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Ramli: State has sufficient forest reserves

IPOH, Tues. - Perak has about one million hectares of permanent forest reserves and there is no need to open up new wildlife parks, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said.

Ramli said the State had not reached a stage where it had to open up land for agriculture and industrial use in forest reserves adding this would only be carried out if the need arose.

He said even logging was only carried out in specific areas designated by the federal Forestry Department under the sustainable forest development concept.

He was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent call to State governments to consider setting up their own wildlife parks.

The Prime Minister had said although wildlife conservation was necessary, it should not be at the expense of development or people's livelihood.

On Belum forest, another wildlife sanctuary, Ramli said "we have to be cautious in our approach since it is located at the border between Malaysia and Thailand.

"The public is not allowed to move in freely and this will ensure that it will flourish," he told reporters at a Hari Raya open house hosted by Yayasan Perak at the Town hall.

The 290,000ha forest area is maintained as a wildlife sanctuary.

Recently, the Wildlife and National Parks Department director Sahir Osman said an estimated 200 elephants, 100 tigers, 100 seladangs and 15 rhinoceroses lived in Perak jungles.

Most of these animals and others are found in the Belum forest.

The only gazetted animal sanctuary is a 8,000ha site in Sungkai.

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