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Mahathir-Airport

DR M LAUNCHES SULTAN MAHMUD AIRPORT EXPANSION PROJECT

KUALA TERENGGANU, Nov 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched RM300 million Sultan Mahmud Airport expansion project in Seberang Takir to open up Terengganu to international flights.

Two firms have been appointed to undertake the project. Phase one of the project costing RM200 million is expected to be completed in two years.

Upon completion, the airport will have facilities to handle two B-747 and three Airbus aircraft at any one time, state officials said.

It would also be able to operate Haj flights direct to Jeddah, they said.

KL International Airport Berhad (KLIAB) would meet the total upgrading cost of the state airport which currently handles at least five flights a day.

KLIAB is a company set up by the federal government to oversee construction of the RM8 billion KL International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang.

The officials said east coast states would benefit from the airport's expansion as it would boost tourism and economic activities.

The Sultan Mahmud airport is a domestic airport having facilities to handle only Boeing 737 planes at the moment.

The federal government had agreed to upgrade the airport's status to handle international flights and to be the centre for all Haj flights from Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu.

It would be able to handle B747 or B777 Haj flights to Jeddah, once the upgrading works were completed, they said.

This means Haj pilgrims from east coast states need not come to KLIA or any other airports to board their Haj flights.

With the latest aviation facilities to be installed, the airport could also handle other international flights, they said.

The two-package project is scheduled to start next year. The first phase entailed lengthening of the 2000-metre runway to 3,100 metres and construction of the taxiway and aircraft parking apron to take in two B747 planes at a time.

Besides having a new control tower building, navigational aid systems, localisers and glide paths would also be improved, they said.

The second package comprises construction of a two-storey terminal building with a floor space of 20,890 square metres and two passenger loading bridges.

The entire project is slated for completion in 36 months.

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