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Zon expects to draw 12,000 visitors a day

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THE Johor Baru Duty Free Complex (Zon) expects to draw in at least 12,000 visitors a day, the majority of which it hopes will be foreign tourists.

The RM300 million integrated duty free complex was developed by Kelana Megah Sdn Bhd, a member of the public listed Sriwani Holdings Bhd. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to officially open the complex today.

Sriwani executive director Razak Yahya said in the last eight months about 800,000 people have come to Zon, of whom 40 per cent were foreigners and the remainder Malaysians.

"We are working hard to attract more foreign tourist here, and are aiming for a 70:30 per cent mix between foreigners and locals" he said at a press conference in Johor Baru yesterday.

Razak said one of the measures taken is to link up with agents so that a visit to the Zon is included in the itinerary of the tourists they handle.

Zon is a one stop duty free shopping, dining and entertainment, transportation and accomodation haven complete with meeting and convention facilities. It is located 2km from the Johor Baru-Singapore Causeway and is easily accessible by road, air or sea.

Razak said Sriwani is putting all its resources to back up the Zon and relies on the internal strengths of its member companies that are participating actively in the project.

About 50 per cent of the retail space is occouped by Cergasjaya Sdn Bhd which has been managing Sriwani's duty free complex in Bukit Kayu Hitam for over 10 years. General Manager Law Teng How said about 60 per cent of the products on sale are made in Malaysia, in line with the Government's call to promote Malaysian-made goods.

The Zon's food and beverage outlets including the Eden Floating Palace are managed by Second Board listed Eden Enterprises (M) Bhd.

The group's transportation arm, Sriwani Tours & Travel, which manages two catamarans and ferry terminal at Zon, is already a prominent maritime recreation operator at Pulau Payar off the coast of Langkawi.

Razak said the group's focus in the Southern region of Peninsular Malaysia is to take advantage of the close cooperation between Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore under the SIJORI (Singapore-Johor-Riau) growth triangle.

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