

## **Only approval-in-principle from MPFN for Kulim Airport - Wee**

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PUTRAJAYA, Oct 30 -- The National Physical Planning Council (MPFN) has merely approved in principle the Kulim International Airport (KXP) development project, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said today.

He said the approval-in-principle, given on Oct 27, was subject to further consideration by the Transport Ministry (MOT) and other government agencies including the Finance Ministry, Home Ministry, Department of Environment, the Royal Malaysian Air Force and Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM).

Wee said the KXP proposal was also subject to the findings of the National Airports Strategic Plan (NASP), which will commence early next year for all 42 existing airports in the country and those in the proposal stage.

"The final approval for the KXP development proposal will only be considered at the conclusion of the NASP study," he said in a statement.

The proposal would also need to comply with all pre-conditions set by the agencies involved, which are noted in technical reports such as the Environmental Impact Assessments, Social Impact Assessments and Traffic Impact Assessments, he said.

He was clarifying a statement by Kedah Menteri Besar Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor on Oct 28 regarding the "approval" for KXP.

Muhammad Sanusi had said the construction for KXP was officially approved during the MPFN meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, and according to him, this was the first official approval for the project since it was proposed in 2014.

In response to that, Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said on Oct 29 that the KXP project had only been tabled to the MPFN for advice, and its progress status was the same as that for the Penang South Reclamation (PSR) project.

Elaborating on the matter, Wee said the KXP project owner would be requested to provide the pertinent information to the NASP consultants with realistic and accurate projections, especially pertaining to passenger and cargo service demands and airlines that have committed to KXP, particularly during the post-COVID-19 era.

He said the basis for the KXP development proposal used by the project proponent was to complement passenger and cargo handling, currently provided by the Penang International Airport (PEN).

"In this regard, it is prudent to review the proposed development of KXP at a time when PEN is nearing maximum handling capacity. Therefore, the passenger and cargo demands must be based on robust and reliable facts and data which takes into account PEN's maximum capacity and the viability of the KXP project," he said.

Wee said the MOT welcomed all proposals from both state governments and the private sector to build airports.

However, he stressed that the MOT was duty-bound to ensure that these projects were viable and sustainable as well as fulfill all technical requirements established by CAAM and the Malaysian Aviation Commission (MAVCOM).

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