

"This collaboration with PETRONAS enables our first supply of Neste MY SAF to Malaysia," said Sami Jauhiainen, Vice President APAC, Renewable Aviation at Neste, "I am excited to see how countries and airlines in the Asia-Pacific region are setting ambitious targets to decarbonise aviation and increasingly many airlines are taking SAF into use to reduce their emissions and enable their travellers to fly more sustainably. Neste is committed to play its part with the ongoing expansion of our global production capacity to 1.5 million tons of SAF by the end of 2023, ready to support the Asia-Pacific and global aviation markets."



Lanmei Airlines Connects Malaysia with Cambodia

In line with its vision to strengthen international connectivity, Lanmei Airlines has commenced a once-a-week direct flights between Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia effective May 28, 2022.

“

We are pleased to announce Lanmei Airlines' direct flights, connecting Malaysia and Cambodia. Following the easing of restrictions, we are witnessing a huge demand for international travel. With these new connections, it will certainly boost trade, tourism and mobility between the two nations.

”

LIU ZIQIAO

*Deputy General Manager (Kuala Lumpur)
of Lanmei Airlines*

Lanmei Airlines is a Cambodian native aviation company founded on March 7, 2016 which is named after Lancang-Mekong River. The airline's logo looks like a peacock spreading its tails which symbolises propitious totem in both oriental and western culture. The six feathers

of the wings-like logo represent the six Greater Mekong River countries who are the community of shared destiny and shared river. The logo also looks like a rotating aircraft engine, implying to supply new and steady thrust to these six nations.

For bookings from Malaysia to Cambodia, customers can get in touch with their respective travel agents or Lanmei Airline's local office at 27th Floor, Wisma Chuang, Jalan Sultan Ismail via phone at 03 – 2148 8033.



Batik Air Reinstates KL to Bali Route



Batik Air (formerly known as Malindo Air) has reinstated its direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to the well-known holiday destination Denpasar, Bali on June 2, 2022, marking its second destination in Indonesia after the reopening of international borders. With flights to Denpasar reinstated, Batik Air's capacity to Indonesia increased as Batik Air has resumed its twice daily services to Jakarta since March 27, 2022.

Flight OD306 departed KL International Airport (KLIA) at 9:10AM local time and arrived at Ngurah Rai International Airport, Denpasar at 12:15PM local time.

Batik Air offered 4X weekly services between June 2 and June 24, 2022. The services then increased to twice daily (14X weekly) from June 25, 2022 onwards.

“

Bali has always been the airline's hit market before the pandemic and we are hoping that this newly reinstated route will provide convenient connections for the gradual hike in the number of holidaymakers travelling to Bali, therefore enhancing the airline's capture of the regional market. Additionally, with the reopening of international borders amidst the lifting of travel restrictions, we will continue to adjust our capacity to match the demand for international air travel.

”

CAPT. MUSHAFIZ

BIN MUSTAFA BAKRI

*Chief Executive Officer of
Batik Air*

For more information,
please visit www.malindoair.com



STARLUX Launches New A330neo



STARLUX Airlines, a full-service carrier from Taiwan, launched its maiden flights for its two brand-new A330neo from Taipei Taoyuan International Airport to Manila, Philippines, and Bangkok, Thailand on June 1, 2022.

Despite the Covid-19 crisis, STARLUX has been steadily expanding routes across the Asia-Pacific region since 2020. The A321neo has been their mainstay aircraft during this expansion and with the addition of A330neos, STARLUX is set to deploy its fleet more flexibly and provide a better flying experience to passengers.

STARLUX's A330neo features a spacious layout with 297 seats, including 28 in business class and 269 in economy class. Business class seats are luxuriously covered with a cashmere silver back shell and enlarged privacy dividers; each seat can fold down into a fully flat bed. The luxurious RECARO seats in the economy cabin offer ultra-thin seatbacks to increase leg room and are equipped with high-quality leather headrests that can be adjusted six ways to provide head and neck support for various positions.

The A330neo inflight entertainment system has also been greatly upgraded. In business class, every seat is equipped with a 17.3-inch 4K screen, while passengers in economy class can also enjoy 4K resolution with 13.3-inch screen. Bluetooth audio connectivity is now available for passengers to use their own headphones onboard.

In addition to the hardware upgrades, STARLUX is also rolling out new fragrance, coffee, and STARLUX cocktails. "Home in the Air 2.0" is a new fragrance formulated by popular Taiwanese perfumer, P. Seven. Compared to the original cabin fragrance, "Home in the Air 2.0" introduces the element of Taiwanese tea as the main theme, using the original "Home in the Air" as the base and adding the aroma of Tieguanyin tea to create a gentle, mature scent, which adds another dimension of tranquillity for passengers.

STARLUX cocktails have also been upgraded as the airline collaborated with popular Tainan pub Bar Home mixologist Huang Yixiang to offer five new STARLUX cocktails, providing a relaxing atmosphere in the air. In addition, gourmet coffee has also been reintroduced by St.1 Café/Work Room, which exudes a premium caramel aroma on the plane.

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

AirAsia Resumes Flights Between Kota Kinabalu and Manila

AirAsia Philippines has returned to the capital city of Sabah – Kota Kinabalu on May 27, 2022 with two weekly flights.

“ The resumption of flights from the Philippines to key ASEAN destinations starting with Kota Kinabalu signifies our recovery, especially in the international market. We hope to support the revival of the tourism and economy of Sabah with the resumption of the Kota Kinabalu flights. We believe that the easing of safety protocols and test requirements have also revived the urge to travel among Filipinos. ”

RICKY ISLA

Chief Executive Officer of
AirAsia Philippines

“ We are pleased to welcome the return of AirAsia flights from the Philippines to Kota Kinabalu. This is AirAsia’s second international flight to Kota Kinabalu after Singapore. We are excited that international flights are resuming. STB will continue to promote Sabah as a holiday destination to the Philippines market, especially to those interested in climbing Mount Kinabalu and other niche tourism products. ”

NOREDHA OTHMAN

Chief Executive Officer of
Sabah Tourism Board

Aside from Kota Kinabalu, AirAsia Philippines also begin to fly tourists and business travelers back to Hong-Kong (weekly) and Singapore (4x weekly) as well as Bangkok (2x weekly) and Bali (2x weekly) in June.

Filipinos traveling outside the Philippines are required to download and install the Trazee Contact Tracing App, and register for the e-Health Declaration Card (e-HDC) through the Bureau of Quarantine’s OneHealthPass (OHP).

For more information, please visit www.airasia.com



Ethiopian Airlines Announces Order for Five 777 Freighters

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest and leading aviation group in Africa, and its longstanding partner, Boeing Inc. announced on May 25, the carrier is further expanding its all-Boeing freighter fleet with an order for five 777 Freighters.

“The addition of these five B777 Freighters into our cargo fleet will enable us to meet the growing demand in our cargo operation. While cementing our partnership with the Boeing Company with new orders, the growth of our freighter fleet takes the capacity and efficiency of our shipment service to the next level. We always strive to serve our customers with the latest technology aircraft the aviation industry could offer. Our Africa’s largest cargo terminal coupled with fuel efficient freighters and well-trained cargo handling professionals will enable our customers to get the best quality shipment service. Customers can rely on Ethiopian for wide-ranging cargo services across five continents.”

MESFIN TASEW
Chief Executive Officer of
Ethiopian Airlines Group

Boeing’s market-leading 777 Freighter is the world’s largest, longest-range and most capable twin-engine freighter currently flying with 17% lower fuel use and emissions compared to prior airplanes. Ethiopian Airlines currently operates a fleet of nine 777 freighters, utilising the range of 4,970 nautical miles (9,200 km) and maximum structural payload of 107 tonnes (235,900 lb) to connect Africa with 66 dedicated cargo centers throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services covers 127 international destinations around the world with both belly hold capacity and dedicated freighter services.

“We value the trust that Ethiopian Airlines places in the 777 Freighter to support their cargo ambitions which will provide them with increased capability and flexibility to their operations,” said Ihssane Mounir, Boeing’s senior vice president of Commercial Sales and Marketing. “Additional 777 Freighters will enable Ethiopian to capitalise on near-term cargo demand, while positioning the airline for further expansion in the future.”

For more information, please visit www.ethiopianairlines.com





Etihad Airways Wins APEX Passenger Choice Award

Etihad Airways has been recognised in the Airline Passenger Experience (APEX) Passenger Choice Awards in a glittering awards ceremony in Dublin, Ireland on June 8, 2022. The UAE's national airline took home the 2022 Passenger Choice Award® for Best Entertainment in the Middle East.

On Etihad's E-BOX entertainment offering, guests will find over 200 movies, more than 350 TV shows, 15 radio channels and 800 albums in a variety of genres and languages. Video and audio content are supplemented with a wide variety of games as well as seven channels of Live TV featuring global news channels and sport.

On the airline's newest A350 aircraft, the latest features include wireless charging in Business class and Bluetooth headset pairing throughout the aircraft. The new flight map technology also features a fun and interactive

children's mode, where young travellers can explore the world with animated dinosaur friends.

APEX once again partnered with TripIt® from Concur®, the world's highest-rated travel-organising app, to gather anonymous passenger feedback based on neutral, third-party passenger feedback and insights for the honour. For the 2022 Awards, nearly one million flights were rated by passengers across more than 600 airlines from around the world using a five-star scale. On the same screen, passengers were given the opportunity to provide anonymous ratings in five subcategories: seat comfort, cabin service, food and beverage, entertainment, and Wi-Fi. The single screen rating allows airline passengers to easily rate their flight in less than 15 seconds.

“

We're consistently investing in the Etihad experience and we're proud our inflight entertainment has been recognised in the APEX awards based on genuine passenger feedback. The content on Etihad's E-BOX is hand-curated to cater to the wide demographic Etihad flies across its global network. On our newest fleet, Wi-Fi connectivity and other innovations like Bluetooth headset pairing and wireless device charging complement this leading entertainment offering.

”

TERRY DALY

*Executive Director Guest Experience,
Brand and Marketing of
Etihad Airways*

For more information,
please visit www.etihad.com

EVA Simplifies Checked Bag Allowances

EVA Air is ending its two-system policy for checked bags starting on June 23, 2022, making travel easier for passengers. The change ends the weight-based concept EVA has been using for international flights to/from Europe and Oceania and within Asia and increases baggage allowances for passengers on those routes. The airline will apply the piece-based concept for checked luggage on all its flights worldwide, making EVA's policies consistent with those of its codeshare partners and other Star Alliance members. EVA is the first airline in Taiwan to apply piece-concept baggage rules throughout its network.

Under the piece concept, passengers booked in Royal Laurel/Premium Laurel/Business Class are allowed two pieces weighing up to 32kg (70lbs) each. Premium Economy and Economy Class passengers can check two pieces that weigh as much as 23kg (50lbs) each. However, for passengers who issued tickets before June 23, 2022, the weight concept policy still applies to the allowance of their checked baggage.

“We’ve been using two baggage-check systems since we launched our maiden flight, applying the piece concept on transpacific routes to and from the U.S. and Canada and the weight concept for passengers within Asia and to/from Europe and Oceania. The piece concept for checked baggage is used by other Star Alliance members and major international airlines worldwide. Our policy change makes it less confusing for passengers to check their luggage and more convenient for those connecting to other airlines. It also enables us to further improve airport and transit services by creating a smoother baggage-check and transfer process globally.”

CLAY SUN
President of
EVA Air

The weight concept capped the checked baggage allowances for Economy Class passengers to/from Asia, Europe and Oceania at 30kg (66lbs).

EVA is accompanying its introduction of the new checked baggage policy with special fare family products designed especially for travelers with less baggage. Among them are an all-new Economy Class “Discount” fare available for travel on all routes and an affordable “Basic” fare with a free checked baggage allowance of 23kg (50lbs) on flights within Asia. In addition, baggage allowance for group ticket holders follow the rules of the “Basic” fare of each route.

For more information, please visit www.evaair.com



Turkish Airlines Provides Uninterrupted Internet Experience

Aiming to provide a travel experience beyond expectations, Turkish Airlines is strengthening its internet service provided on its aircraft.

Providing internet service above the clouds ever since 2011, Turkish Airlines will extend this service, which used to be activated only when aircraft was above 10,000 feet, to be an uninterrupted one that starts right as aircraft doors are closed and continue until they are opened at the destination, making it a Gate to Gate internet service.

“

We are happy to extend our internet coverage area as the airline that flies to more countries than any other and provides the greatest coverage of international connections. We will continue to work on new technologies in order to provide the best of the virtual world just like we do with the real one.

”

PROF. DR. AHMET BOLAT
Chairman of the Board
and the Executive Committee of
Turkish Airlines



Turkish Airlines started Gate to Gate service in a total of 131 aircraft; 74 narrow-body and 57 wide-body since May and will extend this service to other aircraft that provide internet in its fleet in stages over time.

Established in 1933 with a fleet of five aircraft, Turkish Airlines has a fleet of 372 (passenger and cargo) aircraft flying to 338 worldwide destinations in 333 cities.

For more information, please visit www.turkishairlines.com

Korean Air to Restore Long-Haul Network Destinations in July

Korean Air will gradually resume its long-haul flight operations from July on the recovery of international travel demand. The routes to be resumed are Incheon-Las Vegas, Incheon-Milan, and Incheon-Vienna.

The airline's Las Vegas flights will resume on July 10. The flights will operate three times a week on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, departing Incheon at 2:10PM and arriving in Las Vegas at 10:10AM. The returning flight departs from Las Vegas at 12:10PM and arrives at Incheon at 5:40PM the following day. The airline's Airbus A330-200 fleet will service this route.

Flights to Milan, the fashion capital of the world, will recommence on July 1. The Incheon-Milan service will operate three times a week on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. The flight departs at 1:40PM from Incheon and arrives in Milan at 7:55PM. The return flight departs Milan at 10:00PM to arrive in Incheon at 4:15PM the next day.



Three weekly flights to the capital of music - Vienna, Austria - will resume on July 1, operating on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. The flight departs from Incheon at 11:00AM and arrives in Vienna at 5:10PM. The returning flight leaves Vienna at 6:40PM and arrives in Incheon at 12:50PM the next day.

In restoring its global network to meet post-pandemic international travel demand, Korean Air will ramp up its operations by gradually resuming suspended routes.

For more information, please visit www.koreanair.com



Aviation Interview with Datuk Rosmawati Lasuki, Justice of Peace

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC)



From junior secretary in 1984 with the Yayasan Sabah (YS) Group, Datuk Rosmawati Lasuki rose from the rank and file to reach her current CEO position with D'Heritage Sdn Bhd (DHSB), which was set up to manage East Malaysia's largest convention centre, SICC. She obtained a Master of Business Administration from Edith Cowan University in Perth, Australia in 2000 to further equip herself. Turning 60 years old soon in early August, this iron lady who hails from Tawau simply enjoys reading and travelling. She was recognised by Sabah Creative Economy and Innovation Centre at this year's International Women's Day as one of the two women for the significant impact and contribution she has made for Sabah and SICC.

Tell us about your background with the YS Group.

Prior to my appointment as DHSB CEO, I was deputy director of YS and deputy CEO of Innoprise Corporation Sdn Bhd (ICSB). YS is a statutory body established by the Sabah State Legislative Assembly in 1966 to promote educational and economic opportunities for Sabahans and I was responsible for managing over 40 companies under their umbrella.

Incorporated in 1988, ICSB is an investment vehicle-cum-management and holding company of YS Group of companies, which include DHSB. As ICSB deputy CEO, my responsibilities cover formulation, implementation, evaluation and re-formulation of strategies to achieve the targeted goals that will facilitate the management of SICC's operations.

How have these two previous portfolios in particular prepared you for your current position?

Both roles have been very helpful for me in setting up strategic plans and quality assurance system for the YS Group that are relevant to the state government and the people of Sabah. In my role as deputy director of YS, I had to engage with YS's stakeholders, especially in running the people's programmes in the districts in Sabah. The success of these programmes built up the stakeholders' trust and confidence in me.

During my early days as deputy CEO of ICSB, I realised my strength lies in strategic management, innovating companies by expanding their plans and realigning their initiatives to achieve YS's mission and vision in both its social and commercial roles. I was leading and chairing official trips, events or functions. This helped me to build up my social network, which is important in order to stay relevant and succeed in this industry.

How did you first get into the business events (BE) industry?

I proposed to YS Group to organise an international event to attract investors into the state in 2004. The following year, the International CEOs Conference was held, which saw my involvement from its planning right up to its execution. The event was a great success, drawing 650 participants internationally and locally. The event elevated Sabah on

the world map, opened doors to investors and established the state as a BE venue, attracting high-end tourists who provided incremental tourism revenue. Later, we had a series of international and local events, including the International Women Congress.

How do you view your recent trip to IMEX in Frankfurt?

I foresee lots of opportunities for Borneo, in which Sabah is part of, to progress as a popular BE destination.

With the recent opening of the international markets, what efforts have been made to woo more business visitors through business events (BE) held in Malaysia?

SICC was appointed as one of the strategic partners of the 3R initiatives (Reset, Restart and Responsible) when the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau announced this on 23 March at Malaysian International Trade & Exhibition Centre, Kuala Lumpur as a recovery programme for the industry.

At the same time, we have been engaging with local event organisers to establish a BE community through either strategic or delivery partnership by organising events or creating new ones. We also work hand-in-hand with Sabah Tourism Board to woo more BE to Sabah.

Tell us about SICC's unique selling points (USPs), its versatile meeting spaces and how they have been used to maximum advantage in the light of some recent events such as the second Asia Parks Congress (APC) 2022.

Our USPs include SICC's walkable distance from the city centre and easy connectivity with Asian countries such as Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea and the Philippines. We also provide free WiFi throughout the convention centre and easy access for those who are wheelchair-bound. My experienced team is committed to ensure that the guests and events are handled professionally.

Most of our venue was occupied during the second APC. They include our convention and exhibition halls as well as the sundown lounge. A dedicated safety and security section, secretariat, breakout rooms for concurrent sessions, speakers' room and a volunteer room were set up to cater to this regional event, which attracted some 1,200 participants from over 40 countries.

What are some of the milestones achieved by SICC since its opening?

Upon SICC's completion in January 2020, the first event held here was a majlis tilawah or recitation ceremony and Al Quran memory competition at national level from 16 to 21 February 2020. It was a real test of SICC's efficiency and the building's functionality as we had up to 10,000 attendees from all over Malaysia and all our meeting rooms were fully utilised.

It also showed the convention centre's ability to host big events while maintaining the safety and security of the participants. SICC went on to host many other big-scale events.

During the Covid-19 pandemic when events were postponed or cancelled, SICC was used as one of the mega vaccination centres. We accommodated 36,412 vaccine recipients and managed to operate without any cases of cluster during that period.

How many events have been signed up at SICC so far and until what year?

We have a few events signed up for next year and are working on some more for 2024 and 2025.

Tell us about some of your new facilities and recent upgrading exercises at SICC.

We introduced the SICC Café in 2021 to offer a temporary casual and delightful dining experience to our guests and had received good feedback. We are now building up our pool of regular customers as this is a good opportunity for us to extend our portfolio into the food and beverage industry besides being a convention centre.

After upgrading our kitchen and dining area in April, we introduced Meranti Café in June. It is inspired by the 100.8 metre high endangered yellow Meranti tree which is the world's tallest living tropical tree found in Danum Valley Conservation Area in Sabah. The café's name is fitting tribute as it is located at SICC's Rainforest Wing, which represents a perfect homage to commemorate our conservation efforts.

Can we expect more refurbishments at SICC?

There will be none at the moment because we only started full operations in 2021.

Does SICC face labour shortage such as from the hospitality side and how does it hope to address it?

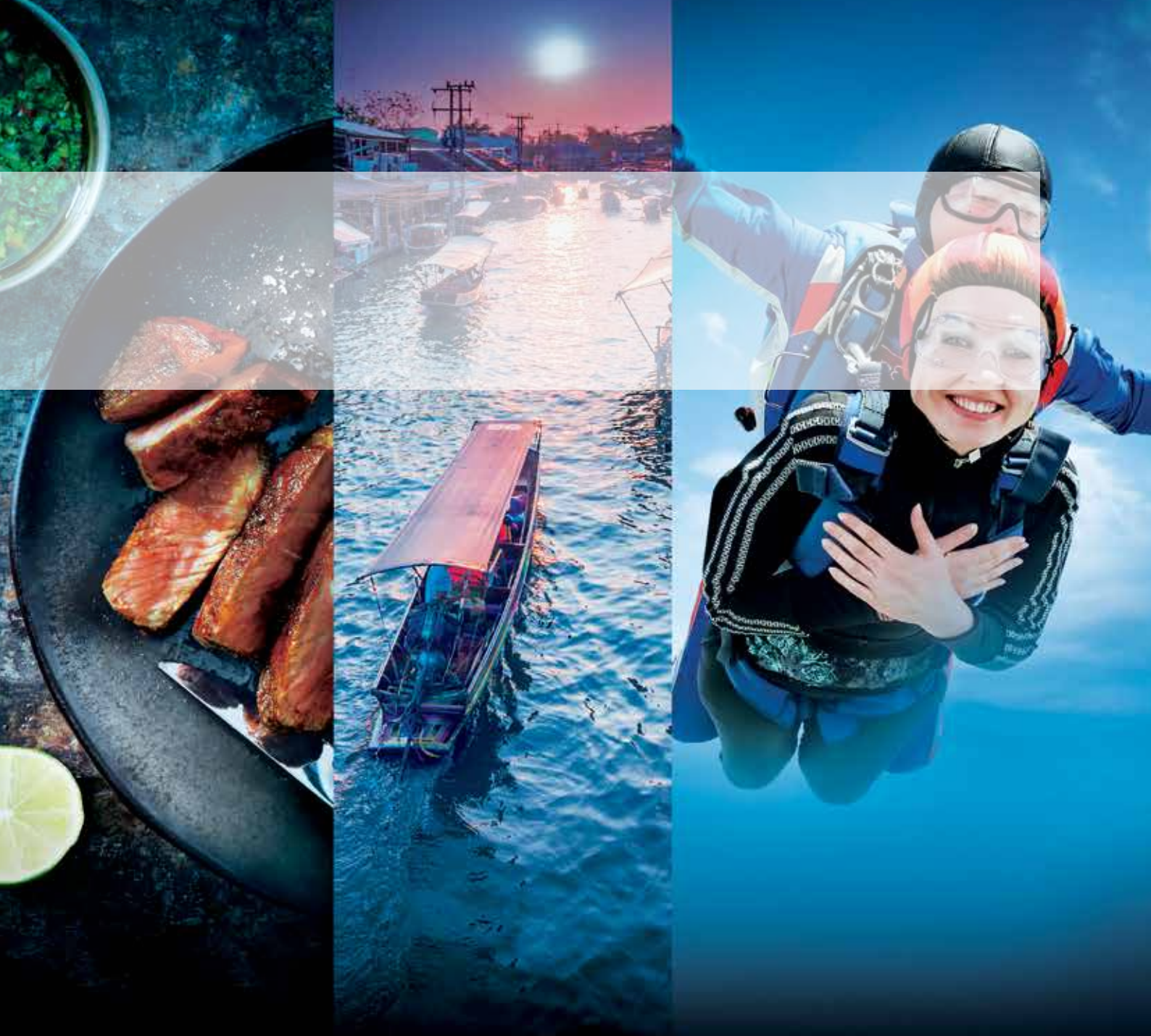
Hospitality overall is facing manpower shortage. We work with a few tertiary education providers such as Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cosmopoint, Politeknik Sabah, ATI College and Almacrest International College to provide on the job training for their students either as frontliners or in the back office. SICC's vision is to provide skills for the next generation.

Under the new norm of doing business following the Covid-19 pandemic, what are some of the green and sustainable measures introduced by SICC besides the absence of plastic mineral water bottles?

We have implemented a few initiatives such as the used oil recycling programme, food wastage control and having a smoke-free area.

As one of SICC's iron ladies, what is your philosophy in life and what is your advice to help other women compete in a male-dominated world?

One of the lessons I learnt when I was growing up was to always stay true to myself and never let others distract you from your goals. However, you must do the right things and rightfully in the eyes of Allah.



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