

11 SEP 2002
Tajol-Pangkor
PANGKOR AIRSTRIP TO BE EXTENDED

IPOH, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- The airstrip in Pulau Pangkor will be extended to attract more tourists to the island, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali said today.

He said he had verbally informed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad of the proposal and the latter had agreed.

The only thing to be worked out was how best to implement the project, especially with environmental protection in mind, he said.

"We want to extend the airstrip so that bigger aircraft can land in Pulau Pangkor. Currently, people fly to Ipoh and need to travel more than two hours to reach Pulau Pangkor," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after the opening of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) biennial national camp by the Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Nazrin Shah, at the Gunung Lang Recreation Park here.

Tajol said the government planned to extend the airstrip by up to 500 metres and part of it might be on reclaimed land.

Tajol Rosli said the state government also planned to build a marina in Pulau Pangkor.

"The proposed marina will attract people sailing from Bali to Phuket to stop over in Pulau Pangkor. Nowadays many people like to travel by yachts. We will study the costs," he said.

"If possible we want to attract Star Cruise to Pulau Pangkor, Pangkor Laut and Lumut. For this we need a big jetty because their ships are big. There are private companies interested in building a long jetty," he said.

He said that Dr Mahathir had an aerial view of Pulau Pangkor during his visit there last week and was impressed that the roads were built without spoiling the forests on the island.

"He said similar roads would be built in Pulau Tioman and other forested areas. This will preserve the natural conditions of the forests," he said.

He also said the state government had appointed four companies from Perak and one each from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to undertake big-scale prawn breeding in Lumut.

He said companies given more than 40 acres of land to work on would eventually have to return 20 percent of their holdings to the state government for local fishermen to manage the farms.

"Land covering 869 acres has been approved for this venture, with one acre for one pond," he said.

Prawn farming would be carried out in mangrove forests and a committee would be set up to prevent encroachment into mangrove forest reserves, he said.

-- BERNAMA
KAY YBY