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Wednesday 31st December 2014

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NYE Travel Daily

THIS New Year's Eve 2014 edition of **TD** has four pages of news and photos.

We'd like to wish all of our readers a very Happy New Year and all the best for 2015.

There will be no **TD** tomorrow or Fri, with the next issue of **Travel Daily** to be published on Mon 05 Jan 2015.

CX OOL CNY charters

CATHAY Pacific will operate a number of direct charter flights from Hong Kong to the Gold Coast during the upcoming Chinese New Year period.

Two-class A330-300 aircraft will be utilised for the services which will take place HKG-OOL on 16, 19, 20, 26 and 27 Feb with the return flights the following day.

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ANA plots Sydney return

JAPAN'S All Nippon Airways is apparently planning to resume services between Tokyo and Sydney, with reports by Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* claiming the flights would operate from Haneda Airport.

The Star Alliance carrier last operated Australian flights in 1999, and the prospective move follows the recent Qantas announcement of its new Sydney-Haneda route (**TD** 09 Dec).

Qantas will launch daily Haneda flights on 31 Jul 15, with ceo Alan Joyce citing strong growth in patronage on the Japan route which will also see the debut of four times weekly Brisbane-Narita services in Aug alongside flights to Japan from a further yet-to-be-announced Australian port on three alternate days.

Speculation centres on ANA using a 787 aircraft on the route. The Japanese carrier was

the launch customer for the *Dreamliner*, and the flights could be expected to receive passenger feeds from Virgin Australia and ANA's fellow Star Alliance member Air New Zealand.

The Tokyo report also claims ANA is planning to commence flights to Kuala Lumpur in the coming months.

Etihad AR codeshare

ETIHAD Airways has today announced yet another codeshare partnership, this time with South American carrier Aerolineas Argentinas.

Effective from 01 Feb 15, the EY code will be placed on Aerolineas Argentinas domestic and regional flights over AR's Buenos Aires hub - despite Etihad not offering flights there itself at this stage.

At present, Etihad's only port in South America is Brazil's Sao Paulo.

"Guests will be able to travel on Etihad Airways marketed flights to Buenos Aires and from there to 20 popular destinations in South America," the carrier said.

Etihad ceo James Hogan said the AR partnership is a significant development for both airlines.

"Codeshares are a fundamental pillar of Etihad Airways' strategy... we are now able to enhance our business and leisure travel offering between the UAE, Argentina and onwards to the strategically important South American market," he said.

CTD rights issue

CORPORATE Travel Management today confirmed the issue of just over 5m \$8.80 shares as part of a 2 for 35 entitlement offer to be used to fund the acquisition of Europe's Chambers Travel and Diplomat Travel in Washington (**TD** 03 Dec).

QR to add Amsterdam

QATAR Airways will debut flights to the Netherlands this year, with a new daily Doha-Amsterdam route to commence operation on 16 Jun 15.

Reservations are now open for the new route which will utilise a Boeing 787-8 aircraft.

MEANWHILE GDS displays also now show QR resuming plans for a second daily Doha-London Heathrow A380 service.

Previously QR planned to use its A380 on QR1/2 from 01 Dec 14 but a change of plans will now see the superjumbo deployed on double daily Doha-LHR flights effective from 16 Jul 15.

No AirAsia survivors

DEBRIS from the disappeared AirAsia flight 8501 from Surabaya to Singapore has been found off the coast of Borneo, with three bodies recovered late yesterday and the recovery operation now continuing through the day.

The A320-200 was found in the Karimata Strait, about 110 nautical miles from Pangkalan Bun, with AirAsia group ceo and founder Tony Fernandes saying he was devastated at the outcome.

"It's an experience I never dreamt of happening and it's probably an airline ceo's worst nightmare...the passengers were on my aircraft and I have to take responsibility for that," he said.

Items from the doomed flight were spotted by an Indonesian air force plane, and ships headed to the area where divers are searching in 30m deep waters.

The debris is floating about 10km from the aircraft's last known radar location.

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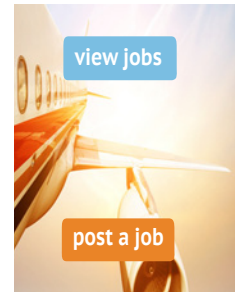
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UA, Orbitz challenge flight startup

UNITED Airlines and US online travel agency Orbitz have filed a joint lawsuit against a website called skiplagged.com which offers cheap tickets by searching for "hidden city" pricing where travellers purposely buy one-stop flights for a lower fare and disembark at the intermediate city, rather than continuing onto the itinerary's final destination - in violation of airline fare rules.

The site was founded last year by 22-year-old Aktarer Zaman, who claims it is not illegal but simply exposes an "inefficiency in airline pricing".

The loophole only works for one way flights with no checked bags, but UA and Orbitz say it makes it difficult to accurately count passengers to the final destination and therefore affects fuel load calculations.

They are seeking US\$75,000 in damages from the entrepreneur.

New Qld routes for Rex

REGIONAL Express will debut three new regulated Queensland routes on schedule tomorrow, after being awarded the right to operate the services in a state government tender (**TD** 15 Oct).

Rex already held the rights for the Northern 1 route from Townsville to Winton to Longreach, as well as Northern 2 which covers Townsville to Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek and Mt Isa, having flown these services for the last 4 years.

The additions are the Gulf Route from Cairns to Normanton, Mornington Island, Burketown, Doomadgee and Mt Isa; the Western 1 Route from Brisbane to Toowoomba (Wellcamp Airport), St George, Cunnamulla and Thargomindah; and the Western 2 Route from Brisbane to Toowoomba, Charleville, Quilpie, Windorah, Birdsville, Bedourie, Boulia and Mt Isa.

Warrick Lodge, gm network strategy and sales, said the Rex team had worked tirelessly over the last ten weeks to ensure that the new regulated air services can commence on schedule.

It's been a huge job, with the carrier adding 16 new ports to its network as a result of the expansion and a new Area Air Operator's Certificate required.

"Rex is honoured to be selected by the Queensland government to deliver these essential services that provide critical linkages between Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville to 20 regional communities that span the entire state," Lodge said.

He said the team had been liaising with local communities and looks forward to building relationships as flights commence.

Rex will also launch a new service between Cairns and Townsville effective 03 Jan.

HLO buyback

HELLOWORLD this morning advised it would suspend its on-market share buyback program from today through until 27 Feb, in accordance with its formal share trading policy.

The suspension is in place until the second trading day following the announcement of the company's preliminary financial results on 25 Feb.

Helloworld shares are currently trading at 33c each.

LGW emergency

LONDON Gatwick Airport was shut down overnight due to an in-flight emergency on a Virgin Atlantic 747 aircraft which developed a landing gear issue.

Flight VS43 had departed LGW for Las Vegas but returned after developing the fault and then burning off fuel for several hours.

The plane landed safely and the airport reopened at 7pm, with operations now back to normal.

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Infinity helps out with hampers



MORE than 30 Infinity and Quickbeds teams participated in a team building exercise earlier this month which also helped give back to the community in which they work and make a living.

Organised by the Flight Centre Foundation, the activity saw the staff create Christmas hampers for specific demographics of people in need.

The outcome was one tonne of food - or 1,333 meals - donated to hunger relief organisation Foodbank Australia.

MH adds sim card

MALAYSIA Airlines has begun offering the OneSimCard product as part of its in-flight duty free offering on international flights.

OneSimCard offers international travellers discounts of as much as 85% on voice, text messaging and internet data roaming rates, including free incoming calls in more than 160 countries.

OneSimCard comes with both a European and US mobile phone number and works in unlocked GSM devices and phones.

Participants also listened to a presentation by Ken McMillan of Foodbank Queensland, who thanked them for their contribution to people in poverty.

The Flight Centre Foundation also organises Workplace Giving for Flight Centre Travel Group staff, and the company matches employee donations dollar for dollar.

At present 25% of Infinity staff contribute a proportion of their monthly wage through the program which helps support partner charities such as Redkite, Youngcare and Bush Heritage as well as Foodbank.

Some of the Infinity staffers are **pictured** above putting together their Foodbank hampers.

Crystal set for first ever circumnavigation

CRYSTAL Cruises is celebrating its 25th birthday in 2015 with its first ever circumnavigation of the globe - a 108-night Miami round trip which departs 14 Jan 15 aboard *Crystal Serenity*.

QF 737 pilot pay deal

QANTAS shorthaul 737 pilots have agreed to a new pay agreement which will give them annual increments of 3% through until 2018.

69% of the 560 aviators backed the offer, with the Australian and International Pilots Association saying it was a positive outcome.

However Jetstar pilots are not in the same boat, with 95% recently rejecting a pay offer.

HA outrigger event

MORE than 140 outrigger canoe racing teams from across the globe are set to compete in the upcoming Hawaiian Airlines Sydney Harbour Challenge this year, with an overwhelming response to the second annual event set to be staged on 28 Feb-01 Mar 2015.

Last year the 20km race attracted 93 teams, and in 2015 this is set to be significantly boosted with a program centred on Manly Cove.

A Hawaiian cultural program and entertainment will also be provided at the wharf - and once again HA will be entering a team of its own employees.

DXB traffic up 4.3%

DUBAI Airports has reported a 4.3% year-on-year increase in Nov passenger traffic, which amounted to 5.565m.

Year to date traffic is up 5.9% at DXB to 63.98 million, while Nov aircraft movements rose 10% to 34,690 take-offs and landings.

Eastern Europe was the fastest growing region, up 54.1% year on year due to strong growth from Budapest, Prague and Warsaw.

Dubai Airports ceo Paul Griffiths said the strong year to date performance combined with some of the busiest days on record in Dec meant he was "confident of ending the year above the 70 million mark and confirming our position as the world's busiest international airport".



Window Seat

HARRY Shum Jr, one of the stars of musical TV show *Glee*, had an unfortunate travel experience this week when Virgin Atlantic lost his luggage.

His one-million plus social media followers were given a blow-by-blow description of the ordeal, including a complaint that "Now I have no warm clothes in this freezing weather".

24 hours later, with the luggage still missing, Shum tweeted "Still no bag. Still wearing the same clothes. But making the most by gorging myself on food to put a lil more fat on me to fight this cold".

Finally the bag turned up yesterday, and Shum turned to his musical background for a final Instagram post (**below**) with the caption "Reunited and it feels so goodood".



SOUTH Dakota in the US is getting itself onto the tourist map with the launch of its biggest entertainment destination - a new pawn shop.

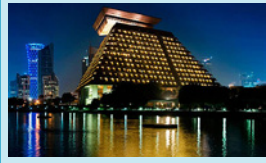
Badlands Pawn, Gold & Jewelry in Sioux Falls offers a host of options for visitors, including, of course, the largest pawn shop in the Midwest.

There's also a gun store with a 14 lane shooting range, an in-house mint that makes Badlands-branded gold coins, and for that super special souvenir there's even an onsite tattoo parlour offering FREE Badlands logo tattoos.



Accommodation Updates

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



The **Sheraton Doha Resort & Convention Hotel** in Qatar has undergone a major renovation, with the project restoring the 1982-built property to its former glory. The update has seen the inclusion of cutting-edge amenities across the hotel which is home to nine restaurants, bars and lounges as well as 371 guest rooms including 64 luxurious suites, plus meeting spaces for up to 5,000 delegates.



Swiss-Belhotel International Hotels & Resorts has officially opened the new five star **Ciputra World Surabaya**, strengthening its portfolio in Indonesia with 212 guest rooms and suites. The hotel has a high-end executive lounge, eight meeting rooms, a health club and non-smoking floors plus a roof-top outdoor pool deck overlooking the city complete with a kid's pool and jacuzzi.



Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide has opened the new **Aloft Dongguan Songshan Lake** in China's central Guangdong province. The centrally located hotel features 193 "urban-inspired bright and design-forward guest rooms" with signature amenities such as plush platform beds, oversized showerheads, free wi-fi, plug & play docking stations and keyless entry via guest smartphones.

China agency move

QUNAR, one of China's largest online travel agencies, has made a major investment in bricks and mortar by taking a stake in Traveling Bestone, a business with 3,500 franchised travel agencies across the country.

However rather than backing traditional distribution, Qunar said the move aimed to transform consumer behaviour in China, where a significant proportion of travel is still sold offline.

"This deal will help to bring more of this business online," the company said, with a combined B2B platform set to offer shared inventory for both Qunar and Bestone packages.

There will also be a co-branded travel app targeted at Bestone's mostly offline customer base, offering incentives for them to embrace mobile booking.

"This will give Qunar access to more suppliers and more purchasers," the company said.

Brussels boost

BRUSSELS Airlines is set to expand its operations within Europe this year, with the addition of new routes to Zagreb in Croatia and Bordeaux in France.

The Bordeaux route will operate four times per week effective 29 Mar 15, while the six weekly Zagreb flights will debut 20 Sep.

Marco Polo handy

HONG Kong's Marco Polo Hotels are offering a free "handy smartphone" for guests staying at all three of its properties.

The Handy device comes preloaded with software adapted for tourists visiting Hong Kong, giving them unlimited 3G mobile internet and local calls, a wi-fi hotspot including tethering for laptops and tablets, and instant access to the hotel concierge.

The Handy also allows guests to receive exclusive offers such as restaurant specials.

Sri Lanka flood alert

BRITAIN'S Foreign Office has reissued its travel advice for Sri Lanka following serious flooding, with local transport affected and landslide warnings in place.



FRASERS Hospitality celebrated the festive season with its annual 'Fraser Cup' sailing day for key clients and corporate partners.

Teams representing each of Frasers' portfolio of Australian properties took to the ocean on Sydney Harbour.

It wasn't quite the Sydney to Hobart, with the contest seeing the yachts racing from Athol Bay around Shark Island before returning to King Street Wharf.

The team from led by Fraser Suites Sydney gm Benjamin Nesbitt took out the coveted cup aboard *Sha Meduza*, and are **pictured** above from left: Johanna Joseph, Carolina More and Sushi Preen of Show Group; Benjamin Nesbitt, Fraser Suites Sydney; Carolyn Dean, Fraser Place Melbourne; and Michael Joseph and Jeremy Sargent of BCD Travel.

Brazil beach blast

FOUR holidaymakers have been killed in a freak accident in Brazil, when lightning struck the beach during a sudden thunderstorm.

The tragedy occurred near the port city of Santos, with the victims reportedly sheltering in a beachside kiosk when the lightning struck.

CZ retires 777-200s

CHINA Southern Airlines is no longer operating Boeing 777-200ER planes, with its last two of the aircraft type heading for the desert in Phoenix, Arizona on Christmas Day.

The carrier took delivery of its first 777-200ER 17 years ago.

Dusit hotel school

THAI hospitality group Dusit International has announced the launch of a new Dusit Thani Hotel School in Bangkok.

To be operated separately from the existing Dusit Thani College, the Hotel School will have a curriculum based on ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals.

Offering both certificate and diploma level courses, credits from the Dusit Thani Hotel School will be transferable to higher education institutions across the country.

It will have capacity for up to 1300 students with a range of learning spaces including kitchens, IT laboratories, language learning facilities and mock-ups of key hotel areas such as front office, housekeeping, restaurant and bar.