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Air travel on Jan 1, 2000 safe, says expert

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Air travellers planning on taking to the skies this New Year need not worry about Y2K problems as efforts are underway to handle any problem which may arise on Jan 1, 2000.

Airport Council International Asia Pacific (ACI-Pacific) president George Bellew today assured travellers the aviation industry would be ready on time.

Apart from current efforts, Bellew said ACI was setting up an early warning system to prepare for any eventuality.

However, the main obstacle is assuring the public that air travel would be safe on the upcoming New Year's Day.

"The aviation industry depends on the confidence of the travelling public, and we have not done an adequate job in terms of allaying their fears," said Bellew.

In terms of preparation, Bellew said the ACI is currently setting up an early warning system in the event of a crisis.

To be based in New Zealand, which will be among the first to enter the New Year in the Pacific, teams of specialists will be on hand to report to other airports if any problems arise.

The teams will be able to provide the Kuala Lumpur International Airport authorities a four-hour advance warning system to further enhance it's preparedness during the period.

Bellew was speaking at a Press conference to announce the Ninth ACI-Pacific Regional Assembly and Conference beginning here on Sunday.

Malaysia Airports Sdn Bhd will host the three-day event, which is scheduled to be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

About 250 participants and guests and 50 speakers are scheduled to attend. Among them will be KLIA's designer, renowned architect Kisho Kurokawa, who will speak on "The Philosophy of Symbiosis and the Design of KLIA".

Malaysia Airports' managing director Datuk Khairuddin Ibrahim said KLIA was expected to be ready for Y2K by September.

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