

Malaysia's flight sector set to soar

30 Boeing aircraft ordered as part of expansion plan

By **SHERIDAN MAHVERA**
mahavera@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia's aviation industry is set to recover and establish a solid foundation for continued growth and expansion, in line with the total recovery in the region's airline sector, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said that Asia Pacific airlines led by a large margin in terms of annual growth, achieving a 16.9% year-over-year increase in revenue passenger kilometres (RPK).

"This year marked a total regional recovery in the airline industry, as all regions have outperformed their pre-pandemic levels.

"With Malaysia strategically located at the heart of Asean, we are a gateway to Asia and beyond," he said at the document exchange ceremony for Malaysia Aviation Group's (MAG) narrow-

body aircraft replacement order yesterday.

MAG has placed a firm order for 30 Boeing 737 aircraft, comprising 18 Boeing 737-8 and 12 Boeing 737-10 models and powered by CFM LEAP-1B engines.

Along with the new deal, MAG has the option of purchasing an additional 30 new planes from Boeing in the coming years at a price that has already been pre-determined.

The event saw MAG group managing director Datuk Captain Izham Ismail exchanging documents of the purchase with Boeing Global president Dr Brendan Nelson and CFM International Asia-Pacific sales and marketing vice-president Nakul Gupta.

The Prime Minister said the order by MAG is an investment that reaffirms the company's commitment to continued growth



Wings of change: Anwar after launching the document exchange ceremony for MAG narrow body aircraft replacement order in Putrajaya. -AZMAN GHANI/The Star

and resilience.

He said the move was not just about modernising MAG's fleet but about strengthening the nation's economic foundation in an increasingly competitive world.

"The investment goes beyond modern aircraft, it signifies MAG's commitment to progress and the future of air travel for all Malaysians and communities it serves.

"These aircraft will improve travel, incorporate modern technology and enhance efficiency, while also creating jobs, driving tourism and strengthening industries that thrive on a robust aviation sector.

"The ripple effect will be felt across our economy, creating new opportunities for businesses and individuals alike," he said.

Meanwhile, Izham said Malaysia Airlines' new planes will

future-proof the fleet by being more fuel efficient and allow the national carrier to be more adaptable in an increasingly competitive sector.

He said the decision to purchase new Boeing 737-8 and 12 Boeing 737-10 models took into account its fuel efficiency and its passenger capacity.

"The decision was made after taking into consideration factors such as fuel efficiency, environmental sustainability, performance, technical reliability and passenger experience," Izham said in his speech.

Izham said the newer Boeing 737-10 would enable MAG to optimise capacity, which was critical for high demand routes such as Indonesia, India and China.

"This is going to future-proof our fleet and ensure we are adaptable and positioned for sustaina-

ble growth in the years to come," he said.

Speaking to reporters after the event, Izham said the new planes will not just replace Malaysia Airlines' ageing fleet but to prepare it for the growth in passenger traffic in the Asia-Pacific region.

He, however, declined to reveal the cost of the deals.

"The expected (cumulative annual growth rate) in this region is between 5% and 6%. If you put that arithmetically for Malaysia Airlines, if we don't invest, we will be left behind the curve," he said.