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AirAsia

AIRASIA PLANS TO FLY TO THREE ASIAN COUNTRIES SOON

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- AirAsia, Malaysia's second national carrier, will embark on a major programme to lease more aircraft to spread its wings to China, India and Indonesia soon.

AirAsia Director Datuk Tik Mustaffa, who is also the vice-president of Hicom Holdings Berhad, said today the Transport Ministry had pledged to give an answer soon to AirAsia's request to fly to the three countries.

AirAsia, which currently has two aircraft, now flies to Pattaya, South Thailand and Taipei via Kota Kinabalu.

During this double festive season, AirAsia was also mounting special charter services to Kota Baharu and Kota Kinabalu.

Tik said in the long term, the company which had a paid-up capital of more than RM20 million, plans to fly to other destinations apart from Asia like Europe and West Asia.

"AirAsia will have to get more aircraft by leasing them," he told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang before joining Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the flight to Langkawi on board AirAsia's latest aircraft, a Boeing 737-300.

The Boeing 737-300 is the second aircraft for AirAsia, which began operations last November. It was leased from GE Capital Aviation Services Ltd of the USA for US\$320,000 (about RM800,000) a month.

Tik said AirAsia would lease two more 230-seater Boeing 757 aircraft by the last quarter of this year, bringing the total number of aircraft owned by the company to four.

He said AirAsia might also operate domestic flights if it was feasible.

However, this would only depend on the survey being undertaken by the Transport Ministry, he added. -- BERNAMA

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