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Ling-airport

NEED FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN THE NORTH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 13 (Bernama) -- Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today another international airport is needed for the northern part of the country to meet anticipated increase in the volume of air passengers.

The existing international airports in Pulau Pinang and Langkawi could no longer be expanded due to limited space, he said.

"Many existing airports do not have sufficient land for a second runway and other facilities needed and because of this we have to look for other greenfields, vast and capable of meeting future expansions," he said, explaining the rationale of having the Northern Regional International Airport (NRIA) in Kedah.

He was speaking to reporters after launching a book entitled "Biographical Dictionary of the Chinese in Malaysia" at Universiti Malaya (UM) here. It includes biography of prominent figures like Tun H S Lee, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun Ong Yoke.

Ling said the implementation of NRIA was necessary in meeting improvement in the standard of living as more Malaysians used air services.

"This is also based on international experience. While we still have greenfields, we better do it because in crowded areas like Europe now they have for the last 20 years only one new airport except Munich. So, we better do it while we still have land," he said.

Last Tuesday, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid said the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed had agreed in principle to the airport project.

The international airport will be built on a 6,300-hectare of reclaimed land in Kuala Muda, some 140km from Alor Star.

Ling said the final decision would be made after a study by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report.

"Although the government has agreed in principle to have the NRIA, we need to carry out several indepth studies just to make sure we don't leave unexpected problem," he said. -- BERNAMA

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