

# Bandar Baru Nilai to be new airport city

By S.C. CHEAH

BANDAR Baru Nilai, currently the largest township closest to the KL International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang, is fast taking shape as the new "airport city."

About 5,300 units of property worth over RM1bil have been completed and handed over since work on the 6,233-acre RM2bil self-contained township began in 1993.

Today about half of the township has been developed. One can see many nice houses in a well-planned township that boasts of, among others, the Nilai College and Inti College, the lovely Nilai Springs Golf & Country Club and a modern town centre.

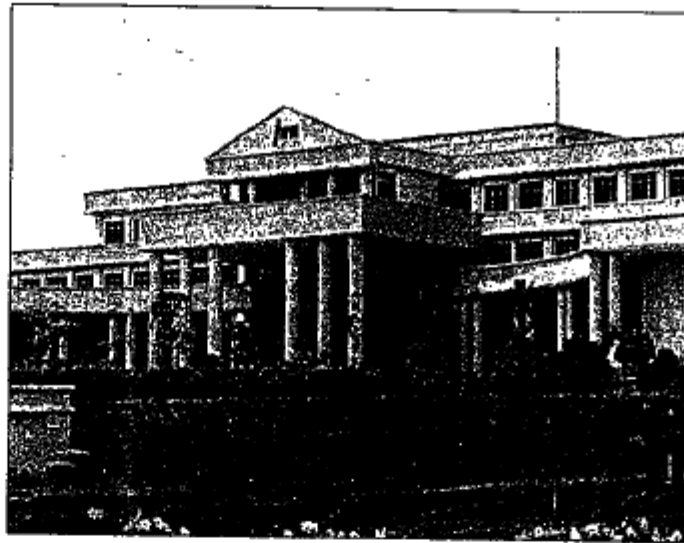
There will also be a corporate park, education centre, administrative centre and recreational areas.

Despite about two years of economic slowdown, the developer BBN Development Sdn Bhd (the property development arm of PK Resources Bhd) has continued to build and deliver all the houses that it has sold.

"During the downturn we continued to build. There were not many launches from 1997 to 1998 and our priority then was to complete what we have started," said PK Resources executive director Gan Kong Hiok.

"Property demand is inelastic. Hence, during the recession, it doesn't mean people would buy at a lower price. Now post-recession, the market is slowly recovering, but gone are the good old days when you can sell at a high price."

Gan said Bandar Baru Nilai would continue to have a mix of residential properties priced



Inti College in Bandar Baru Nilai

from as low as RM40,000 to about RM200,000 to cater to the different market.

For instance, its Desa Casuarina 22ft by 65ft double-storey link houses priced from RM138,000 were all sold soon after the launch in 1998.

"During better years there is no way one can sell it for below RM150,000. It would be around RM180,000," said Gan.

It has also built some 1,000 units of three-bedroom, 720 sq ft, medium cost apartments priced from RM38,000.

However, instead of locating them next to the town centre as done by some developers to bring in the population, it has located them elsewhere in the township.

While this move may enhance the image of the town centre, Gan admitted that it was one of the factors that saw the slow occupancy of the shop office units.

A recent check showed that many of the shop offices are still vacant. Many of the owners have put up "for rent and for sale" signs, which is becoming quite common in fairly new townships these days.

Several banks, including Bumiputra Commerce, Oriental Bank and RHB Bank, have their branches here. There is also a Courts Mammoth outlet, a hypermarket and the Allison Klana Hotel.

Gan said the economic downturn had also affected the movement of people, especially to the town centre.

However, he is confident that with the completion of the proposed North-South Expressway interchange (with a new Nilai toll gate near Bandar Baru Nilai) by next May, more people would relocate here.

"Over the next three years there will only be three ministries left in KL as most of the government departments would have moved to Putrajaya. We hope to be the main provider of residential units for people working in Putrajaya and the KLIA."

"I believe there will be some spillover effect (from KLIA and Putrajaya) to our township as a lot of people commute from KL to work in KLIA. Initially people will be resistant to move but they would not like to pay toll everyday," added Gan.

He said more colleges were expected to move to Bandar Baru Nilai, adding that Metropolitan College had acquired a piece of land there.

BBN Development recently launched its Kasturi Heights bungalows with 50ft by 75ft land. They are priced from RM193,000 for a single-storey bungalow with a 1,200 sq ft built-up area to RM263,000 for a double-storey bungalow with a 1,865 built-up.

These "smart homes" would be installed with the *mi.Guardz* hardware, an interactive, intelligent and talking security and automation system, marketed by Masterlog Technologies Sdn Bhd.

More houses in the township would come with this value-added feature.

Gan said about 400 units of the Desa College double-storey link houses priced around RM150,000 would be launched soon.

He said PK Resources (formerly known as Peladang Kimia Bhd) would continue to focus on its five core businesses — property development, fertilisers and agro-chemicals, hospitality, education and health care.

Its Inti College (Nilai campus) covers about 60 acres and has some 2,000 students as of last year. The group has allocated a 100-acre land in Nilai for the development of Nilai College which upon full completion could accommodate between 8,000 and 10,000 students.



One of Kasturi Heights' bungalow designs in Bandar Baru Nilai