

AIRLINK

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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 rejoices that Kuala Lumpur (KL)-Singapore is among the world's top five busiest international routes based on the number of available seats from October 2021 to September 2022, according to OAG flight data platform in its latest Busiest Routes report. Additionally, the recent reinstatement of Malaysia's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) rating to Category 1 (CAT1) by the United States' Federal Aviation Administration has not only strengthened our country's position as an aviation hub but will also increase our global network connectivity.

Dato' Iskandar Mizal Mahmood
Managing Director
Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad

Kudos go to the airlines which made a total of 2,443,176 seats available between KL International Airport (KLIA) and Singapore's Changi Airport over a one-year period which ended in September, which ranked this route between two of Southeast Asia's largest air hubs and the world's fifth busiest in terms of passenger traffic. Among them are AirAsia, Batik Air Malaysia, Jetstar Asia, KLM, Malaysia Airlines, Scoot and Singapore Airlines, which also contributed reasonable freight movement for this sector.

OAG has also listed KLIA among the top 50 global airport megahubs for 2022, ranking it 39th with 38% of its share of flights contributed by AirAsia while its klia2 terminal was placed 20th among the top 25 low-cost carrier airport megahubs. In terms of Asia Pacific, KLIA is now positioned eighth, down from its fourth ranking in 2019 pre-pandemic.

Thanks to the massive efforts by the Transport Ministry and the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) to get our country's IASA rating reinstated to CAT1, this has helped boost global confidence in the quality of our air navigation services and will further assist us in our marketing efforts to woo more airlines to operate here. Furthermore, Malaysia's re-election to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Council recently is also a testament to our commitment in developing global aviation landscape.

With CAAM recently granting an air operator's certificate to MyAirline Sdn Bhd which is a significant step toward becoming a certified airline, we look forward to its entry into our aviation industry in the aftermath of the pandemic where it will benefit from the abundance of airport slots and availability of pilots and cabin crew in Malaysia.

I believe our ongoing Airport Collaborative Decision-Making initiative integrating our

airport operations with the air traffic control, airlines and ground handlers on a uniformed platform is another move in the right direction given the enhanced predictability of events and optimal use of resources.

With the polling day for the 15th general election fixed on 19 November, we expect a flurry of flights taking place this month with the active campaigning and Malaysians flying back to cast their votes. We anticipate a busy period ahead in the run-up to the year-end where many corporates will be taking their holiday breaks.

IATA's latest passenger data for July testifies to the continued strong recovery in global air travel, standing at 74.6% of pre-crisis level with domestic traffic at 86.9%. Given the pent-up demand for leisure and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) trends, I foresee air travel patterns will remain strong until the end of 2022.



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Growing business aviation sees new MRO facility to be built at Subang Airport

The reopening up of major Asia Pacific countries has fuelled the resumption of strong business aviation operations particularly in Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, which in turn has helped to boost not only overall buoyancy of the aviation industry but also that of aerospace.

In addition, the recently concluded second edition of Selangor Aviation Show (SAS) 2022, themed "The One and Only Business Aviation Show in the Region", also played a pivotal role in connecting the industry players with potential investors and partners both globally and domestically.

Held at the Skypark Regional Aviation Centre in Subang, Selangor from 8-10 September, the high impact event attracted players from the aviation industry in Thailand, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Brazil, Canada, France, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States.

According to Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari, there has been an increasing number of companies setting up their operations in Malaysia's most industrialised state since 2020.

Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang alone houses up to 19 fixed-wing business aviation and general aviation operators as well as up to 13 helicopter operators. Over 80% of these companies are locally owned.

Subang Airport, a centre for maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) of aircraft, is also where original equipment manufacturer (OEM) ExecuJet MRO Services Malaysia Sdn Bhd is located. ExecuJet has started construction of a new purpose-built MRO hangar facility with runway access and a dedicated apron sited at another area of the airport to complement its existing operations.

A leading business aviation MRO company in Malaysia, ExecuJet currently serves Dassault, Bombardier and Gulfstream operators from across Asia. It is certified by the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia, US Federal Aviation Administration, European Aviation Safety Agency and other international airworthiness authorities.

With a gross floor area of about 149,500 sq ft, its new facility will further expand ExecuJet's corporate offices and customer areas, among other things. It is expected to be operational by the third quarter of 2023.

With the number of business jets continuing to grow, especially in Southeast Asia, Ivan Lim, ExecuJet regional vice president for Asia says, "Business people have been turning to business aviation to meet their flying needs because it is time-efficient with far fewer touch points as compared to commercial aviation."

SAS 2022 reportedly generated RM1.06 billion in potential transactions from the memorandum of understandings (MOUs) signed during the three-day event, which surpassed its initial target of RM700 million.

Over 13 MOUs and deals signed

The MOUs range from potential aircraft manufacturing to MRO, air taxi service training as well as research and development for the aerospace industry.

Green aviation technology company, Volar Air Mobility Ltd, inked the biggest MOU valued at RM675.1 million. Incorporated on May 11, 2021, the Hong Kong company will collaborate with Selangor Aviation & Technology Innovation Sdn Bhd (SELATI) to introduce the first green air taxi service in Malaysia within two years.

The two will reportedly establish an institute for the development of electric aviation in





Malaysia to promote the development of green aviation, which is in line with Malaysia's aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

According to a 2021 report by Allied Market Research, the global air taxi market is projected to hit US\$6.63 billion by 2030 from US\$817.50 million in 2021 with North America taking the lead, followed by Europe, Asia Pacific and the Latin America, Middle East and Africa.

Exploring the development of air taxi in Malaysia, it was reported earlier in July that AirAsia's Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), a unit of AirAsia Aviation Group Ltd, which is Capital A's aviation arm, had signed a letter of intent with the world's leading AAM industry expert, Skyports Infrastructure of the United Kingdom.

According to AirAsia Aviation Group chief safety officer and AAM head, Captain Ling Liong Tien, its partnership with Skyports is expected to accelerate the review of this infrastructure, including vertical take-off and landing platforms in Malaysia besides strengthening the country's potential as a zero-emission ultra-short haul air travel provider in Southeast Asia.

At SAS 2022, SELATI, which has been tasked by the Selangor state government to develop a Centre of Excellence for Drones (SDEC) to cover drone testing, training for pilots, development and games besides

providing a one-stop MRO centre for drones in Bestari Jaya, also signed a MOU with Sky Futures Malaysia Sdn Bhd where both will be involved in developing the SDEC.

SELATI will provide a training centre for Sky Futures, an end-to-end solution provider for the inspection, data collection and analysis by unmanned aerial systems.

SAS 2022 also saw the Malaysian Sports Aviation Federation (MSAF) inking MOUs with several companies, namely Davinci Gliders of South Korea, GIAAN Flying Academy, Seniman Malaysia, Kelab Rakan Udara Malaysia and Aerospace Solutions Sdn Bhd.

Another MOU signed was between Global Component Asia Sdn Bhd and Black Arrow Space Technologies Ltd of the United Kingdom while Pen Aviation Sdn Bhd inked a commercial agreement with IT Sky Solutions Ltd of Nigeria.

At the signing ceremony for the unmanned aircraft system purchase agreement, Pen Aviation says the deal will revolutionise healthcare services in Nigeria, making them more accessible especially to the remote areas.

Meanwhile, Systematic Aviation Services Sdn Bhd signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Oriental Sky Sdn Bhd to cooperate in amphibian aircraft maintenance and flight operations besides

inking a MOA with Giaan Flying Academy.

SAS 2022 also witnessed collaborations between Menteri Besar Selangor (Incorporated) with 10 aerospace companies.

They are Aerodyne Group, Asia AeroTechnic Sdn Bhd, GE Engine Services Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Hicom-Teck See Manufacturing Sdn Bhd, Sapura Industrial Berhad, Smarlink Engineering Sdn Bhd, Spirit Aerosystems Malaysia, T7 Aero Tech Sdn Bhd, UMW Aerospace Sdn Bhd and UPECA Aerotech Sdn Bhd.

Another strategic collaboration signed at SAS 2022 was between Delta Aerospace Sdn Bhd and Aeronautique Design & Service Bureau SA of Switzerland with the investment deal valued at RM166.7 million.

The joint-venture, involving the transfer of production, technology and intellectual property, will result in the Swiss company having an equity in the former, Malaysia's first seaplane company and the rebranding of the LA-8 into Heron 8 seaplanes.

There has been significant growth in Asia Pacific in the market for amphibious aircraft. Fortune Business Insights' report on the global amphibious aircraft market 2021-2028, which had valued it at US\$159 million in 2020, projects it to reach US\$358 million by 2028, supported by rising demand for such aircraft for commercial use due to their light weight.

Turkish Airlines Launches Additional Flights to Kuala Lumpur



Flying to more countries than any other airline, Turkish Airlines operated its first direct flight to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on April 25, 2013, with three frequencies per week. Barely a year into operation, Turkish Airlines started operating daily to and from Kuala Lumpur.

Coming into a decade of operation in Malaysia, Turkish Airlines has increased its Kuala Lumpur weekly frequencies by adding another additional three frequencies weekly (total: 10-time weekly service) with the flights that started on October 1, 2022, from Istanbul.

Tourism Malaysia, commenting on the introduction of the additional frequencies, strongly supports the increase in international direct flights by Turkish Airlines as this will bring even more visitors from across their network to Malaysia and further boost the economy for a strong rebound for Malaysia's tourism industry.

The easing of international travel protocols and the relaxation of the entry procedures to Malaysia will also increase the travel demand to Malaysia and boost connectivity from other international continents. Tourism Malaysia welcomes all visitors to explore Malaysia's beautiful and diverse attractions.

Malaysia Airports echoing the same sentiments, has witnessed Turkish Airlines' rapid growth in Malaysia throughout the years and it remains confident of the airline's continued success at KL International Airport (KLIA). The airport operator is pleased that the airline is increasing its flight frequency which will contribute to the growth of the aviation and tourism sectors of the country post-pandemic. Malaysia Airports hopes to see the recovery of more airlines at its airports as air travel regains its momentum this year.



Operating ten flights a week, new additional frequencies will be able to accommodate more demand for passengers departing from KL International Airport (KUL) to more than 320 destinations in over 120 countries from all around the world via Istanbul.

For more information, please visit www.turkishairlines.com

Etiha d Launches Inaugural Flight to Guangzhou

Etiha d Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has launched its first-ever scheduled flights linking Abu Dhabi and Guangzhou. The inaugural flight, EY868, departed Abu Dhabi on October 10, 2022 after a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by representatives from the Chinese Embassy to the UAE, Abu Dhabi Airports Company, Miral Asset Management, and Etihad Aviation Group.

The flight touched down at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport making Etihad the first international airline to operate long-haul passenger services to the top three Chinese gateways – Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou – since the start of the pandemic.



“ We have been tremendously excited about the launch of this service. Guangzhou is the latest destination to be opened in China by Etihad since the launch of the Abu Dhabi–Shanghai route back in 2012. It will continue to help build a solid air bridge for commerce and cultural exchanges between China and the UAE.

We are very grateful for the support from both governments, business partners and our Etihad team, as our new service to Guangzhou will not only further address the huge demand for passenger travel between the UAE and China, building on the formidable people and business ties between the two markets, but also support the increasing consolidation and strengthening of Etihad’s presence in China and the global aviation industry. It also reinforces the airline’s commitment to serving the Chinese market.

”

TONY DOUGLAS

Group Chief Executive Officer
Etihad Aviation Group

To highlight Guangzhou’s reputation as “the spiritual home of Cantonese cuisine”, and to appreciate the cultural diversity within Etihad’s in-house hospitality team, the event offered a tapestry of cuisines, consisting of several signature dim sum and Arabic-style canapés jointly created by Etihad Airways Chef Murray Reason and Capital Hospitality Executive Chef Imad Soboh. The evening gave a glimpse into the fascinating culinary experiences every business and leisure traveller can enjoy on board Etihad flights.

Flight EY868 marks the launch of scheduled services between Abu Dhabi and Guangzhou, growing Etihad’s network to 67 destinations across 45 countries. The new twice-weekly service will be operated via a two-class Boeing 777.

The Abu Dhabi - Guangzhou route will be operated twice weekly.

For more information, please visit www.etihad.com

Air Astana Receives Best Airline in Central Asia Award

Air Astana, Kazakhstan's flag carrier, has received prestigious Skytrax awards for "Best Airline in Central Asia and CIS" for the tenth time and "Best Service in Central Asia and CIS" for the first time. Awards were presented to all winners at a Skytrax Awards ceremony in London recently.

“

Since it was launched 20 years ago, Air Astana steadily built a reputation for safety, efficiency and outstanding customer service. We are once again honoured to receive awards from Skytrax, which perfectly reflect our commitment to the very highest standards of excellence and recognition from our devoted passengers. I would like to thank every one of our almost six thousand staff for their professionalism and dedication on this proud occasion.

”

PETER FOSTER

*President and Chief Executive Officer
Air Astana*

“Air Astana is celebrating its tenth win this year. The airline's management and employees should be proud of this success and of winning the award for Best Airline and Best Service in Central Asia and CIS. The past two years have been very challenging for the aviation industry; therefore, this award confirms the high-quality service that Air Astana continues to provide to its customers,” said Edward Plaisted, Chief Executive Officer of Skytrax.

Winners of Skytrax Awards are determined through an annual passenger survey. More than 300 airlines were evaluated between September 2021 and August 2022.

More than 14 million people from 100 nationalities participated in this survey in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Japanese and Chinese. Survey participants rated the airline's website, check-in and boarding procedures, cabin cleanliness, IFE, crew appearance and service, food quality, the comfort of seats, and more.

Air Astana received the Skytrax “Best Airline in Central Asia and India” award for the first time in 2011 and this was followed a year later by being the first airline in the CIS and Eastern Europe to receive a four-star Skytrax award. From 2013 to 2015, Air Astana was awarded the Skytrax Award for “Best Service in Central Asia and India”.

For more information, please visit www.airastana.com



Lufthansa Launches Suite Concept in First & Business Class

Lufthansa is introducing a new premium product on long-haul routes under the name “Allegris” in all travel classes (i.e. Economy, Premium Economy, Business and First Class). “Allegris” has been developed exclusively for the Lufthansa Group.

For the very first time, the Lufthansa First Class is receiving spacious suites that offer nearly ceiling-high walls that can be closed for privacy. The seat, which is almost one metre wide, can be converted into a large, comfortable bed. All seats and beds are positioned in the direction of flight, without exception. In addition to many other storage options, there is a large, personal wardrobe in every suite. Passengers inhabiting this new First Class can even remain in their suite as they prepare for sleep and change into the Lufthansa First Class pajamas.

Dining will be an exceptional experience in the new First Class cabin. If preferred, eating together is made possible for the guests at a large dining table, whereby one can sit across from their partner or fellow traveler, just as one does in a restaurant. Gourmet menus are presented, along with the airline’s unique caviar service. Entertainment is provided by screens that extend across the full width of the suite, with Bluetooth connectivity for wireless headphones.

“We want to set new, unprecedented standards for our guests. The largest investment in premium products in our company’s history underpins our claim that we continue to be the leading Western premium airline in the future.”

CARSTEN SPOHR

*Chairman of the Executive Board and CEO
Deutsche Lufthansa AG*

Guests in Lufthansa Business Class can also look forward to their own suite, which offers even more comfort and privacy due to higher walls and sliding doors that completely close. Here, travelers can enjoy extended personal space, a monitor up to 27 inches, and ample storage space with a personal wardrobe.



Passengers have direct access to the aisle from all Business Class seats. The seat walls, which are at least 114 centimetres high, with generous space in the shoulder area, ensure greater privacy. All seats can be converted into a two-meter-long bed. Passengers can enjoy the in-flight entertainment program on monitors measuring nearly 17 inches. Wireless charging, noise-cancelling headphones and the ability to connect one’s own devices, such as a PC, tablet, smartphone, or headphones, to the entertainment system, via Bluetooth, are also part of the new Allegris Business Class experience.

Lufthansa will also give its guests significantly more choices in Economy Class. For example, in the future, travellers will have the option of booking seats in the first rows, which have a greater seat pitch and offer additional comfort. Following the success of the “Sleeper’s Row”, which offered Economy Class passengers greater relaxation on long-distance flights since August 2021, Lufthansa now plans to introduce a “Sleeper’s Row 2.0” on all new long-haul aircraft, as part of “Allegris.” In the “Sleeper’s Row 2.0”, one must simply fold up a leg rest and utilise the additional mattress on offer, for rest and relaxation on a reclining surface that is 40% larger compared to the original “Sleeper’s Row”. Also in the future, Economy Class passengers will also have the option of booking a vacant neighbor seat. This will give travelers more choices, even in the most economic travel class.

For more information, please visit
www.lufthansagroup.com



British Airways and Qatar Airways Complete Latest Expansion of Partnership

Qatar Airways and British Airways have completed the latest phase in the expansion of their partnership, offering global connectivity between more countries than any other airline joint business on September 27, 2022.

The airlines have added 42 new countries to their shared network, including Italy, the Maldives, Norway, Singapore, and Sweden, giving passengers enhanced access between destinations in Europe and the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Customers will now benefit from even greater choices in prices and schedules with options for direct flights as well as connections via hubs in London and Doha. This is all part of Qatar Airways and British Airways' plan to "Move Further Together" by enhancing the joint network and providing passengers with the best of both airlines.

The expansion will enable seamless connecting journeys on single tickets through Doha and London, bringing the total number of destinations served by the two airlines to 185 across more than 60 countries. The complementary networks uniquely access dozens of countries that no other alliance or joint business provides. The partnership also ensures access to more cities around the world than ever before, continuing to support global trade, tourism, investment, and cultural connection.

Additionally, customers will have more freedom to engage with both airlines' loyalty programmes, earning and spending Avios, their common currency. Customers are able to seamlessly link their Qatar Airways Privilege Club and British Airways Executive Club accounts to transfer Avios between the two and combine balances to claim rewards offered by each programme.

The collaboration also offers access to both airline's exclusive lounges, and cabins to suit all budgets and needs, including British Airways' new Club Suite and Qatar Airways' award-winning Qsuite.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "The growing collaboration between Qatar Airways and British Airways shows our customers our common goal to offer an unparalleled network with unique benefits. Travellers can now experience the best in quality and service as they travel across our joint network. The joint business between our airlines cements both Qatar Airways and British Airways as industry leaders, aiming to provide the utmost flexibility and unrivalled connectivity to our customers."

“

This is a huge milestone in our long-standing relationship with Qatar Airways, an airline that shares our passion for customer service, choice and flexibility.

From idyllic holiday hotspots such as the Maldives and Thailand, to business hubs such as Singapore and Hong Kong, we are pleased to open up the world as the travel industry continues to make steps towards its recovery.

”

SEAN DOYLE

*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
British Airways*



Cathay Launches Advanced Conversational AI to Enhance Digital Experience



Cathay is enhancing its customers' digital experience with the launch of an advanced conversational artificial intelligence (AI) in partnership with Fano Labs, a Hong Kong-based language AI company.

In recent years, this has included the introduction of AI chatbots that enable passengers and cargo customers to receive immediate responses to their queries, ranging from checking flight status, to booking changes and online shopping.

Under the airline's conversational AI roadmap, Cathay is optimising its digital customer experience even further with the most cutting-edge language AI technologies. The new conversational AI developed in partnership with Fano Labs will improve the efficiency and productivity of the airline's AI chatbots, enabling them to provide more accurate responses to customers' queries.

Cathay and Fano Labs have become one of the first in the market to have successfully developed and launched the Conversational AI Training Excellence platform that uses AI technologies to train AI chatbots. The "Trainer AI" leverages Fano Labs' Callinter product to analyse interactions with customers, including voice calls, live chats, WeChat messages, and WhatsApp messages, and automatically group these data into different categories for further processing, before presenting the results to a human supervisor for review and approval. The AI chatbot then learns from the data extracted by the trainer AI.

With this system in place, Cathay expects to reduce the time needed to train chatbots by 50%, meaning a regular 4-6 week learning cycle

will be shortened to 1-2 weeks only. The solution enables Cathay to take on a significantly greater volume of training data and ramp up its ability to discover new topics and improve the accuracy of chatbot responses.

“

As a company with more than seven decades in Hong Kong, we are committed to supporting local tech start-ups such as Fano Labs and innovating together to build our digital leadership – a pillar for achieving our vision of becoming one of the world's greatest service brands. This collaborative effort in Conversational AI technology is the latest example of how we can work together with startups to develop mutually beneficial partnerships and ultimately bring benefits and enhanced service to our customers.

”

LAWRENCE FONG

*Director of Digital and IT
Cathay*

Cathay is a premium travel lifestyle brand with range of products and services includes flights, holidays, shopping, dining, wellness and payment. Flights are provided by Cathay Pacific, the home airline of Hong Kong and a founding member of the oneworld global alliance. The Cathay Group also comprises of HK Express, Air Hong Kong (a dedicated freighter airline) and various subsidiaries.

For more information, please visit www.cathaypacific.com

Star Alliance reclaims World's Best Airline Alliance Title



Star Alliance has reclaimed the title of World's Best Airline Alliance at the prestigious Skytrax 2022 World Airline Awards on September 23, 2022. The Alliance's famed Los Angeles' lounge has also retained the award for World's Best Airline Alliance Lounge for the sixth year running. The awards were received by Star Alliance Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Goh in a ceremony held at the historic Langham Hotel in London.

“

We are elated to learn that millions of flyers around the world have put their trust in Star Alliance yet again and have recognised the exceptional value the alliance offers through their journey. As we celebrate our 25th anniversary this year, the recognition means even more to us.

”

JEFFREY GOH

Chief Executive Officer of
Star Alliance

Goh also took this opportunity to thank the unwavering efforts of the team and continued: “As we navigate through one of the most difficult periods for our industry, it is the grit and hard work of the Star Alliance team and the staff of our member carriers that has enabled seamless travel despite constantly changing environment. I receive this honour on their behalf.”

Star Alliance is dedicated to a multi-dimensional strategy to elevate customer experience, built on the pillars of digitalisation of the journey, unmatched loyalty benefits and industry-first innovations. Recently, Star Alliance extended its network with the Intermodal Partnership model, which intelligently combines air travel with other transport ecosystems. Launched in July 2022 with the German rail network, Deutsche Bahn, passengers can conveniently book combined air and rail journeys on a single ticket.

Known as “the Oscars of the aviation industry”, the Skytrax World Airline Awards are independent and impartial awards

decided through international customer voting. Passengers with over 100 nationalities participated in the 2021-22 survey, with 14.32 million eligible entries counted in the results. The survey was also provided in six major international languages.

Back in 2005 when the World's Best Airline Alliance category was introduced, Star Alliance was the first alliance to achieve the title, winning it multiple times in the following years. More recently, it held the top position for four consecutive years in 2016-2019.

Edward Plaisted, Chief Executive Officer of Skytrax said, “We congratulate Star Alliance and its member carriers on the award for the World's Best Airline Alliance once again, voted for by passengers across the globe. We also congratulate them on the coveted Best Airline Alliance Lounge recognition for the Los Angeles International Airport, sixth year running. This is a great achievement for the alliance, and a great source of pride for all stakeholders.”

American Airlines Introduces Flagship Suites Seat

American Airlines is giving customers a “suite” new ride. With new deliveries of its Airbus A321XLR and Boeing 787-9 aircraft, beginning in 2024, the airline will unveil new Flagship Suite® premium seating and a reimagined aircraft interior for its long-haul fleet. Flagship Suite® seats will offer customers a private premium experience with a privacy door, a chaise lounge seating option and more personal storage space. Customers will enjoy tailored luxury in their private retreat in the sky in American’s premium cabin.

“We are enhancing the customer experience across their entire journey with American,” American’s Vice President of Customer Experience Julie Rath said. “The arrival of new long-haul aircraft and the customised seat design of the Flagship Suite® seats will offer customers a truly private premium experience on our long-haul fleet.”

American was the first U.S. airline to debut long-haul Premium Economy seats in 2016, and in response to customer demand, the airline is adding even more Premium

Economy seats to its long-haul aircraft. The new custom-designed Premium Economy seat creates more privacy and doubles the amount of in-seat storage space.

With the introduction of new interiors on its long-haul aircraft, premium seating on American’s long-haul fleet will grow more than 45% by 2026. American’s Boeing 787-9 aircraft will have 51 Flagship Suite® seats and 32 Premium Economy seats, and the airline’s Airbus A321XLR aircraft will feature 20 Flagship Suite® seats and 12 Premium Economy seats.

American will also be retrofitting its aircraft, the Boeing 777-300ER, to include Flagship Suite® seats. These 20 aircraft will be refreshed with the new interiors starting in late 2024. American’s aircraft will feature more premium seats than its current design, with 70 Flagship Suite® seats and 44 Premium Economy seats.

The airline will also retrofit its Airbus A321T fleet to align those 16 aircraft with the rest of its A321 fleet. American will continue



to offer lie-flat seats on its transcontinental routes departing New York and Boston along with its Northeast Alliance partner, JetBlue Airways, providing travellers with a premium experience and the opportunity to arrive refreshed after a cross-country flight.

For more information, please visit www.aa.com

Emirates A380 Returns to Japan

Emirates, the largest international airline, is upgrading capacity on its Narita-Dubai route with the deployment of its flagship A380 from November 15, as Japan scraps the daily arrival cap, and lifts the Covid-19 testing and self-quarantine protocols for inbound travel. Following the Japanese government’s announcement on September 2022 to ease the entry restrictions, Emirates has seen a spike in bookings for flights to Japan’s gateways - Narita and Osaka.

Emirates’ flight EK318 from Dubai will depart at 2:55hrs and arrive in Narita at 17:20hrs. The return flight EK319 from Narita will depart at 22:30hrs and arrive in Dubai at 5:30hrs the following day. All times are local.

The reintroduction of the Emirates A380 to Narita also underscores the airline’s long-standing commitment to Japan’s tourism and travel sector. By providing more capacity, the airline aims to serve the pent-up demand for travel into Japan along with providing choice



and flexibility for travellers through its daily service to Osaka operated by the Boeing 777.

This year, Emirates is celebrating two decades of successful operations to Osaka’s Kansai International Airport. Emirates was the first airline to establish air connectivity between Japan and the UAE, as well as the rest of the Arabian Gulf countries back in 2002. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the airline continued to contribute to the local community by transporting essential air cargo between Japan and other global markets, which also helped to maintain the trade links that were needed during the unprecedented times via its Dubai hub.

For more information, please visit www.emirates.com



Aviation Interview with Datuk Captain Chester Voo Chee Soon

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Civil Aviation
Authority of Malaysia (CAAM)

Since his appointment on June 1, 2020, Datuk Captain Chester Voo has been working tirelessly to help Malaysia regain its Category 1 status and succeeded in doing so recently, much to the pride of the civil aviation industry and Malaysia. Projecting CAAM as a strict but facilitative regulator, he works with a committed team dedicated to help the industry do right things in ensuring a safe aviation ecosystem. With almost 30 years of aviation experience behind him, our humble man, who hails from Sandakan, Sabah but grew up in Tawau also brought with him early lessons in life he learnt. They include to never give up and that everything is possible through sincere efforts. Adopting a positive approach, he has steered CAAM to adapt and embrace change. Adopting a positive approach, he has steered CAAM to adapt and embrace change.

Please share with us CAAM's transformation journey under the trying and unprecedented times brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic?

The most important thing in CAAM's transformation is the ability to believe while keeping the same tenacity-cum-stamina to keep moving forward regardless of the difficulties. We should embrace and approach the problems with positive solutions although some solutions are painful as change is never easy. The pandemic gave us a breather as capacity slowed down, thus allowing us to take three steps back to see the picture clearly and fix the root causes of our problems.



We wanted a strong and sustainable organisation. Once we structured that and worked on what we needed to do, we remained discipline in completing each task one at a time. Eventually the issues were fixed, making us more confident and competent. I am grateful to the airlines for trusting me with various management roles in training and operations.

One of your immediate tasks after your appointment was to help Malaysia regain its category 1 status within a year but with the pandemic, it took slightly longer. What were the measures implemented that helped convince the United States' Federal Aviation Administration to upgrade us?

Malaysia's recategorisation has been an uplifting moment for the aviation industry following a very difficult period due to the pandemic. Our success in attaining this was a team effort, right from the Ministry of Transport (MOT) to everyone at CAAM, including the task force looking into the 33 findings in 2019.

The reassessment covered 301 protocol questions that required 403 critical element responses. For us, the best and most sustainable way in approaching the audit or assessment was to be fundamentally strong with solid foundations.

We went about fixing the root causes and putting into place resilient and robust processes. With the support of everyone and the aviation industry players, CAAM embarked on a

complete change of our documentation that included civil aviation directives. We aligned the directives to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) annexes and then developed both civil aviation and internal guidance materials, process manuals and a comprehensive documentation system within CAAM. As a regulator, a strong documentation, process, implementation and evidence methods are necessary. We also became very communicative both internally and externally to all our stakeholders.

What lessons did CAAM learnt from the pandemic to improve the resilience of our civil aviation industry?

The answer to this lies in our ability to be agile. By agility, I believe both regulators and industry players must be ready to change and adapt with a deep understanding of the true value of safety. We learnt that it is very important to digitalise and use alternative means to achieve the same or higher level of safety. As such, we must embrace technology and maximise its use to our advantage.

In instilling confidence among passengers towards flying again after the pandemic, what are some efforts undertaken by CAAM?

CAAM has issued our own safety guidance materials that are compliant to ICAO's Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce. They have been revised according to ICAO, our local authorities and the MOT's updated requirements. In many cases, we have exceeded what was required and both our airlines and airports have quickly adapted and adopted the safest most compliant approach to safety. CAAM also conducted regular safety oversight and surveillance on our license holders to ensure the highest level of compliance. This has been met with great support and results and we urge all in the industry to keep improving their compliance level as this is key in building public confidence and our ability to operate safely.

In terms of recruitment for the aviation industry, there have been drives to employ more engineers besides those for internal audit and the legal divisions. Amid the acute staff shortage faced by various local industries, how has CAAM's experience been like?

Following the lifting of restrictions as Malaysia enters the endemic phase, the shortage of skilled workers has affected most industries. For aviation, license holders would require activation or requalification. There will also need to be proper planning and an early start to recruitment as critical staff are part of the whole manpower ratio system required to manage airline operations. This is important to ensure timeliness of the return to pre-pandemic capacity levels as both training and reactivation require lead time to complete. CAAM will facilitate the industry in terms of providing a clear regulatory process that is timely according to our client charter.

Despite CAAM's safety briefing sessions on the importance of flight operations safety and compliance with regulations, there have recently been incidences flight crash and skidding lately during training? What can be done to minimise them?

CAAM continues to strive to ensure the safest air travel and operations in Malaysia. We have been very communicative over the past two years. As seen from our website, CAAM has been providing information and safety notices to keep the industry abreast. We believe the best approach to safety is the ability to mitigate risk and all efforts have been made to prevent an abnormal situation or accident. It is vital that we all learn from such incidences to enhance our training programmes, safety awareness approaches and a strict diligence to do the right thing.

On the risk-based approach in ensuring an organisation's readiness for aircraft to return to the service industry, what are CAAM's efforts in this area?

CAAM's Airworthiness Division has come up with a comprehensive checklist for operators planning to return to service aircraft that have been in hibernation, be it short, medium or long term. These aircraft, depending on their category, will require different levels of maintenance and inspections. Major operators have in place effective

safety management systems and good maintenance set-ups. Our regulator's role is to facilitate the return to service in a timely manner, ensuring that the operators complete diligently the maintenance requirements according to regulations. The return to service checklist thus serves as a guide to ensure all compliances are met with minimal errors. CAAM strives to see all aircraft returned to service safely and in full compliance.

With regards to technology and the environment, what are your thoughts in terms of aviation safety and sustainability?

It is very important the aviation industry embraces new technology and a harmonised approach in striving to achieve the best results. Digitalisation must result in reduced environmental harm for sustainability's sake. Every small effort counts and adds up to the whole big picture of protecting our environment. In terms of safety, the use of the latest equipment with robust preventive maintenance methods and multiple redundancies are key in ensuring our use of high technology to increase reliability and accuracy, which in turn enhances safety for everyone.

Following Sandakan Airport's recent expansion, what are some safety measures introduced to enhance the flight navigation operations for airlines?

The Sandakan Airport upgrade is timely and I applaud Malaysia Airports in ensuring safe and secure operations. Apart from the lengthening of the runway, new Primary Surveillance Radar/ Secondary Surveillance Radar and Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast maintained by CAAM as part of our air navigation service provider obligation have also been installed to ensure the most stable air traffic management systems for commercial operations. They come with multiple redundancies to minimise risk of disruption due to down time.

Malaysia was recently re-elected as ICAO's member state for 2022-25. What does this mean for our country and the aviation industry?

CAAM applauds MOT's efforts in retaining this important council seat, which was achieved with strong support from our civil aviation industry players that included Malaysia Airports, Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia Berhad and Batik Air Malaysia. This council seat has not only enabled Malaysia to have a voice in the international aviation community but also showcased our ability in contributing to aviation training, effectiveness of safety oversight and efforts in sustainability. CAAM will strive to support MOT's efforts in ensuring ICAO's approach of no country being left behind is met as we collectively contribute to the safety of air travel.

Any last words for the aviation industry?

The key is to be humble, keep learning from everyone and in the face of adversity, always stay calm and have the tenacity to work on the positive and embrace change with lots of stamina. Lastly, trust your team and empower them since they are your most important assets and instill an open and sincere work culture.



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