

'Merger good for aviation biz'

PUTRAJAYA : The decision to merge the Malaysian Aviation Commission (Mavcom) with the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) was made in the best interest of the industry, says Anthony Loke. The Transport Minister said the Cabinet believed the merger would empower CAAM financially as the aviation industry's main regulator. "The past government thought differently, but this present government thinks a merged entity will serve the aviation industry best. "We want to empower the CAAM as the main regulator of the aviation industry. In many other countries, there is only one aviation authority that grants licences. They do not have separate entities for that. "CAAM has its own independence. Although it is a government statutory body, it is not a department under the Transport Ministry. They have their own board of directors and they set their own regulations. This merger will empower them, " said Loke, at a press conference here after launching the #JOMTEKSI initiative by Touch 'n Go at Putrajaya Sentral here.

Loke was responding to criticisms that the merger was not in the best interests of the public. The minister also said in the long run, the merger would help upgrade Malaysia's aviation safety rating back to Category 1. Last month, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) downgraded Malaysia to Category 2 after CAAM failed the FAA's aviation safety oversight audit.

"One of the reasons for the downgrade by FAA was because CAAM does not have enough financial capability and could not hire the best qualified technical personnel. "When we do this merger, we will ensure that we would empower CAAM financially. They will be given more power in terms of setting fees. "In the long run, they will have financial independence and can hire better, " said Loke.

Meanwhile, Loke praised TNG Digital, which is responsible for the Touch 'n Go eWallet, for helping taxi drivers innovate in the digital age through the #JOMTEKSI initiative. "This initiative is in line with the government's goal to get people ready to embrace a cashless society. That is why the government allocated RM450mil in Budget 2020 with an aim to get 15 million Malaysians to use the eWallet technology, " he said.

Under the #JOMTEKSI initiative, 22 drivers chosen as its ambassadors will see their cars equipped with 4G Wi-Fi connectivity by Yes 4G as well as Touch 'n Go eWallet cashless

payment options for its passengers. “We want our taxi industry to change and transform. If they do not adopt to digital technologies, they will lose out. They are already facing a lot of challenges with the emergence of e-hailing services, ” he said.

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