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KLIA ready for ops on Jan 1, 1998 says Anwar

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THE KL International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang will be ready on January 1 1998 but experts have advised the airport operators to begin commercial operations in the first quarter of the year.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the three-month period will be used to test, among others, the baggage handling system, catering services and monitor the turnaround on efficiency and security of the airport.

"The development timetable is on schedule but there are some minor problems on implementation, monitoring and technicalities. Technically, the airport should be ready by December 15 and can open on January 1 but we were advised by the operators to give them a minimum of three months for trial runs," he told reporters after chairing a special Cabinet meeting on the airport's development in Sepang yesterday.

The meeting, the Cabinet's 29th meeting on the KLIA, was held at the site office.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik announced last week the rescheduling of commercial operations date while Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the delay was not critical.

Anwar said the airport's last package, including the implementation of total airport management system, will be completed by December 15.

All basic facilities at the airport will be completed on September 15.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will witness the first 747 landing at the KLIA's soon to be completed runway.

Runway I of the KLIA was ready on January 28 1997 while work on the taxiway for Runway I was completed in April and the airfield ground-lighting for Runway I is expected to be completed in September 1997.

Runway II will be ready by March 31 1997, the taxiway by June 30 and the airfield ground-lighting November 1997.

Passenger Terminal Complex I is due for completion on September 15 1997 and functional by December 1.

The satellite building is to be completed by September 15 and tests on equipment can begin in December.

Anwar also said that Malaysia Airports Bhd 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.

The airport is developing a standard operating procedures (SOPs) for its trial runs.

The SOPs involving staff of Malaysia Airport Bhd, Malaysia Airlines and other relevant agencies will synchronise the applications of various operating systems at the airport.

Asked on the transfer of operations of companies, now based at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah airport in Subang, to the new airport upon 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. The Government had engaged consultants from Munich airport to handle the transfer of the airport operations to Malaysia Airports.

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