THAILAND LAUNCHES AUTOMATED PASSPORT CONTROL

Starting December 15, Suvarnabhumi Airport in Thailand will implement an automated passport control system. The objective is to ease congestion at boarding gates, enabling passengers to board more quickly. Additionally, the system will employ technology for outbound passenger screening, allowing immigration officials to focus on arrival checks.

The government has implemented this measure as part of its policy to enhance the comfort of tourists.

Under the directive of Prime Minister Setha Thavisin, the Immigration Authority has been tasked with enhancing the existing system and introducing automated passport control at Suvarnabhumi Airport.

The main objective of this system is to expedite passenger departure by incorporating passenger screening technology.

Previously, the automated channel was only available to Thai passport holders, but it will now be accessible to foreign travelers.

In preparation for the upcoming New Year's festivities, the Bureau of Immigration is working on system upgrades and procedural adjustments to meet the December 15 deadline. Police Lt. Gen. Chengron Rimphadee, head of the Immigration Bureau 2, explained that by expanding the automated channel for foreign nationals, the airport's outbound passenger handling capacity would double from 5,000 to approximately 12,000 passengers per hour.

The new system aims to reduce the steps in the departure process. However, it keeps the necessary security checks for wanted criminals, those banned from leaving the country, and those who overstay their visas.

Airports of Thailand (AOT) is upgrading its automated channel systems at Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang airports to replace the 12-year-old systems. The new facility at Suvarnabhumi will feature 40 machines for international departures, a significant increase from the current 16 machines. Additionally, the arrival and departure channels at Don Mueang Airport will be replaced with updated systems that promise to be more modern, accurate, and faster.

General Chengron emphasized the importance of manual controls for international arrivals to ensure national security. The installation of additional departure machines in the future will also increase the number of staff responsible for passport control on arrival. This will help cope with the peak passenger influx.

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