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# Highlights for DBKL

## KL mayor shares solutions to city folk's problems

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**D**ATUK Seri Ahmad Phesal Talib was appointed the 10th mayor of Kuala Lumpur on July 18, 2012. Even though the former Federal Territories Ministry secretary-general had only been in office for one-and-a-half years, he brings with him over 35 years of experience in public service.

The mayor's vast experience in planning and development has resulted in Kuala Lumpur scoring some brownie points during his tenure. In an exclusive interview with *StarMetro*, the mayor offers solutions to several problems that have been plaguing city residents for many years.

### Improving KL's image

There is no doubt that Kuala Lumpur has chalked up several successes since Ahmad Phesal took office.

A notable achievement is Kuala Lumpur City Hall's "OSC 1Submission" procedure, initiated to cut red tape for developers when applying and submitting development plans.

Since it was introduced, DBKL has managed to introduce a 12-step procedure for developers when applying for a development order, which saves both parties a lot of time.

Initiatives like this helped rank Malaysia as the sixth easiest country to do business, according to the World Bank Doing Business Report 2014.

"Our ranking improved tremendously from 113th spot to 97 in 2012, and 43 in 2013," he said.

"Our jump to sixth position is a great leap.

"It will place Kuala Lumpur in a better position to attract more foreign investment and this is good news," Ahmad Phesal said proudly.

### Speeding up development project

Another piece of good news for developers is the move to speed up development.

Ahmad Phesal said that City Hall had also responded to calls from developers to extend their working hours at construction sites within the city centre to 22 hours.

"That means they will work until 5am every day except on weekends. This will enable work to be completed faster."

However, he stressed that the ruling was only limited to the city centre. The mayor said many developers had requested for longer working hours because they were unable to complete their work on time, and as such, incurred losses.

"It is also difficult for them to bring materials into the city during peak hours," he added.

### Green city

On the greening of the city, both ordinary folk and investors will certainly appreciate the mayor's commitment to ensuring that the city's development is sustainable.

To the mayor, a city without green spaces has no soul.

"Every city needs a park and every park needs trees and I am proud to say that in the past two years, we have planted almost 100,000 trees all over the city," said Ahmad Phesal.

The mayor also said that plans to plant better quality trees in city parks and upgrade their facilities were in the pipeline.

### Doing the right thing

An advocate of integrity and transparency, the mayor is aware that City Hall often has been accused of favouritism when awarding contracts.

"We have been accused of not practising an open tender system, and I would like to say that this is not true.

"We receive tender applications for projects from hundreds of firms

and the number is shortlisted further. And out of this, we pick the best," he said, adding that those not selected accuse DBKL of being unfair.

However, the mayor said that a further mechanism to monitor quality had been put in place after DBKL signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with Sirim QAS

International Sdn Bhd.

Ahmad Phesal said the signing would ensure all work by DBKL contractors was of high quality and complies with the standards set by Sirim.

"We have received numerous complaints from Kuala Lumpur residents about potholes, burst water pipes and malfunctioning lifts, among others," he said.

He added that the problems were caused by low quality materials used by contractors.

"We hope these problems can be reduced through the agreement with Sirim," he added.

He said DBKL previously cooperated with the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and Public Works Institute of Malaysia (Ikram) to ensure projects were done more efficiently and provided value for money.

On challenges, the mayor said building affordable homes for the lower-income group was hampered by lack of space. But the Government is working on providing affordable homes to the people.

"We will try to get the private sector and developers to help by giving various forms of incentive," he added.

### Congestion, landslides and flash floods

On traffic, the mayor said DBKL was setting up a city traffic unit that will work with the police to resolve congestion woes.

"At the moment, we are finalising their uniforms so that they are easily identifiable. To deal with taxi touts, we are working with the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) and the Blue Ocean strategy will enhance this

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process further.

"Blue Ocean is a management principle to enable greater efficiency.

"SPAD is also planning to relocate city buses to the TBS-BTS (Integrated South-Bandar Tasik Selatan Transport Terminal) to ease congestion," he said.

On flash floods and landslides, the mayor said work to upgrade the drainage system in Kampung Baru and Jalan Tun Razak was ongoing while the hazard mapping initiative to identify hilly areas with Ikram was almost complete.

He said rehabilitation work on areas such as Bukit Setiawangsa, Bukit Nanas and along Lebuhraya Mahameru, which experienced a landslide recently, was almost complete.

### Night markets to stay

On the Taman Tun Dr Ismail (TTDI)

night market issue, the mayor said that night markets were a necessity rather than a novelty.

"We need night markets as they provide a livelihood to thousands of people," he said.

"Every city in the world has one, but having said that, it has to be managed well so that they do not become a nuisance," Ahmad Phesal said.

The mayor said work to upgrade the Keramat, Pudu and Selayang markets were also under way. On the Danau Kota night market, he added that it would be relocated and a piece of land had been identified.

### Changing mindsets

Ahmad Phesal also spoke of the lack of civility evident in just about every facet of life in the city, from vandalism and rubbish, to ugly stickers and banners plastered all over public

property.

"We need to inculcate good social values and attitudes in city folk," he said.

Ahmad Phesal noted that there was a lack of trust and respect between the people and public servants.

"People demand better service from the authorities, but they must also do their part in caring for the city and its facilities," he said.

He promised residents that a cost-effective and systematic approach would be practised throughout the planning and implementation of projects using the RM2.79bil budget allocation.

"We will look into all aspects to make this city a liveable one and we hope to get support from everyone to help us move forward. On your part, I only ask that you love your city.

Happy City Day!"



**10th mayor:** Ahmad Phesal brings with him over 35 years of experience in public service.