



# Bringing Greater KL's promise to life

AMONG the various ongoing developments that are changing the landscape of Greater Kuala Lumpur is effort to propel it into the ranks of the top 20 cities by 2020.

There are various entry-point projects that are ongoing in Greater Kuala Lumpur that essentially seek to improve and enhance Greater Kuala Lumpur's liveability.

"Greater KL is part of the nation's Economic Transformation Programme which seeks to elevate Greater KL to become a top 20 city by 2020. With that aspiration, we have identified nine EPPs and they are organised to improve the transportation in KL, liveability and long-term international networks as well," Pemandu director of greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley NKEA Mohd Azharuddin Mat Sah said.

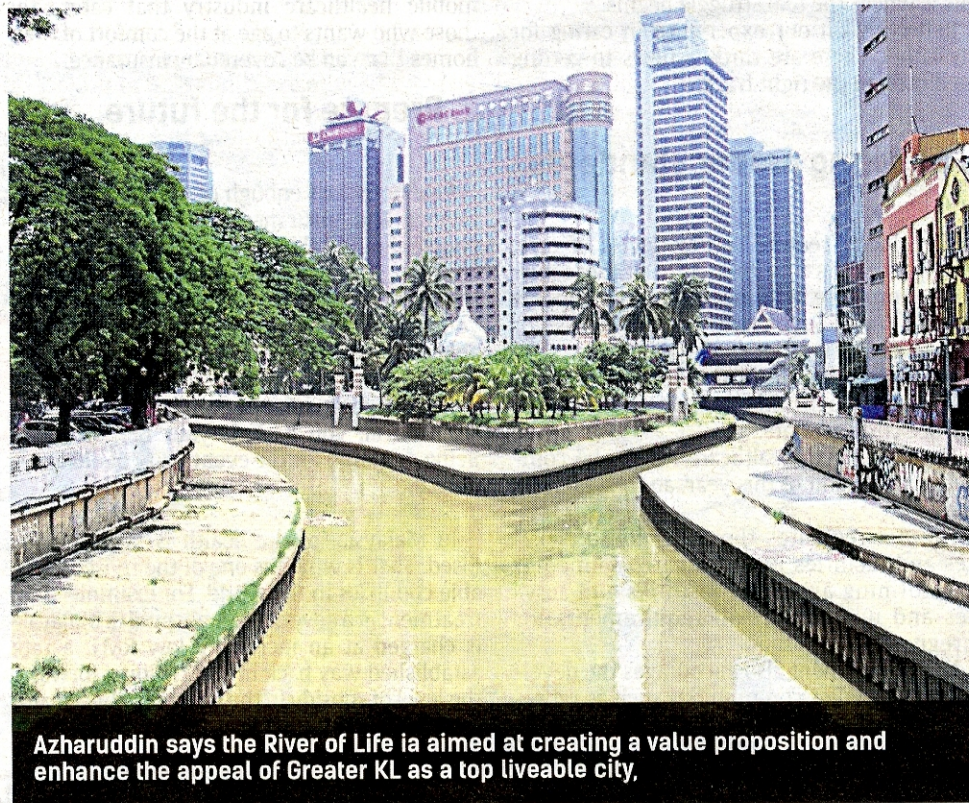
Azharuddin said one of the examples of the many initiatives to improve Greater Kuala Lumpur was the Greener Kuala Lumpur initiative that aimed to plant 100,000 trees to provide shade and improve the greenery in Greater Kuala Lumpur across the scenic spots.

"That is on track and to date we have already planted 120,000 trees. The more important issue now is how do we enhance and improve these green spaces within the city?" asked Azharuddin.

"One of the things we have to look at is to connect the various parks that we have in Greater KL so people can walk, jog or cycle within these parks. This is something that we can look forward to in the future."

Apart from greening Greater KL, there is also the need to improve the pedestrian network within the city. As efforts are ongoing to improve the rail services in the city, there is a need to ensure that those walking are safe, covered, well lit and in good condition. These initiatives are in line with the Greater KL's aim to improve their transportation system and address the issue of traffic jams around the city.

"We have upgraded 38.7km and we are



**Azharuddin says the River of Life is aimed at creating a value proposition and enhance the appeal of Greater KL as a top liveable city.**

going to further upgrade walkways across the spots so people can walk from say Bukit Bintang to KLCC and other hotspots within the city. That is in progress," Azharuddin said.

Beyond propelling Greater KL into the ranks of the top 20 cities by 2020, it targets to become among the top 20 safest cities by 2020 as well. This goal was set by the Greater KL police force in March 2014, after being named the world's 79th safest city to live on the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) livability index.

According to Datuk Mohamad Salleh, Greater KL's police chief, the programme's success would be measured against four barometers: Strengthening human capital, streamlining the service delivery system, enhancing community policing and improving logistics.

Other ongoing projects include a heritage trail where tourists and visitors can appreciate the history of Greater KL in places such as Masjid Jamek, the Sultan Abdul Samad building and the KTM building.

"The other one is the River of Life programme which aims to clean a 110km stretch

of the Klang and Gombak rivers. The waters now are dirty, murky and smelly and we are now putting in place various initiatives that will capture floating rubbish to clean our rivers from pollutants and make it safe for recreational use," Azharuddin said.

"We also aim to beautify the surrounding areas and those near the river so we are able to highlight the liveability and historical structures of Greater KL."

Azharuddin said all these projects aimed to create a value proposition and enhance the appeal of Greater KL as a top liveable city, where people can have river fronts and parks that are connected; people can exercise and absorb the ambience of such places.

"As the initiatives progress and we expect them to be completed by 2020, the nation and people will be able to enjoy Greater KL as a highly liveable city," he said.

The other programme that will add to the appeal of Greater KL is the high-speed rail, a project that will fundamentally change the landscape of Greater KL and Singapore.

"It will not only connect people but open up markets and ease transportation as the time of journey will be reduced to 90 minutes from city centre to city centre. With that, we can expect a lot of economic benefits between Malaysia and Singapore," Azharuddin said.

Aiding Greater KL's appeal is the country's high ranking in terms of the ease of doing business.

Azharuddin said with that flexibility and ease, Greater KL would be able to attract multinationals and businesses to set up here. "The other part is the cost of living in Malaysia, which is very competitive not only in terms of accommodation or salaries."

To draw in multinational companies (MNCs), InvestKL has been tasked as the lead agency to bring in 100 top MNCs to set up their offices in Greater KL.

"They are doing very well as they have so far been able to attract 40 top multinationals to open not just offices but green offices which are then able to control businesses not just across Asean but also the Asia-Pacific as we pursue our objective of becoming a high-income economy," Azharuddin said.

"Malaysia is an epicentre of Asia and we have multi-cultures and religions which are able to attract expats not only from an emotional perspective but also from the point of the ease of doing business. The other thing is Greater KL is within a three-four hour flight from the other major capitals in this region if they were to set up their regional offices," Azharuddin said.

The progress made by InvestKL in bringing in MNCs is also helping the economy. Azharuddin said that in terms of investment, the 40 companies that have come had committed a total of RM2bil to the country, of which RM700mil had been realised.

Another benefit this initiative brought was the employment of our local talents. "Our study and from data provided by InvestKL show that 80% of the staff employed by these MNCs are locals," Azharuddin added.

"We are on an ambitious journey to transform Greater KL to become a top 20 city in the world and we are putting in the building blocks for it to elevate itself into a global city," Azharuddin said.

This article was facilitated by InvestKL, Greater Kuala Lumpur's investment promotion agency.