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Putrajaya, a beautiful jungle within the city

PUTRAJAYA: Visitors to Putrajaya will be quick to realise that the nerve centre of the administration was developed amidst verdant surroundings, living up to its name as a 'City Within a Garden', even though it was shorn of any greenery when it came up a decade ago.

Today, Putrajaya serves as the greens lungs in an ecosystem that strives to achieve a balance between human settlement and ecological concerns.

Putrajaya's administration and management of green areas and public parks are something that other local councils should be emulating, in fact.

The Putrajaya Corporation (PPj) is the local council running the city. It ensures that the city's green landscape component is given priority in every aspect of Putrajaya's development, so that the lifestyle of its residents remains in tune with their well-being.

To achieve this objective, Putrajaya has prepared various monthly programmes such as the 'Experience 1Putrajaya Programme' (ALIP), Happy Cycling Programme and the Happy Walking Programme to encourage residents to engage in a healthy and active lifestyle.

In fact, PPj President Tan Sri Dr Aseh Che Mat said they were also working on several "Go Green Programmes", as a result of which more trees were being planted. Public awareness programmes help underline the importance of cities having green lungs.

Meanwhile, under the "Flowering Programme", colourful flowering plants have been planted throughout the city to add to the beauty of the landscape.

PPj employs knowledgeable human capital in environmental science and technology, especially when it comes to planning and managing the green areas in Putrajaya.

This Plant Inventory and Management System, developed

by the local authority together with the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), is an electronic inventory to manage the plant life asset in Putrajaya.

"The system was completed in August and it is hoped that the experience is shared with others involved in the management of green areas in Malaysia," he said.

He said the system would be implemented by FRIM.

The pioneer project is expected to help improve the quality of the landscape and environmental education in Putrajaya through, among others, cooperation in botany, biodiversity, sustainable green lung management and landscape maintenance.

It is also aimed at fostering cooperation towards strengthening, promoting and implementing various efforts in research, education and transfer of knowledge. This, in turn, creates a knowledgeable human capital.

PPj has also identified the safety requirements for children's playgrounds as part of the efforts towards green area conservation since children need a safe environment to play.

Consequently, the local authority has sent its staff to be trained by the International Playground Safety Institute to become Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI) and Playground Maintenance Technicians (PMT).

"Eight pioneers have successfully completed the training to become CPSIs," said Dr Aseh.

He believes that the new policy by the Federal Territories

Ministry called the Children's Playgrounds Safety Policy would help in the development of high quality playgrounds.

Bernama was also made to understand that the ministry would be enacting a policy to ensure that trees do not pose

a hazard to public safety in Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan.

In line with its efforts to change the country's third world maintenance culture to one followed by any developed nation, PPj is upgrading its equipment and work methods in maintaining and preserving green areas.

"This includes training and employing semi-skilled and skilled gardeners to create high quality landscapes and parks, shunning the earlier approach to hire low-skilled manual labourers", he said.

PPj would also be deploying applied science and technology in its daily routines.

One can find many beautiful parks in Putrajaya, each fully-equipped with public amenities. However, Dr Aseh noted that they were underutilised.

He hoped that the public would be encouraged to spend more time in the great outdoors, and it becomes a culture for families.

The city has at least nine parks, not including lakes and the Wetlands, which were created for different purposes and to serve various functions.

This includes the Botanical Park which functions as a national sanctuary for a collection of plants for research, the Putra Perdana Park which is where one can go if one wanted to enjoy the panorama of Putrajaya from a higher elevation, and the Wawasan Park, which includes a bird park and a theme park.

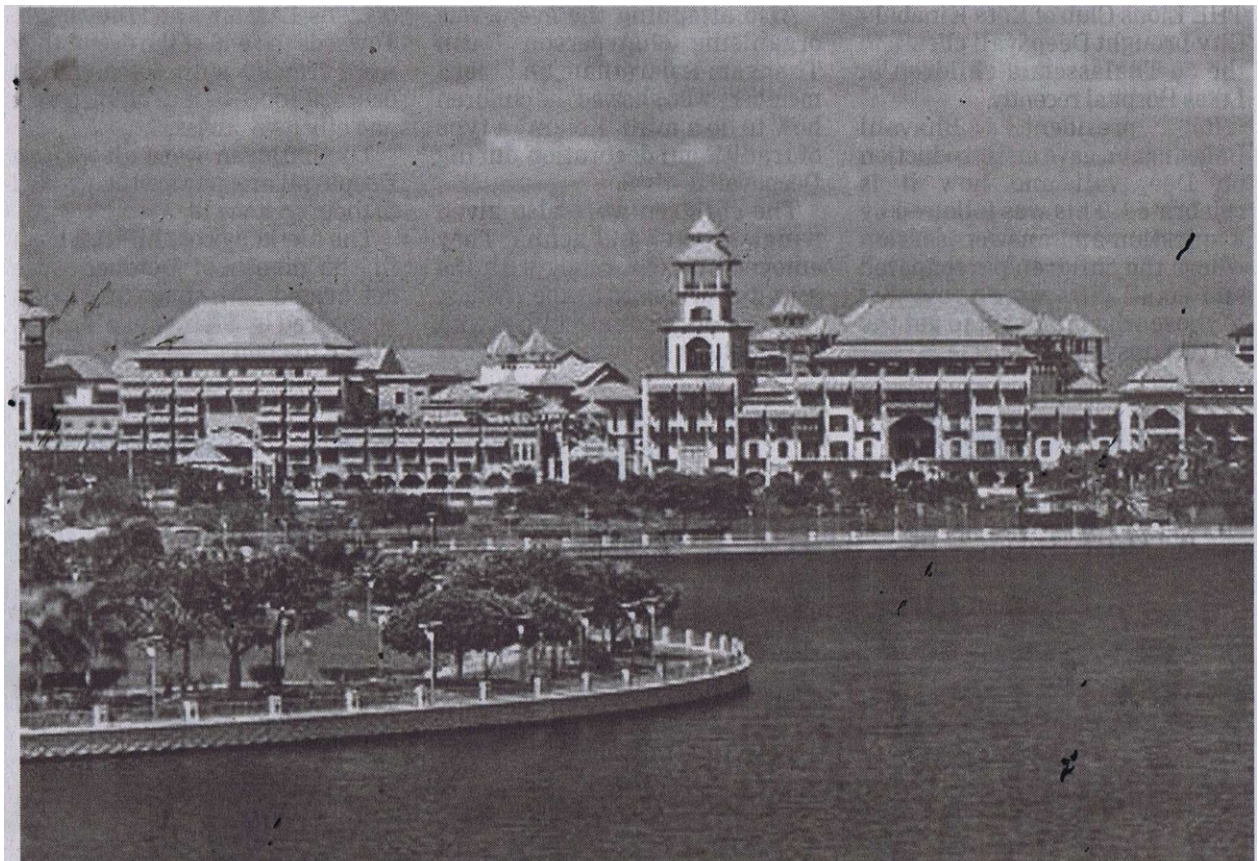
PPj also maintains the Rimba Alam Park, a green lung within the city that combines a tropical forest ecosystem with a metropolitan recreational park. Meanwhile, Taman Warisan Pertanian is a garden that showcases many of the nation's commercial crops. It is also the place to go to if one wanted to see how rubber is

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tapped.

Besides the Wetlands Park, Putrajaya also has an Equestrian Park for a riding school and to host private parties.

The most unique park in Putrajaya would probably be Taman Selatan, a cemetery for Malaysians, that does not discriminate on the basis of race or religion. - Bernama



Putrajaya, the 'City Within a Garden'.