

## **'Govt will not rename klia2'**

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'Unnecessary' : Terminal is registered as part of KLIA's 'KUL' code says minister

KUALA LUMPUR: The government insisted yesterday it will not rename Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (klia2). Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, in a snub to AirAsia, said its proposal to rename it as Low-Cost Carrier Terminal 2 (LCCT2) was both unnecessary and impractical.

"In the International Air Transport Association, klia2 is registered as part of KLIA's official code, namely 'KUL'," he said. "It is neither necessary, nor practical, nor accurate to rename klia2."

"Names should not be changed for the sake of changing," he said in a statement, adding the current polemics were unnecessary. The row over the renaming of klia2 escalated this week after AirAsia vowed that it would not budge from calling the terminal as LCCT2, saying that it must be re-positioned as a low-cost terminal.

AirAsia chief executive officer Aireen Omar said on Tuesday it would be a wake-up call for AirAsia to be recognised as a key player in the low-cost carrier sector not just in Malaysia but also in Asean.

AirAsia group CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes, in an interview with the NST this week, said klia2 should be positioned as the Dubai of the East, a major Asian hub for low-cost flights.

In dismissing AirAsia's calls, Liow said klia2 served as part of the government's plans to position Malaysia as an aviation hub, regionally and internationally. KLIA, klia2, as well as the upcoming KLIA Aeropolis, he said, were crucial drivers of the plan to develop an integrated, connected and competitive KLIA Hub system.

"Furthermore, the brand name klia2 has been in use since its inception, for two years now," he said. Liow, however, said the Transport Ministry acknowledged AirAsia's intention to brand klia2 as a low-cost terminal, as part of its efforts to bring more travellers to Malaysia.

"We are open to hearing from them on the proposals they may have in place in order to position KLIA2 internationally, as a leading low-cost terminal to spur the nation's tourism and aviation industries." The government, Liow said, had always supported the nation's low-cost carriers, particularly AirAsia.

"We are glad to have played a role in AirAsia's growth to become one of the world's largest low-cost airlines. "This includes the provision of incentives such as lower passenger service charges.

Indeed, we are committed to continue supporting and providing such incentives to encourage the growth of Malaysia's low-cost airlines sector." Liow called on all parties in

the aviation sector which are currently debate the issue, he said they must collaborate and work together for the benefit of the country and its people.

Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) managing director Datuk Badlisham Ghazali said klia2 formed part of the main airport hub for Malaysia under KLIA.

“Renaming klia2 does a disservice to our national efforts to position us as an aviation hub to attract airlines and passengers via Malaysia,” he told NST. “We trust this puts an end to this matter,” he said.

A source close to MAHB’s management said the company had already consulted its lawyers on the issue. The source said MAHB was already looking at their legal options if AirAsia forged ahead with its plan to rebrand the airport.

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