

21/04/2001

Move to draw airlines to KLIA

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - All new flights into the Kuala Lumpur International Airport from May 1 will enjoy free parking and landing as part of moves to turn the airport into an international aviation hub.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the incentive would apply to existing airlines flying into the airport and carriers using the airport in future.

The move was aimed at encouraging more airlines to fly into KLIA, Dr Ling said.

Under the proposed fee waiver, an airline with four flights into the country, would enjoy free parking and landing charges for its fifth and subsequent flights.

Flights must have at least 25 per cent capacity and only passenger aircraft qualify.

Dr Ling said this was decided today by the KLIA hubbing committee, set up recently to attract more airlines to fly into the country.

The committee, however, has not decided on the duration airlines would enjoy the fee waiver, but further discussions would be held with the companies.

"Normally, when airlines start flying to a new destination, it will not make money. We want to lighten their burden," Dr Ling said at a Press conference at his ministry.

Under the Civil Aviation Regulations 1996, the charges vary according to the weight of the aircraft. For example, an aircraft weighing less than 5,000kg will be charged RM3 for every kg.

Those exceeding 135,000kg are charged RM1,250 plus RM5.70 for every 500kg in excess of 135,000kg.

For a Boeing 747, for example, a charge of RM5,000 will be levied.

Dr Ling also pledged to give more attention to efforts to develop KLIA into a major regional aviation hub.

At present 41 international airlines fly to KLIA while flights from the airport ply 97 routes.

In 1999, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) ranked KLIA 14th best airport in the world and sixth the following year.

Recently, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when announcing the measures to counter the expected slowdown in the United States' economy, said the Government would turn the airport into an international hub.

The same proposal was also contained in the Third Outline Perspective Plan, tabled in Parliament recently.