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Maznah-Tioman

DON'T BE GREEDY, TIOMAN RESIDENTS TOLD

PULAU TIOMAN, Sept 19 (Bernama) -- A Pahang state executive councillor has urged residents of Pulau Tioman, which became duty-free last Sept 1, not to be greedy and succumb to tempting offers for their land.

Instead, the land owners should exercise patience as the Pahang government had plans to systematically develop the island, said Datuk Maznah Mazlan, who is the State Culture, Arts and Tourism Committee chairman.

She said the state government would regulate any development on the resort island to safeguard the interest of residents as well as its environmental conservation.

"The state government will lay out a development plan which provides business and public zones apart from infrastructures which will have no adverse effects on local residents and the environment," she told newsmen here yesterday.

The move to make Pulau Tioman Malaysia's third duty-free island, after Labuan and Langkawi, was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad early this year.

Maznah said the state government would spent RM30 million to develop only nine per cent of the island's land, and this did not include its hills, jungles and beaches.

She said this was the government's development strategy as it wanted to conserve Tioman's environment in order to woo more tourists.

Pulau Tioman, located 36 nautical miles from Tanjung Gemok, Rompin, has a population of 3,201 who stay in settlements like Kampung Salang, Air Batang, Tekek, Genting, Mukut, Lanting, Nipah and Juara.

Maznah said: "Some people here do not quite understand what duty-free means. They think that the island will be an instant commercial centre but the government wants it to be an international eco-tourism destination".

She said residents affected by the development projects would be relocated to low-cost housing areas and the projects were expected to commence during the monsoon season when only a few tourists visited Tioman.

-- BERNAMA

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