

Wee's first task of the day

PUTRAJAYA: Newly minted Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong's first task would be looking into ways to handle the impact of Covid-19 on the transportation industry. The MCA president said his ministry would compile data on the cancellation of flights by the main airlines in the country due to the outbreak. Dr Wee said the matter was among those discussed in the first Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday morning. He said that apart from transportation, other industries such as tourism and related sectors are also being impacted by Covid-19.

"I have been tasked with getting the Transport Ministry to prepare notes that are clear enough to look at the effects from Covid-19 that can be used as a reference by other ministries such as Finance, so we can come up with strategies to handle the impact. "That will be my initial task as a minister," Dr Wee said at a press conference shortly after clocking in at his ministry accompanied by his deputy Hasbi Habibollah. They were greeted by the ministry's secretary-general, Datuk Isham Ishak.

Dr Wee said initial reports had shown that local airlines have had many flight cancellations. Malaysia Airlines has cancelled about 63% of its flights, AirAsia cancelled about 70% while Malindo Air suspended 510 flights due to Covid-19, he said, adding that the ministry wanted to zoom in to the destinations affected by these cancellations. He said the ministry would also be calling top officials from the airlines to get detailed information. While the first task entrusted to him is heavy, Dr Wee is confident that his team at the ministry can work together and deliver.

Meanwhile, Dr Wee said he had also contacted, and had been contacted by, some former transport ministers such as Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, Tan Sri Kong Cho Ha and Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein for their input. "I believe they have done a lot during their tenure as Transport Minister, so we will listen to their input and whatever good policies, we will continue. We will do what is necessary," he added.

Asked if he would receive views from his immediate predecessor Anthony Loke, Dr Wee said he had no qualms doing so as he believed policies that were good would be continued while others would be looked into for enhancement. "We will take into account views from everyone, including the public," he said..