



OPENING OF JAKARTA AIRPORT'S NEW TERMINAL 3 DELAYED OVER SAFETY CONCERNS

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The opening of the new terminal at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport has been delayed for at least two weeks after the authorities deemed the facility unfit to welcome its first travellers, media reports said.

A first phase opening of the new "Terminal 3 Ultimate" had been scheduled for Monday, initially serving passengers on domestic and international flights by national carrier Garuda.

But Transportation Ministry officials decided it would be "too risky for the terminal to operate with back-up electricity still not online, a disrupted view from air traffic control tower to apron, incomplete signs and dysfunctional toilets," Jakarta Globe reported on Sunday (June 19).

Transportation Minister Ignasius Jonan had expressed concerns over ground safety during a visit to the terminal last Tuesday, Jakarta Post reported.

The ministry will conduct another inspection of the 4.7 trillion rupiah (\$477 million) facility on Monday before a new opening date can be set, state airport operator Angkasa Pura II said

according to the reports.

"It's likely the operation will be postponed until after Idul Fitri," Angkasa Pura II operations and engineering director Djoko Murjatmodjo told the Jakarta Globe.

Eid Idul Fitri is the Muslim holiday marking the end of the Ramadan month of fasting. Celebrated as Hari Raya Puasa in Singapore, the holiday falls on July 6 this year.

Addressing the problems raised by the ministry, Mr Djoko told Jakarta Globe the state airport operator has back-up facilities to ensure operations at the new terminal remain uninterrupted in the event of a power outage, which he claimed is a rare occurrence in the region.

The operator has also set up a portable mobile air traffic control tower to support the main control tower in monitoring "blind spots" at some of the aprons of Terminal 3 Ultimate.

But during its final check on Thursday, the Transportation Ministry deemed the borrowed tower insufficient to meet civil aviation safety regulations, the Jakarta Post reported.

Covering 422,804 sq m, the new terminal is slightly larger than Changi Airport's Terminal 3 and will have 10 gates for international flights and 18 for domestic ones, two four-star hotels, meeting rooms, duty-free shops, retail outlets, restaurants and multi-storey carparks.

There will be skytrains to shuttle passengers between all three terminals, and commuter trains to take them to the city in less than an hour.

An automated baggage handling system featuring at least 13 conveyor belts, 206 check-in counters, 38 self check-in and 12 bag drop counters, are expected to lead to swift clearance and shorter queues.

Angkasa Pura II had planned for Terminal 3 Ultimate to go fully operational in March next year and serve international flights from other carriers including Air France, China Airlines and Dutch carrier KLM.

It is also expected to become the only arrival and departure point for international passengers in future.

When fully operational, the new terminal will be able to handle some 25 million passengers a year, which will add to the 52 million that currently pass through Soekarno-Hatta's other two terminals.

Indonesian officials hope that with the opening of the new terminal, Soekarno-Hatta will be able to rival Changi as well as Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), and lure international passengers to choose Jakarta as a transit point.

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