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Malaysia Airports Strengthens Industry Partnerships for East Malaysia's Airport Development

Following the success of Malaysia Airports' inaugural Procurement and Project Showcase held in Kuala Lumpur recently, the airport operator has brought the East Malaysian edition closer to the contractors, consultants, suppliers, technology providers and specialist firms based in Sabah and Sarawak.

A total of 144 companies attended this event held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

They included 87 Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) G7 contractors, who represented 60% of participating companies.

This strong participation reflected the groundwork laid through last years Vendor Roadshows to broaden local participation in Malaysia Airports procurement ecosystem.

Through this year's initiative, East Malaysian-based companies were able to gain insights into upcoming airport development opportunities as infrastructure development and asset renewal gather pace across airports located here.

The engagement came at a time when Malaysia Airports is advancing the proposed upgrading and expansion of Kota Kinabalu International Airport (BKI), whose capacity would be increased from nine million to 12 million passengers per annum (mppa).

BKI's capacity peaked at 9.45 mppa in 2019. The airport handled over 7.95 mppa in 2024, making it Malaysia's third busiest airport after KL International Airport (KUL) and Penang International Airport (PEN).

Under BKI's RM442.3 million expansion plans, expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2028, the development includes the expansion and renovation of its existing terminal, airside infrastructure upgrades, as well as the reconfiguration of the kerbside and car park.

The RM442.3 million project will be funded almost entirely through private financing by Malaysia Airports.

> "East Malaysia is an important part of our development agenda.
>
> While BKI is a major focus, the wider programme includes proposed improvements at airports serving communities and economic centres across Sabah and Sarawak.
>
> The scale and diversity of the development pipeline, ranging from terminal and airside works to baggage systems, technology and passenger facilities, make early engagement with the regional vendor community essential.
>
> By engaging the industry early, we want capable East Malaysia-based companies to understand what is required, strengthen their readiness and position themselves to participate in the opportunities ahead."

DATO' MOHD IZANI GHANI
Managing Director
of Malaysia Airports


Kota Kinabalu International Airport (BKI)

Malaysia Airports is also working with the government to support proposed upgrades at other airports across East Malaysia, including Sandakan (SDK), Lahad Datu (LDU) and Tawau (TWU) in Sabah, as well as Miri (MYY) in Sarawak.

As Sabah's second-largest airport, TWU's annual capacity of 1.5 million mppa was already exceeded in 2023, when passenger traffic reached 1.71 mppa.

Upon completion of its RM120.9 million expansion project by 2028, approved under the 12th Malaysia Plan, the airport is expected to cater to 2.5 mppa.

Malaysia Airports recently presented updates on TWU's progress, operational priorities and terminal expansion during a working session with Finance Minister II, Senator Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan.

Among the key initiatives highlighted were traffic decongestion measures, enhanced enforcement, implementation of cashless parking and rectification of existing passenger boarding bridges, all aimed at improving passenger experience and operational efficiency.

Overall, these measures are expected to support TWU's growing tourism, trade and economic activities while strengthening its connectivity and role as a gateway to Sabah's east coast.

Meanwhile, under the Airport Development Fund administered by the Ministry of Transport for smaller domestic airports, RM24 million and RM20 million have been allocated for SDK and LDU respectively to improve their operational efficiency and passenger comfort.

At SDK, Malaysia Airports is reportedly finalising the scope of work, which includes improving public transport facilities by providing dedicated bus and taxi parking bays with pedestrian access to the terminal building.

Two passenger boarding bridges, upgrades to its baggage conveyor system and the relocation of X-ray screening machines for post-check-in baggage screening concept will also be included in its upgrading exercise.

Also in the works will be the refurbishment of SDK's immigration departure and arrival checkpoints to facilitate the installation of NIISe e-Gate facilities in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

SDK's departure hall will also be expanded to provide larger waiting areas and more commercial space to accommodate growing travel demand.


Sandakan Airport (SDK)

Physical works at the airport are expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2026 and scheduled for completion by the end of 2027.

Additionally, a new RM1 million air conditioning system for SDK is scheduled for installation in the first quarter of 2027 to fix the terminal' comfort issues.

Meanwhile, MYY's RM445 million expansion for a larger terminal, multi-storey car park and aerobridges is currently undergoing tender process, is expected to begin construction early next year, according to Sarawak Transport Minister Dato Sri Lee Kim Shin.

As Malaysia Airports continues to work with CIDB to facilitate the local vendors' participation in all these project scopes, procurement timelines and capability requirements across five priorities are crucial.

The priorities are capacity expansion, asset renewal and operational resilience, passenger experience, smart airport technology, and sustainable infrastructure.

Opportunities abound for the industry players beyond major construction to engineering, maintenance, baggage and terminal systems, traffic management, ICT, automation and energy solutions.

Besides providing potential vendors with a clearer understanding of the requirements of working within an operational airport environment, Malaysia Airports also requires projects to be delivered without compromising safety, service continuity or the passenger journey.

Vendor assessment goes beyond cost, taking into account technical capability and compliance, quality controls, delivery track record, and the ability to carry out work without disrupting airport operations.

All this in the name of building a future-ready airport ecosystem.

Kepler Club More Than Doubles Capacity at KL International Airport

Technology-driven airport hospitality brand, Kepler Club, recently celebrated the grand opening of its expanded facility at KL International Airport (KLIA) Terminal 1, more than doubling its capacity from 64 to 148 beds.

Its ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Türkiye to Malaysia, His Excellency Nevzat Uyanık; Ambassador of Malaysia to Türkiye Adlan Mohd Shaffieq; Malaysia Airports Managing Director, Dato' Mohd Izani Ghan and its Senior General Manager, Hani Ezra Hussin.

Kepler Club's expanded facility also introduced a double-deck cabin design with private entrances for guests, the world's first of its kind within an airport terminal.

The configuration combines the intimacy of a hotel room with the space efficiency required in an airport environment.

Each DoubleKep cabin features superior sound insulation, allowing guests to connect to the in-cabin sound system via Bluetooth and enjoy their favourite Spotify playlists in complete privacy.

Available 24 hours daily and bookable by the hour, Kepler Club also offers travellers a lounge and working area, showers, smart toilets, lockers, high-speed Wi-Fi, and unlimited refreshments.

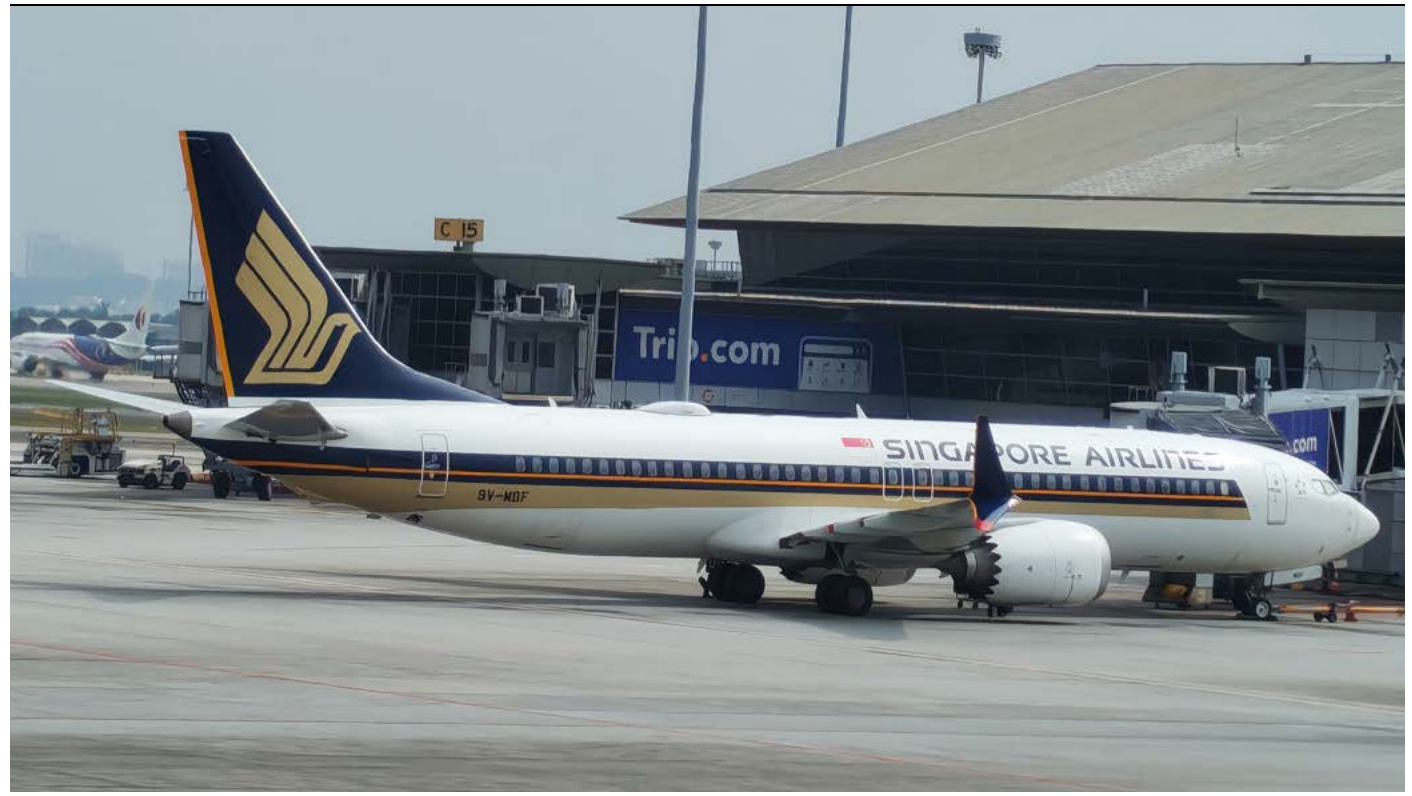
Check-in and check-out are fully automated through self-service kiosks. Guests can unlock their cabin doors directly through the Kepler app, eliminating the need to check in at the reception although a 24-hour receptionist is available.

Guests checking in via the app can personalise their stay by selecting a mood — Rainforest, Desert, Ocean, Mountain, or Fire — which sets the cabin's lighting and soundscape on arrival and gently wakes them in the same mood before checking out.

Kepler Club has also collaborated with Malaysian artists to feature their original artworks in selected cabins, with the artists' names displayed alongside the works, turning each guest's rest stop into a small gallery of Malaysian creativity

Since its launch at KLIA's airside location, Kepler Club has emerged as the highest-rated property on Booking.com among the 182 hotels around KLIA, scoring 9.2 out of 10 while its landside location followed closely behind with a 9.1 score.

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



Singapore Airlines Group's Passenger Traffic Grows 2.6% in July 2026

Passenger traffic at Singapore Airlines (SQ) Group increased 2.6% year-on -year in July 2026 amid growing capacity, with its national carrier and its low- cost carrier subsidiary, Scoot, carrying a combined 3.7 million passengers, up 4% more than the period a year ago.

Driven mainly by network expansion to East Asia, Europe and the Southwest Pacific, the growth in SQ Group's passenger capacity resulted in a load factor (LF) of 86%, with the monthly LF for SQ and Scoot at 84.8% and 90.2% respectively.

These figures come after the Group's first-quarter results recorded revenue of SDG5.7 billion with 10.9 million passengers carried.

However, higher fuel costs linked to the prolonged conflict in the Middle East, together with a larger share of losses in its 25.1% stake in Air India (AI), have resulted in a Group net loss of SDG76 million, its largest quarterly loss since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the challenging operating environment, passenger demand is holding up well.

Earlier this year, SQ and Air China (CA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a commercial joint venture partnership to deepen their collaboration.

Additionally, customers are offered more travel options and flexibility, greater value and additional benefits.

The agreement is expected to offer customers more travel options and flexibility, greater value and additional benefits.

It also covers the potential expansion of their codeshare partnership to additional destinations between Singapore and mainland China, within China and beyond the two countries.

Building on their long-standing relationship as Star Alliance members, the two carriers also intend to deepen the cooperation between CA's PhoenixMiles and SQ's KrisFlyer frequent flyer programmes.

Goh Choon Phong, SQ Chief Executive Officer said, "Our partnership will also support the growth of tourism, business, and cultural exchanges, strengthening economic and people-to-people ties while fostering deeper connections and shared opportunities between Singapore (SIN) and China."

Both airlines began their codesharing on selected flights in 2016. Today, they have codeshare on services between SIN and Beijing (PEK), Chengdu (TFU), Chongqing (CKG), and Shanghai (PVG).

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

Royal Brunei Airlines Expands Connectivity Through Strategic Partnerships

Brunei's flag carrier, Royal Brunei Airlines (BI), has expanded its long-standing codeshare partnership with Turkish Airlines (TK), introducing a new codeshare route between Bandar Seri Begawan (BWN) and Istanbul (IST) via Kuala Lumpur (KUL), effective 7 August 2026.

The enhanced partnership builds on the airlines' existing codeshare arrangement via Dubai (DXB), providing passengers with an additional gateway to Türkiye and beyond.

Under the expanded agreement, BI will operate the BWN to KUL sector, while TK will operate KUL to IST, strengthening Brunei's connectivity to Türkiye, Europe, the Middle East and destinations across TK's extensive global network.

The partnership also creates greater opportunities for international visitors to discover Brunei ahead of Visit Brunei 2027.

Earlier at ITB China 2026, BI further strengthened its regional connectivity efforts by formalising a strategic partnership with the Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU was signed by Dr Sharzede Datu Salleh Askor, Chief Executive Officer of STB, and Colonel Norsuriati Sharbini, Interim Chief Executive Officer of BI.

Dylan Redas Noel, STB Marketing Director of North Asia and New Markets, and Alirahim Abdul Rani, BI Manager of Integrated Marketing, witnessed the signing.

Also present at the signing were Dato Dennis Ngau, Chairman of STB, and Song Kai, President of Beijing Longway International Travel, BI's General Sales Agent in China.

Dr Sharzede said, "Strategic collaborations such as this are important in strengthening accessibility, enhancing destination visibility, and creating greater opportunities to encourage travel into Sarawak and the wider Borneo region.

"As the gateway to Borneo, connectivity remains an important component in supporting our ongoing tourism growth and international outreach efforts."

Located on the northern coast of Borneo, Brunei is the largest source of international visitors to Sarawak, accounting for around 1.7 million arrivals in 2025.

Colonel Norsuriati said China remains a key market for BI and the wider Borneo region, with strong opportunities to further position Brunei and Sarawak as compelling destinations for travellers seeking authentic cultural, nature and wellness experiences.

"Through our established network and ongoing partnerships, we remain committed to enhancing regional access and welcoming more visitors to discover the richness and diversity of Borneo."

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

Riyadh Air's New Direct Service to Kuala Lumpur, A Gateway to Southeast Asia

The recent launch of Saudi Arabia national carrier, Riyadh Air's (RX) inaugural thrice weekly service between Riyadh (RUH) and Kuala Lumpur (KUL) marks its expansion into one of Southeast Asia's (SEA) most dynamic markets.

Dato' Mohd Izani Ghani, Managing Director of Malaysia Airports, described RX's decision to make KUL its first destination in SEA as significant for Malaysia.

"As the ninth Middle Eastern airline to serve KL International Airport (KUL), its entry further strengthens our connectivity with a region that is an increasingly important market for tourism, trade, and investment," he remarked.

Tony Douglas, RX Chief Executive Officer said, "This new route builds a vital bridge between Saudi Arabia and the broader Association of Southeast Asian Nations region.

"By facilitating seamless travel for business, tourism and education, we are actively supporting Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 while delivering an elevated, digitally led travel experience for our guests."

Besides advancing position RUH as a leading global aviation hub, the route also supports the continued growth of religious travel by providing Malaysian Umrah and Hajj pilgrims with enhanced access to Saudi Arabia.

Deploying RX's new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, the inaugural arrival to KUL on 31 July 2026 was celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Operating RX's Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, the inaugural flight to KUL on 31 July 2026 was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The event was attended by His Excellency (HE) Osamah Dakhel Al-Ahmadi, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Malaysia; HE Dato' Syed Mohamad Bakri Syed Abdul Rahman, Ambassador of Malaysia to Saudi Arabia; Dato' Mohd Izani Ghani, Managing Director of Malaysia Airports; Dato' Seri Jana Muniayan Secretary General of the Ministry of Transport and Chu Chuan Hwa, Deputy Secretary General (Tourism) of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, alongside other senior airport and government officials.

Tokens of appreciation were also exchanged between Vincent Coste, RX Chief Commercial Officer and Malaysia Airports, as well as other dignitaries.

Guests on RX's inaugural service to KUL were invited to become founding members of its loyalty programme, Sfeer. Under its Best Offer Guaranteed, members are offered priority access to bookings on new routes, along with other benefits such as a 'no points expiry' policy and complimentary Wi-Fi onboard for seamless connectivity.

Derived from the Arabic word for 'ambassador' and the English word 'sphere', Sfeer embodies the generous spirit of Saudi Arabia while fostering a global community.

RX's B787-9 aircraft offers four classes of seats - Business Elite, Business, Premium Economy and Economy - and features one of the world's most advanced in-flight entertainment systems.

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

Philippine Airlines' Resilient Measures Amid Rising Fuel Costs

Philippine Airlines (PR) has advanced key strategic initiatives to strengthen its global competitiveness and enhance customer experience, moving quickly to mitigate the impact of higher fuel prices arising from the conflict in the Middle East (ME).

Apart from targeted fare and capacity adjustments across its network, the airline also implemented schedule adjustments on selected domestic, ME and regional routes while maintaining its stable long-haul international network.

While the Philippine flag carrier's total revenue for the first half of 2026 rose 5.9% to USD1.746 billion, a USD219.5 million increase in fuel expenses led the airline to incur a net loss of USD25.1 million.

Nevertheless, PR's cash balance remained stable at USD456.3 million as of 30 June 2026, with positive free cash flow at USD135 million and capital expenditures totalling USD153 million, underlying its resilience.

> "We moved quickly on fare and network adjustments, protected our liquidity, and continued investing in the fleet and partnerships that will strengthen our long-term competitiveness.
>
> International demand remains strong, our cost discipline is holding, and we enter the second half with the flexibility to manage through this disruption while staying focused on our strategic plan."

RICHARD NUTTALL
President at Philippine Airlines

PR recently welcomed the third of its nine Airbus A350-1000 aircraft ordered in 2023, reinforcing its ongoing fleet modernisation and long-haul growth strategy.

Following its debut on the Manila (MNL) to San Francisco (SFO) route on 5 August 2026 with thrice weekly services, the A350-1000 has transitioned to daily flights in September, bringing PR's newest premium long-haul travel experience to more customers

As the first and only airline in Southeast Asia to operate the A350-1000, its flagship aircraft features the latest Business, Premium Economy and Economy Class cabins, offering significantly improved fuel efficiency, lower carbon emissions and larger cargo capacity than previous generation aircraft.

The airline announced orders at the recent the Farnborough International Airshow 2026 of up to 20 Boeing 787-10s and 14 Airbus A350-1000s alongside their respective GE Aerospace GEnx-1B and Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-97 engines to be delivered between 2031 to 2036.

"These widebody aircraft and engine investments will enable PR to expand its reach, compete more effectively in key international markets, and serve better the evolving needs of travellers," said Lucio C. Tan III, President and CEO of PAL Holdings, Inc, which owns and operates the airline.

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

Emirates Grabs Five Accolades in The Middle East and Africa 2026 Flyers Choice Awards

Dubai-based Emirates (EK) has been voted by travellers as the preferred airline in the Middle East (ME) and Africa in the 2026 Flyers' Choice Awards organised by AirlineRatings.com.

The United Arab Emirates carrier also performed strongly in several individual categories, taking the top position in Preferred Premium Economy.

EK finished second in three other categories: Preferred Business Class, Preferred Economy and for cabin crew service, demonstrating broad passenger recognition across multiple areas of the airline's onboard experience.

Meanwhile, the airline and South African Airways (SA) recently expanded their codeshare partnership, providing access to nine cities and establishing the start of a reciprocal codeshare agreement between both carriers.

The two have been partners for almost 30 years, making it one of the longest partnerships in EK's portfolio.

Amid the ongoing conflict in the ME, the airline has offered customers greater flexibility and wider choices, enabling them to tailor their travel plans for more peace of mind booking through to arrival at their destination.

Starting 10 August 2026, EK customers travelling to Dubai (DXB) can have make unlimited free changes to their travel dates across all Economy, First and Business Class fares.

Additionally, customers travelling anywhere on the airline's network are entitled to one free date change on tickets booked from 2 April 2026, including journeys connecting through DXB. They can also hold a fare for 24 hours at no charge while finalising their plans.

Another benefit for customers is reduced refund fees on flights to DXB on fares in the Economy and Business Class.

The airline has also introduced an industry first comprehensive travel insurance product covering a range of scenarios, including enhanced conflict cover with reimbursement of medical expenses up to USD25,000 and a free trip extension of up to 30 days.

This insurance cover is not restricted by government travel advice. Customers are covered for trip cancellation, baggage delay and losses in addition to unlimited worldwide medical expenses and emergency evacuation.

Available at an accessible premium and across 27 countries, the cover can be purchased at the time of booking on the airline's website or added to an existing booking through its online tool, Manage Booking.

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

Garuda Indonesia Tests High-Speed Inflight Connectivity at 30,000 Feet

Commemorating Indonesia's 81st Independence Day on 17 August 2026, Garuda Indonesia (GA) has accelerated its service transformation through a pilot project for high-speed in-flight connectivity on flight GA-960 from Jakarta (CGK) to Medina (MED), which is increasingly relevant to the needs of today's digital society.

A total of 81 passengers were granted special access to enjoy the high-speed internet access for various digital activities, including making video calls at an altitude of over 30,000 feet.

The trial was conducted as part of the Sinyal Merdeka campaign, reflecting the spirit of independence through connectivity and innovation.

GA President and Chief Executive Officer, Glenny Kairupan, viewed this development of high-speed in-flight connectivity as part of the airline's efforts to take its transformation to the next phase.

Through this pilot project, Indonesia's national flag carrier will enhance its technological performance, user experience, operational readiness, safety and compliance with aviation regulations.

Further service development will be carried out in phases, taking into account the evaluation results, fleet readiness and supporting technology, with implementation projected to begin in 2027.

Meanwhile, GA's consistent operational performance on a global scale has positioned it as the world's most punctual airline for five consecutive months from March to July 2026.

The airline recorded an arrival On-Time Performance (OTP) of 95.4% across 6,895 flights in July 2026, according to the OAG's OTP Rankings,

GA Vice President Director, Thomas Oentoro, identified consistent flight punctuality as one of the key indicators in the airline's performance transformation journey, notably in strengthening its operations fundamentals and service quality.

"Punctuality is a crucial element in building trust with our customers," he added.

Based on OAG's methodology, flight punctuality is measured by comparing an aircraft's actual arrival time at the gate to its scheduled arrival time, with flights arriving within 15 minutes of the scheduled arrival time categorised as on time.

In a move to strengthen GA's international flight connectivity, particularly to the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Australia, GA recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Saudia, Saudi Arabia's national flag carrier.

The collaboration between the two carriers includes strengthening the codeshare schemes and interline agreements besides exploring potential joint-business opportunities.

Thomas said the partnership also aligned with the need to create a better integrated pilgrimage travel service ecosystem as the mobility among Indonesians to the Holy Land increases alongside their demand for more efficient, comfortable and connected flight services.

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

TransNusa's Historic Direct Flight from Bandar Lampung, Sumatra to Kuala Lumpur

Strengthening regional connectivity, TransNusa (8B) has launched a new daily international service connecting Bandar Lampung (TKG) in Sumatra directly to Kuala Lumpur (KUL), providing passengers with a convenient point-to-point travel option without the need to transit through other hubs.

The new route establishes a direct gateway between TKG and KUL, reducing travel times and supporting greater opportunities for trade, tourism and business between the two destinations.

8B Group Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Bernard Francis said, "As part of our strategic growth, we aim to excel in the business of absolute route creation."

The new service marks the first direct connection between TKG and KUL operated by TransNusa using the COMAC C909 aircraft with 95 Economy Class seats.

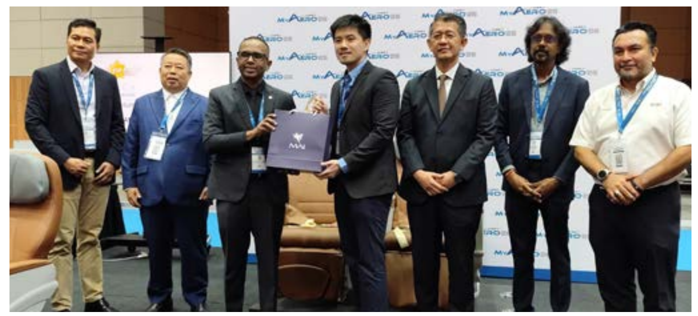
Rahmat Mirzani Djausal, Governor of Lampung Province, was among the passengers on the inaugural flight on 24 August 2026. The flight was welcomed by Samuel Lee Thai Hung, Deputy Director General (Promotions II), Tourism Malaysia and other airport representatives.

Bandar Lampung, a vibrant capital of the Lampung Province on the southern tip of Sumatra, is rapidly emerging as a premier economic and tourism destination.

Its cultural landmarks include the legendary Krakatoa volcanic complex and Way Kambas National Park, a sanctuary for endangered Sumatran elephants.

Additionally, Bandar Lampung is a major agricultural and trade hub known for its premium coffee, pepper and robust maritime industries.

For more information, visit **www.transnusa.co.id**



Myanmar Airways International Paves the Way for More Collaborations

Privately-owned Myanmar Airways International (8M) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Pecca Aviation Services Sdn Bhd to collaborate on cabin interior and seat assembly services at the recent MyAero Summit 2026.

Present at the MoU signing ceremony were Pecca Aviation Services Chief Operating Officer K Karunakaran and Invest Selangor Chief Executive Officer Dato' Hasan Azhari Idris.

As part of 8M's cabin interior transformation programme, the MoU covers cabin design enhancements, cabin repair and refurbishment, as well as soft furnishing solutions.

Earlier this year, the airline announced a Special Prorate Agreement

with Saudia (SV) to expand travel options between Myanmar and Saudi Arabia.

The agreement will enable guests to book travel on a single itinerary between Jeddah (JED) or Madinah (MED) and Yangon (RGN), with connections via key regional hubs, including Bangkok (BKK), Singapore (SIN), Kuala Lumpur (KUL) and Dubai (DXB).

Guests will benefit from coordinated itineraries across both airlines' networks, enabling a more streamlined booking process.

Additionally, the partnership expands SV's reach into Myanmar and strengthens its connectivity with Southeast Asia, supporting growing travel demand between the two markets.

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

AirBorneo, The Pride of Sarawak Elevates Regional Air Travel

Sarawak-owned AirBorneo (MY) has gone beyond providing essential rural air services (RAS) and has ventured into the commercial jet market with the recent launch of its Kuching (KCH) services to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) and Singapore (SIN). The airline has also surprised passengers with a range of unique onboard offerings.

At the helm of the rebranded MY is Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Megat Ardian Wira Mohd Aminuddin, who brings more than two decades of experience in the aviation industry to the role.

Megat's wealth of experience and industry knowledge, accumulated throughout his career, from his first aviation role with AirAsia Malaysia (AK) in 2004 as an Executive of Airport and Public Policy to his most recent position as Chief Aviation and Strategy Officer at Malaysia Airports, has equipped him well to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Since assuming his current role on 1 January 2026, the 54-year-old CEO acknowledged he had come full circle to know exactly what an airport requires from an airline and vice versa having spent almost eight years with Malaysia Airports from 2018 to 2025.

He recalled picking up his CEO skills as far back as 2007 during his second tenure with Malaysia Airlines (MH) when he was the special officer to the then Managing Director/CEO and worked on strategies related to the national carrier's transformation, among other things.

From 2012 to 2015, Megat was with Saudi Arabia's flynas, where he rose to be its Chief Commercial Officer, overseeing low-cost carrier's network, revenue management, marketing and moving its sales to more direct distribution channels.

Megat was also a trainer for airlines such as Jeju Air and Jetstar during his short stint with the International Air Transport Association (IATA). He believes these experiences have equipped him for his new role, whose immediate task at MY was "to launch an airline within an airline".

"Our priority remains to deliver safe, reliable and high-quality service while continuously enhancing the travel experience for our passengers."

MEGAT ARDIAN MOHD AMINUDDIN
Chief Executive Officer at AirBorneo

The former MASwings (MH) was subsequently rebranded as MY and had its operations stabilised with the right talents within six months, a process that would typically have taken one to two years to accomplish, according to Megat.

MY's manpower needs are now adequately resourced with close to 460 staff for the airline to operate Ivts network safely, reliably and efficiently.

About 300 of them are with the rural air services (RAS) based in Kota Kinabalu (BKI) and Miri (MYY) while the rest of the staff are based in Kuching (KCH), where MY's jet operations are and also where the airline intends to grow its local talents.

The RAS, an important lifeline for the residents of the remote corners of Borneo, continues to be operated by the turboprop fleet inherited from MH, comprising eight ATR 72-500s and six DHC-6-400 Twin Otter aircraft.

The long-term plan is to have eight new ATR -600 series aircraft, with two arriving in 2027, four in 2028 and the last two in 2029 to replace the ATR 72-500s, Megat disclosed.

Identifying reliability and serviceability as the main challenges faced by its RAS, Megat sees operational resiliency as critical to MY's success.

"This means working, especially with maintenance, retail and overhaul (MRO) service providers to ensure that parts arrive on time and resources are placed at the right time for aircraft to be serviceable so that they can fly more."

For MY, its role extends beyond fulfilling its social responsibility to remote communities in East Malaysia and Labuan. The airline also aims to establish a wider catchment area and connect it to Kuching (KCH) as a gateway.

Following its recent maiden connection to KUL ,the airline is now looking to expand its reach to the other destinations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as could be seen from the successful launch of its daily flights from KCH to SIN on 22 July 2026.

On the challenges facing its jet operations, Megat opined that the airline's growth needs to be managed in a controlled manner, despite vthe excitement surrounding its growth potential and opportunities.

MY currently deploys two wet leased Boeing 737-800s for its jet operations for a determined period from July 2026 to December 2027 to support its new routes from KCH to KUL and SIN. Its agreement with Batik Air Malaysia covers the aircraft, maintenance and insurance.

Megat said the next phase of its jet services' growth would be to procure the aircraft through dry lease from lessors and have its own cabin crew.

"We are also looking at network recalibration and rationalisation, prioritising flights that are high in demand and merging those with low load factors."

Highlighting MY's product distinctiveness, Megat enthused about the way its crew interact with customers and how the elements of taste and sound or audio onboard the airline are different. "We want to be customer obsessed."

Although the airline is still in the early stages of its sustainability journey, it has taken small steps towards this journey. "Our signature calamansi drink is sourced from local providers while the cartons we use are reheatable and recyclable," he said.

Meanwhile, discussions are at an initial stage with service providers on the pricing and volume for the use of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), as the airline explores ways to advance its sustainability efforts.

MY has been participating in international trade events and local fairs to raise awareness of its growing presence as a local airline and is eager to engage in more business dealings besides working closely with travel agents, destination management companies to market its destinations. These include the recent three-day PATA Travel Mart (PTM) 2026, held for the first time in Kuching from 18 to 20 August 2026.

Asked about the legacy that Megat plans to leave behind, he modestly replied, "A legacy is only worthwhile if you leave it for the future."

He sees himself as just passing through and is here to expand MY as much as he could with his team to fuel its future. His parting words, "The energy comes from the team. Every day is not a challenge when you have the right team."

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