

PUTRA NILAI: INTO A HUB FOR SHOPPERS

PUTRA Nilai will soon live up to its status as an airport city with all the plans in place to attract tourists and visitors to its corridor.

Rather than merely being a residential and commercial hub in support of the KL International Airport (KLIA), PK Resources Bhd's property unit, BBN Development Sdn Bhd, has outlined some exciting plans to rejuvenate the township into a major tourist attraction.

PK Resources chairman Tan Sri Dr Gan Kong Seng said the plans to revitalise the tourism and commercial potential of Putra Nilai were in line with the Nilai Structural Plan (2005-2020) drawn up by the Negri Sembilan State Government.

Under the plan, Putra Nilai has been earmarked as the state's residential, educational and trading hub in line with the expanded role of Nilai, which was granted a municipality status in 2000.

In the state's economic blue print to achieve "developed state" status by 2020, Putra Nilai has been designated part of the Greater Klang Valley over the next decade or so.

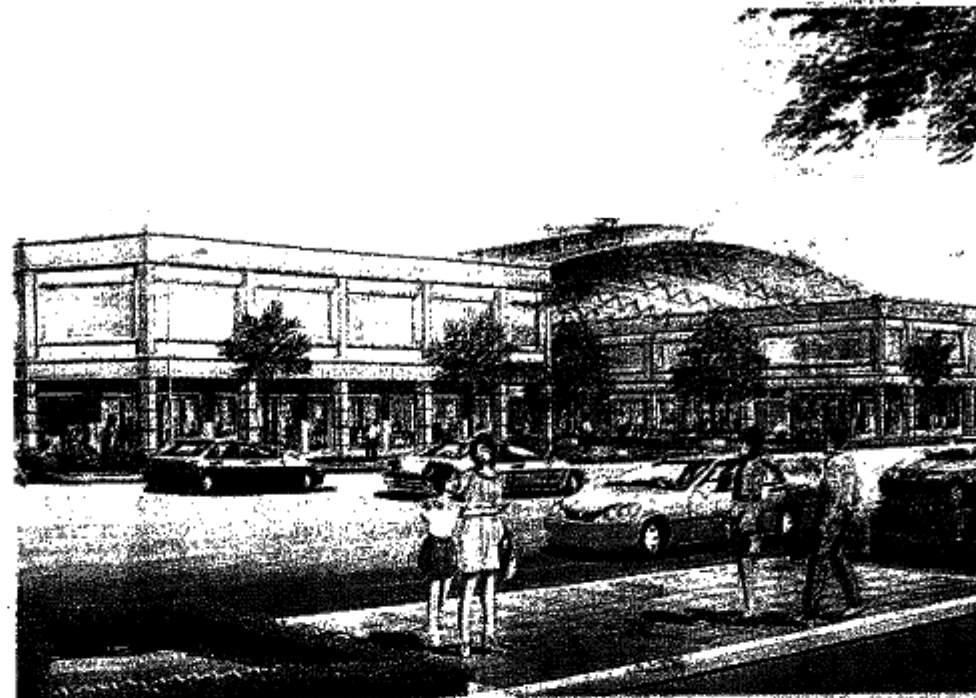
It would then benefit from the spillover from ongoing development in the Klang Valley as the lower operational and land costs in Putra Nilai would provide a viable platform for investors and businesses in the face of rising competition.

Gan said the state had also envisioned a duty-free area in Putra Nilai to accommodate tourists/transit vacationers from KLIA in a greater effort to capture a larger balance of payments for the state and country.

"Future projects to come will encompass the zoning of a duty-free area to cater for transit and stop-over tourists to best promote Malaysia's viability as a duty-free haven.

"Various ministries will play an active role to realise this goal. Tourism Malaysia will be invited to further expand on the idea and their input will be sought to ensure the plan take off smoothly."

PK Resources director of sales and market-



An artist's impression of Nilai Square with its covered boulevard that will turn Putra Nilai into a wholesale hub.

ing Glenn Gomez, who recently joined the group to spearhead its tourism initiatives, said to further develop Putra Nilai as a centre for shopping in relation to the nationwide Mega Sale promotions and to sustain year-long sales activity in the promotion of quality goods, advice would be sought from Tourism Malaysia's Pembangunan Pelancongan Nasional Sdn Bhd.

"The creation and sense of continuous activity in Nilai through the invitation of professional event management companies to facilitate monthly activities are being seriously looked into. These are not merely limited to flea markets, concerts, shopping contests and tours of high tech and tourists attractions in

Putra Nilai," Gomez said.

In line with its retail aspirations, plans are afoot to create an international wholesale hub within the completed Nilai 1 Wholesale Centre and the Nilai Square Wholesale Shopping Hub, which is underway for completion by June next year.

The purpose-built shopping and trading hub of Nilai Square with covered boulevard will feature 201 double-storey shop houses to accommodate the trading needs of a group of wholesale and retail traders in dry food, household items, apparel and toys.

With an expected gross development value of RM\$2.8mil, its special features include sheltered walking malls with lush landscaping.

BBN has undertaken to complete the shop houses by the middle of next year with certificate of fitness in time for the traders to commence operations for next year's festive seasons.

There would also be a designated trading zone to cater to foreign traders who want to set up shops and offer various products from all over the world.

According to Gan, these traders will in turn introduce goods specific to their home countries and sourced for Malaysian products to be distributed in their home countries.

"This will in the true sense mean a facilitation of global trade at Putra Nilai," he added.

Other bigger plans in store for Putra Nilai include plans by the state to create an 800-acre Satellite BioValley in Putra Nilai for the research and development of medical and pharmaceutical technology.

The project will complement the BioValley Malaysia project developed by the Federal Government and is designed to provide a conducive environment for companies to conduct research and development activities.

Dubbed "City of Knowledge", Putra Nilai is also fast turning into a regional education centre with the largest concentration of educational institutions including three primary and two secondary schools. Close to 700 acres are dedicated for the education hub, which is expected to have a 30,000 student-population in the near future.

Presently, two fully residential private international colleges with MSC status - PK Resources' Nilai International College and Inti College - are already operational in Putra Nilai.

Gan said Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia, which will shift to Putra Nilai by the middle of next year, was the 12th public university to be set up by the Government. Besides the current Economics and Islamic studies, a new medical faculty and teaching hospital will cover all aspects of medical sciences including research.

"We hope to attract one to two more learning institutions to our shores," he added.