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Subang airport to service north-bound flights

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SOME domestic air services, especially for northern destinations, will be maintained at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah International Airport in Subang after June 30 when the KL International Airport (KLIA) begins commercial operations.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, in announcing the Cabinet decision on the matter in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, said the move is aimed at providing convenience and choice to the public.

Airlines operating on the domestic routes are Transmile Air, AirAsia, Pelangi Air and Malaysia Airlines.

The Cabinet, he said, made the decision about 10 days ago.

"Subang airport will maintain a "skeleton" staff to handle the check-in, ticketing and the like for passengers who are travelling up north.

"North-bound passengers will continue to board their plane at Terminal Three of the (Subang) airport," he said.

Those who prefer to fly out of KLIA to any points in the north - especially those staying in Seremban, Nilai, Malacca and Port Dickson - will be able to do so because domestic carriers will also operate the north-bound flights out of the new airport.

"It makes logical sense for them to go directly to the new airport," he added.

Dr Ling acknowledged that providing the domestic air services at both airports will incur additional costs as well as some duplications in operation, "but these are for the convenience of the public."

On the number of domestic air services to be maintained at the Subang airport, he said: "We'll leave it to the respective domestic airlines to decide."

"Of course, we expect to face some teething problems in the start ... like whether we had underestimated or overestimated the number of domestic air services needed at the two airports," he said.

Asked whether regional airlines will be allowed to continue operating out of Subang airport instead of KLIA, he said: "We have not received any request (from any regional airline to do so) ... question does not arise at this point in time."

Dr Ling said charter flights, general aviation services, the Royal Malaysian Air Force, flight training schools and Airod Sdn Bhd will continue to operate from the Subang airport.

"There will still be a lot of things happening in Subang," he said.

KLIA will be opened by the Yang Di Pertuan Agong at 8.30pm on June 27. "A total of 1,000 guests are expected to attend the opening ceremony, which include Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, ministers and foreign diplomats," he said.

It is understood that Malaysia Airlines 777 will land at the KLIA during the opening ceremony.

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