

New Airline Destinations, E-Commerce Platform to attract more Chinese Tourists – PM Bernama

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From Hafizah Kamarudin

BEIJING, Nov 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysia in a move to attract more Chinese tourists is introducing new airline destinations and routes between China and Malaysia, and an e-commerce platform.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Malaysia Airlines would be flying to eight new destinations in China and introduce 11 new routes beginning January 2017.

"Translating into 35 additional frequencies between Malaysia and China," he said when launching the Alitrip Malaysia Tourism Pavilion which is being developed with China's Alibaba.com, here Friday.

Present was Alibaba Group founder and executive chairman Jack Ma, who is also China's top internet tycoon.

Najib said among the new connections were Nanjing, Haikou, Wuhan and Fuzhou, were expected to be in MAS' routes in first half of next year.

Najib said he had been informed that Malaysia Airlines would be upgrading the Kuala Lumpur-Hong Kong service to a widebody Airbus A330 from January 2017, as well as introduce the Kuala Lumpur-Haikou service.

"There will be a second daily service to Shanghai's Pudong Airport as well as new connections to Nanjing, Wuhan and Fuzhou, which will follow suit in the first half of 2017," he said.

Meanwhile, he said new services to Chengdu and Chongqing would be introduced from Kuala Lumpur, subject to slot availability.

"And beyond that, Malaysia Airlines will begin to gradually add services from cities such as Penang and Kota Kinabalu to cities across China such as Shanghai and Shenzhen.

"All of these new routes will hopefully spur even more visitors from China to choose Malaysia as their preferred destination; a choice that is made even simpler with the convenience of the Malaysia Pavilion on Alitrip.com," he added.

Touching on the e-commerce platform, Najib said that he hoped that the upcoming Singles' Day Sale on Nov 11 would benefit Malaysia Pavilion on Alitrip.

"Last year, on that very same date, Alibaba broke all records with the US\$143 billion sales it made in one day.

"I am sure that with the growing presence of Alibaba in the online marketplace today, you will be enjoying another record-breaking achievement this time around. I am glad that the Malaysia Pavilion on Alitrip will be a part of the Singles' Day Sale craze this year," he said.

The Alitrip Malaysia Tourism Pavilion is an e-commerce platform to reach to the China market in promoting tourism and place the Malaysian tourism industry prominently with China's Alibaba.com

Meanwhile, Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz in his welcoming speech said, besides Malaysia Airlines, the AirAsia Group had become the biggest international foreign airline operating in China,

offering 313 flights a week between both countries.

Also there are 26 chartered flights operating between both countries," he said at the launching of the Alitrip Malaysia Tourism Pavillion, the ministry's new initiative that has incorporated the latest technology for ease of obtaining information, as well as for effective marketing and promotions.

He said Chinese travellers constituted the largest source of tourists in 2015.

He added that nearly 1.7 million tourists from China visited Malaysia in the first eight months of this year as compared to 1.4 million Chinese tourists in the same period last year, which is a 26.3 per cent growth in arrivals.

It is projected that over 200 million Chinese tourists will travel abroad by 2020, and this phenomenal growth will impact economies all over the world, particularly ASEAN and Malaysia.

"We are now gearing up to achieve two million Chinese arrivals by the end of this year, and eight million by 2020," said Mohamed Nazri.

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