

AirAsia finally agrees to move to KLIA2
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AirAsia Bhd has finally agreed to move operations to KLIA2, after Putrajaya decided to enlist the expertise of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to further evaluate the long-term safety of the new airport.

"This decision reflects the priority that the government is giving to the issue of safety, and assuring the public that KLIA2 is safe. We are very grateful for this priority that the government has placed on this issue," the company said in a press statement today.

AirAsia had previously expressed reservations about moving to KLIA2 by the May 9 deadline set by Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) because of concerns over depressions along the taxi-way and apron.

However, AirAsia stressed that there are still "a few outstanding commercial issues" that need to be resolved, but provided scant details of these.

"Ongoing discussions with relevant authorities are in progress. However, should the negotiations not be completed or concluded expeditiously, we hope the government will be able to provide the necessary mediation, in order to enable MAHB to get its dues as the airport operator.

"At the same time, enabling the AirAsia to efficiently operate based on our proven low-cost carrier business model through reasonable charges and levies," the company said.

The opening of KLIA2 has been delayed several times since 2011 and is a major embarrassment for Putrajaya as the facility is owned by MAHB, a government-linked company.

Khazanah Nasional Bhd holds a 40 percent stake in MAHB while Employees Provident Fund holds a 12 percent stake.

AirAsia initially resisted moving to KLIA2 by the May 9 deadline, citing safety concerns and claims that KLIA2 was not the low-cost carrier terminal promised by MAHB, which will inevitably result in higher fees for passengers.