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Changi Airport welcomes Drukair of Bhutan

Changi Airport today welcomed the arrival of Drukair, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bhutan, which is situated in the Himalayas between China and India.

A special inaugural flight from the Bhutanese city of Paro landed at Changi Airport this afternoon with Her Royal Highness Princess Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck, the eldest princess of the Bhutan royal family, on board. Her Royal Highness is leading a delegation here to inaugurate the commencement of Drukair's direct service between Paro and Singapore. She is accompanied by the Bhutan Minister of Information and Communication,

and Chairman of Druk Holdings and Investment, among other senior government officials.

Drukair's Paro-Singapore route begins commercial service on 1 September 2012. The commencement of this twice-weekly service means passengers departing from Singapore can now reach Bhutan in under six hours, saving an overnight transfer stay in Thailand or India as visitors currently have to do. Singapore is only the fifth country to be linked to Bhutan by air.

Singapore boasts strong ties with Bhutan. Apart from cooperation at both the government and people-to-people levels in areas such as education, healthcare and media, there has been a strong increase in the number of Singapore travellers heading to Bhutan. In 2011, about 1,300 visitors from Singapore headed for Bhutan, representing an increase of more than 70% over 2010^[1]. Bhutan received over 64,000 visitors in 2011^[2].

Drukair will operate a two-class configuration using the A319 aircraft on the Paro-Singapore service. The flight departs Paro at 0720 hours and arrives in Singapore at 1505 hours on Wednesdays and Saturdays, while the return flight from Singapore to Paro features an early morning departure out of Changi at 0600 hours on Thursdays and Sundays. The flight reaches Paro at 0945 hours, allowing travellers the entire day ahead to explore Bhutan. There is a 30-minute stopover in Kolkata on both legs of the flight. Drukair will operate at Changi Airport's Terminal 1.

Changi's commitment of support

Changi Airport Group's Executive Vice President for Air Hub Development, Mr Yam Kum Weng, said, "In recent years, more people in Singapore and the region are looking forward to visiting Bhutan to experience its unspoilt, exotic beauty and rich culture. Drukair's commencement of flights from Paro to Singapore is timely in meeting this increasing market demand, and enhancing the people-to-people exchange between the two countries.

Changi Airport Group is pleased to partner with the Tourism Council of Bhutan and Drukair to promote the Kingdom of Bhutan and the direct air link both in Singapore and the region."

Mr Tandin Jamsa, Chief Executive Officer of Drukair, said, "Drukair is honoured by the warm welcome given by Singapore. For Drukair, Singapore is not just another destination, but an opportunity to bring our two nations

and people together. Drukair aims to connect Singapore to Bhutan, and afford its people an opportunity to experience a way of life that is slowly fading in many countries, an opportunity to experience happiness like the Bhutanese. The goal of Drukair is to eventually make Singapore our gateway to the world.”

Paro is a new city link for Changi Airport and follows the addition of the Gold Coast (Australia) and Kota Bahru (Malaysia) to the Changi network. As at 1 August 2012, Changi Airport serves some 100 airlines operating more than 6,200 weekly flights to over 220 cities in 60 countries and territories worldwide.

Getting to know Bhutan

To raise awareness about the commencement of this new direct link to the beautiful country often hailed as the last Shangri-la, a series of activities to introduce Bhutan to the general public will be rolled out at Changi Airport’s Terminal 3 Departure Hall from 1 to 23 September 2012.

To kick off the series of activities, a photo exhibition entitled ‘Bhutan: The Unknown Kingdom’ will be held at Changi Airport. Arranged according to the five themes of nature, culture, sights, people and transition, this exhibition will show the various facets of the kingdom, from the everyday lives of the Bhutanese, to its breathtaking scenery. The photos on exhibition, contributed by a group of photo enthusiasts and the Tourism Council of Bhutan, will also be available for sale, with proceeds going to the Changi Foundation, a community-support initiative of Changi Airport Group to help disadvantaged youths.

In addition, in conjunction with the September school holidays, there will also be fun activities for the whole family at the sidelines of the photo exhibition at Changi Airport. With a minimal spend of \$30, visitors can try their hand at archery, the national sport of Bhutan, and also dress up in Bhutanese costumes for a free family photo [\[3\]](#). For visitors interested to experience Bhutan, there will be daily travel talks at 3pm and 7pm during the school holiday period and exclusive travel deals available for on-the-spot booking through travel agents. On top of all these, visitors can take part in a lucky draw and win an all-expenses-paid 4D3N trip for two to Bhutan in Drukair’s Business Class.

To celebrate its commencement of operations at Changi Airport, Drukair is offering promotional fares for return business class and economy class tickets at S\$1,208 and S\$1,080 respectively. Fares exclude all applicable fees and surcharges, and terms and conditions apply.[\[4\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) Tourism Council of Bhutan

[\[2\]](#) Tourism Council of Bhutan

[\[3\]](#) The archery and costume tries will also be available during the weekends of 15 – 16 September and 22 – 23 September.

[\[4\]](#) The promotional fares for economy class and business class tickets are available only from 1 to 30 September, and are valid for travel from 15 November 2012 to 28 February 2013. For more information, please refer to www.changiairport.com.

About Changi Airport Group

Changi Airport Group (Singapore) Pte Ltd (CAG) (www.changiairportgroup.com) was formed on 16 June 2009 and the corporatisation of Singapore Changi Airport followed on 1 July 2009. As the company managing Changi Airport, CAG undertakes key functions focusing on airport operations and management, air hub development, commercial activities and airport emergency services. Through its subsidiary Changi Airports International, the Group invests in and manages foreign airports to spread the success of Changi Airport internationally.

Changi Airport (www.changiairport.com) is the world's most awarded airport having garnered more than 400 accolades since it opened in 1981. To serve passengers and visitors from the world over, there are 360 retail stores and 130 F&B outlets across the airport's four terminals. Changi handled more than 46 million passenger movements in 2011, an annual record. Today, it serves some 100 airlines flying to over 220 cities in about 60 countries and territories worldwide. A flight takes off or lands at Changi roughly once every 100 seconds.

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