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TheStar EXCLUSIVE

Flowering forest park

Waiting to bloom: The star attraction at the Seven Lakes Project will be Tecoma trees similar to these found in Sentul. The trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of purple, pink and white usually bloom between March and April.
— IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/ The Star

New recreational area surrounding seven lakes in north Kuala Lumpur will feature colourful plants and shrubs

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KUALA Lumpur folk will soon be able to enjoy a new city park measuring 231.48ha, comprising seven lakes and ponds.

It will be located at the northern end of the city near the Batu Metropolitan Park and Intan Baiduri people's housing project.

Among its features will be pedestrian walkways, jogging tracks and bicycle lanes that will cover a distance of 62.5km connecting Sentul, Tasik Titiwangsa, KLCC, and ending at Taman Eko Rimba, Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve.

Projek 7 Tasik (Seven Lakes Project) as it is called, will take about five years to complete and will be sponsored by Albukhary

Foundation as part of its corporate social responsibility programme.

It will be built around seven flood retention ponds in the area, which will be transformed into a flowering forest city focusing on pollinating plants and shrubs.

The crown jewel of the project is the miles and miles of huge flowering tabebuia rosea trees popularly known as the Tecoma, the Malaysian version of the Sakura tree.

The Tecoma's trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of purple, pink and white usually bloom between March and April. These trees will be one of several plant species at the park.

Speaking to *StarMetro*, Federal Territories Minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa said the project was vital to combat green-

house gas emissions and to help in the push for the three Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan to become low-carbon cities.

"Kuala Lumpur is facing space constraints. This is the reality. So wherever we find open space, we plant trees and build parks in line with the city's Low-Carbon Society Blueprint.

"The first phase will focus on planting 100 trees, including Tecoma, at the Batu flood retention pond as part of the launch tomorrow," he said, adding that more trees would be planted in other areas in the next few months.

"Apart from Batu pond, six nearby lakes will also be transformed into a sanctuary in the city for nature lovers," he added.

The lakes are Taman Tasik Metropolitan

Kepong, Tasik Intan Baiduri, Kolam 99, Kolam Seri Murni, Kolam Nanyang and Kolam Taman Wahyu.

Annuar said he wanted families to be able to cycle from the park at Batu pond and as they travel from one lake to another, they would encounter different types of trees from the pink and purple Tecoma, to the bright yellow golden showers, the orange flame of the forest and *bunga Tanjung* or Spanish Cherry as it is referred to in English.

"We want people to come here and relax with their families, jog, cycle, walk and spend quality time so that when they go home, they will be rejuvenated and energised.

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Bird's eye view of some of the seven flood retention ponds that will be given a new lease of life under the Seven Lakes Project. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

Mining ponds will become green spaces under project

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"I am aware how climate change is affecting cities, the rising heat and carbon emissions, pollution and flooding; that is why we feel urban parks like these are important."

"We are committed to building these city gardens wherever there is available land, no matter how small," he said.

Annuar said the project was also to support Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's national tree-planting campaign launched on Jan 5 as part of the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry's target to plant 100 million trees nationwide within four years.

"In Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan we pledge to plant one million trees from now to 2025 and the respective local authorities and agencies will be involved in selecting the areas to plant them," he added.

The first phase of the project will involve planting trees, while the second phase will be the construction of infrastructure to be carried out by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

DBKL will manage and main-

"The only way to tackle climate change is to build more parks and plant more trees."

Tan Sri Annuar Musa



tain the Batu pond and construct the bicycle tracks in the Albukhary Foundation-funded project.

The project is estimated to cost RM10mil.

Meanwhile, the city's old and disused tin mining ponds will also be turned into green spaces as part of the Seven Lakes Project.

According to a DBKL spokesperson, Kuala Lumpur has 18 such ponds and lakes that have the potential for rejuvenation.

"We are looking at this too and other parts of the city that are currently being identified for the tree planting," he said.

In January, *StarMetro* reported Annuar's commitment to increase public open spaces in Kuala Lumpur.

This was in relation to a proposal to degazette a 3.86ha plot of land sandwiched between the Taman Intan Baiduri lake and Sungai Jinjang.

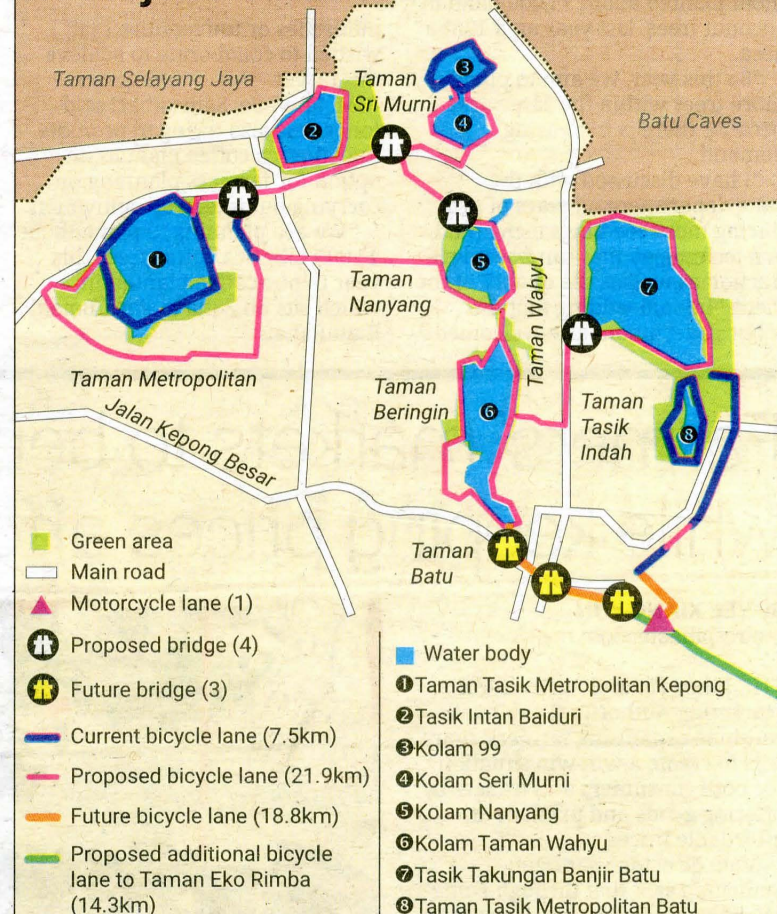
The authorities degazetted the land reserved for public space to accommodate a proposed mixed development that included an affordable housing scheme.

The proposal was met with concern among stakeholders who were worried about the loss of recreational space.



City folk taking photos under the beautiful blooms of Tecoma trees in Sentul.

Proposed outline of Projek 7 Tasik



Source: DBKL

TheStar graphics