

AIRLINK

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Malaysia Sees Strong International Air Travel Recovery

Malaysia's flagship KL International Airport (KLIA) has surpassed the pre-COVID-19 pandemic level of 69 airlines, serving currently 70 airlines with British Airways (BA), Thai Vietjet Air and 9 Air expected to begin operations by the end of 2024, according to Malaysia Airports.

BA's return with a direct daily service from London Heathrow (LHR) to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) on Boeing 787-9 is much anticipated in view of the strong links between Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

According to the British High Commissioner to Malaysia Ailsa Terry, bilateral trade between the two countries is about six billion pounds, with the resumption of LHR to KUL welcomed by the students, professionals and holiday makers alike.

Thai Vietjet Air and 9 Air are both low-cost carriers, with the latter headquartered in Guangzhou, China. 9 Air is a subsidiary of Juneyao Air, which recently commenced its four times weekly flights from Penang International Airport (PEN) to Shanghai Pudong International Airport (PVG).

Malaysia Airports said, "About RM3 million has been allocated for marketing support on Malaysia-China routes alone so far."

Malaysia is among the popular overseas destinations this summer for Chinese tourists besides Thailand, Japan, South Korea and the United States, according to Beijing-based online travel agency Qunar, which noted that from July to August 2024, booking volumes of outbound international flights have jumped 160% year-on-year (YoY).

With both Chinese and Malaysian governments pledging to their review the visa-free travel arrangements which are set to expire in the following months, this augurs well for both countries, which is celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

China has decided to extend its visa-free policy to December 31, 2025, for Malaysia and other countries. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced the extension of the 30-day visa exemption for Chinese travellers starting December 1 this year until the end of 2026.

To further boost air travel, Malaysia Airports has invested significantly in initiatives such as the Airline X-celebration Programme, which includes landing fee waivers, airport office rental rebates and marketing support. The airport operator is pursuing 15 more foreign carriers over the next two years in its efforts aiming to elevate KLIA as a preferred international hub.

Latest statistics released by Malaysia Airports and Malaysian Aviation Commission (MAVCOM) reflect sustained growth and recovery in the country's aviation sector.

Attributing it primarily to increased international travel from both the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other regions, MAVCOM said, "Notably, non-ASEAN air passenger traffic experienced the highest month-to-

month (MoM) increase at 2.9%, climbing from 1.9 million in April to 2 million in May 2024."

Overall international traffic saw a 2.2% MoM growth, accounting for 50.9% of the total air passenger traffic for May 2024 to reach 97.2% of pre-pandemic levels, reversing a trend which initially saw post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery supported by the rebound in domestic travel first.

Datuk Seri Saripuddin Kasim, Executive Chairman of MAVCOM said, "The May 2024 traffic figures demonstrate the resilience and ongoing recovery of the aviation sector, particularly in international traffic, which is a positive indicator of global travel and tourism health.

"With the restoration of more international routes and increased flight frequencies, we anticipate this trend to continue."

MAVCOM also recently gazetted new Aviation Service Charges for June 2024 to December 2026, with a supplemental Loss Capitalisation Mechanism embedded, to ensure improved cost recovery in the running of the network of airports in Malaysia.

According to Malaysia Airports, its robust passenger traffic growth for May 2024 has surpassed pre-pandemic levels for the same month in 2019 with the group registering a total of 11.2 million passengers across its 39 airports in Malaysia while its Turkish asset, Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport, saw a 5.1% increase over May 2019 figures.

Its 11.2 million total passenger movements, which represented a 2% increase from 11 million passengers for the previous month, not only set a new milestone for the group but also overtook what was achieved in February 2024.

Additionally, this latest achievement marks the fifth consecutive month where it has over 10 million total passengers.

Boosting Malaysia-China Air Cargo Connectivity

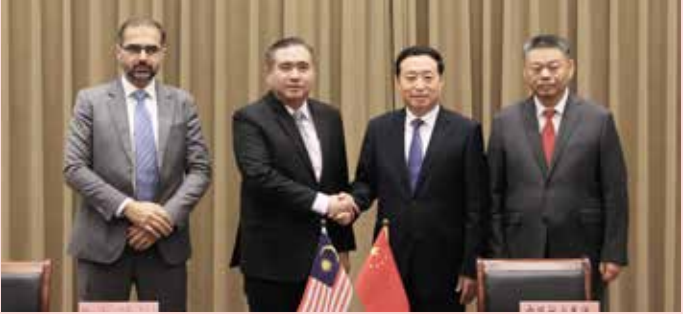
Not just focused on promoting passenger growth from Chinese tourists, Malaysia Airport has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China Henan Aviation Group Co Ltd (CHAGC) to boost air cargo connectivity and logistics between Malaysia and China.

CHAGC, which manages one of China's leading air cargo hubs, CGO, has a global presence with cargo terminal projects in Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport (BUD) and Leipzig/Halle Airport (LEJ).

With plans to expand its overseas projects in Asia, particularly in Malaysia, CHAGC is exploring setting up an air cargo hub to complement China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Witnessed by Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook and the Executive Vice Governor of Henan Province, Sun Shougang at Zhengzhou in China, the strategic partnership is expected to enhance the efficiency and reach of the airport operator groups of both countries.

This will be achieved by establishing new air cargo routes between KL International Airports (KUL) and Zhengzhou Xincheng International Airport (CGO), creating routes linking Europe with Malaysia and strengthening KUL as a regional logistics hub.



By leveraging CHAGC's expertise, the collaboration will enhance KUL's cargo capabilities, bringing huge benefits to both countries and the broader Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

The partnership will also focus on expanding the infrastructure required to support transshipment and reexport activities, thus solidifying Malaysia's position as a key player in global trade.

China has been one of Malaysia's largest trading partners since 2009. Loke said a testament to the Chinese investors' confidence in Malaysia was reaffirmed during the Malaysia-China Business Forum last year with the announcement of RM170 billion investments from China.

Commenting on the partnership, Malaysia Airports Acting Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mohamed Rastam Shahrom said, "By expanding our air cargo connectivity and logistics capabilities, we are also creating new opportunities for economic growth and development in the region."

In line with the KLIA Aeropolis Master Plan, which is closely aligned with the country's National Transport Policy 2019-2030 and the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, Malaysia Airports has been actively expanding its cargo facilities.

KUL currently handles 21 scheduled freighters transporting cargo to and from 40 countries, hosting over 200 third-party logistics providers and freight forwarding agents. It registered about 700,000 metric tonnes of cargo movements last year.

Earlier this year, DHL Express operationalised its state-of-the-art, fully automated sorting facility with a capacity of 10,000 parcels per hour.

Moving forward, Malaysia Airports plans to accelerate KUL's growth with the first phase of the Aeropolis Industrial Park. Covering 200 acres, it will focus on air-centric, high-value sectors and components such as aerospace, electronics and electrical (E&E), as well as halal and cold chain logistics.

With its latest partnership with CHAGC, Malaysia Airports said the direct air routes from CGO to KUL will be expanded with Raya Airways' thrice weekly cargo flights expected to begin in August 2024.



Fiji Airways to Become oneworld’s 15th Full Member

Fiji’s national carrier, Fiji Airways (FJ), has transitioned from being oneworld’s connect partner for the past five years to become the award-winning alliance’s 15th full-member airline. The announcement of its full membership, made at the recent IATA’s Annual General Meeting in Dubai, will commence immediately and be completed within the next 12 months.

“This milestone will have far-reaching benefits for Fijians, including enhanced domestic services via Fiji Link and increased global connectivity, drawing more international tourists to our islands.”

ANDRE VILJOEN
Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Fiji Airways (FJ)

A wholly-owned subsidiary of FJ, Fiji Link will become an affiliate airline of oneworld and extend the alliance’s network further by bringing its domestic flights to Suva, Nadi, Labasa, Taveuni and Kadavu as well as regionally to the Pacific Island nations of Tonga, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

With its hub at Nadi International Airport, FJ serves 26 destinations in 15 countries and territories globally, including oneworld hubs in Sydney, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and Tokyo.

The airline recently announced record annual profits and revenues for 2023. With 2.8 million seat capacity, FJ carried 2.2 million passengers last year. Its current fleet comprises 21 aircraft, including Airbus A350s, A330s and Boeing 737s.

As a full oneworld member airline, FJ will provide oneworld Emerald, Sapphire and Ruby customers with a full suite of the alliance’s benefits such as earning and redeeming miles, priority check-in and boarding as well as lounge access.

FJ’s top-tier customers can access oneworld’s priority benefits, including a network of nearly 700 business and first-class lounges globally as well as the newly opened oneworld branded lounges in Amsterdam’s Schiphol and Seoul’s Incheon Airports.



FJ won the Best Airline, Best Airline Staff and Best Airline Services in Australia and the Pacific categories at the 2023 Skytrax Awards. It came in 15th in the Global Top 100 Airline Rankings and was ranked 12th in the Global Top 20 Cabin Crew Rankings. In the Global Top Cleanest Airline Rankings, FJ was in 16th position.

For more information, visit www.fijiways.com



Award-winning Qatar Airways to Introduce Free Starlink WiFi Onboard

Qatar Airways’ (QR) three Boeing 777-300 aircraft will be the first to receive Starlink’s game-changing WiFi connectivity by the fourth quarter of 2024 while the rest of its modern fleet will be upgraded with this cutting-edge technology over the next two years.

With this complimentary ultra-high-speed WiFi of up to 500 Megabit per second onboard the plane, passengers can access a variety of internet-based services such as streaming their favourite entertainment and sports videos as well as enjoy their online gaming and web browsing with a simple one click.

This strategic move will solidify QR’s commitment to elevate the passengers’ flight experience and will also be the first service of its kind in the Middle East (ME) and North Africa via its collaboration with Starlink, the world’s largest satellite internet constellation engineered and operated by SpaceX.

It also marks a new milestone for Qatar’ national carrier, which was recently named Airline of the Year for 2024 by AirlineRatings.com besides winning the Best Business Class for the fifth consecutive year and Best Catering award.

QR, the largest airline to partner with Starlink, also took home the Best Regional Airline Serving in the ME, Airline with the Best Business Class and Best Travel App accolades at the Business Traveller ME Awards 2024 held during the recent Arabian Travel Market in Dubai.



“These awards are a testament to the dedication and hard work of the entire QR team along with our focus on innovative travel technologies.”

ENGINEER BADR MOHAMMED AL-MEER
Group Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Airways (QR)

Meanwhile, Mike Nicolls, Vice President of Starlink Engineering at SpaceX remarked, “High-speed, low-latency internet is the future of aviation connectivity.”

For more information, visit www.qatarairways.com



Three Skytrax 2024 Wins for Plaza Premium Group's Lounges

Plaza Premium Group (PPG)'s largest global independent lounge network, Plaza Premium Lounge (PPL), has received the World's Best Independent Airport Lounge title for the eighth consecutive time at Skytrax's World Airline Awards 2024 in London.

Song Hoi See, PPG Founder and Chief Executive Officer said, "Twenty-six years ago, we introduced the world's first independent airport lounge concept, and we have come a long way."

"Today, we operate in 80 international airports across 30 countries, with over 250 locations and have expanded beyond just offering lounge service to providing a comprehensive 360-degree airport experience."

Located at T3 Departures of the Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport, PPL Rome, whose design draws inspiration from ancient Roman architecture, also topped Skytrax's list this year, building on its triumph in 2023.



Meanwhile, PPL in Dubai International Airport, ranked fifth in Skytrax 2024 Awards, features four private family suites with personalised butler service, a well-stocked Aerobar and live cooking stations among other things.



Holding true to PPG's core mission of "making travel better", the company recently introduced the Proudly Local experience in six inaugural locations, including its two award-winning lounges in Rome and Dubai.

The other PPL locations were Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Nagoya and Adelaide.

For more information, call **+603-8876 0988** or visit **plazapremiumgroup.com**



Strategic Partnerships by Malaysia Aviation Group with Sarawak Tourism Board and Huawei

Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) and Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to solidify their three-year partnership aimed at leveraging synergies between them to promote Sarawak as a premier tourist destination in the lead up to Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Inked between Ahmad Luqman Mohd Azmi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Airlines from MAG and Sharzede Datu Salleh Askor, STB CEO, the MoU was witnessed by Datuk Sebastian Ting, Sarawak's Deputy Minister for Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts.



As part of the collaboration, MAG will facilitate seamless travel arrangements for familiarisation trips and key events such as the Rainforest World Music Festival and the Rainforest ASEAN Youth Summit.

Via its Malaysia Airlines' Bonus Side Trip programme, travellers can take advantage of the complimentary stopover to explore Sarawak's rich and diverse culture.

MAG will also aid participation in major travel fairs in Penang, Johor Bharu and Kuala Lumpur, further solidifying MH's aspiration to be the gateway to Asia and beyond.

Meanwhile, the recent collaboration between Malaysia Airlines (MH) and Huawei to revolutionise the national airline's digital landscape via Huawei Consumer Cloud Services' advanced digital solutions will enable MH to gain deeper insights into Chinese travellers' preferences and effectively analyse market trends.

Through the Petal Ads marketing platform, Huawei Consumer Cloud Services will provide advertising, marketing and traffic monetisation services for the airline, facilitating its expansion into China's market.

Formalised during the Huawei Developer Conference 2024 in Dongguan, the partnership will empower MH to deploy data-driven personalised recommendations and targeted ad placements to enhance its customised marketing strategies.

Vincent Wen, Director of Cloud Service Business Growth of Huawei said, "This strategic alignment between us combines technological prowess, market expertise, and innovation, opening up exciting opportunities in the dynamic Chinese tourism landscape."

For more information, visit **malaysiaaviationgroup.com.my**



Homecoming for Cathay Group's Last Aircraft from Long-term Overseas Parking

The Cathay Group has completed one of the most unprecedented undertakings in its 77-year history when its 85th and final aircraft Airbus A330 returned to Hong Kong on June 6, 2024 after nearly four years of long-term parking in the Australian desert of Alice Springs.

Bearing the registration B-HLV under Cathay Pacific (CX), it was the first of the Group's aircraft that went into overseas parking on July 28, 2020 when global air travel came to a near-standstill during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aircraft is now undergoing extensive hangar maintenance check to ensure its safety and performance for entry back into regular service.

“To do this for more than 85 aircraft long-term parked overseas as well as to manage the large number of aircraft parked in Hong Kong is a phenomenal achievement.

Thanking his teams worldwide and the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department, he said the Cathay Group has more than 70 new aircraft on order, with the right to acquire an additional 52 aircraft in the future. We are also exploring options for a new mid-size widebody aircraft.

ALEX MCGOWAN

Chief Operations and Service Delivery Officer
of Cathay Group

Meanwhile, with the recent resumption of CX's in-town check-in service at KL Sentral, which was previously suspended due to the pandemic, its passengers can indulge in some last-minute shopping in the city before heading to KL International Airport (KLIA) after checking-in and dropping off their luggage.



CX Country Manager for Malaysia, Robbie Blackwood said, “Customer-centricity is our focus and it begins even before our passengers board our flights.

“This service provides greater convenience and flexibility for our passengers as they can plan to make good use of their time before departing from Kuala Lumpur. They can also look forward to bypassing any rush hour congestion and airport queues for a much more seamless and stress-free travel experience.”

To use this service, air passengers must be travelling on the same day and hold a valid KLIA Ekspres ticket for the express train which runs every 20 minutes daily for the 28-minute journey to the airport.

CX currently operates three flights daily from Kuala Lumpur to Hong Kong.

For more information, visit www.cathaypacific.com



Singapore Airlines Won Several Skytrax 2024 Awards

Skytrax 2024's latest ranking for the world's best airlines has placed Singapore Airlines (SQ) second, down one spot from its 2023 ranking.

Singapore's national carrier, however, retains its title for being Best Airline in Asia. SQ also picked up a number of other accolades, including the World's Best Cabin Staff and World's Best First Class, World's Best First Class Seat and Best Business Class.

The others, which are all under the Asia category, are for Best Business Class, Best Business Class Onboard Catering, Best Cabin Crew, Best First Class Airline, Best First Class Onboard Catering, Most Family Friendly Airline, Best Business Class Lounge and Best First Class Airline Lounge.

Touted one of the world's most awarded airlines, it was named again in Fortune Magazine's list of the 50 most admired companies in the world this year.

Supported by a strong pick-up in forward bookings to North Asia and Southeast Asia, SQ expects demand for air travel to remain healthy in the first quarter of its financial year ending 2024/25.

For the northern summer 2024 operating season from March 31, 2024 to October 26, 2024, the airline is increasing its services in Barcelona, Beijing, Darwin, Hong Kong, Houston, Kuala Lumpur, Melbourne, Milan, Perth, Rome, Seattle, Shanghai, Taipei-Tokyo (Narita) and Yangon.

Its frequencies from Singapore (SIN) to Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK) will be raised from 18 to 21 weekly services on August 5, 2024.

With SQ launching daily flights between Singapore (SIN) and Beijing's Daxing International Airport (PKX) on November 11, 2024, this means there will be a total of 28 weekly services to China's capital city from November 2024.

SQ is the first foreign airline to service the SIN to PKX sector, remarked PKX Vice President Kong Yue.

The airline will be using the Boeing 787-10 aircraft, featuring 36 business class and 301 economy class seats.

Dai Haoyu, SQ Acting Senior Vice President of Marketing Planning said, “China is a key market for the SIA Group.”

Together with its low-cost subsidiary Scoot, the two airlines will serve 24 destinations in mainland China.

In Skytrax 2024 Awards, Scoot, which bagged the World's Best Long Haul Low-Cost Airline, moved one place up to score 32nd on the global list of best airlines.

For more information, visit www.singaporeair.com



AirAsia X to Launch New Destination in Africa

Kenya's capital, Nairobi will be AirAsia X's (D7) latest destination in Africa as part of its expansion plan when the airline introduces its four times weekly flights from KL International Airport (KUL) to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (NBO) starting November 15, 2024 using the Airbus A330-300 widebody aircraft.

D7 will be sole low-cost carrier (LCC) in Malaysia to offer direct connections linking Kenya to its network of 130 destinations. Its Chief Executive Officer Benyamin Ismail expects the route to provide connectivity to its key markets such as Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and Thailand.

According to Malaysian Aviation Commission (MAVCOM) Air Traffic Rights (ATR) April 2024 bulletin, the medium-haul LCC has been awarded the KUL to NBO route seven times weekly commencing October 2024.

The other two ATRs from MAVCOM for D7 were for the KUL-Taipei (TPE)-Kansai (KIX) seven times weekly service and the four times weekly KUL-TPE-Fukuoka (FUK) route, both starting June 2024.

On the other hand, D7's ATR application for KUL-TPE-Narita (NRT), which was granted by MAVCOM, has been withdrawn effective April 16, 2024.

An affiliate airline under the AirAsia Group, D7 is reportedly looking to serve Cape Town in South Africa and Cairo in Egypt with the introduction of newer aircraft such as the A321neo, A321LR, A321XLR and A330neo to its fleet.

The A321LR offers a longer range of up to 8,300 km in a single-class configuration while the A321XLR can fly up to 8,700 km.

Meanwhile, AirAsia Malaysia (AK) has announced the launch of its new direct three-times weekly service to Manado (MDC), its second connection to Indonesia after Jakarta from Kota Kinabalu (BKI) in Sabah on September 1, 2024.

AK continues to grow its momentum with two new three-times weekly routes, namely KUL to Lucknow (LKO) in India on September 13, 2024 and KUL to Chiang Rai (CEI) in Thailand starting November 2, 2024 as part of its regional expansion.

Paul Carroll, AirAsia Group Chief Commercial Officer confirmed AK's plans to start operations from Port Blair (IXR) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to KUL this November with thrice weekly flights.

At the recent Skytrax World Airline Awards 2024, AirAsia, leveraging its 23-year track record of multi-hub operations in Asia, has been named the World's Best Low-Cost Airline for the 15th consecutive year and Best Low-Cost Airline in Asia also for a record 15th time.



For more information, visit www.capitala.com

Vietjet (VJ) has been named the Best Ultra Low-Cost Airline and Best Low-Cost Airline Onboard Hospitality for 2024 by airline safety and product rating website, AirlineRatings.com, for its dedication to affordable air travel, innovation, diversified services and great value inflight offering.

Vietnam's largest private carrier is also known for its pioneering and revolutionary low-cost model products, including a business class service that offers top-tier experiences for passengers.

"VJ is extremely clever in its marketing and has amazing fares but behind the scenes is a very smart and serious business plan that brings affordable travel to millions."

GEOFFREY THOMAS

Editor-in-Chief
of AirlineRatings.com

Earlier in January 2024, AirlineRatings.com had ranked VJ seventh among the Top 20 Safest Low-Cost Airlines globally

Recognised with the most awards received by any Canadian airline at the recent 2024 Skytrax World Airline Awards, Air Canada (AC) walked away with five accolades

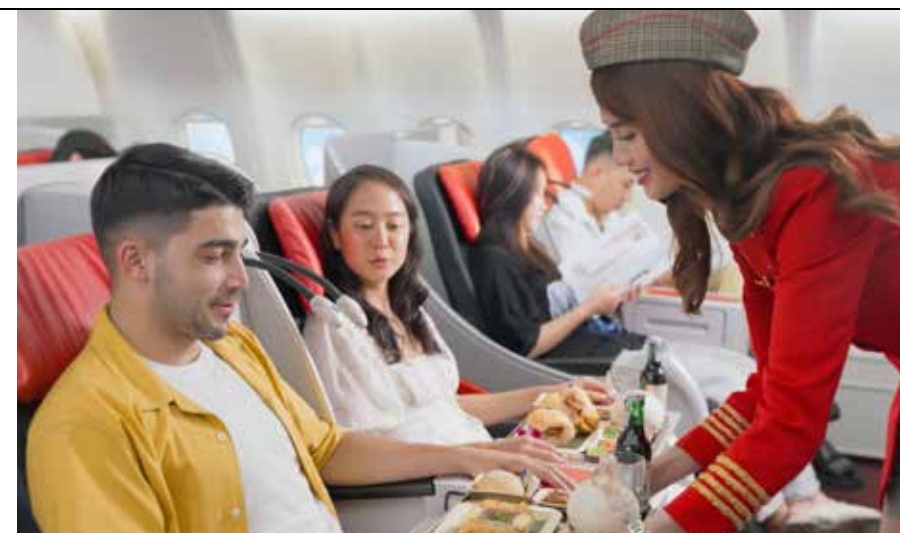
They include for having the Best Cabin Crew in Canada, and Best Business Class Airline Lounge Catering for its Signature Suite at Toronto Pearson International Airport.

Canada's flag carrier was also named the Most Family Friendly Airline, Best Premium Economy Class Onboard Catering, and Cleanest Airline, all in North America.

"These awards also recognise the dedication, professionalism and hard work of our 40,000 employees worldwide who safely transport our customers to their destinations, and for truly representing what is the best of Canada."

MICHAEL ROUSSEAU

President and Chief Executive
of Air Canada



Vietjet Receives More Recognition from AirlineRatings.com

and awarded it with a seven-star rating, which the airline had retained since 2018.

Meanwhile, VJ has provided an additional 1.4 million tickets across its domestic and international destinations, increased flight frequencies and opened new routes for the summer season. They include night flights with special prices for certain routes

Starting July 1, 2024, the airline is increasing its direct service from Phu Quoc to Taipei in Taiwan from seven to 11 return flights a week.

For more information, visit www.vietjetair.com



Air Canada Wins Five Categories of Skytrax 2024 Awards

AC, Canada's largest airline holds a Four-Star ranking from Skytrax whose online customer survey from September 2023 to May 2024 for this year's awards received 21.42 million entries from over 100 customer nationalities.

A founding member of Star Alliance, AC provides scheduled service to over 180 airports in Canada, the United States and internationally on six continents. The airline recently introduced a new four-times weekly non-stop service between Seoul Incheon and Montreal on Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft.

Discover The World, which has been its General Sales Agent since 2012, said passengers from Kuala Lumpur can choose a mix-and-match itinerary options via AC's different Asian gateways in their same booking itinerary.

For more information, call +603-2715 2053 or visit www.aircanada.com

Upclose with Mohd Fadhli Abdul Rahman Group Chief Executive Officer of Brahim's Holdings Berhad (BHB)



Mohd Fadhli Abdul Rahman, who assumed his current CEO role since 2018, was formerly BHB's Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer, holding both positions at the same time.

Coupled with his in-depth knowledge in corporate finance and operational accounting, the 41-year-old, who hails from Bukit Mertajam, has vast experience in management positions and diverse exposures ranging from manufacturing, construction, retail and trading to fast-moving consumer goods products.

With his forte in negotiations, he managed to save millions of Ringgit, including utility bills, for the company and is still raring to achieve more.

What are some of the poignant moments in your almost seven years with BHB?

When I joined in October 2017, the Group was in financial distress due to the effects of amortisation of goodwill. The first thing I did was to clean up the accounts.

We managed to sustain the businesses regardless of the turmoil then. The storms continued and next thing, we were struck by the COVID-19 pandemic but we survived this difficult period.

Please share with us more details about some of the achievements?

Taking over SATS Investments Pte Ltd's shares of 49% in 2022 was a great achievement for the Group. The buy-out process involved many layers of negotiation, with the success of this transaction providing us with huge savings. The ability to continue to renew catering contracts with major foreign carriers is another milestone for us and we do not compromise on quality.

We are certified MS ISO 9001, ISO 22000 and MS 1480 HACCP, which stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Point to ensure the management of food safety. Additionally, we have the BRC Global Standard certification for food safety.

How have your previous job experiences equipped you for your current responsibilities?

With accounting as my background, I have been dealing with numbers most of the time. It is critical for someone in my position and responsibilities to be well versed with numbers. Having the opportunity to deal with different people from various backgrounds has helped to build up my character to face the challenges in my job.

Who does your company provide food catering to currently?

Our active customers are 35 foreign carriers, including most of the airlines from the Gulf Cooperation Council member states.

They include Qatar Airways, Emirates, Turkish Airlines, Oman Air, Mahan Air and Iraqi Airways. We also serve All Nippon Airways, Japan Airlines, Korean Air, Eva Air, Xiamen Airlines, Silk Way West Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, China Southern Airlines, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Turkmenistan Airlines and Himalayan Airlines.

Recent additions to our customer base are flydubai and Air Macau. We supply catering to the crew of cargo airlines such as Cargolux and FedEx as well. Do you know the pilot and co-pilot are served different meals to prevent both from getting ill and unable to fly?

As a total food solutions provider, what is BHB's catering capacity like these days?

We have the biggest halal food facilities in the region. Depending on the operational structure and production method, we are capable of producing up to 75,000 meals daily. With inflight catering picking up volume and the travel bug gaining momentum, we expect to be back on track to pre-pandemic numbers before the end of 2024.

What are the challenges that beset airline catering and how do you hope to overcome them?

Demanding passengers will translate to airlines making demands on their suppliers. However, as long as the airlines are open to a two-way communication with us on their menu and services required, we are on the right track.

To me, every day is a learning process. We need to expose ourselves to the best international practices in this business and learn from each other. Our continuous engagement with our previous partners, SATS and LSG, has availed us with opportunities to improve ourselves.

Besides handling inflight catering, what other businesses are BHB involved in?

We do not just provide food to the airlines under Brahim's Food Services Sdn Bhd (BFS), formerly known as Brahims SATS Sdn Bhd. Inflight catering includes cabin handling services for linen, pillows, blankets, headsets, newspapers and periodicals.

BFS contributes about 95% to BHB Group's revenue while the rest comes from our subsidiary, Tamadam Industries

Sdn Bhd, which provides warehousing and logistics services in Port Klang. Our recent involvement is into offshore catering services for the oil and gas companies.

How do you view the termination of Malaysia Airlines Bhd's (MAB) catering contract on August 31 last year and what are the lessons learned?

MAB remains our 30% partner in BFS with the remaining 70% shares owned by us. The break-up is unfortunate but I believe we have delivered our best and still value their business. The best lesson from this is to get up again and move forward. If we can survive the pandemic, where we hit rock bottom, we can surely survive this termination. Furthermore, we still have 35 other airlines to service and are now vying for new contracts.

What is the latest on BHB's financial performance?

It is a blessing BHB reported a profit for the financial year ended December 31, 2023. We expect to improve our performance in 2024, with BFS's restructuring exercise expected to take place soon.

Tell us more about BFS restructuring.

Some potential capital injection as well as merger and acquisition are expected to take place, subject to shareholders' approval and the success of the negotiations. It will be an exciting journey for BFS.

How big is BHB's current staff force?

As an investment holding company, BHB has a very limited staff. On the other hand, BFS has 550 under full-time employment besides having around 100 vendors. Under Tamadam Industries, a one-stop warehouse, logistics, forwarding and supply chain solutions provider, we have about 50 staff.

What are some awards received by the Group?

Our latest recognition as the Best Improved Caterer Worldwide was received by BFS from Japan Airlines under the Hygiene Quality Award category. Last year, Brahim's Dewina Group of Companies bagged the Malaysia Global Business Icon Leadership Award. Another award was for the Global Muslim Business Distinguished Entrepreneur Lifetime Achievement Award. Brahim's Dewina Group was also recognised at the Malaysia Tourism Industry Award 2022 for Best International Promotion of Malaysian Cuisine.

Moving forward, what do you wish to achieve?

Bringing the group out of the current difficult situation would be my short-term objective. I will be turning 42 years old in December and would love to achieve more, including creating more inspiring stories for my three children to follow in my footsteps.

Besides golf, what are your other hobbies?

I am more of an amateur and social golfer. I am passionate about automobiles, in particular sports utility vehicles, and motorcycles plus the technologies surrounding them. I also enjoy reading and watching serials and movies.

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