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Anwar-KLIA

KLIA NEEDS THREE MONTHS' GRACE PERIOD BEFORE COMMENCING OPERATIONS

SEPANG, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- The RM9 billion Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) will commence commercial operations during the first quarter of next year and not on Jan 1 as originally scheduled, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today.

He said that the KLIA would be ready for operations on Jan 1 but according to experts, it would be better to commence operations during the first quarter of next year.

The three-month period would be used to conduct tests and trials to ensure the efficiency and security of all the airport systems like passenger and baggage handling procedures and the flight catering service, he told reporters after a tour of the project site here.

"We are still keeping to our earlier undertaking that the airport will be completed on Jan 1...but we will only determine the opening of the airport for the public during the first quarter of next year," he said.

Earlier, Anwar chaired a special Cabinet meeting on the KLIA at the site office here.

Among those who accompanied him during the tour of the project site were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Abu Zahar Isnin, Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Isa Samad and Finance Ministry Secretary-General Tan Sri Clifford Herbert.

Asked whether there will be any more delays in the completion of the project, he said: "Technically, it should be completed by Dec 15 and could commence operations on Jan 1."

However, he said, on expert advice, a three-month trial run would be conducted.

He said that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would witness the touchdown of the first aircraft, a Boeing 747, at the airport on Sept 15.

Last week, Dr Ling announced the rescheduling of commercial operations at the airport but Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the delay was not critical.

Anwar gave an assurance that the KLIA would be in operations well ahead of the Commonwealth Games in September next year.

He said that construction works at the airport would be completed on Sept 15 while trial runs would commence on Dec 15.

Anwar also said that Malaysia Airports Berhad and Malaysia Airlines would be requested to coordinate several operations at the airport to prepare for its official opening although the date would only be determined later.

Asked on the transfer of operations of companies, now based at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah airport in Subang, to the new airport on its completion, Anwar said that a special committee would be set up to deal with the matter.

A date would be fixed for the companies to shift their operations to the KLIA, he said.

Commenting on the Cabinet meeting today, the Cabinet's 29th meeting on the KLIA, he said that from the briefing and the discussions, there seemed to be no serious problems.

He said that only monitoring measures and minor technical problems were raised.

Anwar also expressed satisfaction that construction works at the KLIA

was progressing on schedule and that action would be taken to rectify minor problems which had been identified. -- BERNAMA

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