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Mahathir-airport

MAHATHIR: KLIA DELAY NOT CRITICAL

By: Ruhil Amani Zainal Abidin

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the delay in commissioning the KL International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang for commercial operations "is not critical" as its re-scheduled opening is still in the first quarter of next year.

Dr Mahathir said its rescheduled commissioning for commercial operations was not considered very late as the 1998 Commonwealth Games would only be held in September.

The RM9-billion project was originally scheduled for opening on Jan 1, before the Games from Sept 11-21.

"I don't think it is very critical. It will be opened within the first quarter of next year. In fact, we are not having the Commonwealth Games until in the third quarter of the year, so we are not very late," he told reporters here after launching a company called InterAsia Fairs and Exhibitions Sdn Bhd.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on recent reports that the KLIA would only be operational within the first quarter of next year.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who announced the delay last Tuesday, said it was to ensure that everything was in order before the KLIA was commissioned for commercial operations.

Dr Mahathir said he would be visiting the KLIA site on Aug 15 and expected to be briefed on the problems faced by the project.

At the ceremony, Dr Mahathir also witnessed the signing of an agreement on joint collaboration between the company and Hannover Fairs Asia Pte Ltd to organise three international exhibitions in Malaysia.

InterAsia Fairs and Exhibitions Chairman Senator Datuk Ibrahim Ali signed on behalf of the company, while Senator Prof Dr Klaus Goehrmann for Hannover Fairs Asia.

The three proposed exhibitions are the Multimedia, Information Technology and Telecommunications (MIT'98), the Malaysia Industrial Fair (MIF '98) and the Automotive Technology Exhibition Malaysia (ATM '99).

All are scheduled to be held at the Mines Resort, here.

The MIT '98, to be held from Oct 6 to 10 1998, focuses on multimedia, information technology, networking, telecommunications, data security and software development.

The MIF '98, from Dec 2 to 5 1998, will feature a cross-section of industrial technologies such as mechanical engineering, production and manufacturing, electrical and electronic engineering, and robotics and automation.

The ATM '99, from June 22 to 25,1999 is an automotive downstream exhibition highlighting automotive manufacturing, assembly and components manufacturing. . -- BERNAMA

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