

Govt to offer more perks to boost air travel

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BINTULU: In a move to make air travel increasingly attractive, local aviation companies will be allowed to introduce more exciting fare packages next year.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the Government would give more incentives to companies handling chartered and scheduled flights to enhance the air services sector and promote faster development of tourism.

"The Government will offer flight operators incentives to introduce very attractive fares so as to enable more people to travel by air.

"I am confident the operators will be able to introduce these fares next year," he said yesterday.

Dr Ling did not disclose the type of incentives to be offered but stressed that aviation was a crucial industry that could serve as a catalyst to develop other sectors.

He was speaking at the opening of the Bintulu Airport by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The event was attended by some 15,000 people.

On the new airport, Dr Ling said it boasted some of the most modern facilities and

services in the industry.

The airport, he said, would help Bintulu meet the demands of the 21st century.

"The Government has invested a lot of money to build new airports and improve existing ones in Sarawak since air transport is vital in this huge and geographically complex state.

"This new airport, just like the Bintulu Port which was built last year, represents very important and strategic investments by the Government which will help the region progress for years to come."

In his speech, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said the state was grateful to the Federal Government for its help in ensuring the airport was completed.

"This airport will open up new horizons for the social and economic development of the state.

"Besides helping to bring in investments and create more jobs for locals, it will also help enable more outsiders to come and visit the state," he said.

Bintulu Division, with a population of about 200,000, is home to over RM20bil worth of heavy industrial projects.