

AirAsia: Not leaving LCCT until all issues resolved

Kinibiz.com

Apr 1, 2014

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AirAsia is refusing to move out of the low-cost carrier terminal (LCCT) despite a statement by the deputy transport minister that the terminal will be closed by May 9 with all budget flights moved to klia2.

“Referring to the recent report on LCCT closure on May 9, 2014, AirAsia would like to clarify that all AirAsia and AirAsia X operations will still be based at the current LCC Terminal even after May 9 due to a number of unresolved pressing issues that still need to be addressed,” said the budget airline in a statement this evening.

The deputy minister of transport Aziz Kaprawi earlier today said the LCCT would be closed by May 9, one week after the new terminal’s scheduled opening date of May 2.

AirAsia did not state specific reasons for the apprehension over the transfer of budget flights to the newly built klia2, which has been beset with ballooning costs and numerous delays.

“Although AirAsia is prepared to move to klia2, the transfer will only be carried out after all the issues are addressed,” the budget airline said.

The “issues” appear to be related to allegations of construction flaws in the new terminal.

“The recent Ikram Premier Consulting findings on the readiness of klia2 has revealed that there are depressions on the taxiway/apron and runway which will necessitate periodic remedial measures to be undertaken on relevant areas.

“This will prove to be operationally disruptive to a hub airline such as AirAsia Group which has about 400 aircraft movements in a day and at least 70 aircraft in its fleet in LCCT. Last year alone the Group carried 22 million passengers via LCCT,” the airline said.

“We believe it is crucial to ensure that whole remedial steps are undertaken prior to a transfer, which will mitigate risks relating to any potential aviation incidents,” AirAsia warned.

AirAsia not confident klia2 can open on time

AirAsia claimed the Operational Readiness & Airport Transfer (ORAT) period for a transfer to support the size of AirAsia’s operations would be substantially more than the two months prescribed by Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB).

Anything less, according to AirAsia, is “unrealistic and overly-optimistic.” The airline added, “even the ORAT for the transfer from KLIA Main Terminal to LCCT in 2006 took longer than 2 months when AirAsia’s operations were significantly smaller.”

“Further to that, there are other key commercial, operational and contractual open items which are still undergoing discussions between AirAsia and MAHB which need to be resolved prior the transfer to klia2,” said the airline without specifics.

“The move to KLIA2 is imminent, however it will only be carried out after all issues are addressed,” said AirAsia Bhd CEO Aireen Omar. “We appeal to the Prime Minister for the benefit of the 12,000 AirAsia Allstars – for a fully functional airport where we can continue to work

hard to make flying affordable for over 20 million Malaysians who have benefited from the low cost carrier business model.”

“We have addressed the above issues to MAHB and relevant authorities. AirAsia will be making an official announcement and inform all of its guests once we are ready to proceed with the move to klia2,” she added.

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