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Sabah-Fares

PENINSULA-SABAH AIR FARES UNDER REVIEW

KOTA KINABALU, March 11 (Bernama) -- The Transport Ministry is considering the possibility of reviewing air fares between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah in an effort to boost domestic tourism, Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

"The study is aimed at seeing if the current air fares are too high and are a discentive to domestic tourism in Sabah," he said.

Ling, who is MCA president, told reporters this before going out to campaign for the party's candidate in this weekend's state election, Datuk Chau Tet On, who is standing in the Api-api seat here.

On international flights to Sabah, Ling said he had recently signed an open skies agreement with Taiwan that allows more flights from the country to fly into Kota Kinabalu.

"I know the load coming from Taiwan is good among the chartered flights," he said.

The agreement also allows Taiwan to commence direct scheduled flights to the state, the minister said.

Ling said approval had also been given for flights from Taiwan to Kuching, Sarawak.

"We are going to take very positive step to improve tourist inflow into Sabah," he added.

The move is timely as tour operators in Sabah, at a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Feb 20, wanted more international airlines to be allowed to operate in the state to boost tourism.

Sabah recorded 264,900 international tourist arrivals last year compared to 159,700 in 1997.

Visitors from Taiwan topped the list with 57,300 arrivals.

-- BERNAMA

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