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Chan: Proposed RM140m airport to boost Tioman tourism

TIOMAN, Wed. - The island's proposed RM140 million airport will boost tourism on this duty-free island once it is completed in two years, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy said.

He said work on the airport, situated between Kampung Paya and Kampung Genting, would start early next year.

Chan said with the new airport, which will be bigger and equipped with modern facilities, more regional airlines would start services to the island.

"We expect airlines, especially from Singapore and other member countries of Asean, to start services there once the airport is ready," he told reporters after witnessing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officiating at the ground-breaking ceremony for the airport via videoconferencing from Putrajaya at Kampung Paya, here, today.

Also present were Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and other State leaders.

Berjaya Air presently has scheduled flights from Kuala Lumpur and from the Seletar Air-field in Singapore to the island.

Chan said the Government was in the final stages of shortlisting the contractors to carry out the project.

"We have shortlisted a few contractors and the Finance Ministry will make a decision soon on the company which will be entrusted with the responsibility."

He added that work on the airport would start "not later than January 2004" at the end of the monsoon season.

"We will also insist that the contractor complies with the Environmental Impact Assessment report."

He said the new airport would have a positive impact on the island's economy, as it would create more jobs for villagers.

On the present airport in Kampung Tekek, Chan said the Government would make a decision later whether to cease its operations or let it continue as it was.

"We have not made a decision yet. We will wait until the new airport is operational and we will then decide."