

AIRPORTS

B39bn Don Mueang 3rd phase gets nod

POST REPORTERS

The Airports of Thailand Plc (AoT) board has approved a master plan for the third-phase development of Don Mueang airport costing an estimated 39 billion baht, a source at the AoT said yesterday.

The expansion scheme, which will increase the airport's capacity to 40 million passengers a year — up from 30 million at present, includes a 3.4-kilometre automated people mover system (APM), 12 parking bays, a junction terminal offering retail space and car park buildings.

The APM system will boost the airport's capacity to handle increasing passenger numbers and should also ease congestion at the airport, which has caused spill-over traffic jams on the adjacent Vibhavadi Rangsit Road.

The planned new junction terminal will cover 100,000 square metres and incorporate commercial space to boost the airport's non-aviation income by 40% to 50%.

According to the source, the development plan will be submitted to the Transport Ministry and the National Economic and Social Development Council for review before it goes to the cabinet for approval.

Changes to the project will be

included in the environmental impact assessment report to be considered by the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand. The bidding for the third-phase development project is expected to take place within this year at the earliest.

The source said the AoT board has also approved the outcome of bidding for duty-free pick-up counters at Don Mueang airport. King Power Development won the bid to operate duty-free pick-up counters for 10 years and three months, from Oct 1, 2022 to Dec 31, 2032.

The board has also proposed relief measures to help airlines cushion the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak in line with the Transport Ministry's policy. The airlines have been hit by dwindling passenger traffic since the onset of the outbreak.

The proposed measures include a 50% cut in landing fees and parking fees for domestic flights and international flights from and to countries heavily affected by the virus outbreak.

However, the proposal will have to be approved by the cabinet before it takes effect.

According to the source, the board has also approved a proposal to buy Covid-19 health insurance for staff working at six airports under AoT supervision.