

# Airport upgrade to drive Perak's economic growth

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**IPOH:** The upgrading of Sultan Azlan Shah Airport is set to significantly boost trade, industry and tourism, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"In the past, when we wanted to expand the airport, efforts were hindered as there were very few flights from Kuala Lumpur to Ipoh.

"But now, we are thinking more broadly with routes from Senai in Johor, from Singapore, and possibly expanding to other areas such as Kota Kinabalu and Kuching," he said.

The plan is another effort by Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) to enhance the airport's capability, Anwar said when launching the upgrading of Sultan Azlan Shah Airport yesterday.

"When we look at the national budget, the cost of developing transport infrastructure is extremely high be it highways, the East Coast Rail Link or air-

ports. "But we have no choice but to proceed because it is strategic for the nation's development and also for the tourism sector," he explained.

The Prime Minister said upgrading the airport, for example, would provide opportunities for MAHB without burdening the government's financial resources.

The government had approved an allocation of RM60mil for the expansion project and once completed, the airport is expected to accommodate a minimum of 700,000 passengers annually compared to the 500,000 at present.

The upgrade includes a cargo terminal spanning over 10ha of land owned by the Perak State Development Corporation, located near the airport.

The Prime Minister also spoke on the tariffs announced by the United States.

"In my discussions with Asean leaders, and more recently with the President of China, we have reached a consensus.

"The most important step is to



**Hello there:**  
Anwar chatting with airport staff after the launch.  
— Bernama

build our domestic capabilities. We must instil public confidence that we can be self-reliant and that we can grow using our own strengths," he said.

Anwar said at the same time, efforts are being put in to expand networks in Asean, Asia, Australia, Japan and Korea while also opening new markets in Europe.

At another event, the Prime Minister warned that there is no

room for negative behaviour, including bullying in the country's education system.

"It is vital that discipline in schools improves. We continue to hear reports of misconduct, students mocking one another, hurling insults, or discriminating based on skin colour or ethnicity.

"This is not the behaviour of educated individuals," he said at the "Santuni Kasih" programme

with students from the Tambun parliamentary constituency at SMJK Poi Lam.

Anwar also stressed the importance of unity, stating divisive thinking would only weaken and destroy the nation.

At the event, Berjaya Group founder Tan Sri Vincent Tan contributed RM1mil to assist 2,000 underprivileged students from 15 schools in the constituency.