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New gateway vital for nation's growth

Badrul Hisham; Sarban Singh; Shareem Amry; Azrani Rustam

SEPANG, Sat. - The Government has made an important strategic investment in building the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport to enable Malaysia to face the challenges of the next millennium and enhance its role in the international air travel industry.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the public air transport industry had become an important component in a country's quest for rapid development.

He said it also played an important role in facilitating international trade.

"Realising this, the Government made a strategic decision in 1991 to build a new international airport as the main gateway into Malaysia and the region," he said at the KLIA's opening ceremony tonight.

He said when KLIA begins full commercial operations on June 30, it would become one of the most modern airports in the world and on par with other famous airports in the Asia Pacific region.

"We will work hard to ensure that the airport is capable of providing a high standard of service which is both unique and innovative to attract more passengers and airlines to use KLIA as a regional gateway."

He said airports in the region had experienced encouraging infrastructural and passenger growth, more than in North America and Europe, over the past 10 years.

"Although such rapid growth could not be sustained in the next one or two years, the Asia Pacific region is expected to re-emerge stronger and achieve dynamic growth in the long term."

Dr Ling thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was the brainchild and inspiration behind the building of the KLIA.

"I would also like to congratulate KLIA Berhad, the various ministries and government agencies and the private sector that have worked hard for four years to construct this sophisticated airport."

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