

We may collaborate with MAS, says AirAsia boss
The Malaysian Insider
June 3, 2015

AirAsia Bhd is looking for possible areas in which to collaborate with Malaysia Airlines (MAS) in response to a statement yesterday by new chief executive officer (CEO) Christoph Mueller to seek collaboration with the low-cost carrier and other potential partners.

AirAsia Group CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said the companies had already entered into discussions but negotiations were still in the early stages.

"In reducing the cost, it would be a great thing if the two of us can make a regional power house in maintenance, repair, overhaul (MRO)... that's great and make sense.

"We have to put our planes somewhere for maintenance and why not do it in Malaysia and do it with MAS," he told the media after AirAsia's annual general meeting today.

He said it would allow both airlines to reduce costs and, most importantly, through their volume, they could offer services to third party airlines globally and make Malaysia the bigger MRO centre which would create more jobs.

Other than the MRO, he said the company was also looking for other opportunities to collaborate with MAS, including airport ground handling and cargo.

Fernandes also urged Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) to embrace technology to help reduce costs in the aviation industry.

"Airports outside Malaysia are moving very fast in embracing technology and helping airlines to reduce cost and they are being very proactive on that," he said.

Airports in Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia, he said, were far ahead of Malaysia's airports right now.

"Other airports in the region are responding quicker. This is home based and we are the largest low-cost carrier and Malaysia should be the number one leader in low-cost travel. We need MAHB to be proactive in helping us," he said. – Bernama, June 3, 2015.

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