

AirAsia seeks PM's intervention on KLIA2
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AirAsia has appealed for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's intervention in Putrajaya's attempt to cease operations of the low-cost carrier terminal (LCCT) by May 9.

In a press release today, AirAsia CEO Aireen Omar said her company was not deliberately trying to delay the move to KLIA2, but there are many concerns over the new airport which has yet to be resolved.

"There are many concerns, especially on functionality, safety and security of KLIA2 which are paramount to our staff working efficiently and for our passengers to have a seamless travel experience," she said.

She said AirAsia, as a regional hub player and KLIA2's anchor tenant, expects to carry 24 million passengers to Malaysia and thus the company must ensure that the new airport is fully functional without possibility of interruptions.

In view of this, Aireen said Najib's intervention is "crucial" in resolving this "national issue".

"KLIA2 has the potential to be a global aviation hub, just like Dubai. AirAsia, as the largest low cost carrier in the region can and will contribute towards making that a reality, directly elevating the nation's aviation industry as a whole.

"As a major contributor to Malaysia's economy, AirAsia must be given a voice as we are the main user of KLIA2. AirAsia looks forward to resolve this issue as soon as possible," she said.

Deadline 'unreasonable'

Yesterday, Deputy Transport Minister Aziz Kaprawi said LCCT, AirAsia's current base, would be closed on May 9, while KLIA2 would begin operations on May 2.

In an immediate response to this, AirAsia said the deadline was unreasonable as the company's operations would take at least two months to relocate and there are many unresolved problems with KLIA2.

Previously, the Department of Civil Aviation had admitted that there are superficial cracks on the KLIA2 runway and taxiway. AirAsia said this must be rectified before the airport begins operations.

However, Putrajaya is keen on seeing KLIA2 begin operations as soon as possible as the project completion has been delayed since 2011.

There are also concerns about cost-overruns as the original price tag for KLIA2 was RM1.6

billion, but the bill has is now in the RM4 billion range.

KLIA2 is owned by Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB). Putrajaya's investment arm Khazanah Nasional Bhd hold a 40 percent stake in MAHB while Employees Provident Fund holds a 12 percent stake.

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