

AIRLINK

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Marketing and Development
Division

Managing Editor
Zainuddin Mohamed

Editorial & Concept
Mediate Communications Sdn Bhd
airlink@mediate.com.my

Advertising & Production
Noor Hafiza Ruslan
hafiza@malaysiaairports.com.my

Nurul Farehah Norsam
farehahn@malaysiaairports.com.my

Design & Distribution
Mediate Communications Sdn Bhd

**MALAYSIA AIRPORTS HOLDINGS
BERHAD**
Reg. No: 199901012192
(487092-W)

Aviation Marketing and
Development Division
Level 3, Arrival Hall (Domestic)
Main Terminal Building
KL International Airport
64000 Sepang
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: +603-8776 4949
Fax: +603-8776 4040
Email: marketing@
malaysiaairports.com.my



Sustained Global Air Travel Growth Projected in the Near Term

The much anticipated Airport Traffic Forecasts 2024–2053 by Airports Council International (ACI) World projects global passenger numbers to reach 17.7 billion by 2043 and 22.3 billion by 2053, with the latter figure nearly 2.4 times the projected volume for 2024.

Covering 99.8% of the global markets across 161 countries, the new forecasts show a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.4% from 2024 to 2043, with a slightly slower CAGR of 3% from 2024 to 2053.

This steady upward trajectory in global aviation is driven by factors such as rising middle-class travel demand in emerging markets, strengthened international travel, and continued investments in airport infrastructure.

However, short-term challenges such as geopolitical tensions, economic instability, trade shifts like the reintroduced tariffs, and supply chain bottlenecks, may slow recovery in some regions.

“Despite the challenges in the near term, global air travel is poised for steady, sustained growth. It is crucial for airports, airlines, and policymakers to take bold, forward-thinking action to anticipate and meet the demands of the future.”

JUSTIN ERBACCI

Director General
of Airports Council International (ACI) World

International passenger traffic is expected to grow faster than domestic traffic over the next three decades, with a forecast CAGR of 3.3% for international traffic growth compared to 2.8% for domestic traffic.

The number of aircraft movements is also expected to increase significantly, reaching 149 million by 2043 and 176 million by 2053.

Global air cargo, meanwhile, is projected to grow steadily, with a CAGR of 2.7% from 2024 to 2043 and 2.4% from 2024 to 2053. However, ACI World cautions that evolving trade policies and supply chain disruptions could introduce volatility in the sector.

Given the challenge of meeting air traffic demand, airports worldwide, supported by ACI, have been working diligently to both increase the capacity of existing infrastructure and develop new facilities.

Darryl Dowd, Vice President of Safety, Security and Operations at ACI World said, “Meeting future capacity demands requires collaboration. Airports and airlines must work together to ensure fair and efficient slot allocation and usage, improved operations, and the necessary investments in infrastructure to support growth.”

IATA's January 2025 Data

The latest statistics from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) show robust growth in January 2025, with total global passenger demand up 10% while total capacity, measured in available seat kilometres, rose 7.1% year-on-year (YoY) and load factor (LF) reached 82.1%, an all-time high for January.

International demand increased 12.4% YoY, with the capacity rising 8.7% YoY and LF at 82.6%, another record high for the month.

“We've seen a notable acceleration in demand this January, with a particularly strong performance by carriers based in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.”

WILLIE WALSH

Director General
of International Air Transport Association (IATA)

APAC led with a 33.5% share of the world's air passenger market, with the region's carriers recording a 21.8% YoY increase in demand in January 2025 while capacity grew 16.5% YoY.

The region's LF reached 86.7%, driven by strong traffic from Northeast Asia. Results in APAC have been partly underpinned by the strong performance of the Gulf carriers.

Walsh added, “The record high LFs that accompany this strong demand are yet another reminder of the persistent supply chain issues in the aerospace sector.”

“The strong demand aligns with our latest November 2024 passenger survey, where 94% of the travellers indicated plans to travel as much or more in the next 12 months than they did in the past year.”

Walsh remarked, “Airlines are doing a good job of accommodating growing demand amid fleet and infrastructure constraints with satisfaction levels above 95%, and nearly 80% of the travellers agreeing that air travel is good value for money.”

He observed that some 70% prefer to pay the lowest fare and customise the additional services they need. “It is important for regulators to clearly understand that the majority of travellers do not want to pay automatically for services they do not need.”

Additionally, IATA's January 2025 data showed total demand for the global air cargo market, measured in cargo tonne-kilometres, rose by 3.2% YoY.

Although it marked the 18th consecutive month of growth, Walsh said it was a moderation from the double-digit peaks in 2024. Meanwhile, capacity, measured in available cargo tonne-kilometres, expanded by 6.8% YoY.

Regionally, APAC has the biggest 34.2% share of the global air cargo market, with its airlines having 7.5% YoY demand growth for air cargo in January 2025 while capacity rose by 10.9% YoY.



KLIA's New Water Treatment Plant to Enhance Sustainable Operations

Moving towards sustainable airport operations, Malaysia Airports has developed a state-of-the-art water treatment facility at KL International Airport (KLIA) as part of its Environmental Roadmap.

This initiative reflects the airport operator's dedication towards responsible water management, flood prevention, and ecological conservation.

The KLIA's new water treatment plant features a vertical compact system, reducing land usage by 50% compared to traditional designs.

Equipped with an advanced purification technology that processes up to 10 million litres of water daily, this ensures that its flagship airport has an eco-friendly water source to support its operations.

Driven by Malaysia Airports' Recycling Rainwater Harvested from KLIA Catchment Area Initiative, this project covers 200 acres with a depth of 1.5 metres and a total capacity of 3,000 litres.

The rainwater collection system, a dual-purpose powerhouse, supplies water to the treatment facility and serves as a flood mitigation measure. Its impact goes beyond KLIA, providing benefits to the nearby communities and the Southern Balancing Pond area.

Through such efficient resource management, Malaysia Airports has been able to reduce energy use related to distribution besides promoting long-term sustainability.

This cutting-edge treatment plant further strengthens KLIA's environmental leadership under Airports Council International's Airport Carbon Accreditation programme.

Holding a Level Three Optimisation status, KLIA is part of a global network of over 600 airports progressing toward net-zero carbon emissions through ACI's structured seven-level carbon management framework.

This latest facility strengthens the airport's commitment to sustainability, supporting Malaysia Airports' efforts to enhance environmental management and resilience.



Firefly's Subang Jet Operations Expands with New Direct Route Launches

Malaysia Aviation Group's (MAG) subsidiary, Firefly (FY), will launch two new direct flights to Kuching International Airport (KCH) and Changi International Airport (SIN) from Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (SZB) in Subang, Selangor starting 24 March 2025.

Using the modern retrofitted Boeing 737-800 aircraft with a capacity of 189 seats, the new routes' frequency will be six times weekly but will be increased to seven times a week from 30 March 2025.

FY offers complimentary 10 kg check-in baggage, 7 kg carry-on baggage and inflight refreshments while passengers who upgrade to Flex enjoy 30 kg checked baggage and unlimited flight changes.

“The launch of these new routes marks another milestone in FY's mission to deliver enhanced connectivity and convenience.”

DATUK CAPTAIN IZHAM ISMAIL
Group Managing Director
Malaysia Aviation Group's (MAG)

Complementing the airline's turboprop services in SZB since 2008, these latest additions to its jet operations will significantly boost its presence in this hub, which currently operates 28 weekly flights to four destinations, including Penang (PEN) and Kota Kinabalu (BKI).

Additionally, recently FY started a weekly flight using the B737 from KCH to Chongqing (CKG), China's largest city in the world.

On another development, MAG, the parent company of MASwings Sdn Bhd, signed a Sale and Purchase Agreement on 12 February 2025 to formalise the transfer of MASwings' ownership to the Sarawak government.



MAG expects to complete the acquisition by the end of 2025 will work closely with the stakeholders, including shareholder Khazanah Nasional Berhad, to ensure a seamless transition and compliance with all relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.

Throughout the transition period, MASwings will operate as usual under MAG's purview, with no disruptions to flight schedules to the underserved communities in East Malaysia.

Sarawak Premier, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg, said at the signing ceremony in Kuching that MasWings, now rebranded as AirBorneo, will operate as a Full-Service Carrier (FSC) to serve as a balance between connectivity, affordable fares and economic benefits.

“Being a FSC, AirBorneo will be engaging in strategic partnership and code sharing agreements with other international airlines, including Malaysia Airlines (MH), to further expand the network reach and improve global connectivity for Sarawak.”

Beyond this transition, MAG said it will continue to strengthen Malaysia's aviation landscape via its other airline subsidiaries, including Amal, to reinforce the country's position as a key player in regional and global connectivity.

For more information, visit www.fireflyz.com.my and www.maswings.com.my



Corporate Startup Collaboration and Sustainability Recognitions for Japan Airlines

Japan Airlines (JL) has been awarded as a Top 100 Global Company in the Corporate Startup Stars 2024, alongside a special award for its in-house venture arm, W-PIT.

The airline's innovative approaches, especially through its corporate venture capital, Japan Airlines Ventures, earned recognition from the award organisers, International Chamber of Commerce and Mind the Bridge.

Additionally, JL was selected for the Dow Jones Sustainability Asia Pacific Index (DJSI APAC) 2024 for the third consecutive year, receiving the highest rating in various areas within the airline industry.

The areas include multi-stakeholder engagement for decarbonisation, information security and managing of packaging materials such as reducing single-use plastics.



JL uses 100% plant-based reusable tableware in economy class, while paper toothbrush and eco-friendly packaging are available upon request at the airline's lounge.

The DJSI, an environmental, social and governance (ESG) investment index that analyses and evaluates the corporate activities of over 13,000 leading global

companies, holds significance for investors who prioritise corporate social responsibility and sustainability

JL also received high ratings for its disclosure based on the recommendations of the task force on climate-related financial disclosures.

Besides its selection for the DJSI APAC for the third consecutive year, JAL has been a constituent in various leading ESG investment indices such as the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) Blossom Japan Index and the FTSE Blossom Japan Sector Relative Index.

Meanwhile, the JL Group's newly released consolidated financial results for the third quarter (3Q) ended 31 December 2024 showed improved profits and revenues from its full-service carriers (FSC), low-cost carriers and non-aviation businesses year-on-year.

Owing to increased profits in its non-aviation businesses driven by business model reforms, its 3Q performance saw the highest profit since relisting.

The higher revenue from its FSC was driven by strong international passenger demand, recovery in domestic passenger demand through promotional campaigns, and the acquisition of high-value cargo using freighters.

JL bid farewell to its aging Boeing 777-300ER aircraft on the Tokyo Haneda (HND) to London Heathrow (LHR) route with the delivery of its eighth Airbus A350-1000, which it started daily operations from 2 January 2025.

The airline will introduce its next generation Airbus fleet from HND to Paris (CDG) in France and Los Angeles (LAX) in the United States later this year.

For more information, call **+603-2287 6888** or visit www.jal.co.jp/my/en



British Airways' Investments to Expand Its Engineering Operations

British Airways' (BA) proposed acquisition of the Boeing Company's maintenance, repair and overhaul hangar facility at London Gatwick Airport (LGW) forms part of the airline's strategy to expand its engineering operation.

The United Kingdom's flag carrier said that this significant investment will create a new wholly owned engineering subsidiary, British Airways Engineering Gatwick, joining BA's existing engineering operations in South Wales and Glasgow.

Apart from carrying out minor maintenance on the B777 aircraft at LGW, the airline's increased capacity will also allow for in-source scheduled heavy maintenance work on its Airbus A320/321 fleet.

Handling more B777 and A320/A321 maintenance at LGW will reduce the need to ferry these aircraft to other operational bases, thus supporting BA's wider sustainability goals.

Andy Best, BA Chief Technical Officer is confident this new facility at LGW will not only strengthen the airline's presence but also create more job opportunities in the longer term as its operations grow.

Welcoming the Boeing staff, including highly skilled and experienced licensed aircraft engineers who will be working at the facility into the BA family, Best said they would be transferred to the new subsidiary in the second

Earlier in November 2024, BA announced a multi-million pound investment in its engineering maintenance facility at Cardiff Airport to facilitate the larger long-haul A350 aircraft. Currently, this base, which employs 480 staff, can only serve B777 and B787 aircraft types. Its expansion, to be underway in 2025, is part of the airline's seven billion pound transformation investment.



Upon its completion in 2026, this facility will allow more complex and detailed maintenance work to be undertaken.

"The expanded facility provides us with greater flexibility and control over our Heavy Maintenance activity on both the Boeing and Airbus long-haul fleets, ensuring more efficient planning and execution," Best added.

For more information, visit www.britishairways.com



Two More Design Accolades for Cathay Pacific

Cathay Pacific's (CX) state-of-the-art inflight entertainment (IFE) system has received accolades from two of the world's most prestigious design awards, the German Design Award 2025 and the Red Dot Award 2024.

Reaffirming its excellence in customer experience and design, as well as its commitment to becoming one of the world's best premium airlines, CX emerged as Gold winner in the Excellent Communications Design – Interactive User Experience category at the German Design Award.

Its IFE system's seamless integration of cutting-edge design and technology adapts across diverse screen types, ensuring usability from high-resolution displays to older models.

Among the key customer-centric features is My Journey, which blends flight tracking with inflight entertainment by incorporating real-time flight paths and map layers

to create a game-like flight path preview.

CX passengers can also pair their Bluetooth-enabled headphones to the 4K ultra-high-definition screen for a premium digital experience.

Onboard its retrofitted Boeing 777-300ER aircraft's all-new Aria Suite Business Class, CX passengers can tailor the space to their needs using the interactive seat controls on the in-seat entertainment touchscreen.

Pre-set seat modes such as Relax, Work and Sleep are available for added ease.

The seat control interface also features live lavatory status, enabling passengers to know which lavatories are unoccupied without leave their seats.

In the Red Dot Award under the Brands and Communication Design category, CX's IFE was recognised for its minimalist User Interface Design that is easy to use.

Vivian Lo, General Manager of Customer Experience and Design of CX said, "At the core of our IFE that we developed together with Finland's Reaktor is a thoughtful, human-centric design, underpinned by innovation, customer comfort and an intuitive graphical user interface."

These latest accolades follow the airline's recent wins at TheDesignAir Awards 2024.

For more information, visit www.cathaypacific.com



Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council Partners Batik Air Malaysia to Enhance Medical Tourism

Batik Air Malaysia (OD) and Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) have formalised a strategic partnership to elevate Malaysia as a premier global destination for healthcare tourism in a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 13 February 2025.

Leveraging OD's regional network and resources to provide seamless travel for international patients seeking medical and wellness treatments in Malaysia, the partnership fosters a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship between the healthcare and travel sectors.

Besides providing co-branded advertising opportunities and exclusive travel packages, OD passengers with proof of hospital appointments will enjoy priority boarding, with targeted social media campaigns further supporting this initiative.

Among the benefits for international patients are a streamlined and hassle-free travel experience with dedicated support services, access to exclusive travel packages and priority services for medical travellers, and enhanced connectivity to Malaysia's leading healthcare providers.

OD Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Datuk Chandran Rama Muthy said, "Malaysia's healthcare travel industry recorded 584,468 health tourist arrivals in the first half of 2024, with Indonesia as the highest contributor."

This collaboration is the first step in promoting healthcare travel across Indonesia, particularly to destinations OD currently serves.

They include Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bali, Batam, Lombok, Padang, Pekanbaru, Yogyakarta, Makassar, and Banda Aceh, with plans underway to expand to more destinations.

Aligning with Visit Malaysia 2026, this initiative with MHTC will further position Malaysia as a leading healthcare destination.

MHTC will be developing promotional materials and joint marketing initiatives apart from raising global awareness of Malaysia's world-class healthcare facilities and services, its CEO, Dr Mohamed Ali Abu Bakar, remarked.

For more information, visit www.batikair.com



AirAsia Named World's Best Low-Cost Airline 2025

AirlineRatings.com has recognised AirAsia group of airlines as the World's Best Low-Cost Airline for 2025, evaluating the airline based on its services and offerings to passengers besides meeting rigorous safety standards, including a seven-star safety rating.

Bo Lingam, Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AirAsia Aviation Group attributed this achievement to the dedication of all of AirAsia's Allstars, the airline's relentless pursuit of innovation and excellence as well as the support of its guests over the years.

“Being consistently ranked among the world's best low-cost airlines by AirlineRatings.com since 2018 shows that we have delivered across key metrics of safety, value, guest satisfaction and reliability.

Starting 2025 with this recognition, alongside our recent 7/7 safety rating, reinforces our drive to keep evolving, improving and delivering the best possible experience for our guests

BO LINGAM

Group Chief Executive Officer of AirAsia Aviation Group

Sharon Petersen, CEO of Airline Ratings Pty Ltd remarked, “While our World's Safest Airlines focus on safety, the World's Best Airlines awards are centred on passenger comfort, feedback, and product consistency across an airline's route network.

“These awards are not a popularity contest. AirAsia's operations stand out for their extensive flight network and destinations connecting Southeast Asia to the world at affordable fares.

“Additionally, AirAsia's hot meals are recognised as some of the best-tasting among low-cost carriers and represent good value, especially when pre-purchased at the time of booking.”

“This is a significant acknowledgement of the incredible efforts made by the team at AirAsia X as we have been laser focused on delivering the very best value and service for medium haul air travel spanning Australia, Asia and beyond

BENYAMIN ISMAIL

Chief Executive Officer of AirAsia X

The airline's operational performance across all key metrics saw a 20% surge of passengers carried in 2024 compared to 2023 alongside an increase of 20% in capacity, improved aircraft utilisation whilst maintaining 83% load factor (LF) by end-2024.

Overall, the AirAsia Aviation Group carried over 63 million passengers in 2024, with 89% LF, underscoring sustained demand and a growing active fleet to 205 aircraft to support its network growth.

Since its humble beginnings in 2001 with just two aircraft flying domestic routes in Malaysia, AirAsia has revolutionised low-cost travel.

Flying over 800 million guests and connecting 130+ destinations through multiple hubs across five of its operating markets including Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

For more information, visit www.capitala.com



New Xi'an to Kuala Lumpur Flight by China Eastern Airlines

China Eastern Airlines (MU) added its latest international connection from Xi'an (XIY) to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) with its inaugural flight on 23 February 2025.

XIY serves the capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, a significant urban hub that is witnessing rapid population growth, especially among middle-class families with rising disposable income.

MU's new route operates daily using the Airbus A320 aircraft featuring 156 seats, enhancing the airline's existing daily Kunming (KMG) to KUL service besides offering a significant opportunity to attract tourists from other major cities in China to Malaysia.

MU 873's maiden arrival was welcomed with a water cannon salute, followed by a warm reception and cake cutting ceremony that was attended by representatives from Tourism Malaysia, Malaysia Airports as well as the airline and its ground handling partner, AeroDarat.

This milestone highlights a major step forward in fostering tourism and cultural exchanges between Malaysia and China.

There are currently 502 weekly flights between the two countries, offering 102,343 seats.



TripAdvisor's newly released rankings identifying Malaysia's capital city, with its iconic landmarks, as the second most popular and must-visit global travel destination in 2025, alongside the continuation of the country's visa-free policy for Chinese nationals until December 2026, and enhanced air connectivity, are expected to expedite more growth from this key market.

With 3.28 million visitors from China in 2024, Malaysia is the third most visited country in Southeast Asia.

For more information, visit www.ceair.com



Award Recognitions Pour in for Korean Air

Korean Air (KE) has not only been named Airline of the Year 2025 by AirlineRatings.com but also won Best Economy Class in its World's Best Airline Cabin Class Awards.

The airline also secured eighth position in its Top 25 Safest Full-Service Airlines rankings in January this year.

The Australia-based aviation media outlet evaluated over 350 airlines worldwide based on various criteria, including safety, product ratings, passenger reviews, fleet age, and environmental commitment.

Recognising KE's commitment to enhancing the passenger experience and its strategic growth initiatives, AirlineRatings.com commended the airline's economy class for its spacious seat configurations, attentive onboard service, comprehensive amenities on its long-haul routes, enhanced dining and expansive inflight entertainment options.

KE's economy class onboard the Boeing 787-10 offers industry-leading seats with a 120-degree recline capability and 13.3-inch high-resolution monitors, significantly enhancing passenger comfort and entertainment options.

The airline's latest next-generation aircraft, including the Airbus A350-900, A321neo and Boeing 787-10, have strengthened its network coverage while setting new standards for inflight experience and operational reliability.

Its successful acquisition of Asiana Airlines, one of the largest mergers in Asian aviation history, marks a significant milestone for the airline.

AirlineRatings.com Chief Executive Officer, Sharon Petersen said, "KE's delivery of exceptional service all

cabin classes, from economy to premium, is backed by continuous investment in next-gen aircraft and fleet modernisation.

This latest recognition follows KE's previous accolades, including being ranked second in AirlineRatings' Top 25 Airlines and winning Best Long-Haul Carrier in North Asia in 2024.

Additionally, KE remained recognised as a five-star airline in Skytrax's 2025 World Airline Star Rating.

The 2025 assessment involved a two-week evaluation by three Skytrax auditors who flew on seven KE routes using a mystery shopper methodology to review over 550 service elements.

KE received high marks for its intuitive website design, streamlined passenger experience, premium inflight dining options, expertly curated wine selection and convenient meal pre-ordering service.

Its advanced entertainment offerings, comfortable seating across all cabin classes - First, Prestige and Economy - and exceptional cleanliness throughout the aircraft were also recognised. Meanwhile, KE's cabin crew earned praise for their warm and professional service, multilingual proficiency, and skillful handling of service complexities.

Besides securing the Airline Passenger Experience Association's five-star global airline rating in 2024 for the eighth consecutive year, KE is the first Korean carrier to receive the Consumer-Centred Management certification from the Korean Fair Trade Commission in 2024 for the third consecutive year domestically.

For more information, visit www.koreanair.com



Express Rail Link's Support for Visit Malaysia Year 2026

Tourism Malaysia and Express Rail Link (ERL) recently signed a Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) to promote the KL TravelPass to global travellers leading up to the country's Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM 2026) campaign.

This all-in-one transport ticket KL TravelPass combines ERL's KLIA Ekspres service and two days of unlimited train rides on the LRT, MRT and KL Monorail lines operated by another public transport provider, Prasarana.

The KL TravelPass and other ERL product offers will be promoted on Tourism Malaysia's digital channels such as its website, social media platforms, digital screens and digital ads.

Noormah Mohd Noor, ERL Chief Executive Officer said, "From the moment the passengers land in KL International Airport Terminal 1 or 2, they can immediately use the KL TravelPass to seamlessly explore Kuala Lumpur, eliminating the need and hassle for separate travel cards.

"They can also enjoy greater savings if they travel to Kuala Lumpur in groups with the ERL's Family Package and Group Saver plans, and experience the convenience of door-to-door airport transfers directly from hotels to the airport with ERL's VIP Service."

Datuk Manoharan Periasamy, Director General of Tourism Malaysia remarked, "Seamless accessibility is crucial for ensuring that tourists can fully immerse themselves in Malaysia's offerings without the hassle of navigating transportation hurdles."

He added, "The collaboration between us is a testament to the valuable synergy between the public and private sectors.

"Through this non-exclusive partnership with ERL, we look forward to leveraging their expertise in transportation to enhance tourist convenience and support the aspirations of VM 2026."

KL TravelPass is available on Single and Return trip on the KLIA Ekspres service.

For more information, visit www.KLIAekspres.com



Garuda Indonesia Among the World's Best Airlines for 2025

Indonesia's national flag carrier, Garuda Indonesia (GA), has been recognised as the sole local airline to receive an award for Best Airline in the World for 2025 by AirlineRatings.com.

Ranked 25th overall, GA received special recognition as the top full-service airline, with its dedication to passenger comfort, positive customer feedback, and consistent product quality its their extensive route network.

Known for its top-notch service, the five-star airline was established on 26 January 1949 as Indonesia Airways to support country's development.

It later changed its name to Garuda Indonesian Airways and became a state-owned company in 1950. In 1985, a complete branding makeover included a change to its current name.

Named after the mythical bird Garuda, which is also Indonesia's national emblem, GA has grown to become

a major player in the global aviation industry, reflecting its adaptability and commitment to service.

The continued modernisation of GA fleet's is part of the airline's commitment to environmental responsibility and reducing its carbon footprint.

A SkyTeam global alliance member since 2014, GA's fleet as at January 2025 includes the Airbus A330-200, A330-300, A330-900, Boeing 737-800 and B777-300ER aircraft.

Additionally, GA has embraced digital technology to enhance customer service, including streamlined booking processes and improved in-flight entertainment options.

The airline's frequent flyer programme rewards loyal customers with benefits besides enhancing customer retention and satisfaction.

For more information, call +603-27026301 or visit www.garuda-indonesia.com

Up close with Nita Malek Chairwoman of Board of Airline Representatives (BAR) Malaysia

Nita Malek, 54, started her career in banking in 1995 but found her true passion in aviation 10 months later when she joined Malaysia Airlines (MH) as a Management Trainee.

There has been no turning back since, with the opportunity to take on diverse roles across multiple portfolios, each responsibility providing invaluable insights. She was with Network Development, Customer Research and Insights, Government Sales, Internal Audit, Programme Management Office, and Operations, allowing her to develop a well-rounded understanding of the aviation industry.

Nita held her current position as Malaysia Aviation Group's (MAG) Senior Manager of Government and Industry Relations at, MH's parent company, since October 2020. With nearly three decades in this industry, her journey has been one of continuous learning and growth. Earning her stripes in the industry, she was appointed Chairwoman of BAR Malaysia in 2023 to represent scheduled airlines with permanent representation in the country, and reappointed in 2025 for another two-year term.

Since BAR Malaysia's formation in the early 1970s, have there been any other Chairwomen before you?

I am humbled to be the first woman to serve this top position, reflecting the growing role of women in leadership within the aviation industry. I embrace this responsibility with dedication and remain committed to advancing the progress and success of BAR Malaysia and the aviation sector as a whole.

What are the challenges like?

When navigating in a traditionally male-dominated industry, establishing credibility and ensuring representation at decision-making tables requires one to exude resilience and confidence. Another key challenge I face when advocating for airline interests in a highly regulated environment is balancing the needs of the various stakeholders, ranging from government authorities, regulatory bodies to industry players.

All this requires diplomacy, strategic negotiation, and a deep understanding of both local and global aviation policies. All the more so with the aviation sector constantly evolving, shaped by economic fluctuations, regulatory changes, and sustainability commitments.

Ensuring that BAR Malaysia remains proactive in addressing these developments, while supporting member airlines in adapting to new challenges remains top priority for me. Despite these challenges, I see significant opportunities to foster inclusivity and innovation within the industry. I am committed to driving positive change, strengthening industry collaboration, and ensuring the collective voice of member airlines in Malaysia is effectively represented.



How do you plan to achieve them under your leadership?

My primary goal is to strengthen BAR Malaysia's role as a unified and influential voice for member airlines operating in the country. I aim to enhance collaboration among member airlines, regulatory bodies, and key stakeholders to foster a more conducive and sustainable aviation ecosystem.

A key priority is advocating for policies that support airline growth, operational efficiency, and an improved passenger experience. This includes working closely with authorities to ensure fair regulations, competitive airport charges, and seamless connectivity that benefits both the industry and travellers.

As environmental concerns take centre stage, I seek to advance discussions and initiatives that align with global sustainability goals while ensuring the industry's long-term commercial viability.

How big is your team and what is BAR Malaysia's current membership?

I am supported by a dedicated team of seven committee members. BAR Malaysia comprises 59 members representing 32 scheduled airlines. We are delighted to welcome Air India as our latest member, further strengthening our collective voice in the aviation industry.

What are some of the key issues affecting the international civil aviation industry in Malaysia that are addressed by BAR Malaysia?

A primary concern among members is the increasingly complex regulatory landscape, particularly in consumer-related matters and rising industry costs. For instance, the evolving Malaysian Aviation Consumer Protection Code requires airlines to adapt to new compliance measures while balancing operational efficiency and cost management. Similarly, the introduction of the e-Invoice system presents challenges due to the complexity of

ticketing, fare structures, and international taxation.

BAR Malaysia, in collaboration with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), plays a crucial role in facilitating discussions between regulators and airlines to ensure smooth implementation and minimise disruptions.

Another pressing concern is the rising cost of aviation-related fees, taxes and charges, which directly impact airline operations and passenger costs.

Increases in Passenger Service Charges and air navigation charges add to the financial pressures, while globally, new travel and tourism related taxes-cum-rising airport charges present further challenges. In this respect, BAR Malaysia engages with the regulators and stakeholders to advocate for fair and balanced policies that consider both consumer interests and airline sustainability.

What are some recent representations BAR Malaysia made to organisations and authorities on aviation-related matters?

We engaged with the Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia on the implementation of the e-Invoice system, working alongside with IATA to address compliance and operational challenges specific to international ticketing, fare structures, and tax regulations.

Looking ahead, we will be engaging with the authorities on the implementation of the Advance Passenger Screening System to ensure a seamless rollout that enhances security protocols while minimising disruptions to airline operations. These engagements reflect our commitment to advocating for a regulatory framework that supports industry growth and operational efficiency.

What are some of BAR Malaysia's collaborations with Malaysia Airports?

Working closely with our key industry stakeholder, Malaysia Airports, to ensure the smooth operation of our member airlines, we focus on maintaining open communication, addressing industry challenges, and enhancing Malaysia's aviation landscape.

Malaysia Airports, on the other hand, regularly participates in BAR Malaysia meetings, providing briefings on their latest updates, initiatives, and developments to keep our member airlines informed on critical matters such as airport operations, infrastructure upgrades, passenger service enhancements, and regulatory changes. They also facilitate direct discussions with airlines, thus fostering greater transparency and collaboration in resolving operational concerns.

How does the BAR Malaysia work with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture's (MOTAC) agency, Tourism Malaysia, to promote the country and its Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign?

Our collaboration focuses on enhancing Malaysia's visibility and accessibility to the international travellers by ensuring that airlines are well-aligned with Tourism Malaysia's goals and initiatives. In the past, BAR Malaysia engaged with MOTAC to introduce policies that encouraged travel post-pandemic and advocated

for the use of tourism tax funds to improve aviation-related facilities.

Our member airlines also worked with MOTAC on promotional activities, events, and marketing efforts to showcase Malaysia's rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and diverse tourism offerings to global audiences. Through this partnership, we aim to make the VM2026 campaign a success and further elevate Malaysia's position as a top destination for international travellers.

As MAG's Senior Manager of Government and Industry Relations, who do you deal with mainly and what are your areas of cooperation?

Besides MOTAC, we engage with other key ministries such as the Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment, and Sustainability. Each ministry plays a vital role in shaping policies that impact the aviation industry, from regulatory frameworks and economic policies to sustainability and tourism development.

Besides collaborating with airports and aviation authorities both in Malaysia and globally to ensure seamless operations, regulatory compliance, and infrastructure development, we also work closely with embassies and diplomatic missions worldwide to facilitate air travel, support international relations, and address industry challenges.

Our goal is to build and maintain strong partnerships with all stakeholders, ensuring a thriving aviation sector that drives economic growth, enhances connectivity, and reinforces Malaysia's position as a key aviation hub.

What is your advice for women aspiring to enter the aviation industry?

Having witnessed the evolution of the aviation industry and the growing opportunities for women in this dynamic field, my advice to them is to be bold, resilient, and adaptable. Aviation is fast-paced, ever-changing, and highly competitive, but it is also incredibly rewarding.

Firstly, build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills. Whether in operations, commercial, engineering, or regulatory affairs, continuous learning and staying informed about industry trends will set you apart.

Secondly, cultivate a strong network. As a global industry, aviation connections with industry professionals, mentors, and peers can open doors to opportunities and provide invaluable guidance throughout your career. Thirdly, embrace challenges and obstacles with confidence, perseverance, and professionalism. A results-driven approach will earn you credibility and respect.

Lastly, never be afraid to take on leadership roles. The aviation industry is evolving, and diversity in leadership is crucial for progress. Women bring unique perspectives and strengths that can drive meaningful change. Believe in your abilities, seek mentorship, and continue pushing boundaries. As the saying goes, "The sky is not the limit, it is just the beginning."

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