

12/06/1999

Subang flights to go on till the ERL opens, says Ling

KUALA TERENGGANU, Fri. - Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ling Liong Sik said today that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's sensitivity about problems faced by travellers was the main reason behind the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport being still open for certain domestic flights.

If not for the Prime Minister, Malaysia Airport Bhd's operations at Subang would have ceased immediately after the opening of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang.

"There is no need for MAB to duplicate its operations at both airports as this is costly. We do not want to force people to travel to KLIA for domestic flights," he said when asked to comment on the lack of maintenance at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport.

"The Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport will remain open for certain domestic flights for at least three years more until the Express Rail Link is completed. Moreover, I noticed that all domestic flights to and from the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport are full," he told reporters after opening the MCA Building today.

When completed, the RM713 million ERL would provide a cheaper and faster mode of travel from the city to KLIA.

Travel time by ERL would be about 30 minutes as the train would reach speeds of 160km per hour. Tickets will cost RM30 each.

"This is cheaper than the current rate of between RM60 and RM90 by taxi or limousine," he added.

Asked what would happen to the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah airport after the ERL started service, he said there was a possibility that it would be closed to all domestic flights.

However, he said there were plans to transform the airport into an exhibition centre, a free trade area, an aerospace centre and a flight training centre.

"It is still too early for the Government to make a decision on the future of the airport but obviously the options are many," he added.

(END)