

28/04/2003

Kampung Paya picked as site for Pulau Tioman's new airport

ROMPIN, Sun. - Kampung Paya in Pulau Tioman will be the site for the island's new RM150 million airport which will enable bigger and more aircraft to land .

The airport on the island located at Kampung Tekek will cease to operate.

Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis said the new airport would also be the new growth centre on the popular island resort which is described as one of the 10 most beautiful islands in the world.

"The airport in Kampung Tekek has to be replaced as it is not suitable to be upgraded.

"Each time the planes take off and land there is an element of danger as the aircraft are forced to pass the foothills at the end of the runway," he said.

"This is why we decided to move the airport to Kampung Paya which is more suitable and safe," Jamaludin said.

He said the construction of the new airport would not destroy the environment, especially the corals.

The new airport will have a unique feature as its 2,000-metre long and 45-metre wide runway will be built on the sea.

Other upgrading works include the construction of new arrival and departure halls, VIP waiting rooms, a 200-metre long taxiway and a parking apron.

All structures, apart from the runway, will be built on the island.

"An Environmental Impact Assessment would be conducted before the project starts," Jamaludin said.

Jamaludin, who is also the Rompin MP and deputy Umno Rompin chief, was speaking to reporters after an Umno delegates' meeting which was opened by Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, the Religious Adviser to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Also present were Rompin Umno chief Datuk Hasan Arifin, state assemblymen from the district and Umno leaders and members.

On the status of the existing airport, Jamaludin said the construction of a shopping complex was among projects planned.

Berjaya Air operates daily flights to Tioman from the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang, using the 48-seater De Havilland Dash-7 aircraft.

The new airport can accommodate the Boeing 737 which can carry about 143 passengers.

The entire project will take about 21 months and the contract has been awarded to engineering and construction company Gadang Holdings Bhd.

With the upgrading, the Government is confident that tourist arrivals to the island resort will increase.