

Connecting *the world*

> AirAsia adds two direct international flights to Sarawak route



Third from left: Sarawak Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry principal assistant secretary of planning and development Desmond Douglas Jerukan, Lee, Sarawak Tourism, Arts and Culture Assistant Minister Datuk Lee Kim Shin, Abdul Wahab, Bintulu MP Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, and AirAsia Berhad director of government relations Zamani Mohd Rafique at the Bintulu Airport.

2017 went out with a bang for AirAsia with the introduction of two additional flights into Sarawak – from Shenzhen to Kuching and Singapore to Bintulu. The inaugural direct Shenzhen-Kuching flight, which arrived at the Kuching International Airport just before 8am on Dec 27, was greeted with bursts of water from a “water cannon” at the parking bay area. A ceremonious Sarawakian welcome ensued for the passengers. Passengers on the maiden Singapore-Bintulu flight, which touched down at 11am the same day, were greeted with no less warmth and celebration. Passengers on both flights were led by an entourage top government officials and AirAsia

Berhad head honchos. **BETTER TIES** While both flights will certainly help boost international connectivity and improve the tourism industry in East Malaysia, AirAsia Berhad’s head of commercial Spencer Lee said the direct flights reiterate the airline’s commitment towards expanding its Sarawak market. “So far this year, we have flown 4.8 million guests in and out of Sarawak, which is 12.1% more than in 2016, with Chinese and Singaporeans in the top five nationalities. “We hope the new routes will foster the number of visitors into Sarawak in 2018,” Lee said, adding that this can only happen with the

continuous support from the Sarawak state government and tourism authorities. Meanwhile, in expressing his gratitude to AirAsia for the new routes, Sarawak Tourism Board chairman Datuk Abdul Wahab Aziz said, “they augur well for the development of the tourism industry in Sarawak, and we hope and look forward to more international connectivity in the years to come”. **IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY** AirAsia flies to 12 destinations from Kuching, including Shenzhen, Singapore, Pontianak, Miri, Sibul, Kota Kinabalu, Johor Baru, Kota Baru, Penang, Langkawi and Kuala Lumpur. From Bintulu, the



airline flies to three destinations, namely, Singapore, Kuching and Kuala Lumpur. For more information, activities and promotions of the world’s best low-cost airline, which was

recognised as the leading airline operator by the Sarawak state government in 2017 (at the Sarawak Hornbill Tourism Award 2015/2016), visit AirAsia on Twitter or Facebook.

Bake the blues away

IF you find that your home oven has lost its spark, and is not reaching the high temperatures it once did – essential for that perfect pie crust or crispy roast chicken – fret not, as this simply means it’s time to treat yourself to the latest kitchen beauties from Khind. Heat things up again with the Khind Electric Ovens, available in 30-litre (OT3005), and 52-litre (OT5205) variants. The two newest models – winner of Natural Health magazine’s Reader’s Choice award – sport heat sources emanating from the top and bottom.



The electric ovens can reach temperatures up to 230°C, and a pair of separate knobs allow you to control both temperatures and heat

distribution to the top, middle or bottom of the oven. This gives you the flexibility to tweak your cooking according to your needs. For example, allowing you to achieve a golden pie crust without overcooking the already perfect filling. Whether it is baking, broiling or roasting, the updated functions are not only user-friendly, but also expand the list of recipes you can try out and serve at the next family gathering. From sugary desserts to savoury dishes, the rotisserie and



convection specifications can act as a stand-alone feature, or be used together for an even circulation of

hot air during the cooking process. The ovens also produce a bell signal after the maximum two-hour long timer goes off, to let you know the dish is done. Both variants are available for purchase at major retail outlets or Khind’s online website, with a two-year warranty. Both the OT3005 and OT5205 models come inclusive of two baking trays, a bake rack, two tray handles, a rotisserie spit, and a rotisserie spit handle, allowing you to test recipes right away. For more information, visit Khind Malaysia’s website.

Insights on students’ aspirations

ONLY two decades ago, being accepted into a university would have earned parents bragging rights. “It is now a natural expectation, as higher education becomes more prevalent and accessible,” said PHD Malaysia head Eileen Ooi. PHD Malaysia, in its on-going efforts to develop relevant talents equipped with the skills and mental ability to tackle global technological advancements, conducted a study on students’ aspirations. The survey involved 370 local Form Five and undergraduate

students across demographic spheres. The outcome: valuable insights on the students’ career aspirations and their hopes for their future across different demographics. Ooi called for the broader business community to create internships and openings for these emerging skill sets and new disciplines. “They ultimately allow us to future-proof our organisations in the process,” she said. Her petition to those in the

education sector: “That the curriculum be modular to promote self-learning and to infuse the realities of the rising technological advancements, now and in the near future.” “As we endeavour to build a diversified workforce that can ultimately shape the future of our industry, we need to look beyond degrees, to see what are the challenger skills required to meet our clients’ needs tomorrow,” she said.



INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS

- ▶ Over a third viewed job placement rates and industry tie-ups as top indicators of the quality of an educational institution. These two indicators ranked highest (54%) among the Chinese students, above international recognition, campus facility and innovation.
- ▶ Majority looked at a postgraduate degree as an opportunity to enhance earning potential. Malay students were more inclined to obtain a higher degree upon graduation over working experience, whereas Chinese students were split over their opinion on this. However, 80% of the students agreed that a degree is necessary.
- ▶ Current-generation students were found to be highly aware of the other skills needed in addition to attaining a degree. Among the respondents, communication (36%), creative thinking (31%), and critical and analytical thinking (21%) were fared important soft skills required to stay competitive in today’s job market.