

People-in-Travel

Tracking Travel's Leaders

New Malaysia minister

The old and new tourism ministers in Malaysia:

- Following the country's elections last month, Dato Sri* Mohamed Nazri bin Tan Sri* Abdul Aziz was named tourism minister. He took over from Dato Sri* Dr Ng Yen Yen, who held the job for almost five years.



Although Ng is from the same party, and which won re-election, she had run into controversy – albeit generally petty and related to her personality and lifestyle as much as anything else.

Nazri is also controversial, mainly related to past racial (reported as racist) comments concerning non-Malay Malaysians (mainly Chinese and Indian).

He has no experience of the travel business. His political experience has been at a high level, with particular emphasis on the judicial and legal side.

One important move will be budgets of the destination's DMO. The year 2014 has been declared Visit Malaysia Year, but no additional budget has been allocated. His influence in the party and in the government lends support to the belief that he will obtain funds for some promotional and administrative activity related to the VMY.

**Dato Sri and Tan Sri are titles, but 'bin' means 'son of' so that is Nazri's father's title, not his.*

- Soundbites from now-departed minister of tourism, **Malaysia**, Ng Yen Yen (may be paraphrased):

-We target 36mn arrivals and RM168bn [US\$55bn] spend by 2020.

-We target high net-worth tourists and we have rolled out various luxury experiences.

-The visitor business is expected to remain third-largest income contributor to the economy.

-The ministry of tourism is leading efforts to increase shopping spend in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre precinct by creating better pedestrian



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connectivity, increasing commercial mix, and improving streetscaping.

CEO for Air Asia India

Air Asia India's first CEO is Mittu Chandilya, due to start work this month. Launch date for AAI has still not been announced.

Previously, Chandilya was working in Singapore with Egon Zehnder, the personnel search company. One of his responsibilities was the aviation business. We presume he too would have selected himself for AAI's CEO job.



AAI and EZ provide no information on

any of Chandilya's earlier choices for other aviation jobs. Either they were insignificant or bad – as we cannot believe that all would be confidential.

Ratan Tata, still a chairman at Tata Sons (one of the AAI partners), is quoted saying that Chandilya will "bring to bear his entrepreneurial skills" in growing AAI. As Chandilya would not have needed entrepreneurial skills in his previous jobs (which includes being a part-time model), we presume this announcement was written for Tata, and not read by him.

Overall CEO of AA, Tony Fernandes, upgrades the unsubstantiated praise, noting Chandilya's "great entrepreneurial skills".

Chandilya seems to have zero experience for the job. That said, no-frills-airlines have managerial requirements different from full-service-airlines. These are mainly tight adherence to keeping operating costs low, and personality skills for personnel relations and publicity/promotional activity.

For AAI, the operational disciplines will presumably come from AA's cor-

porate offices in Malaysia. That leaves the personality skills, where Chandilya scores. Forget the entrepreneurial spirit, real or imagined; it is not needed for this job.

Chandilya, an ethnic Indian Malaysian (but born in Chennai, where AAI is to be based), has lived on three continents (Africa, Asia, North America), and has educational qualifications from places of learning in China, Singapore, US. Aged 32, he is married, and has two children.

Briefs

- **Michael Wale** is due to take over as president of Starwood's EAME division this month from **Roeland Vos**, who has resigned.

Wale, 55, has been with Starwood and its predecessors since 1978, mostly in his home country, the UK. His most recent job was SVP & operations director for Western Europe.

We wonder if he will try to move Starwood's regional operation from Belgium to the UK.

Vos has been with the company almost as long, 30 years, including 12 years as EAME head. Vos, like Starwood's US-based CEO Frits van Paasschen, is Dutch (although FVP has spent most of his life and all of his education in the US). Vos will now have what is called a 'consulting role', but we suspect he will be rarely consulted.

- As we predicted in our issue in April, **Gabriele Del Torchio** has been appointed CEO of Alitalia. He was CEO of Ducati, maker of motorcycles.

- At a time when AirFrance-KLM is facing serious falls in traffic, two of its (long-time) leaders – brought back to help 'save' the company in 2011, are leaving again.

Jean-Cyril Spinetta, group chairman & CEO, and **Leo van Wijk**, vice chairman & deputy CEO, are due to leave next month. JCS is French, LVW Dutch.

Taking over will be **Alexandre de Juniac** for AF and **Peter Hartman** for KLM.

The problem is that AF is losing traffic, and probably a lot of money. And KLM is holding steady. These moves seem to do nothing to solve that problem – or even recognise it.

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For more information, contact Raymonde Perpignani at Travel Business Analyst, TBAoffice@gmail.com

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