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Mahathir - flight

MAHATHIR FLIES ON FIRST DOMESTIC FLIGHT OUT OF KLIA

SEPANG, June 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad took the inaugural domestic flight out of the brand new KL International Airport (KLIA) here to Langkawi today.

Also accompanying the prime minister on Flight MH1432 were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Malaysia Airlines executive chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli.

The MAS Boeing 777 landed at the Langkawi International Airport at 8.15 am and Dr Mahathir was met on arrival by Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, Langkawi Member of Parliament Datuk Abu Bakar Taib and members of the national shooting and rugby squads for the Kuala Lumpur '98 Games who are training on the resort island.

Dr Mahathir is in Langkawi to inspect development projects and is scheduled to return to the federal capital later today.

Meanwhile, MAS flight MH188 from Male, Maldives, an Airbus 330 was the first international flight to land at the KLIA at 7.45am today.

Australian Gayle Hardy, 46, who was among the 132 passengers onboard flight MH188, spoke of the excitement of being among the first international passengers to land at the KLIA.

"I feel privileged to be here and am very excited when told that I'm boarding the first international flight to this beautiful new airport," said Hardy.

Fellow Australian Stephen MacBlane said he had heard about the KLIA from a taxi driver while holidaying in Malaysia 10 days ago.

"Yes, I heard about KLIA from a taxi driver but the excitement of actually being here beats everything. It's really a privilege," said MacBlane.

Commander of flight MH188 Capt Missman Lhan, a pilot with 17 years experience, also shared the excitement of landing the first international flight into the KLIA.

"Everything was excellent, we got very clear guidance from the control tower and the landing was very smooth. No problem at all," he said.

Lhan said the KLIA's facilities and systems were comparable to the world's best.

Khairuddin Osman, a Malaysian student returning from Cairo's Al Azhar University, said he had sourced information on the KLIA through the Internet and was happy to be able to enjoy its facilities first hand.

The KLIA was opened by the King, Tuanku Ja'afar on Saturday night.

-- BERNAMA

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