TAOYUAN AIRPORT PLANNING FOR EXPECTED GROWTH

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Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport is planning to introduce several new procedures that are likely to expand its capacity to 45 million passengers per year by 2018, as it seeks to deal with an estimated 10 percent annual growth in passenger traffic, the airport operator said Thursday.

The focus will be mainly on improving boarding efficiency by installing more self service facilities for passenger check-in processing and bag drops, said Fei Hourng-jiun, chief executive officer of Taoyuan Airport Corp.

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For instance, up to 10 bag drop kiosks could be installed at Taipei Main Station when the new MRT line between Taipei and the Taoyuan airport opens next March, he said.

That would allow passengers to check their luggage even before they arrive at the airport, and has the potential to increase the airport's annual capacity by 1 million passengers, Fei said.

"We hope to increase use of the automatic boarding process to about 20 percent of the total number of passengers by 2018," Fei said.

Currently, about 95 percent of the passengers at the Taoyuan airport rely on ground staff to process their luggage, he said.

At present, the airport's Terminal 1 is capable of handling 15 million passengers a year, while the capacity of Terminal 2 is 17 million, statistics show.

The plan is to increase capacity to around 45 million passengers a year by 2018, Fei said.

He said there were 35 million arrivals and departures at the airport last year, and the annual number is likely to grow to 100 million by 2042, which is why the airport must plan ahead.

The plans include expanding Terminal 2, building two more terminals, creating more shopping areas and adding another 5,000 parking spaces, he said.

Passenger arrivals and departures at the country's main gateway are estimated to grow about 10 percent per year as a result of increased tourism since the launch of direct flights between Taiwan and mainland China and the visa-free treatment granted to Taiwan nationals by an increasing number of countries, the airport operator said.

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