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CONTENTS - JUNE 2025

AIRPORT TALK

AVIATION NEWS

AVIATION INTERVIEW

MALAYSIA AIRPORTS

A Monthly Publication of MALAYSIA AIRPORTS © Aviation Marketing and Development Division

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Picture Credit : LADA

Business Events on the Uptrend in Malaysia

With the rebound of business events in Malaysia and the country taking on the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) this year, opportunities abound for the industry players in both the public and private sectors to optimise on the encouraging growth momentum in terms of visitor arrivals.

For the first quarter of 2025, Malaysia received 10,102,972 visitors, an increase of 22.2% from the same period a year ago.

To cope with the increasing number of arrivals, the Home Ministry extended the use of the autogate facility for immigration clearance at KL International Airport (KLIA) Terminals 1 and 2 for travellers from six ASEAN member countries and Timor-Leste effective 15 February.

The six country are Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and the Philippines. Currently, the autogate access is granted to citizens of 63 countries, including two ASEAN members, namely Singapore and Brunei.

To enhance public service delivery by prioritising speed and efficiency, autogate access is also extended for passport holders from countries whose travel documents do not contain embedded chips.

This is in line with the International Civil Aviation Organisation's requirements for secure and accurate identity verification, the ministry said.

"This initiative also embodies the spirit of inclusivity and regional cooperation, particularly in strengthening diplomatic and tourism ties between Malaysia, ASEAN member states and Timor-Leste."

As announced on 26 May 2025 by Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Timor-Leste or East Timor will become a full member of ASEAN at the 47th Summit this October.

KLIA is set to welcome more travellers directly from Dili, Timor-Lester's capital, with the debut of Batik Air Malaysia's twice weekly flights to KLIA on 6 June 2025.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Airports, which recently bagged two Airport Service Quailty (ASQ) Awards 2024 rom Airports Council International for KLIA and Langkawi International Airport (LGK), held a high tea on 29 May 2025 in Langkawi to appreciate the LGK team led by Airport Manager Che Sulaiman Che Pa and the airport community there.

LGK had consistently won the ASQ award for Airports of 2-5 million passengers for four consistent years since 2021 with full marks of 5 points.

This award, which recognises the best airport experience, is voted by the passengers.

Malaysia Airports Managing Director, Dato' Mohd Izani Ghani said, "This international recognition is not just a success story but a reflection of consistency, pride and commitment in ensuring every passenger's journey is a meaningful experience."

"Collective effort and strong cooperation among staff members are crucial in maintaining passenger satisfaction, operational efficiency and high service quality."

For the first quarter of 2025, LGK registered 666,241 passenger movements, nearly a 10% year-on-year jump, he added.

Langkawi hosted the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in January 2025, which was attended by over 200 delegates from the 10-member ASEAN bloc and Timor-Leste as an observer.

According to Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dato' Haslina Abdul Hamid, foreigners made up the majority of arrivals to the island, which is poised to attract even more international visitors this year through a series of global events.

These include renowned sporting events such as Le Tour De Langkawi, Ironman, Langkawi International Half Marathon and the 35th Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta that will be held in the second half of 2025.

LADA is committed to make Langkawi a destination of choice throughout Visit Kedah Year 2025 campaign as a forerunner to the Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Strategic Partnerships at LIMA 2025

The recently concluded 17th Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) 2025, conducted over five days, drew in a larger attendance of about 450,000 visitors, surpassing its target of 350,000 trade and public visitors.

At the event's closing on 24 May 2025 at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC), Defence Minister Dato' Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said this year's edition reaffirmed LIMA's position as a platform to exchange ideas, the latest technologies and strategic collaborations that are vital to Malaysia.

Among them was the formalisation of a charter service contract between AirAsia Malaysia (AK) and the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) worth RM99.5 million on 22 May 2025.

The contract includes special leasing of aircraft until 1 August 2027, which encompasses daily and special charters covering domestic routes throughout Malaysia.

AK will facilitate the movement of MAF personnel from Monday to Friday for duty and welfare travel using the airline's existing high-frequency commercial flights while maintaining passengers' convenience.

In addition, there will be a special charter arrangement involving the exclusive rental of an entire aircraft dedicated solely for MAF personnel's use.

AK Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Datuk Captain Fareh Mazputra said, "As the airline with the most extensive domestic network with 38 routes and the highest flight frequencies in Malaysia with more than 1,100 flights weekly, we are well equipped to support the MAF's mobility needs."

The contract also includes the provision of comprehensive services such as inflight meals, luggage handling and logistical support from the airport to military camps both ways to ensure comfortable and efficient transport solutions for the MAF personnel.

Meanwhile, the presence of UniKL at LIMA 2025 through its Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology (MIAT) also saw five strategic Memoranda of Agreement (MoAs) established with the country's leading aviation industry players.

They are namely Malaysia Airports, Galaxy Aerospace (M) Sdn Bhd, Global Turbine Asia Sdn Bhd, Pen Aviation Sdn Bhd and Aerostar Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd.

Through these MoAs, UniKL MIAT is poised to broaden its influence and impact within the aerospace and aviation ecosystem, which will enable its students to gain the necessary expertise and skills aligned with the industry's needs.

i-CATS University College of Sarawak also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Aerospace Industry Corporation Malaysia at LIMA 2025 to ensure its students are exposed to real-world knowledge in their classrooms.

With i-CATS's academic programmes and research efforts aligned with the Malaysian Aerospace Industry Blueprint 2030, the educational institution is building capacity across key areas in aerospace.

These include systems engineering, aircraft design, avionics, satellite technology and aerospace systems integration, which will not only pave the way for long-term industry sustainability within Sarawak but also produce a skilled talent pool of knowledgeable and practical expertise.

Wholly owned by the Sarawak government under Yayasan Sarawak and Sarawak Skills, i-CATs will be instrumental in transforming the state's transformative journey in aerospace.

Emirates Strengthens Collaborations with Several Countries, Including Malaysia

Emirates (EK) recently signed seven Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) on the sidelines of the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai with several tourism bodies and ministries to bolster visitor arrivals and boost the appeal of each destination.

Renewing its partnership with Tourism Malaysia, the promotion arm of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, EK reaffirmed the airline's longstanding commitment to the Southeast Asian gateway.

Dato' Sri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture witnessed the signing of the MoU between Datuk Manoharan Periasamy, Tourism Malaysia Director General and Orhan Abbas, EK Senior Vice President (Commercial Operations - East).

EK will seek to promote Malaysia across key markets in its global network, exploring opportunities for joint marketing promotions and advertising initiatives to position Malaysia as a premier tourist destination with its natural landscapes, cultural heritage and unique culinary experiences.

Other MoUs were signed with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Morocco National Tourist Office, Tourism Seychelles, Warsaw Tourism Organization, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Bahamas and Nigeria's Ministry of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy.

Meanwhile, the EK Group's newly released 2024-2025 Annual Report showed the best result in its history, making it the world's most profitable airline with new records for profit, revenue and cash assets.

The Group's profit after tax stood at USD5.6 billion for the financial year ended 31 March 2025.

Collectively, the Group invested USD3.8 billion in new aircraft, facilities, equipment, companies and the latest technologies to support its growth plans during this period.

Its total workforce grew by 9% to 121,223 employees, its largest size ever.

On the outlook for 2025-2026, His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of EK Group said, "We enter the year ahead with excitement and optimism.

Our excellent financial standing enables us to continue building on and scaling up from our successful business models.

"While some markets are jittery about trade and travel restrictions, volatility is not new in our industry. We simply adapt and navigate around these challenges.

"EK will strengthen our network connectivity with the expected delivery of 16 Airbus A350s and four Boeing 777 freighters in 2025-2026, providing the much-needed capacity to meet customers' demand.

"Our retrofit programme will continue apace to provide our customers with the latest products and a more consistent experience across our A350, A380 and B777 fleet."

For more information, visit **www.emirates.com**

Sichuan Airlines' Maiden Direct Flight from Chengdu to Penang Heralds Exciting Prospects

Penang is poised to attract more visitors from China following Sichuan Airlines' (3U) inaugural non-stop flight from Chengdu (CTU) to Penang International Airport (PEN) on 1 May 2025 which carried over 150 passengers using the Airbus A320 aircraft.

Managed by Malaysia Airports, PEN is a key aviation hub connecting the island state to major international cities and significantly contributing to its economic growth.

Samuel Lee Thai Hung, Deputy Director General (Promotion II) of Tourism Malaysia said, "This new route is both timely and strategic as we continue to position Penang as a premier destination for international travellers, investors, and businesses.

"We warmly welcome all visitors from Chengdu to discover the unique charm, heritage, and culinary richness of Penang."

Wong Hon Wai, Penang State Executive Councillor for Tourism and Creative Economy viewed the advent of 3U's five times weekly flight as a significant milestone to herald exciting prospects for tourism and economic exchanges between the two cities.

"Since 2018, the two have been officially twinned as friendship cities, paving the way for deep and enduring friendships.

"Penang is a globally recognised hub for semiconductors and manufacturing while Chengdu is a powerhouse for high-tech industries in western China, particularly in electronics, semiconductors, and aerospace sectors.

"The economic momentum generated by this connectivity will breathe new life into Penang's tourism sector, bringing benefits while our bilateral ties will grow even stronger. New avenues for collaboration in science, technology and industry will open."

Also present to welcome flight 3U3911 flight were various tourism industry players from Penang. They include Ooi Chok Yan, Chief Executive Officer of Penang Global Tourism, Edwin Tan, Chairman of Malaysian Chinese Tourism Association (Penang Chapter) and the association's Life Honorary President, Datuk Albert Tan Sam Soon, alongside Yu Yan Bing, 3U Deputy Director of Commercial Department.

For more information, visit **www.global.sichuanair.com**

Photos credit: Tourism Malaysia

Landmark Boeing Widebody Order for Qatar Airways

Qatar Airways (QR) has placed the largest aircraft order in its history with Boeing that includes 160 widebody jets, of which 130 units are for the B787 Dreamliners and the remaining 30 for B777-9s.

The latter is the world's largest twin-engine airplanes with new standards in efficiency that can cut fuel use and emissions by 25%.

With the airline's options to purchase an additional 50 B787 and B777X airplanes, this also makes it the largest B787 Dreamliner order for the American manufacturer.

QR currently operates more than 150 Boeing airplanes, including B777 and B787 passenger jets as well as B777 Freighters. With this new purchase, airline will become the largest Dreamliner operator in the Middle East.

As part of QR's strategic fleet growth plan, it also signed an agreement with GE Aerospace for more than 400 engines, including 60 GE9X and 260 GEnx engines, with additional options and spares, to power its next-generation B777-9 and B787 aircraft.

Building on QR's previous order of 188 GE9X engines, this brings to a total of 248 engines from GE Aerospace.

Representing the largest widebody engine purchase in GE Aerospace's history, this latest deal also includes service agreements to cover the maintenance, repair and overhaul of the GEnx and GE9X engines.

QR's two deals with Boeing and GE Aerospace were announced during the United States President Donald Trump's recent visit with His Highness Sheikh Tamim Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar.

“

This is a critical next step for us as we invest in the cleanest, youngest and most efficient fleet in global aviation.

After two consecutive years of record-breaking commercial performance and with this historic Boeing aircraft order – we're not simply chasing scale; we're building strength that will allow us to continue to deliver our unmatched products and customer experiences.

”

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

Boeing Commercial Airplanes President and Chief Executive Officer, Stephanie Pope, said, “We are deeply honoured that QR has placed this record-breaking order with us, one that solidifies their future fleet with our market-leading widebody airplane family at its centre.”

For more information, **visit qatarairways.com**

Malaysia Airlines Signs Strategic Deals to Boost Connectivity to Australia

Malaysia Airlines (MH) recently signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) aimed at strengthening ties between Malaysia and Australia, as part of its efforts to expand its network and enhance air connectivity.

Through its tripartite agreement with Brisbane Airport as well as Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) on 19 April 2025, MH has a three-year collaboration that includes the return of a five-time weekly direct flight from Kuala Lumpur (KUL) to Brisbane (BNE) scheduled to start on 29 November 2025 after a two-year hiatus.

Dersenish Aresandiran, Chief Commercial Officer of Airlines from Malaysia Aviation Group said, “We can leverage shared insights to drive demand, enhance connectivity and strengthen our position as the gateway to Asia and beyond.”

Echoing his sentiment, Anthony Cicuttini, BNE Senior Vice President and Head of Aviation Business Development said, “With MH's return, BNE is back to our pre-pandemic numbers of 33 direct destinations”

Craig Davidson, TEQ Chief Executive Officer (CEO) said, “This is a fantastic outcome for Queensland's visitor economy and our ongoing commitment to grow aviation access.”

This partnership aims to stimulate travel demand to Queensland by leveraging the combined strengths, insights and market reach of all three parties.

On the same day, MH also signed a MoU with the Australian state of Victoria, which sets the stage for joint promotional campaigns.

Additionally, the airline will introduce a third daily service from KUL to Melbourne (MEL) in October 2025, increasing its frequency from 14 to 21 weekly flights.

“

It speaks of the importance of the Victorian market that MH plans to use its newest aircraft, featuring the latest onboard products for its enhanced MEL services.

To keep pace with demand, we are working with our airlines to deliver an expansion of the international terminal and a third runway to ensure our airfield has the capacity to serve Victoria's growing population.

”

LORIE ARGUS
Chief Executive Officer
of Melbourne Airport

MH will progressively deploy its brand-new A330neo aircraft to support this route.

These two collaborations with Queensland and Victoria are aligned with the airline's strategy to expand its international presence and deliver a seamless, premium travel experience, promoting tourism, business, and cultural exchange between the two countries.

Australia reportedly received 202,600 Malaysian arrivals last year, up 15% from 2023, according to Tourism Australia.

For more information, visit **www.malaysiaairlines.com**

Etihad Airways Posts Record Results and All-Time High Customer Satisfaction

Building on last year's momentum of notable improvements across revenue, operational efficiency and fleet expansion, Etihad Airways (EY) has delivered record-breaking financial performance and customer satisfaction scores in the first quarter of 2025 (1Q2025).

The profit after tax of the national airline of the United Arab Emirates reached USD187 million, up 30% year-on-year (YoY) while revenue rose 15% to USD1.8 billion during the same period, driven by both passenger and cargo business.

EY, which carried five million passengers in 1Q2025, a 16% YoY increase, is expected to maintain a strong momentum into the second quarter.

The airline's passenger load factor improved slightly to 87% while its customer satisfaction reached a record high in 1Q2025, with scores improving by 20% YoY due to enhancements across its airport, onboard and digital experiences.

> *"From continued refinements to our onboard offering to improved airport services and the debut of our Airbus A321LR in April with a market-leading narrowbody product, we are raising the bar in every part of the journey."*

ANTONOALDO NEVES
Chief Executive Officer
of Etihad Airways (EY)

As of March 2025, EY operated flights to 80 destinations with 16 new routes launching this year to support its continued growth.

Todate, the airline's fleet comprises 100 aircraft, including the reintroduction of its sixth A380 aircraft, the delivery of an additional A350-1000 and another Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

EY recently confirmed an order for 28 wide-body Boeing aircraft, which included a mix of B787 and B777X powered by GE engines and supported by a services package.

These aircraft are expected to join its fleet 2028. EY is currently finalising a detailed plan that will guide the airline's growth through 2035.

Meanwhile, EY's frequent flyer partnership with Portugal's national carrier, TAP Air Portugal, launched on 14 May 2025, will enable members of both 'Etihad Guest' and the TAP Miles&Go programme to earn and redeem their respective loyalty currency on either carrier.

'Etihad Guest' members are able to redeem their miles on flights, worldwide hotel stays and holidays, or shop from a variety of products from the Etihad Guest Reward Shop. Additionally, TAP Miles&Go member miles can be spent on flights and a range of additional offers such as TAP Store items.

The networks of both airlines complement each other, covering destinations across North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

For more information, visit **www.etihad.com**

Record Net Profit and Revenue for SIA Group

The Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group's net profit has improved by 3.9% to a record SGD2.8 billion for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 due to a SGD1.1 billion non-cash accounting gain following the completion of the Air India-Vistara merger in November 2024.

Driven by resilient demand for air travel and cargo uplift, its Group revenue rose 2.8% to a record SGD19.5 billion.

However, the Group's operating profit was lower at SGD1.7 billion due to reduced passenger yields from heightened competition, which was partially mitigated by a record number of passengers carried.

Both its national carrier, SIA, and low-cost carrier, Scoot, carried a record 39.4 million passengers, up 8.1% year-on-year, with the Group's passenger network covering 128 destinations in 36 countries and territories.

Besides holding one of the strongest balance sheets in the industry, the SIA Group remains in a strong position to navigate global trade and macroeconomic uncertainties due to its robust foundation and long-term strategic investments.

Scoot, which launched its services to Iloilo City in April 2025, will fly to Vienna in June 2025.

The SIA Group's fleet comprises 207 aircraft, with 78 aircraft on order as of 1 May 2025.

To bolster its premium positioning and elevate the end-to-end customer journey, SIA announced a SGD1.1 billion investment in November 2024 to redefine the premium travel experience across its network.

This includes the introduction of its new first class cabin in seven Airbus A350-900 ultra long range aircraft, setting new industry benchmarks for travel on the world's longest routes.

Continued focus on product leadership and service excellence, including investments in next-generation aircraft, new cabin products and airline lounges by the SIA Group will help its airlines maintain their competitive edge by providing customers with more value and enhancing the end-to-end travel experience.

The SIA Group said it will rely on its strong foundations, well-diversified global network, robust balance sheet, talented and dedicated workforce, as well as industry-leading digital capabilities to navigate the global uncertainties and challenges.

The Group is in a strong position to focus on profitability while pursuing growth opportunities and ensuring long-term value creation for shareholders, it added.

For more information, visit **www.singaporeair.com**

Strategic Initiatives by All Nippon Airways

All Nippon Airways (ANA) and Singapore Airlines (SIA) have deepened their commercial collaboration, offering customers additional value beyond their existing codeshare partnerships from the wider variety of fare options and enhanced flight schedules.

This strategic initiative will also strengthen connectivity for both passenger travel and air freight between Japan and Singapore, with the revenue-sharing flights between the two countries starting from September.

Additionally, working together with the Japan Travel Bureau, ANA recently flew 24 students of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seafield in Subang Jaya, Selangor from KL International Airport (KLIA) to Japan under the Malaysia-Japan Educational Tour (M-JET) Programme.

This marks ANA Kuala Lumpur office's first participation in such student exchange programmes between Malaysia and Japan.

The M-JET and Malaysia-Global Educational Tour programmes, endorsed by the Ministry of Education, have been bridging students across borders for over 20 years, creating meaningful global connections and life-changing learning experiences.

Faradina Kamarudin, ANA Manager of Sales, Reservation and Ticketing said, "We decided to take part because the programme aligns with our goals. Furthermore, it is a good way to connect with the students and raise awareness about our airline."

For its financial year ended 31 March 2025, Japan's largest airline carried 8.07 million international passengers, up 113.1% year-on-year.

Of this, the majority of them came from Asia and Oceania (5.02 million), followed by North America (2.35 million) and Europe (706,875)

For more information, call **+603-2032 1331** or visit **www.ana.co.jp/group/en/my**

More New Direct Routes by Batik Air Malaysia

Batik Air Malaysia (OD) will be expanding its network at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (SZB) in Subang, Selangor with the launch of its first international route to Thailand starting on 28 July 2025.

Marking a momentous milestone in the airline's growth and the revival of SZB as a key aviation gateway, the airline will operate daily flights to Bangkok's Don Mueang International Airport (DMK).

On the same date, OD will also commence daily flights to Kuching International Airport (KCH), further strengthening its domestic connectivity from SZB, which is being transformed into a vibrant city airport hub and alternative to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA).

SZB, which is located in close proximity to urban centres such as Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam and Kuala Lumpur, serves over nine million Klang Valley residents.

These two new services are also expected to attract more visitors from Thailand and East Malaysia to discover the many charms of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

Earlier, OD also announced it will be connect East Malaysia to South Korea with the launch of its new direct three times weekly service between Kota Kinabalu (BKI) in Sabah and Seoul's Incheon International Airport (ICN) starting 12 September 2025.

South Korea (16.5%) was the third largest source market for Sabah in 2024 with 192,259 arrivals after China (39.1%) and Brunei (21.2%), according to the Sabah Tourism Board.

> *This new route reflects our commitment to building a stronger regional network across Asia. As our footprint continues to expand, we are creating more meaningful links between cultures, economies and communities.*

DATUK CHANDRAN RAMA MUTHY
Group Chief Executive Officer
of Batik Air Malaysia (OD)

For more information, visit **www.batikair.com**

Increased Connectivity in Malaysia and the Middle East by China Eastern Airlines

China Eastern Airlines' (MU) inaugural direct flight from Lanzhou (LHW), the capital of Gansu Province, to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) via Kunming (KMG) on 22 May 2025 represents a significant milestone in enhancing bilateral tourism and economic relations between Malaysia and China.

A major transportation and economic hub in northwestern China, LHW has seen rapid growth driven by rising incomes and a growing middle class.

Strategically positioned along the historic Silk Road, the city plays a vital role in China's Belt and Road Initiative by promoting enhanced connectivity with Central Asia and other countries, including Malaysia.

MU's inaugural flight was welcomed by Samuel Lee Thai Hung, Tourism Malaysia Deputy Director General (Promotion II) as well as representatives from Malaysia Airports and AeroDarat, the airline's ground handling partner.

MU's thrice weekly LHW to KUL via KMG route using the Airbus A320 aircraft with 156 complements its existing daily KMG to KUL flights.

Meanwhile, at the recent Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai, MU launched its landmark joint venture (JV) partnership with the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, Etihad Airways (EY).

This first JV between a Middle Eastern airline and a Chinese airline sets a precedent for future bilateral aviation agreements where both will continue to align in various areas, including codeshare flights, joint marketing initiatives and customer experience enhancements.

Following the debut of MU's four-weekly services from Shanghai (PVG) to Abu Dhabi (AUH) using the Airbus A330 aircraft on 28 April 2025, the airline will increase the frequency to daily flights starting 12 September 2025, with its one-way flight duration taking about nine hours and 20 minutes.

Building upon their JV, the two airlines also signed at the ATM a new agreement related to their respective loyalty programmes.

From 1 June 2025, loyalty members of Eastern Miles and Etihad Guest programmes can earn and redeem miles across both airlines' global networks, unlocking greater value and seamless travel experiences.

For more information, visit **www.ceair.com**

KNOW YOUR TRAVEL RIGHTS IN MALAYSIA:

A Guide for Every Passenger

You've planned your trip for months. You arrive at the airport, only to find that your flight is suddenly cancelled. Around you, passengers scramble for answers. Do you know what you're entitled to?

Pushpalatha Subramaniam, Malaysian Aviation Commission's (MAVCOM) Director of Consumer and Public Affairs, explains why knowing your rights ensures you know exactly what to do next.

With the Malaysian Aviation Consumer Protection Code 2016 (MACPC), MAVCOM has set clear protections to safeguard the rights of consumers flying into and out of Malaysia, covering both local and foreign airlines.

Here is a breakdown of key air travel rights that every traveller should be aware of throughout their journey.

Pushpalatha Subramaniam
Director, Consumer and Public Affairs,
Malaysian Aviation Commission
(MAVCOM)

Before your flight

Transparent air fare - no hidden fees:

- Hidden fees can be frustrating, especially when the final price of payment is much higher than expected. To address this issue, the MACPC mandates that airlines display the full, all-inclusive price upfront in advertisements. This **price must include** government taxes, charges under any written law, mandatory fees, and surcharges.
- At the time of payment, before you purchase your tickets, airlines must provide a detailed fare breakdown, clearly showing all charges along with any optional services selected by the consumer. By ensuring this transparency, consumers can make informed decisions and avoid unexpected costs when purchasing their tickets.

Tip:
Before purchasing your ticket, make sure to review the **airline's terms and conditions,** including their policies on cancellations, refunds, rebooking, baggage allowances, and no-shows (which refers to a situation where a passenger fails to show up for a booked flight).

Optional add-ons require your consent:

Airlines **cannot automatically add extra services,** such as insurance or extra baggage allowance, without your consent. Any optional add-ons must be offered **as an opt-in service,** clearly presented before you pay.

Tip:
Please **provide your phone number** when booking with the airline to ensure they can contact you directly in case of a flight disruption.

No price increase after booking:

Once you have paid for your ticket, the price is final. Airlines are not allowed to increase the fare after you complete your booking. The only exception is if there has been an increase in government-imposed taxes or fees.

Tip:
Check the **validity of your travel documents.** For example, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months.

Stay updated: flight status changes

Communication when there is a change in the scheduled time of departure:

Airlines are required to inform consumers at least 2 weeks before any changes to the scheduled time of departure. Under the circumstances of extraordinary or unavoidable technical problems, airlines must inform consumers as soon as practicable.

If an airline discontinues to operate a route, it must provide a notification at least 1 month before the scheduled departure date.

Flight cancellations and rescheduling:

In the event of a flight cancellation and/or flight rescheduling of 3 hours or more, you have the **right to choose** between a full refund or rerouting to your final destination. Refunds must be processed within 30 days and returned to you using the original mode of payment.

Verification letter for flight delays or cancellations:

If your flight is delayed by 30 minutes or more or is cancelled, you have the right to request a verification letter from the airline. This letter, which must be issued within 7 working days, can be used as proof for travel insurance claims or any necessary documentation.

Tip:
Stay updated by regularly checking airline notifications and contacting the airline immediately if your flight is disrupted.

At the airport

Flight delays:

If your flight is delayed for **2 hours or more,** you are entitled to meals or refreshments, internet access, and limited phone calls. If the delay extends to **5 hours or more,** you will also receive the previously mentioned care, along with hotel accommodation and transportation to and from the airport if an overnight stay is necessary. If you decide **not to continue travelling** due to the delay, you are entitled to **a full refund** in the original mode of payment of the ticket purchased from the airline.

Flight disruptions caused by extraordinary circumstances:

For flight disruptions that are beyond the airline's control (such as weather-related issues, strikes, or security threats), airlines are required to **refund the full ticket cost,** including taxes and fees, in the original mode of payment within 30 days. Airlines **may offer alternative forms of refund,** such as vouchers or credit shells, but the **choice of refund method is ultimately up to you.**

Denied boarding:

An airline can only deny you boarding an aircraft if you voluntarily surrender your reservation or if there are not enough volunteers to do so. If you are denied boarding, this must occur before you board the aircraft. If this happens to you, you are entitled to a full refund or rerouting with comparable transport conditions – including meals or refreshments, phone calls, internet access, as well as hotel accommodation and transport, if necessary.

After your flight

Mishandled baggage:

If your baggage is lost, delayed, or damaged, you should file a complaint with the airline immediately upon arrival. For damaged baggage, complaints should be filed within 7 days, and for delayed baggage, within 21 days. However, we strongly encourage for you to file a written complaint upon arrival at the airport.

Tip:
Keep all receipts for **essential purchases** made due to baggage delays, as these can support your claims.

Refunds if you decide not to continue your journey:

If you have purchased a ticket and unable to travel, you are able to request a refund for mandatory charges, including fuel surcharge, taxes, fees, and charges imposed by the government and prescribed under any written law, as well as charges imposed on consumers by airlines. This entitlement is applicable to both refundable and non-refundable flight tickets.

Complaint resolution timeline:

Airlines must resolve consumer complaints within 30 days. Consumers have up to 2 years to file their complaints. However, consumers are encouraged to file a complaint as soon as possible.

Accessibility for Passengers with Disabilities:

- Passengers with disabilities are entitled to free wheelchair assistance if they hold an Orang Kurang Upaya (OKU) card. It is recommended that you **request this service** at least **48 hours** before departure.
- If an airline loses or damages your mobility equipment, the airline must compensate you based on its current market value.

Should you get travel insurance?

The MACPC is designed to protect your rights during air travel, and it applies even **if you did not purchase** travel insurance. However, travel insurance offers additional coverage for a range of situations. This can include coverage for medical emergencies and expenses related to hotel accommodation or transportation resulting from flight disruptions.

Tip:
Before you travel, be sure to **review your insurance policy** to **ensure you have complete coverage.**

Need assistance?
MAVCOM is here to help

If you have an unresolved issue with an airline or are dissatisfied with the resolution provided, you can escalate it to MAVCOM using our available platforms. File a complaint to MAVCOM through flysmart.my or the FlySmart mobile app.

Additionally, you can contact MAVCOM by calling our hotline at **1800-18-6966 (within Malaysia) or +603-7651 2777 (outside of Malaysia)** from Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 5.30pm.

By knowing your rights, you can travel with confidence.

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Upclose with Dato' A Aruldass

President of Malaysian Indian Tour and Travel Association (MITTA)

With 45 years of experience in the tourism industry, Dato' A Aruldass, 70, has come a long way as the newly elected MITTA President who returned unopposed for the second term.

From taking his tourist guide course in 1982 to later setting up his own agency, Tourland Travel in 1989, with offices now in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Thailand and Dubai, he helms the 28-year-old MITTA, desiring to bring more new blood and changes.

What are some of the measures you have adopted during your first term in 2023 that have now come to fruition?

In 2023, MITTA focused heavily on building opportunities for our members through tangible, business-enabling platforms.

We organised dedicated business-to-business (B2B) sessions for both inbound and outbound agents, allowing them to explore partnerships and expand their networks.

We also guided and encouraged member participation in international roadshows such as South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE) Delhi and Outbound Travel Mart (OTM) Mumbai, scheduled for 2025.

This early planning secured prime participation slots and affordable booth options for our members, which will open doors to new markets, especially from India.

What are your plans as you embark on your second term?

MITTA will be bringing 30 members from the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Kerala Chapter for a hosted five-day four-night familiarisation tour from 24 to 28 June to Kota Kinabalu in Sabah and Kuala Lumpur.

We recently began a building financial reserve fund for MITTA to have its own building. I also want to see more Indian community representation in tourism not just as transport providers but as full-fledged travel agency owners, wholesalers, technology adopters and online sellers. The future of travel is digital. We want to help upgrade these businesses to include online booking systems, artificial intelligence (AI) based tools and new market segments.

How is the digitalisation journey for MITTA members going?

It is an ongoing process and not always easy. The travel industry is one of the most disrupted by digital platforms, so we continuously urge our members to stay ahead of the curve.

We promote adoption of AI-driven itinerary tools, customer relationship management systems and online payment solutions.

MITTA will continue to provide training, support and grants to help agencies modernise and remain relevant.

With Malaysia as Chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year, how should we tap into the vast opportunities to further develop our tourism and hospitality industries?

Malaysia is enjoying a period of political stability, investors' confidence, and growing regional influence.

As the ASEAN Chair, we should lead efforts in tourism cooperation, improving cross-border packages, visa facilitation and regional air connectivity.

We must also enhance training and service standards across hospitality to prepare for a stronger influx of tourists from neighbouring ASEAN members and beyond.

What are your insights into the Indian market?

As one of Malaysia's most stable and fast-growing source markets, India's growth has been resilient.

Post-pandemic, Indian outbound travel surged, with an estimated 30 million outbound tourists in 2024. Malaysia must be well-positioned to capture that.

The Indian travellers are no longer just leisure tourists, we are seeing strong growth in business events, weddings, medical tourism and student travel. Malaysia is well-suited for these segments with our affordability, cultural similarities, and growing range of offerings.

How can we improve the yield and Indian arrivals to Malaysia?

We must continue developing new and unique tourism products beyond the traditional Kuala Lumpur–Genting–Langkawi route.

There is growing interest among Indian travellers in spiritual trails, adventure eco-tourism, cultural immersions and experiential village stays, segments where Malaysia has immense potential.

The VSY 2025 campaign marks a pivotal milestone in the Selangor First Plan (RS-1) covering 2021-2025. How do you see this?

Destinations such as Sabah and Sarawak are rich in nature, heritage and soft adventure offerings but they remain underexposed to the Indian market.

We need to aggressively promote them as part of curated thematic experiences that appeal to the higher-yield travellers seeking something off the beaten path.

To complement product development, we must also invest in stronger air connectivity and collaborations with Indian online travel agents (OTAs) and influencers.

Marketing efforts should target high-spending groups such as business events, families, luxury travellers and second-time visitors who are open to exploring beyond the mainstream.

These combined efforts will help lift both arrival numbers and yield.

One of the key challenges is the lack of direct flights from India. How can this be resolved?

While direct flights from India's metro cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore are largely available, the issue lies in flight frequency and connectivity to tiers 2 and 3 cities.

As India's middle class expands and becomes more travel-savvy, many are willing to book impromptu getaways.

We must work with airlines to increase frequency from metros and explore new direct routes from fast-emerging cities like Lucknow, Coimbatore and Vizag.

Please share regarding MITTA's partnership with Tourism Malaysia to promote the Indian market.

In collaboration with Tourism Malaysia, MITTA hosted a fully-sponsored familiarisation trip for the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Southern India Chapter in July 2024.

We welcomed 44 top agents from across South India to experience our iconic and new tourism offerings.

This trip, also supported by Wyndham Ion Majestic Genting and Sunway Resort Hotel, has seen increased group queries.

Additionally, MITTA and Tourism Malaysia jointly conducted the Malaysia Travel Mart (MTM) India Roadshow from 23 to 30 September 2024, covering the cities of Trivandrum, Calicut, Bhubaneswar and Guwahati, which have strong outbound potential but are often overlooked.

The roadshow was a breakthrough, generating over 600 B2B meetings and solid interest from regional agents to promote Malaysia.

What is MITTA's current membership? How do you plan to grow it further?

MITTA currently has over 400 members but only 200 are active.

Our goal for 2025 is to have 280 new and active members, with special outreach to underserved segments like niche tour operators, emerging OTAs and regional players.

We also offer education sessions, digital workshops and reduced event participation fees for our members.

This will attract more young entrepreneurs and second-generation operators into the fold.

From tourist guide to president, what advice do you have for those keen to enter into the travel and tourism industry?

Tourism is not for the faint-hearted but if you are in it for the long run and you have passion, this is the most fulfilling industry in the world.

Since I started as a tourist guide, I still carry the same passion, if not more.

We are in many ways like magicians: we make people happy, help them escape the stress of life and create lasting memories. That is the magic of tourism and I love it dearly.

How do you unwind?

I unwind by spending time with my grandchildren, reading industry journals and occasionally revisiting my old tour guide notes as they remind me of where I started and why I still love this job.

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