

By ZUNAIRA SAEED
zunaira@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Johor-based Senai International Airport set a new record of a 13% increase in passenger growth last year compared with 2017, driven by an increase in both domestic and international passengers.

In a press release yesterday, the operator of Senai International Airport, Senai Airport Terminal Services Sdn Bhd (SATSSB) said the number of domestic passengers rose by 9% to 2.91 million last year from 2.68 million in 2017.

Similarly, the number of international passengers increased by 37% to 600,000 in 2018 compared to 440,000 in 2017.

The operator noted the rise in the number of domestic and international passengers was mainly due to the introduction of new routes including Seoul by Jin Air, Sanya and Haikou by Malindo Air as well as Alor Setar and Ipoh by AirAsia.

This was in addition to the increase of flight

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Operator targeting to handle 3.76 million passengers this year

frequencies for the existing sectors such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Kota Kinabalu, Langkawi and Bangkok.

Moreover, commercial aircraft movements was 8% higher amounting to 32,574 landings and takeoffs.

SATSSB chief executive officer Md Derick Basir said the growth was driven by the southern region's rigorous economic activities, escalating the demand for business and corporate travel, as well as the leisure sector.

"We are aggressively collaborating with the industry players including the tourism bodies and airlines to promote Johor as a destination.

"Ultimately, the aim is to encourage the demand for more air connectivity," he added.

Going forward, Md Derick expects further growth this year, targeting to handle 3.76 million passengers at Senai International Airport.

"It is going to be a busy and exciting year for us now that we have also expanded our portfolio to manage Kertih Airport in Terengganu," he pointed out.

Recently, Senai International Airport was awarded "Asia Pacific Regional Airport of the Year 2018" under the less than 10 million annual passenger category by the Centre for Aviation for its leading role in using new biometrics technology and its support of the LCC model.