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Port-Housing

PORT SPENDS RM87 MILLION ON HOUSING FOR TANJUNG KUPANG VILLAGERS

JOHOR BAHRU, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- After earning accolade from the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Monday for exemplary management, the Tanjung Pelepas Port (TPP) also merits praise as a caring corporate citizen.

Dubbed the world's most rapidly expanding port, the TPP's compassionate attribute comes in the shape of a RM87-million housing scheme it is building for 450 residents in Tanjung Kupang whose land was acquired to make way for the port.

A 32-ha site is being transformed into the self-contained Desa Paya Mengkuang housing estate complete with a police station and quarters for officers and men, schools, a health clinic and a-1,000 capacity mosque, among other facilities.

Nearing completion and due for occupation in June, the houses, though not erected for free, are offered at concessionary and irresistible prices to the affected residents.

A four-roomed double-storey terrace house, for example, is offered at RM94,000 against RM210,000 in the open market while a three-roomed unit, at RM25,000 compared to its market price of RM85,000.

As such affordability should not be a problem given that the residents had earlier received compensation running up to hundreds of thousand ringgit for their land.

Baharom Abdul Ghani, the Johor state assemblyman for Tanjung Kupang who officiated at the sales launch for the houses here yesterday, said TPP could afford to offer the units at such prices as it was the project developer and financier.

"The project is also instrumental in alleviating resettlement of villagers displaced by land acquisition for the port's development," he told Bernama.

The housing estate comprises 193 low-cost double-storey terrace units, 155 four-roomed double-storey units, 55 single-storey terrace units and 28 units of shophouses.

TPP chairman Datuk Mohamed Taufik Abdullah said it did not mind financing the entire project in return for the residents' major sacrifice for the sake of TPP's development.

"It is a big sacrifice on their part to ensure that our port could be built fast," he said.

The project was the outcome of TPP's consultation with the state government which endorsed that the affected residents be resettled not far from their original plot, he said.

"A state government committee determines the prices for the units," Mohamed Taufik said.

Tanjung Kupang penghulu Mohamad Yassin Hassan said the TPP's gesture proved that with will and determination there was no reason for corporate entities to abscond their social obligations.

"TPP has done it convincingly and in good faith... it not only pays us compensation but also builds the homes for us. Over and above that it offers the residents the units cheaply," he said.

Despite being inevitably transformed into a concrete establishment, Desa Paya Mengkuang, as the name suggests, looks set to retain the serenity and beauty of Tanjung Kupang's rural life.

"Perhaps more importantly Desa Paya Mengkuang will serve as an

embodiment of a successful privatisation project of which the spillovers much benefit the masses," Mohamad Yassin added.

-- BERNAMA

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