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Theme park to spearhead north Perak's tourism sector

TAIPING, Sun. - The northern region's first water theme park at Bukit Merah Lake Town is expected to spearhead the development of Perak's Northern Industrial Corridor, especially in the tourism industry.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said the soft opening of the theme park early this year had shown the project's potential in becoming a popular tourist destination.

Speaking to newsmen after a working visit to the township today, Ramli said he was impressed with the progress made by the developer of the project and predicted that the park would become a big hit with families and children.

The Menteri Besar's visit was in preparation for the official opening of the theme park by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Thursday.

The theme park is the first phase of the RM1 billion Bukit Merah lakeside development covering 600ha of waterfront land and carried out by Segi Objektif (M) Sdn Bhd, a member of the Emkay Group of Companies.

Accompanying Ramli was State Tourism and Women's Affairs Committee chairman Datuk Mazidah Zakaria and Emkay's executive chairman Datuk Mustapha Kamal Abu Bakar.

Occupying an area approximately 4.4 hectares and overlooking the 2,800ha Bukit Merah Lake, the park is being developed at a cost of RM20 million.

Construction, which commenced in October last year, is scheduled for completion early next year. The park is designed to cater for one million visitors annually with some 300,000 expected in the first year alone.

Ramli said since the water theme park was opened to the public, 300,000 people including foreign tourists had visited it.

He said compared with Pangkor, which attracted about one million tourists yearly, the theme park had managed to lure the same number in 11 months.

He said with the development of Bukit Merah Lake Town, the State Government was planning to develop a chain of tourist spots near the township to bring visitors to other parts of Taiping.

He added that Bukit Merah Lake Town would complement Taiping which already had various tourist attractions such as the Kuala Gula Bird Sanctuary and the Matang Mangrove Forest.

Besides the park, Phase One of the development, which costs RM170 million, includes the construction of a marine village, a 174-room family hotel and recreational facilities.

The development is located near the Bukit Merah interchange and is a mere 35-minute drive from the Penang Bridge and about an hour from Ipoh.

(END)