

Building vibrant liveable cities

FT Ministry maps out projects for Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan

By JAROD LIM
jarodlim@thestar.com.my

THE Covid-19 pandemic is undoubtedly one of the main challenges faced by Federal Territories Ministry but its minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa sees it as adding to his job experience.

"The movement control order is something that has never crossed my mind and now, we have to work under the new norm."

"As chairman of the state security working committee, I have been directly managing day-to-day MCO operations and that is something new for me," he told *StarMetro*.

While recounting his first year in office, the veteran politician highlighted how important it was to act fast on economic revival.

"We are entering the final phase of the war against Covid-19 and on the road to recovery with the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme under way."

"The country needs to regain lost ground as a lot of industries have been severely affected."

"One of the industries which has been badly affected is tourism but it has the capacity to recover very fast."

"With the current immunisation plan, we should develop travel bubbles between Kuala Lumpur and places like Jakarta and Hong Kong."

"The government should sit down with the respective city administrations and form a bilateral arrangement to encourage tourism as well as accept vaccinated travellers regardless of the type of vaccine they received."

"We need to be proactive in making sure we send the right signal so that the industry can be fast-tracked," he emphasised.

Wilayah Incorporated

Annuar announced that the ministry would introduce Wilayah Incorporated where the private and public sectors work hand in hand to become the major engine for the development and redevelopment of the Federal Territories.

"We want to introduce more innovative and creative projects as well as modernise public transport."

The ministry's vision for infrastructure includes a monorail system in Putrajaya and the completion of the ongoing mass rapid transit (MRT) project in Kuala Lumpur to ensure the two major cities in the country are well-connected.

"I also encourage the redevelopment of KL Sentral and Putrajaya Sentral as both are major hubs for travellers who can make Putrajaya Sentral the last station before disembarking at Kuala Lumpur International Airport."

"KL Sentral needs to be further modernised as the station is now a bit run down."

"We have plans for an office tower above the current KL Sentral transport hub," said the minister.

The territories

With the three Federal Territories namely Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan each having unique characteristics, Annuar said different approaches were needed for them.

"Kuala Lumpur is an old city with its own existing problems but it remains an important commercial centre as the country's capital."



More greenery is in store for Kuala Lumpur folk. — Filepic



Annuar: We are looking at developing RoL from Brickfields to the Selangor boundary.



The redevelopment of Kampung Baru in Kuala Lumpur is moving forward. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

ment," he said.

As for Putrajaya, Annuar intends to double the population to 200,000 in the next 10 years.

"Putrajaya has nice architecture and is full of greenery but the population is small; we want a bigger population to support more commercial activities."

"Currently, the city has water-based activities but we hope to introduce new tourism products," he said, revealing that negotiations were ongoing for a safari park.

"We also want to start constructing a Quranic Village that is modelled after those in Abu Dhabi and Dubai (both in the UAE)."

Putrajaya will be the focus of health tourism expansion plans as well, in the form of a post-medical treatment centre.

"Other efforts include converting part of Precinct 4, where Floria (an annual flower and garden festival) was held, into another hub for family outings and redeveloping the Putrajaya wetlands," said Annuar.

On Labuan, he acknowledged that more had to be done.

"There is a need to draw up a new blueprint, with the construction of a Labuan bridge connecting to Sabah as the game-changer."

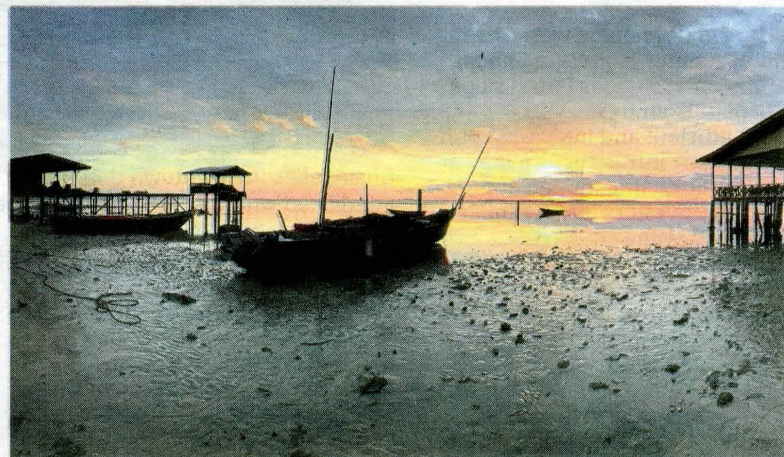
"With the bridge, we expect more activities for Labuan and this will really transform it into a modern and vibrant island city," he said.

Outstanding issues

Annuar also shared his views on complex issues plaguing Kuala



Putrajaya's Precinct 4, which has hosted the Floria festival, will have more facilities for family outings. — Filepic



A scenic view of Kampung Tanjung Aru Nelayan in Labuan. — Bernama

Lumpur such as the redevelopment of Kampung Baru and housing development in Taman Awam Bukit Kiara (formerly known as Taman Rimba Kiara), saying there were no straightforward solutions.

"We need to be objective and delve deeper into those problems."

"With Kampung Baru, it is not as simple as developing a piece of Malay reserve land."

"It involves legislation, physical planning, multiple land ownership and funding."

"I have to draw up a proposal to the Cabinet on the need to enact a special Kampung Baru Development Act as a tool to develop the site."

"The next step is to open up Kampung Baru."

"Although the Ampang-Kuala Lumpur Elevated Highway (Akleh) and Dutra Ulu-Kelang Expressway (DUKE) are just next to the area, they do not connect to Kampung Baru."

"Then, we have to see how we can develop such a fragmented area because a normal willing-buyer and willing-seller approach cannot be done here due to absentee landlords."

"Also, developing the entire Kampung Baru area is difficult because the land prices are so steep that it will require billions of ringgit in capital," he pointed out.

So he introduced an organic type of development where Kampung Baru land would be divided into smaller parcels and each parcel could yield a gross development value (GDV) of RM400,000 to RM600,000.

"I think that sum is sizeable and lucrative enough."

"Things are moving in the right direction and we have decided to proceed with the RM250mil Kampung Baru loops that connect the place to DUKE and Akleh."

"I will carry on with parts of the plan mapped out by former Federal Territories minister Khalid Abd Samad but using a new approach," he added.

Annuar said the complexity of the housing project issue in Taman Rimba Kiara was similar to Kampung Baru's.

"The government had parcelled out the land and one plot was given to Yayasan Wilayah Persekutuan (YWP)."

"When the group against the development took Kuala Lumpur City Hall to court, it was about the way DBKL approved the development order," he explained.

A group of Taman Tun Dr Ismail residents had filed a judicial review application with the High Court to quash the conditional planning permission for the housing project but it was dismissed by the court on Nov 28, 2018. The group then appealed the decision and won.

Annuar said DBKL and YWP were appealing that decision.

"We are presently looking at other development possibilities with the aim of providing permanent housing for 100 longhouse families," he added.

Political future

As for his political future, Annuar said he had no specific plan as far as politics was concerned.

He said that for now, he would focus on serving the people as the Federal Territories Minister.

"I don't have any specific targets, plan or personal ambition. I think I have done my part."

"I have been given a fair chance so I want to serve to the best of my abilities in this ministry," he said.

Annuar also highlighted that more opportunities should be given to the younger generation to be political leaders.