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Ling-MAS

MAS ASKED TO CONSIDER FLYING TO OKAYAMA

KUALA LUMPUR, Julai 10 (Bernama) -- The government has asked Malaysia Airlines (MAS) to study the feasibility of flying to Okayama in Japan in a move to improve business ties and promote tourism between Malaysia and Japan.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the proposal was mooted by the governor of Okayama prefecture, Masahiro Ishii, who called on him at his office today.

Speaking to reporters after their meeting which was also attended by MAS officials, Dr Ling said Ishii had on behalf of the Okayama airport requested that MAS extend its current flights from Kuala Lumpur to Fukuoka to include Okayama.

Dr Ling said MAS currently has a 58 percent load factor for passengers and cargoes on the Kuala Lumpur-Fukuoka flights.

"We may achieve a 100 percent or at least 90 percent load factor if we extend our flights from Fukuoka to Okayama," he said.

The minister said Okayama authorities have offered MAS an attractive proposition which includes discounted landing charges, financial assistance for flights promotion and subsidised transportation charges for cargo from Okayama to other cities like Kyoto and Kobe.

Dr Ling said MAS had in 1998 decided to fly to Okayama but the plan for a twice weekly flight there was shelved due to the economic downturn.

"We have requested MAS to look into the viability of this proposition from the Okayama Prefectural Government as favourably as possible because theoretically we have approved this move two years ago," he said.

Ishii's 15-member delegation comprising key government officials and business leaders will meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow.

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