

AirAsia outlines priorities for future expansion

Ghim-Lay Yeo, Kuala Lumpur (26 Jan 2010, 07:10 GMT)

Malaysia's AirAsia expects to receive another 16 aircraft this year as it seeks to grow its network.

The 16 aircraft will be mostly Airbus A320s, says AirAsia's regional head of commercial Kathleen Tan. The rest will be Airbus A330s for long-haul operator AirAsia X, she adds.

"We will be a very high-growth airline this year. Last year, we launched 35 new routes," says Tan.

The carrier is looking at launching flights to link its other hubs in the region instead of just flights from Kuala Lumpur, she adds.

"We have four hubs in Indonesia now and we have also built up Penang and Phuket. It's not just about Kuala Lumpur," says Tan.

AirAsia X previously disclosed it was interested in starting flights to Sydney, but Tan says it is unlikely to happen soon.

"There's been some protectionism going on, some airlines are lobbying against it. But we are very patient," she says, adding that the idea is still on the table.

The carrier, meanwhile, had secured rights to fly to Paris' Orly airport, but Tan says Paris is "not a priority for now".

"Our focus is India and Southeast Asia, and we will also focus on adding frequencies on existing routes," she says.

Source: Air Transport Intelligence news