

27 JUN 1998

KLIA-Opening

KING OPENS KLIA AMIDST GLITTERING CEREMONY

SEPANG, June 27 (Bernama) -- Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), Malaysia's premier ultra-modern and state-of-the-art airport aimed at serving the country's needs well into the 21st century, was officially opened here tonight.

The eco-friendly KLIA, one of Asia Pacific's most modern airports, will replace the ageing 33 year-old Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (SAAS) Airport in Subang and will be operational from Tuesday as the country's main aviation gateway.

The country's latest pride and joy, costing about RM9.0 billion to build, was officially opened here by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar ibni Tuanku Abdul Rahman at the open air piazza in front of KLIA's main terminal building amidst a glittering ceremony attended by about 1,400 invited guests.

Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Cabinet ministers, senior government officials and foreign dignitaries were among the guests present at the historic event.

The highlights of the two-hour ceremony were a sparkling fireworks display and laser show. The ceremony was also witnessed "live" by millions of proud Malaysians over RTM 1.

The airport's project manager, KL International Airport Bhd, had at one time employed some 25,000 workers at the peak of the project's development.

Carved out of 10,000 hectares of mostly former plantation land, KLIA, which has been designed along the "airport in the forest" and "forest in the airport" concepts, is sited about 50 km south of Kuala Lumpur.

Conceptualised in the early 1990s, it took four-and-a-half years to be built.

KLIA has a capacity to handle 25 million passengers annually, almost twice that of the SAAS airport, and one million tonnes of cargo a year.

Under future phases of development, KLIA will ultimately handle 100 million passengers annually and have four runways.

A Formula One racing track is being constructed close to the airport and is scheduled to be ready for competition next year.

KLIA is also strategically located within Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor. It is electronically linked to Putrajaya, the Federal Government's new high-tech administrative capital, and its twin "intelligent" city, Cyberjaya, both located within the MSC.--BERNAMA

AD SHY