

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	18/10/2011

# National Aviation Policy to be formulated soon

NST-18/10/2011



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha are surrounded by a group of jubilant students who received their Aircraft Maintenance Licence from Najib earlier at a function at MAS Hangar 6 at KLIA yesterday. — NST picture by Izhari Ariffin

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**SEPANG:** The rapid development of the country's aviation industry calls for the formulation of a National Aviation Policy, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said last night.

He said this was to ensure the survival of the country's aviation players in view of the most challenging time faced by the industry globally.

"As we move forward in a most uncertain and volatile time for this sector, it is essential that a comprehensive policy defining all the key aspects of aviation, its direction, objectives and long-term strategies be laid out for the clarity of all Malaysian aviation stakeholders.

"I am certain that a comprehensive National Aviation Policy will give us an important boost as we take the

next step forward to a brighter and more defined future for Malaysian aviation," he said at the launch of the 100 Years of Aviation in Malaysia celebration at Malaysia Airlines' Hangar 6 at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport here.

Najib said the policy would be formulated soon, adding that the Transport Ministry had initiated several consultations and discussions with various parties on a policy framework.

He said aviation infrastructure was critical to national development and global integration, as Malaysia had reaped the benefits from air links that had expanded the country's export market globally and generated a boom in the tourism industry.

Last year, overall passenger traffic at airports nationwide grew 12 per

cent to more than 57 million. KLIA alone recorded 34 million passenger movements, up 14.8 per cent from the previous year, with 60 carriers operating from the airport.

He said the tourism sector had benefited from the aviation industry, recording 24.6 million tourist arrivals with total receipts of RM56.5 billion last year.

Najib said Malaysia had also proved to be a player in the global aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul, with the transformation of Subang Airport facility into Malaysia International Aerospace Centre with 136 companies, including 40 local firms, operating there.

On the corporate exercise involving Malaysia Airlines and AirAsia, he said the move was made not without serious thought on the best outcome that could be derived.

"We want Malaysia Airlines not only to survive but also to thrive for a long time to come and we also want AirAsia, a Malaysian product, to remain a leader in the no-frills sector."

Najib also commended the Department of Civil Aviation, which attained the coveted Category 1 Certification in the International Aviation Safety Audit by the US Federal Aviation Administration.

Also at the function, Najib presented Aircraft Maintenance Licence to 47 students, including 29 children of Felda settlers, who had successfully completed the programme.

Najib also witnessed the conferment of the Approved Training Organisation Award to Malaysia Airlines Engineering and Dialog Training Services.

