

Tioman set to woo visitors

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. Pulau Tioman, which will be made a duty-free island, is set to become a major destination for tourists to Malaysia.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said programmes have been drawn up to develop Tioman into an attractive island for tourism.

“We will be relocating the squatters at the beach and those staying on the beach reserve areas, cleaning the rivers and also build some of the main roads on the island,” he said.

Detailed programmes on the development of the island would be made after intensive discussion with the Tioman Development Authority.

Speaking after the pre-launch of the first and only Arabic Shopping and Tourism Directory Malaysia edition 2002/2003 today, Kadir said he welcomed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad’s announcement on the duty-free status for Tioman and expressed confidence of its success.

Tioman, said to be one of the **10** most beautiful islands in the world, will be the third island with the duty-free status after Langkawi and Labuan.

The *NST* reported yesterday the decision to accord the status to Tioman, located off Pahang, was made to allow it to compete with Pulau Bintan and Batam in attracting tourists from Singapore.

Meanwhile the Arabic Shopping and Tourism Directory Malaysia is an effort by IMAF Sdn Bhd to make Malaysia known in the Arab world so that more people would be aware of the country’s potential.

The directory, in Arabic, provides important tourist information, listing of services, highlights of places, special features or advertorials and special events in Malaysia.

IMAF executive chairman Akram Youseff said Malaysia’s potential was “not just as a place to visit but also as a place to do business.”

In **Kuantan**, the **Pahang** Government said it would give priority to the environment and interests of locals in drafting a structural plan for Tioman.

It would also give special attention to the infrastructure on the island such as transportation and food outlets, State Culture, Arts, Tourism and Women’s Affairs committee chairman Maznah Mazlan **said** today.

She said the people of Tioman, especially small business operators, would not be left out.

“The State government, through the Town Planning Department, will be drawing up a structure plan for the island.”