

Hi NAME,

I wanted to flag an announcement out of Bahrain that may be of interest from a global aviation and infrastructure perspective.

The Kingdom of Bahrain and AirAsia X unveiled the airline's new strategic Gulf hub at Bahrain International Airport. The launch enables AirAsia X to return to the UK market via the Gulf, beginning with service to London Gatwick, while positioning Bahrain as a bridge between Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Beyond the route announcement, the move reflects a broader trend emerging across global aviation in the post-COVID recovery: airports outside traditional mega-hubs are increasingly being developed as primary long-haul growth engines, supported by targeted capacity investment, cargo infrastructure, and cross-regional connectivity. Bahrain's strategy centers on value tourism, business travel, and logistics, with wider economic impact across the region.

Cargo is expected to play an important multiplier role as e-commerce growth and supply chain redesign make smaller, well-connected hubs more attractive. Bahrain's aviation ecosystem — including 24/7 customs clearance, investment in cargo infrastructure, and proximity to major Gulf and Saudi markets — underpins this approach.

We thought this could be useful context as U.S. audiences track how airlines and governments are re-shaping long-haul networks and hub strategies following the pandemic.

Please find the full release below and let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss with a representative from AirAsia or Bahrain.

Best,  
NAME

**AirAsia X goes global with launch of Kuala Lumpur-Bahrain-London route, establishing Bahrain as its first strategic hub to Europe**

February 11, 2026 -- AirAsia X (AAX) Berhad celebrated a monumental milestone in the airline's global expansion strategy with the announcement of two long-awaited international routes, connecting Kuala Lumpur to Bahrain and onwards to London Gatwick (KUL-BAH-LGW), at press conference in Bahrain today.

The Bahrain-London sector would be AAX's second Fifth-Freedom route, marking the expansion of the airline beyond its homeground Asia, to serve the global budget travel sector. Commencing on 26 June 2026, these strategic routes establish Bahrain as AAX's first global hub, strengthening its role as a key gateway between Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Leveraging Bahrain's strategic location and aviation structure, the KUL-BAH-LGW service anchors a multi-sector route anchored on transit and partnership opportunities.

Tony Fernandes, CEO of Capital A and Advisor to AAX said: "This is a defining step in the next phase of AAX's growth. Bahrain as our strategic aviation hub allows us to connect Asia with the Middle East and Europe more effectively while creating a scalable platform for future growth. Beyond the

airline, this partnership strengthens the broader aviation ecosystem, enabling Capital A businesses such as cargo and MRO services to scale alongside AAX. Today, Teleport marks an important milestone as its first flight arrives in Bahrain, following its recent USD50 million capital raise - a move that will help position the Kingdom as a key aviation and logistics hub in the region. Looking ahead, we will deepen partnerships with airports, tourism authorities and industry stakeholders to unlock new demand corridors. We are building a growth engine that balances connectivity, commercial performance and operational resilience, while staying true to our value proposition of affordable long-haul travel.”

H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance and National Economy of the Kingdom of Bahrain said, “This agreement with AirAsia X is a strategic decision that reflects Bahrain’s strength as an economic partner, and its role as a centre for regional and global connectivity. The investment will reinforce Bahrain’s position as a key gateway linking Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, while delivering tangible economic benefits. It will create direct employment across aviation operations and generate wider opportunities across tourism, logistics, hospitality, and related services. Just as importantly, it will support skills development and long-term career pathways for Bahrainis in a global industry that continues to evolve and grow. We are proud to welcome AirAsia X as a member of TeamBahrain.”

With the launch of this route, AirAsia X continues to build on its network of more than 150 destinations worldwide and redefine both its short-haul and long-haul travel by combining low-cost efficiency, strategic partnerships and hub-based connectivity - cementing its ambition to be a truly global airline. AirAsia X has established Kuala Lumpur as its major gateway, connecting travelers to 95 destinations across 23 Asian countries with nearly 2,000 weekly flights, including routes to Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Australia and Japan. Operating with AAX’s A330 fleet, the new KUL-BAH-LGW service further broadens access for travellers from Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam and other key markets, creating more affordable and convenient pathways to Bahrain and London.

In celebration of this milestone, AAX is offering introductory first-come first-served promotional fares from RM99\* and RM199\* all-in-one way respectively from Kuala Lumpur to Bahrain and London with subsequent fares starting from RM299\* and RM399\* on both sectors. Guests can also travel on the airline’s award-winning Premium Flatbed from RM2,999\* all-in one way on both sectors for an elevated in-flight experience. Flights are available for booking starting today until 22 February 2026 for the travel period between 26 June and 30 November 2026, on airasia.com and the AirAsia MOVE app.

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