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Mahathir - KLIA

KLIA SET FOR OFFICIAL OPENING AS SCHEDULED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

SEPANG, June 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, expressing satisfaction with the final touches to the KL International Airport (KLIA), today said it is all set for the official opening on June 27 as scheduled.

"It has shown good progress, its construction is high quality and indeed its Total Airport Management System appears to be without hitches," he said at a press conference after inspecting the KLIA here.

Dr Mahathir said when he privately toured the KLIA several weeks back, he was then quite apprehensive whether it could be completed on schedule.

But after today's inspection, he was very satisfied with the progress that has taken place, the prime minister said.

Work on the KLIA, on a 10,000-hectare site, started four years ago and it cost RM9 billion to build.

Fully operational, it could handle 25 million passengers a year.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar is scheduled to open the KLIA on June 27 and it would be fully operational three days later.

Dr Mahathir said the KLIAB, the airport developer, has been able to develop its own expertise for the project.

"This project costs RM9 billion, not US\$9 billion. Others have built airports smaller than this for more than US\$9 billion. It has been completed within four years that is one year for land clearing and three for erecting the structures.

"In my opinion this is a record given that they have managed such a gigantic complex which required 25,000 workers and 300 contracts," he said.

He congratulated the KLIAB for having accomplished the project within a short time.

Asked whether the low cost has affected construction quality, Dr Mahathir said: "No compromise. You can see for yourself that the quality is very good, the finishing is very good, the construction work is good, and the designs are very innovative and the furniture is of very good quality."

He said the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang, now worth about RM20 billion, would continue to be used for various purposes including for Haj flights, aircraft servicing and overhaul as well as general aviation.

Moreover, the air force base is also situated adjacent to the Subang airport.

Dr Mahathir said the timing of the decision to build the KLIA was right as otherwise it could not have been built for RM9 billion.

He said the KLIA management had taken into account all public complaints and views on improving services at the KLIA including public transportation and signages around the complex.

The prime minister was accompanied by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and KLIAB chairman Tan Sri Clifford Herbert.

-- BERNAMA

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